

The King of Arcadia

the huge steel-beamed derrick lined itself against the farther distances.

"No, it wasn't a dream," said Ballard. "The thirty-mile, nerve-trying drive home in the car, with the half-wrecked railroad bridge for a river crossing, ought to have convinced you of the realities."

"Nothing convinces me any more," she confessed, with the air of one who has seen chaos and cosmos succeed each other in dizzying alternations; and when Ballard would have gone into the particulars of that with her, the King of Arcadia came up from his morning walk around the homestead knoll.

"Ah, you youngstehs!" he said, with the note of fatherly indulgence in the mellow voice. "Out yondeh unde the maples, I run across the Bigelow boy and Madge Cantrell;—'Looking to see what damage the water had done,' they said, as innocent as a pair of turtle-doves! Oveh in the orcha'd I stumble upon Mistuh Wingfield and Dosia. I didn't make them lie to me, and I'm not going to make you two. But I should greatly appreciate a word with you, Mistuh Ballard."

Elsa got up to go in, but Ballard sat in the hammock and drew her down beside him again. "With your permission, which I was going to ask immediately after breakfast, Colonel Craigmiles,