

third night, the Vigilance Committee considered their duty plain and clear. There was a midnight procession to the cabin in which the Mexican was confined, a silent march to the edge of Lodore canon—before the grave was filled in.

For once, however, the doctor was a false prophet. Thanks to the tender nursing of 'Angel,' Bob slowly passed the danger point and started up-hill to recovery. This, as Bill said, "gave Juan's ghost ther laugh on ther cummittee, but bein' ther pizen critter he wuz, ther cummittee cud stand it," and with a decency quite unexpected in such a region, the Mexican was never mentioned before Bob after he regained consciousness.

His convalescence, in a miner's cabin, was one of the sweetest memories which Ames recalled in after years. Whenever he thought of those long, long days of feverish tossing on a rough bunk, a tender woman's face seemed always hovering about him—a woman such as he had known at home, one who knew books, music and pictures and society; talking intelligently of them by the hour, yet

very young men usually have for women slightly older than themselves, it never occurred to Bob that his friendly affection might be a dangerous thing if humored beyond a certain point, and often, when she sat by his bunk, talking over the other life they had known, he would hold her hand warmly clasped in his own.

As for Kate—his utter helplessness and the sisterly relation which she seemed to bear toward him kept anything like suspicion of herself from entering her mind. He was a handsome, winning boy—scarcely a man in spite of his fine physique and twenty-three years—and he was so grateful for all her little attentions that it was impossible to avoid being fond of him. Sandy himself shared this feeling. He recognized the advantage which education gave Ames over himself, but he was too much of a man to envy it; too sure of Kate, yet, to see that she and Bob belonged to a class apart from his own.

At first the little caresses which she bestowed upon her patient seemed nothing more than those which had made every wounded man in the

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"Goat Canyon," Crows Nest.

the wife of an almost illiterate miner in a forgotten corner of Colorado. It seemed an anomaly.

Before he was able to sit up Bob became aware, in many ways, that he had fallen among friends, but all lesser kindnesses were overshadowed by the growing affection he felt for Mrs. McIntyre, or, as she was always called, "the angel of Murphy's Gulch." There were but three other women within sixty-five miles—when Ned Rodney died she had been the only one—and they were of an entirely different class: nice girls, yes; bright, handsome girls, but innocent of the Eastern refinement or cultivation. "Angel," on the other hand, came originally from Massachusetts, and had been just such a sweet, wholesome girl as the cousins whom Bob had loved and kissed in his boyhood. Why, when he came to think of it, lying there in her kitchen, they had more subtle common interest to talk over, those places which they had both seen and known, more books which they had both read, than great-hearted Bob had ever heard about in all his Missouri schooldays, years before, with the weakness which

Rio Blanco country reverence her above all other women, and Bob Ames' little familiarities were but natural marks of his appreciation. But the awakening came one day.

Ames had recovered sufficiently to walk about in the sunshine a little, and he was just returning from a constitutional as far as the Lone Dog, when Sandy came up from the mine. He was yet too far away to notice the weakness which made Bob lean against the wall for breath when he entered the kitchen, or to see the look of anxiety on Kate's face as she hastily pulled forward a chair for him; but what he did see through the open window was Bob putting his arm around her neck and kissing her before he sat down.

The blood rushed into Sandy's head and made him so dizzy that he couldn't think straight. He was dimly conscious that things would seem alright if he could only get them properly explained, but those other thoughts which would seethe and boil in his brain prevented anything like clear reasoning. They recalled each look, each caress, each bond of sympathy between his wife and Bob—until