

for a second she bit her lip and then, "I *must* cry," she gasped, — and cried.

Gerry was big, strong and placid. Action came slowly to him but when it came it was sure. He threw one knee over the tiller and gathered Alix into his arms. She lay like a hurt child, sobbing against his shoulder. "Poor little girl," he said, "I know how it hurts. Cry now because in a minute it will all be over. It will, dear. Ships are like that." And then, before she could master her sobs and take in the unconscious humor of his comfort, the boat struck with a crash on Hidden Rock.

The nearest Gerry had ever come to drowning was when he had fallen asleep lying on his back in the middle of West Lake. Even with a frightened girl clinging to him it gave him no shock to find himself in the water a quarter of a mile from shore. But with Alix it was different. She gasped and in consequence gulped down a large mouthful of the Lake. Then she broke into hysterical laughter and swallowed some more. Gerry held her up and deliberately slapped her across the mouth. In a flash anger sobered her. Her eyes blazed. "You coward," she whispered.

Gerry's face was white and stern. "Put one hand on my shoulder and kick with your feet," he said. "I'll tow you to shore."

"Put me on Hidden Rock," said Alix; "I prefer to wait for a boat."

"It will take an hour for a boat to get here," answered Gerry. "I'm going to tow you in. If you say another word I shall slap you again."