

304 Trails to Two Moons

"I love this man, Zang — love him more than I know, and I must fight for his life because it belongs to me. Yes, yes," she answered the question that was rounding his lips, "I know you saw me fight him — saw him try to break my arm. That's when I began to love him, Zang. I can't explain it. Maybe if you had ever fought me — wrestled with me, Zang — tried to break my arm — maybe then I would have loved you. I ——"

"Did Original steal you from the jail and have you hid out?" the big fellow demanded with a sudden access of jealousy. Hilma's eyes widened.

"Steal me — no! I ran away from the sheriff's house because I thought I was arrested; then I stole Original's horse and started for home. He found me when I was lost and — and put me on the right road and left me. All the time you were in jail."

Zang slowly shook his head and smiled wanly.

"It's a mix-up, Hilma, — a whale of a mix-up. But it seems to be comin' out right for you, leastways. If I've lost you, girl, reckon it's because I didn't savvy how to rope an' brand a wild one like you. Kin I ——"