

"Too late, Ken, I filed on that six weeks ago, and Ellis took the one next to it. You won't get in under your own ditch at all if you don't look lively."

"Anne," he said, in the most unstinted admiration he had ever given her, "*you are a hummer.*" They plunged into an hour of happy planning.

The next most natural reaction of Kenneth's restored state was that he wanted somehow to have a talk with Rickart. He made many excuses to himself for bringing it off, not the least sincere of which was the sense he had of what, after all, he owed to the Old Man's tutelage. And finally, without any excuse at all, he went up early in September and presented himself at the Rickart offices. Frank was still away on the Atlantic Coast, in the train of Miss Rutgers to whom his engagement had already been announced, and there was a new stenographer in the outer office, which gave an unwonted strangeness to his being asked to wait there until Rickart could see him. He waited an unconscionably long time, which the Old Man made up to him by taking him out for luncheon.

It was not until the meal was ordered, the drinks brought, and napkins tucked in that they got around finally to the meat of the occasion. "Well, now, young man," — Rickart folded his large hands on the cloth before him, — "suppose you tell me all about it."

"I'd like to try," Kenneth admitted, "though I don't know if I can explain —"

Rickart tucked his cigar away into the farthest corner of his still finely cut mouth to make room for a flicker of a smile. "Shoot," he said; "I'll do my best to understand you."