

a daughter," he went on. "Not because I didn't care for Tom. I wanted a girl too — some one I could pet and maybe spoil a little." He paused and looked at his son. "I couldn't risk it with a boy. You know that, don't you, Tom?"

"Yes," he said brokenly. "And I know that I've never tried to save you worry — never stopped to think that you'd like a little affection. I've just gone my own way. Sheila has given you something that the rest of us haven't. I see that clearly now."

His father smiled.

"You'd make a poor witness in a lawsuit," he said.

"All I wanted was a plain yes." He closed his eyes.

"Perhaps I'd better mind the nurse and sleep."

They turned to steal from the room.

"Sheila?"

"Yes."

"Ever think of the time we went blackfishing?"

"Often," she replied.

"So do I," he said drowsily. "It came home to me then what a lot I'd missed."