

"Rather. Here is my part cut out for me. Here I stay and become a chief factor in making this city greater even than before. That is enough for any man. And there will be plenty of fight. Politics will crawl back to new strongholds, as soon as men become egos again, but I shall fight them here, not in the country."

He stood up, and Isabel asked, hastily: "Have you had no sleep?"

"Hofer and I broke into an empty house in the Western Addition towards morning and slept on the floor for three hours. I have known harder beds. I must go. I felt that I must look at you and order you to leave at once."

"I don't want to leave the city."

"You must go. The fire will have taken this house before midnight. You will be ordered out before that. They may save the city west of Van Ness Avenue, for the mayor at last has consented that several blocks shall be blown up at once. I am carrying dynamite. If I saw Russian Hill on fire, and was not sure that you were out of harm's way, it would unnerve me, and I need all the nerve I've got."

"I can go down to Fort Mason."

"I want to know that you are out of the city. I think my mother is better off where she is. She is working with a will down there, and absolutely refused to leave. I did not insist--no fire could cross those sand-lots, and I fancy she needs occupation. But you must go."

"I should be as safe."

"Perhaps. But I should be beset by fears that you had ventured too far. I can be quite impersonal, keen, steady of hand and brain, if you are out of the city."

"Very well, I will go."