

flatter yourself for a moment that I am afraid. You just spar with yourself and get limbered up, while I put some wood on the fire. This is too ridiculous."

Yates gathered some fuel, and managed to coax the dying embers into a blaze.

"There," he said, "that's better. Now, let me have a look at you. In the name of wonder, Renny, what do you want to fight me for to-night?"

"I refuse to give my reason."

"Then I refuse to fight. I'll run, and I can beat you in a foot race any day in the week. Why, you're worse than her father. He at least let me know why he fought me."

"Whose father?"

"Kitty's father, of course—my future father-in-law. And that's another ordeal ahead of me. I haven't spoken to the old man yet, and I need all my fighting grit for that."

"What are you talking about?"

"Isn't my language plain? It usually is."

"To whom are you engaged? As I understand your talk, it is to Miss Bartlett. Am I right?"

"Right as rain, Renny. This fire is dying down again. Say, can't we postpone our fracas until daylight? I don't want to gather any more wood. Besides, one of us is sure to be knocked into the fire, and thus ruin whatever is left of our clothes. What do you say?"

"Say? I say I am an idiot."

"Hello! reason is returning, Renny. I perfectly agree with you."