

44 Trails to Two Moons

right had been invaded by the cattle clan, did she give herself to the other's promptings of bitter recompense.

Weightiest thing in the balance of the girl's growing wrath was that they, the cattlemen, through their hired agent had sealed her to the bondage of the great lonesomeness forever and ever. To live at all she must live alone, work the sheep band, grub for dollars to buy flour and bacon. Away out there where the blank sky bends to touch vacant wilderness, where nothing moves except at the stir of winds, where silence lies like a deep sea, there must she live — alone. Alone!

They came to Hilma's house on the crest above Teapot and laid Old Man Ring in his bunk.

"When shall we have the funeral?" Uncle Alf asked over bacon and beans.

"Right away, while you're still here," Hilma answered. "I've got to have somebody round to help. Now that Jed Monk's dead — he was our only neighbor — there's nobody nearer than Zang Whistler and his boys over in the Spout. I reckon it won't be much of a funeral."

She tried to smile, but found the effort some-