

"Thank you," she said at last, and

Fyfe looked at her a minute or more

thought about you getting lonesome.

Except for a greater number of board

hacks and a larger area of stump and

top littered waste immediately behind

structure with a shingle roof, which

rom its more substantial appearance

within, Stella perceived that there was,

in fact, considerable difference in Mr.

stone fireplace, before which big easy

chairs invited restful lounging. The

floor was overlaid with thick rugs

which deadened her footfalls. With

10 pretense of ornamental decoration,

the room held an air of homely com-

"Come in here and lay off your

hings," Mrs. Howe beamed on her.

'If I'd 'a' known you were livin' so

close we'd have been acquainted a

week ago, though I ain't got rightly

settled here myself. My land, these

men are such clams! I never knowed

till this mornin' there was any white

It boasted an enamel washstand with taps which yielded hot and cold water, neatly curtained windows and a deep seated morris chair. Certainly Fyfe's

household accommodation was far su-perior to Chartie Benton's. Stella ex-

ready like himself, and in a measure it was, but a comfortable sort of rough and readiness. She took off her hat and had a critical survey of herself in

a mirror, after which she had just time

to brush her hair before answering

The cup of tea resolved itself into a well cooked and well served meal, with thins and linen and other unexpected able accessories which agreeably surprised her. Inevitably she made comparised with the transfer of the control of th

f disagreeable work. As it was—well, he unrelieved discomforts were begin-ting to warp her outlook on every-

Fyfe maintained his habitual sparsits

of words while they ate the food Mrs.

of words while they are the room the Howe brought on a tray hot from the cook's outlying domain. When they fin-ished he rose, took up his hat and help-ed himself to a handful of cigars from

a box on the fireplace mantel:
"I guess you'll be able to put in the

time, all right," he remarked. "Make

yourself at home. If you take a notion

to read there's a lot of books and mag-azines in my room. Mrs. Howe 'll show

He walked out. Stella was conscious

of a distinct relief when he was gone. She had somehow experienced a recurrence of that peculiar feeling of need-

ing to be on her guard as if there were

some curious, latent antagonism be-tween them. She puzzled over that a

very gently

Some time during the next forence she went southerly along the lake shore on foot without object or destination merely to satisfy in some measure the restless craving for action. When she returned to camp at 2 o'clock, driven in by hunger, Jack Fyfe sat on the

"How de do? I've come to bring you over to my place," he announced quite casually.

Thanks. I've already declined on ressing invitation to that effect." Stell la returned dryly. His matter of fact assurance rather nettled her.

"A woman always has the privilege of changing her mind." Fyfe smiled. Charlie is going to be at my camp for at least three weeks. It'll rain soon, and the days'll be pretty gray and dreary and lonesome. You might as. well pack your war bag and come slong.

She stood uncertainly. Her tongue she judged to be his personal domicile. A plump, smiling woman of forty greeted her on the threshold. Once held ready a blunt refusal, but she did not wifer it, and she did not know why "I haven't had any lunch," she temporized. "Have you?" Fyfe's habitation. There was a great

He shook his head. "I rowed over here before 12 Thought I'd get you back to camp in time for dinner. You know," he said, with a twinkle in his blue eyes, "a logger never eats anything but a meal A lunch to us is a snack that you put in year pocket. I guess we lack tone out here. We haven't got past the breakfast-dinner-supper stage yet. Too busy making the country fit to live in." You have a tremendous job in hand,"

"Oh, maybe," he laughed. "All in the way you look at it. Suits some of West, if we get to my camp before 3 the cook might feed us. Come on. You'll get to hating yourself if you

stay here alone till Charlie's through." Why not? Thus she parleyed with herself, one half of her minded to stand upon her dignity, the other part of her urging acquiescence in his wish that was almost a command. She was tempted to refuse just to see what he would do, but she reconsidered that. Without any logical foundation for the feeling, she was shy of pitting her will against Jack Fyfe's. Hitherto quite sure of herself, schooled in self posses-sion, it was a new and disturbing experience to come in contact with that subtle, analysis defying quality which carries the possessor thereof straight er goal over all opposition which indeed many times stifles all oposition. Force of character, overmas ering personality, emanation of sheer will, she could not say in what terms it should be described. Whatever it was, Jack Fyfe had it. It existed, s factor to be reckoned with when one dealt with him. For within twenty minutes she had packed a suit case

He sent the lightly built craft easily through the water with regular, effort ess strokes. Stella sat in the stern, facing him. Out past the north horn



of the bay she broke the ellence than had fallen between them.

"Why did you make a point of coming for me?" she asked bluntly. Fyfe rested on his oars a moment, looking at her in his direct, unembar-rassed way.

"I wintered once on the Stickine. he said. "My partner pulled out before Christmas and never came back. It was the first time I'd ever been alone n my life. I wasn't a much older hand in the country than you are. Four months without hearing the sound of human voice- stark alone. I got so talked to myself out loud before pring. So I thought—well, I thought spring. So I thought—well, I thought d'd come and bring you over to see firs. Howe."

Stella sat gazing at the slow moving to her lonely soul to have some one of panorama of the lake shore, her chin anorama of the lake shore, her chin little.

But she did not spend much time out for any particular attention. Once he surprised her sitting with her elbows on the kitchen table, her face burled in her palms. She tooked up at his panorama of the lake shore, her chin little.

But she did not spend much time out for any particular attention. Once he surprised her sitting with her elbows on the kitchen table, her face burled in her palms. She tooked up at his quiet entrance, and her face must have

that their three children could be in school.

"I was up here all through vacation," she told Stella. "But Lefty he got to howlin' about bein' left alone shortly after school started again, so I got my sister to look after the kids for a spell while I stay. Til be goin' down about the time Mr. Benton's through here."

Stella eventually went out to take a look around the camp. A hard beaten path led off toward where rose the distant sounds of logging work, the posterious crash of trees and the poil of the donkeys. She followed that a little way and presently came to a knoll some that part of the supplies had been appeared to look and wonder curiously.

A noble stretch of lake and mountain spread out before her gaze. Straight across the lake two deep clefts in the supplies had been a

a queer, half amused expression creep-ing into his eyes. "Well," he said finally, "I might as well tell the whole truth. I've been thinking about you quite a lot lately, Miss Stella Benton, or I wouldn't have He smiled ever so faintly, a mere ovement of the corners of his mouth. at the pink flush which rose quickly in her cheeks and then resumed his steady pull at the oars.

swinging down the trail.

Behind them a litle way came Jack

it, Fyfe's headquarters, outwardly at least, differed little from her brother's camp. Jack led her to a long log crisp at the table in the big living room, where Fyfe, Stella and Charlie Benton, Lefty Howe and his wife sat down together. A man from the camp kitchen served

the meal and cleared it away. For an hour or two after that the three men sat about in shirt sleeved ease, puffing at Jack Fyfe's cigars. Then Benton excused himself and went to bed. did likewise. The long twilight had in the northwest and she fell asleep more at ease than she had been for ing about. The present looked passable enough, she thought, if she kept her mind strictly on it alone. And with that idea to guide her she found the days slide by smoothly. She got on

Altogether she spent a tolerably pleasant three weeks. Autumn's gorgeous paintbrush laid wonderful coloring upon the maple and alder and birch that lined the lake shore. The fall run of the salmon was on, and every stream ing through shoal and rapid to reach the spawning ground before they lied. Off every creek mouth and all beds to feed upon the roe. The days shortened. Sometimes a fine rain would drizzle for hours on end, and slopes after each storm.

Early in October Charlie Benton had squared his neighborly account with idea of pleasure. Oh, well, why should lack Fyfe. With crew and equipment I care? I don't, so far as he's conhe moved home, to begin work anew on his own limit.

Katy John and her people came back from the salmon fishing. Then Charite wheedled Stella into taking up the cookhouse burden again. Stella consented. In truth she could do nothing else. Charlie spent a little of his contract pected the man's home to be rough and profits in piping water to the kitchen, in a few things to brighten up and make more comfortable their own quar-

"Just as soon as I can put another boom over the rapids, Stell," he promised, "I'll put a cook on the job. I've got to sail a little close for awhile, with calked boots on and Benton's hie With this crew I ought to put a million cupy response. The rest of the night feet in the water in six weeks. Then she slept fitfully, morbidly imagining tril be over the hump, and you can take terrible things. She was atraid, that it easy. But till then?—

"Till then I may as well make my-

perisons, somewhat tinctured with nat-ural envy. If Charlie would fix his place with a few such household lux-uries life in their camp would be more nearly bearable despite the long hours "Well, why not?" Benton demander impatiently. "Nobody around here works any harder than I de."

And there the matter rested. CHAPTER VI.

One Way Out. THAT was a winter of big snow. November opened with rain. Day after day the sun hid his face behind massed, spitting clouds. Morning, noon and night the eaves of the shacks dripped steadily, the gaunt limbs of hardwoods were a line of coursing drops, and through all the vast reaches of fir and cedar the patter of rain kept up a dreary monotone. Whenever the mist that blew like rolling smoke along the mountains lifted for a brief hour there, creeping steadily downward, lay the banked white: Before the snow put a stop to log-ging, Jack Fyfe dropped in once a week or so. When work shut down he came oftener, but he never singled Stella

Howe lacked in the higher culture she made up in homely perception and unassuming kindliness. Her husband was Fyfe's foreman. She herself was not a permanent fixture in the camp. They had a cottage at Roaring Springs, where she spent most of the time so that their three children could be in school.

The higher culture she leaned a tittle toward her.

"How long do you think you can struggling to be at each other like wild bears, the bloody face of the one who had been struck, the coarse who had been struck, the coarse that their three children could be in school.

There's things lacking in your iffe, and so are there in mine. Why shouldn't we go partners? You think about it."

"I don't need to," she answered cooling that lay uppermost in her mind, surprised beyond measure that he should read that their three children could be in school.

whistle brought forty-odd lumberjacks ing glass, a panted oath, sounds of struggle.

hour later they were served hot and to the shore. It led past the bunk-

curtained windows, yellow squares that struck gleaming on the snow. The panes of one were broken now, sharp fragments standing like saw teeth in

She stole warily near and looked in. Two men were being held apart, one by When Howe and his wife retired Stella | three of his fellows, the other by Jack Fyfe alone. Fyfe grinned mildly, talkdwindled to a misty patch of light sky ing to the men in a quiet, pacific tone. "Now you know that was nothing to scrap about," she heard him say. weeks. Sitting in Jack Fyfe's living "You're both full of fighting whisky, room through that evening she had be but a bunkhouse isn't any place to gun to formulate a philosophy to fit her fight. Wait till morning. If you've enforced environment—to live for the still got it in your systems go outside day only and avoid thought of the future until there loomed on the horizon disturb our game and break up the fursome prospect of a future worth think- niture. Be gentlemen, drunk or sober. Better shake hands and call it square." "Aw, let 'em go to it. if they want to." Charlie's voice, drink thickened harsh, came from a corner of the room into which she could not see until she famously with Mrs. Howe, finding that woman full of virtues unsuspected in her type.

In our Fyfe resumed his seat at the table where three others and Benton waited with cards in their hands, red and white chips and money stacked before them.

She knew enough of cards to realize that a stiff poker game was on the board when she had watched one hand was packed with the silver horde, dealt and played. It angered her, not from any ethical motive, but because of ber brother's part in it. He had no funds to pay a cook's wages, yet he along the lake the seal followed to could afford to lose on one hand as ing to say you don't love me. Lord, 1 prey on the salmon, and sea trout and much as he credited her with for a lakers alike swarmed to the spawning month's work. She could slave at the kitchen job day in and day out to save him \$45 a month. He could lose that without the flicker of an eyelash, but when it would clear the saw toothed be couldn't pay her wages on demand. ranges flanking the lake would stand | Also she saw that he had imbibed too out all freshly robed in white—a man-tle that crept lower on the fir clad the glassy fixedness of his eyes could be read aright.

"Pig!" she muttered. "If that's his idea of pleasure. Oh, well, why should cerned, if I could just get away from this beast of a place myself."

Abreast of her a logger came to the broken window with a sack to bar out the frosty air. And Stella, realizing suddenly that she was shivering with the cold, ran back to the cabin and got

into her bed. But she did not sleep, save in uneasy periods of dozing, until midnight was long past. Then Fyfe and her brother came in, and by the sounds she gathered that Fyfe was putting Charlie to bed. She heard his deep, drawling voice urging the unwisdom or sleeping



spread out before her gaze. Straight ger who started Matt the cook on his across the lake two deep clefts in the eastern range opened on the water five miles apart. She could see the white ribbon of forming cascades in each. Between lifted a great mountain, and on the lakeward slope of this stood a terrible scar of a slide, yellow and was finished. While she stacked up because the cook on his spree, and she wondered at this relaxation, but it was not in her province, and she made no comment.

Jack Fyte stayed to supper that evening. Neither he nor Charlie came back to Benton's quarters when the meal always did at that husbed hour before dawn, she experienced a physical by, turning over strips of bacon with terrible scar of a slide, yellow and brown, rising 2,000 feet from the shore. A vaporous wisp of cloud hung along the top of the slide and above this aerial banner a snow capped pinnacle thrust itself high into the infinite blue. She went back to the house to converse upon domestic matters with Mrs. Show until the shrilling of the donkey of the slide, and the clinking smash of break. fore dawn, she experienced a physical shrinking from those grim solitudes in the long handled fork. which there was nothing warm and tuman and kindly, nothing but vastness of space upon which silence lay like a smothering blanket, in which she, the human atom, was utterly negonly woman I've run across so far with

Behind them a little way came Jack

Stella slipped on a pair of her brothmorning she would not have to build
stop to exhibit his catch, but half an
out on the path beaten from their cabin
teeth chattered, and she hurried in to teeth chattered, and she hurried in to the warmth heralded by a spark belchnot risen to the occasion. Instead Jack me from every possible angle, because Fyfe sat with his feet on the oven I'm going to come back and ask you door, a cigar in one corner of his mouth. The kettle steamed. Her porridge pot bubbled ready for the meal. "(lood morning," he greeted. "Mind

my pre-empting your job?"
"Not at all," she answered. "You an have it for keeps if you want." "Aren't you getting pretty sick of I'd like to have some incentive to put this sort of work, these more or less a big white bungalow on that old founancomfortable surroundings and the dation for us two," he smiled. "Fil-

ort of people you have to come in con- never do it for myself alone. Go on, act with?" he asked pointedly. I am." she returned as bluntly, "but Stella. Say yes, and say it now."

But she shook her head resolutely think that's rather an impertment

destion, Mr. Fyfe," You have it." he said positively. "1 all had it worse if this snow stays our I know what a logging camp is when work stops and whisky creeps in and the boss lets go his hold."

"That may be true," she returned omily, "but I don't see why you should enumerate these disagreeable things for my benefit." "I'm going to show you a way out."

he said softly. "I've been thinking it over for quite awhile. I want you to marry me." Stella gasped.

"Mr. Fyfe!"

"Listen." he said peremptorily, leangrates against every inclination of yours like a file on steel. I wouldn't jar on you like that; wouldn't permit you to live in surroundings that would. That's the material side of it. Nobody can live on day dreams. I like you. Stella Benton, a whole lot more than I'd care to say right out loud. You and I together could make a home we'd be proud of. I want you, and you want to get away from this. It's natural. Marry me and play the game fair and I don't think you'll be sorry. I'm putting it as baldly as I can. You stand to win everything with nothing to lose but your domestic chains." The gleam of a smile lit up his features for a second. "Won't you take a chance?

"No," she declared impulsively. "I won't be a party to any such cold blooded transaction."

"You don't seem to understand me," he said soberly. "I don't want to hand out any sentiment, but it makes me sore to see you wasting yourself on this sort of thing. If you must do it. why don't you do it for somebody who'll make it worth while? Because we don't marry with our heads in the fog is no reason we shouldn't get on fine. What are you going to do-stick won't get away. You don't realize what a one idea, determined person this brother of yours is. He has just one object in life, and he'll use everything and everybody in sight to attain that object. He means to succeed, and that object. He means to succeed, and food upon an aggressed and rebellious he will. You're purely incidental. But stomach. Gradually a flood of recklesshe has that perverted, middle class family pride that will make him prevent you from getting out and trying your own wings. Nature never intended a woman like you to be a celibate. any more than I was so intended. And sooner or late you'll marry somebody if only to hop out of the fire into the frying pan." "I hate you," she flashed passionate-

"when you talk like that." "No. you don't." he returned quietly. "You hate what I say because it's the things you can't get by yourself, but and opposition with sheer brute force, ed to report, making very satisfaction; and be had shown unreckoped qualities tory progress toward recovery.

ed and frightened her.

The night frosts had crept through For me it would be plain selling myand soul to a man she cloesn't care for.

whom I could calmly contemplate spend orable wilderness.

A light burned in the kitchen. She That's a fact. To me it's a highly imthanked her stars that this bitter cold morning she would not have to build have any such feeling about me, eh?" "No. I hadn't even thought of you in

that way," Stella answered truthfully. "You want to think about me," he ing stovepipe. But the Siwash girl had said calmly. "You want to think about this same question every once in awhile so long as you're in reach and doing this dirty work for a thankless boss. You want to think of me as a possible refuge from a lot of disagreeable things

I'd like to have you to chum with, and Take a gambling chance and marry me,

and as Katy John came in just then the you do. I've seen your feelings went out of the kitchen. He threw a ny a time. I don't blame you. It's glance over his shoulder at Stella, a tten business with a girl of your broad smile, as if to say that he hares and bringing up. And I'm afraid | bored no grudge and nursed no wound in his vanity because she would have none of him. Katy rang the breakfast gong. Five

minutes later the tattoo of knives and



That Was Only One of a Dozen Brutal

forks and spoons told of appeties in process of appeasement. Charlie came into the kitchen in the midst of this bearing certain unmistakable signs. His eyes were inflamed, his cheeks still bearing the flush of liquor. His de-meanor was that of a man suffering an intolerable headache and correspond-ingly short tempered. Stella barely spoke to him. It was bad eno here at this till you go crazy? You a man to make a beast of himself with whisky, but far worse was his gambling streak.

copiously in cold water and then seat himself at the long table trying to force ess welled up in her breast.

"For two pins I would marry Jack Fyfe," she told herself savagely. "Anything would be better than this

> CHAPTER VIL The Plunge,

STELLA went over that queer de-bate a good many times in the ten days that followed. It revealed Jack Fyfe to her in a new, inexplicable light, at odd variance with her fruth, and it's humiliating to be help-less. You think I don't sabe? But could not have visualized him standing I'm putting a weapon into your hand, with one foot on the stove front speak-Let's put it differently: leave out the sentiment for a minute. We'll say that had not seen him with her own eyes, I want a housekeeper, preferably an beard him with somewhat incredulous ornamental one, because I like beauti- ears. She had continued to endow him ful things. You want to get away with the attributes of unrestrained pasfrom this drudgery. That's what it is, slow, of headlong leaping to the goal of ago underwent a serious operation simple drudgery. You crave lots of his desires, of brushing aside obstacles at the hospital here, is, we are pleas-

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