

In a dead silence they plowed slowly to shore and when Gerry found bottom he stood up, took Alix into his arms and strode well up the bank before he set her down.

During the long swim she had had time to think but not to forgive. She stamped her sodden feet, shook out her skirts and then looked Gerry up and down. Gerry with his crisp light hair; blue eyes, wide apart and well open; and six feet of well-proportioned bulk, was good to look at but Alix's angry eyes did not admit it. They measured him scornfully but it was not the look that hurt him so much as the way she turned from him with a little shrug of dismissal and started along the shore for camp.

Gerry reached out and caught hold of her arm. She swung around, her face quite white. "I see," she said in a low voice. "You want it now."

Gerry held her with his eyes. "Yes," he answered, "I want it now."

"Why did you yell at me to jump into your horrible boat?"

"I took you for Nance."

"You took me for Nance," repeated Alix with a mimicry and in a tone that left no doubt as to the fact that she was in a nasty temper.

"And *why*," she went on, her eyes blazing and her slight figure trembling, "did you strike me — slap me across the face?"

"Because I love you," replied Gerry steadily.

"Oh!" gasped Alix. Her gray-slate eyes went wide open in unfeigned amazement and suddenly the tense-