

"To sit out then," said Kate. "Let's get in the first row of the gallery, where we can hang over and watch the giddy young things!"

Their conversation did not flourish. The night outside still had Jack by the heartstrings; loping over the prairie under the stars, the far-off ululation of a wolf, a ruddy campfire in the dark, and beside it, Mary!

"You're not exactly garrulous to-night," remarked Kate.

Jack turned a contrite face to her. "I'm sorry. I wouldn't be rude to you, Kate!"

"Bless your heart! you don't have to talk unless you are moved to it. I don't like to see a pal looking so down, that's all."

"Down?" said Jack with a laugh. "I'm living in hell, Kate!"

"Tell me about it, old man. You can, you know."

He shook his head. "I can't talk about it. I only sound like a fool. It only makes matters worse to talk about it."

Kate knew her men. "Change the subject then," she said cheerfully. "How are business matters going?"

"All right," said Jack. "I have sold my claim and the other one to Sir Bryson's company for twenty-five thousand — a fair price."

"Cash or stock?" asked Kate.

"Cash. I have no talent for business. I don't want to be in the company."

"The other claim?" she asked.