

He was not convinced that an ignorance of subsequent revelations provided adequate excuse for silence. He knew that Dawson would agree with him and his pride suffered.

Since that morning, Meadows had rehearsed the scene until he knew it by heart. He had probed Goldie mercilessly, until he was convinced that stark fear for Kleath's life had terrified her into silence. He even readjusted his opinion of her, and gave her a modicum of grudging sympathy. But his problem remained — how could he make Dawson look upon her act with lenient eyes? How could the thing be explained to Kleath?

"It ain't as though a colyum loike that could be put in the noospaper," he complained into his glass. "An' it ain't as though Oi could invite a boonch av people here an' give Goldie a chanct to make her little spiel. Certain it is too," he bit hard on the stem of his pipe, "that Oi can't chase around an' hand out the only true an' re-liable version av the affair mesilf, fer that would look as if Oi thought folks was *bound* to blame her. Shure, an' if Barney McCool was only aloive, the whole story, entoire, could be circulated as thorough-loike as the atmos-