

"Maybe. Can't I guess if I like?"

"Are you goin' speak, den?"

"Not yet!" Sonia temporized.

Chasni Jim and the admiral were already outside. The Sitka was testing the depth of the snowfall with his shoepacked leg as Félix joined them.

"No good," he decided. "Deep and some more. No can trail um."

"Dat's w'at I say maself," agreed the voyageur.

He knew that if Enid had really lost herself there was now no chance of finding her before the frost and fatigue should have done their work. But he doubted the assumption that she was lost. It was not customary for people to get up in the middle of the Yukon night and wander off across mountain slopes with the mercury forty below. Yet there was no telling this to Mavor. Instead, immediate pretence of ranging the peaks must be made.

"You tak' de lower peak," Félix directed the admiral. "Dere's not so mooch ground to cover. Chasni Jim and me'll tak' de odder."

Sticking his head in the doorway, Bruneau spoke to Sonia again. "Kip de fire goin'," he ordered. "Mebbe we need hot t'ings. Dese Kusawaks be some cold."

"Cold!" echoed Mavor. "It's a devilish spot, a hellish spot!"

"No, only strong!"

"It's hellish, I say," contradicted the admiral,