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AT ONE minute the prairie had been empty and white under a low gray sky. At the next minute the air was filled with fine, pelting snow which drove with fury and whirled in a biting wind.

On the main road across the Lewiston Open, a man came riding. He was galloping with the wind, yet in all his haste he stopped at every one of the few scattered houses on the plain and pounded on the door. The women, already busy at supper, answered the summons wondering, or the men came running from stables and cowsheds, and to these the horseman cried his message and was off before the gaping folk could stay him with questions:

"Stephen Mine's little girl's lost. She's been gone an hour. 'Nother searchin' party starts as soon's enough get to Stephen's. Take your lanterns and some rope."

With that he was off—Jake Mullet, on his way to Pillsbury's store in Lewiston to ring for the bucket brigade and to telephone to the few in the neighborhood who had telephones.

"Hannah Mine's girl," said the women. "Which one? Oh, not the baby. It can't be the baby!"

It went up like one cry, all over the Open, while the men made ready to leave and brought rope, and the women filled the lanterns. More than one woman girt her skirts about her and set forth with her man, certain that Hannah Mine needed comforting and, it might be, serving, and unable to wait at home in any case. But when they reached Mine's little house, they found that Hannah had gone with the first searching party, and their glances sweeping the three children huddled by the fire told the truth. The lost child was Hannah Mine's baby. Somewhere out in that storm, already for more than an hour, was Stephen and Hannah Mine's baby, three-year-old Lissa.

Meanwhile, Jake Mullet was riding. And when he had done what he could in Lewiston, he took the lower road back and now he was facing the storm and its fury was growing with the darkness. When the first farm-house light showed through the thick-white, Jake groaned. She was so little—if night came, or if in two hours they had not found her, who could hope that they would be in time.

He continued to call at the little houses and to shout his message to any whom he met lumbering through the snow. But when he came to one house, on the forty



OUT OF THE STORM CAME A SINGLE, PIERCING CRY

The Night Of The Storm

By ZONA GALE

Illustrated by GEORGE HAY CHARLES

adjoining Stephen's forty, he did not stop.

"No use wastin' breath on Waldo Rowan," he thought, and galloped on. He crossed the cut—a queer, ragged gap in the plain, shallow and rockfilled—and saw a figure fighting its way on foot.

"Turn back to Mine's!" Jake shouted. "His little girl's lost. She's—"

Then he stopped. Here was Waldo Rowan himself, who had not spoken to Stephen and Hannah for ten years, as all the Open knew.

"They wouldn't have my help!" Waldo flung back. Jake pounded on, carrying coils of rope for the searchers who were now to spread in a great circle, threading the rope, and so come drawing in. He gave not another thought to the only one on the Open who had failed to answer his appeal. Everybody was used to this feud between Mine and Waldo. Stephen would have done the same if it had been Waldo whose child was lost. But Waldo had no children to lose. In the days when he and Stephen were friends they had loved the same woman, and Stephen had won her, Waldo said,

through a lie. She and Stephen had raised their family and seemed happy. Waldo married a girl of the village who had died, with their two-year-old baby, only a year ago. Since then he lived alone, and he was dead to Stephen, as Stephen was to him.

AT HIS own line fence, Waldo Rowan left the road and plunged into a grove of dwarf oak and on into a denser stretch of wood. It was evident that this storm was to continue for at least twenty-four hours, and he wanted a look at his traps. He found some empty, one dragged away, and in one something pitiful and struggling helplessly, and moaning, which he despatched and dropped in his bag. And as he did so he thought, as he had thought before.

"Blowed if I wouldn't druther live on corn-bread than do it. Blowed if I never set another trap."

He plunged down into the cut, which was the short way to his cabin. There was another reason for haste besides the weather. He had been out all day and creeping in his veins came the giddiness and tremor which precede a chill; and with it, too, that curious lightness of head, of body, which pre- sages a possible illness. He must get indoors, build a great fire, heat his kettle of soup, wrap up warmly and sleep it off.

"I'd ought to had the doctor give me something when I met him this noon,"

Waldo thought. "What was't he said? He was going sixteen mile north. He won't be back tonight. I guess I can mope it out—"

The snow was of a deceiving softness and piled on the rocks of the cut as if billows of foam had rolled in, lapped, and now lay quiet. Here the wind roared through from the northeast, catching the tops of the white pines and making a furious singing. And on that wind, Waldo heard a cry.

He heard it for a little before he knew that he heard it—with that strange inner ear which catches sound too light to be less delicately measured. An animal, or a way of the wind, he might have called it and thought no more; but when he was deep in the cut and before he began the rough ascent, abruptly this cry rose on a single, piercing note, and fell again to its quiet pulsing. He listened—

Still uncertain what he had heard, he turned north and kept along the cut, at every few steps stopping to turn his head to the wind. He was ready to face back, and then it came again. There was no mistaking now,

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