

had *not* snapped, but—it was up to Jimmy to make them break, if possible.

“A lot you thought of her!” he sneered. “Leave me out of it. I don’t count. But, Eileen—I never thought you were yellow, Rod.”

Baird stared at him.

“What are friends for,” went on Jimmy, “but to help each other stand the gaff? And if friends are supposed to do that, what are lovers supposed to do? You make me feel pretty sick, Rod.”

Slowly Baird turned to Eileen. He wet his lips with a nervous tongue.

“Do—how do you feel about the matter, Eileen?”

“I’m here, eh?” she said again.

“Here? Yes. But—did Mr. Ladd tell you what I told him? That *I’m* a faker, a cheap imposter, a—a four-flusher, a thief? That I pretended——”

“He told us that you said those things about yourself,” she interrupted.

“Well? You believe it, don’t you?”

“Talk sense!” snapped Jimmy. “Would we be here if we believed that stuff? Say, Rod, have you been kidding the girl?”

“Kidding?” Baird stared again at Jimmy. “What do you mean?”

“Don’t you understand slang? I said ‘kidding.’ I meant making love to her for the fun of it. Flirting, if that makes it clearer.”

“Don’t be an ass,” said Baird.

“And I say the same thing to you, Roddy me buck. Good Lord above us, look down upon the man! Early-martyr stuff, monks wearing wire