

THE BOSS OF WIND RIVER

and left by countless cigars carelessly laid down, and drew the pile of correspondence to him. The topmost envelope bore no stamp, and as he saw his name upon it in the familiar, bold handwriting, his heart pounded and a lump rose in his throat. The fingers which slid a paper cutter beneath the flap were a trifle unsteady. He read:

MY DEAR BOY: Locke will see that you get this when I have gone out. It is just a little personal note which I like to think you will be glad to read.

I am not going to begin by apologizing for the fact that I leave behind me less money than most people, including myself, expected. There will be enough to give you a start and keep you hustling, which will do you no harm. You'll find it easier to hustle now than later. But, nevertheless, a word of explanation is due you.

As you grow older you will observe that when the ordinary man acquires a comfortable stack at his own game he is seized with an unaccountable desire to play another man's game, at which he usually loses. It turned out so with me. I know the logging business; but I didn't know, and don't know, the stock market. I lost and I have no kick coming. It serves me right, but it may be a little hard on you. If that Power which put me in this world had seen fit to allow me to remain in it for a few years I would have stuck exclusively to my own last and repaired the damage. As it is I am warned that I must go out inside six months, and may do so at any earlier moment. It is in contemplation of the latter possibility that I write you now. Afterward I intend to go into business details with Locke. You may tie to him and Crooks. They are both white