

The wind was blowing off the ice fields of the higher peak, blowing from Dane's cabin, and Félix knew that Jules inside would never hear the rifle's crack. Also he knew that in the cabin across the slope, carried by the wind, it would be heard. It was the signal for Mavor and Canard to come and find him. Therefore he must be quick!

What shreds of physical strength were left Bruneau the nervous reaction of the moment, when he had toyed with death, had dissipated. Having no muscular power to work his will, he drew upon the vital fire of his inner self. In a sort of monomania, he lurched in a zigzag course across the mountain gap and up the higher peak, sliding about, falling down, rising up—to fall again. The immensity of effort strained his heart. The pressure burst open his half-healed wound, and the loss of blood laid him faint upon the crust.

He pulled himself erect and went on, buoyed by an incandescent vigour that was burning up his spirit. When he struck the trail where dogs and sled had passed by to the cabin, he was crawling along on hands and knees. The trail was like a path of encouragement to the sombre hand of the smoke that beckoned. It proved that the curling vapour on the ruddy sky was not an illusion of his overtaxed brain, a consequence of malnutrition, a forerunner of madness. His sight was not steady. Yet he did not pause to steady it. The trail was under his groping