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imaginary food was left on Selwyn Lake."

"Then you saved our lives only to separate us," interrupted Natalie, quickly. "It would have been kinder to leave us there."

A sudden wrinkle appeared on the stranger's brow.

He lit another cigarette, while a faint colour reddened his brown temple. "It is an unfortunate fact that no human mechanism can eliminate humanity. It is almost invariably the heart and not the mind that makes the false step. So! This knowledge is to-day, one might almost say this evening, about to escape, and with it any possible gain by the society. And now for a moment I beg your careful attention. It has been decided that the girl return to the supervision of those who know the meaning of the word silence, and the man"—he paused again—"the man will give his oath to go back to his native land for the rest of his life and not to speak of what he knows under any circumstances whatever."

"And the alternative?" snapped Pearson, angrily.

"Ah! I hesitate to mention the alternative."

THERE was a moment's silence, then a voice came in like the click of a steel trap.

"Sit still! If you move I'll blow your brains out if I swing for it. Now I've got something to say."

The stranger shrank. Pearson's hand was covered with a napkin from which the shining muzzle of Natalie's revolver protruded for a quarter of an inch and just cleared the edge of the table against which it rested. The tall man could see straight down the barrel.

"You will be kind enough to sit perfectly still, and please remember that in the past few months I have seen enough of death not to mind a little more. Now listen, although I won't take as long as you did. You saved our lives, but your terms are ridiculous. You talk as if you were omnipotent as to the platinum—for that is what you mean. Also please observe that I am not stating an imaginary case. All I have to do is to tell the Canadian government the truth about this whole, horrible affair and they will put a guard of Mounted Police up there that will blow holes in every Russian murderer in America. Now, as to my future wife, she will stay with me, and we are going to be married to-morrow. I think your past dealings must have been with cowards."

The stranger's face was as motionless as marble, but one arm moved, and his shoulder shifted slightly.

"Another quarter of an inch and you're a dead man. Put your hands on the table! One—two—"

The long brown hands came up and descended slowly on the spotless cloth.

"That's better. Now I want to ask something. Do you actually think I am going to sit here and take what you hand out? I'm a poor man, I admit it, and that platinum would mean a good deal to me, but I'm willing to forget it if—if you will forget us. There is one more thing. If you insist on this girl going back to Russia with you, you will never leave this place alive."

"Do you expect me to yield to a threat?"

"I expect nothing, except that in an hour you will be in the morgue and I will be in jail."

The stranger smiled coldly. "So, my young fire eater, you think I'm alone. You are very shortsighted."

"What do you mean?" stammered Natalie.

"It's very simple," he said, impersonally. "The policy of our society is always to provide for emergencies. It is quite true that you may be foolish enough to shoot me, but that will not make any material difference to the programme. My work will be carried on by another."

The muzzle of the revolver trembled, then steadied again. "Are you a man

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