

"What's it to you?" he growled. "She's my *klootchman!*"

"If you abuse her I'll—I'll kill you!" blazed Layton, his words coming crisp and sharp as the snap of electric sparks. He sprang to his feet and stood over Johns, his hands clenched. "I swear I'll kill you!" he exclaimed.

Dan edged along his bunk, watching Layton closely.

"I suppose you're wantin' to fool me an' send me to the pen so you can take Tess for your woman!" he snarled. "I know you, Seb Layton!"

"No. I intend to work hard to clear you. I did ask—but no matter. I was wrong. I'll not be again. And she'll not forget that she is your wife! Now we'll drop that and talk about your case."

It was noon when he left the jail and telephoned Jose that he would not be home to luncheon. As he passed along the streets he was always on the alert for a glimpse of Tess, but his watch was unrewarded. That afternoon he went back to the jail, and the turnkey told him that Dan's wife had been there but an hour before. The interview that afternoon