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IT'S LOADED, MR. BAUER

Winslow Greene may remind Mr. Marquand's readers of H. M. Pulham, Esq., but Winslow was a Pulham who dared. A modest geological expert, his work takes him to South America, and there in Santa Rosa he meets Henrietta Simpson, the newly arrived stenographer for the Boca Grande Mine. Attraction is mutual, but the course of true love runs to form, and what with the too easily caught Mr. Bird and the hard-to-get Mr. Bauer, the young people have their troubles.

This novel has the pace and thrills of Mr. Marquand's Moto stories, with something of the flavour of his famous novels. In a sense, Winslow Greene is the protagonist of all Mr. Marquand's books, seen here triumphant instead of in gentle eclipse.

IT'S LOADED MR. BAUER

by
JOHN P. MARQUAND

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It took thirty-six hours for the flat-bottomed river boat to make the trip to the city of Santa Rosa on the coast from the landing on that winding tropical river to which supplies were brought by

water for the Boca Grande Mine. The running time downstream that day had been faster than the average, although there had been the usual waits when the boat stuck on mud-banks and sandbars. There had also been the all-day ride on mule-back from the mine down to the river, but time in South America was not considered much in that sort of travel. You judged distance by its difficulties rather than by time.

It was only much later that Winslow Greene considered what must have happened at Santa Rosa on the morning that he arrived to take the plane from there to the jungle country on the other side of the Andes. It must have been on the very morning that the boat edged its way through the river mist and tied up at its musty dock at Santa Rosa that Mr. Ludwig Gruber and his two companions had their conversation in Mr. Gruber's apartment. Later, when it was all over, Winslow Greene sometimes tried to picture the scene in his own mind. Mr. Gruber's apartment was in that block of flimsy ornate French-looking buildings that stood by the waterfront park which was named in honor of the great South American liberator, Bolivar. To reach Mr. Gruber's place you walked up a dark flight of stairs between a liquor shop and a Panama hat emporium and rang the doorbell on the first landing. You came into a high-ceilinged, rather uncomfortably furnished South American drawing room, the great windows of which opened upon minute balconies that looked across the General Bolivar Park to the muddy waters of the river and in the distance to the clearer silvery waters of the Pacific. The room was furnished with a dozen uncomfortable, highly polished rosewood chairs precisely arranged along its walls, with a small round table between each, and each table was flanked by a handsome china cuspidor. On the walls were two enormous mirrors ornately

framed in black mahogany, and between the mirrors were two hideous chromos depicting pastoral scenes. A very fine glass chandelier, which must have been brought over from Europe in the early days of the last century, hung from the exact center of the ceiling, and beneath it the floor, coldly empty, was painted in gaudy reds, greens and blues, to represent a carpet—a useful device, since no sort of a Persian rug would have lasted long in that hot, humid climate.

It was actually not until a long while afterward that Winslow Greene ever saw that parlor of Mr. Ludwig Gruber's, and when he saw it it was in great disorder. Mr. Gruber was gone, and in his place a small swarthy policeman with one of those great cavalry sabers, almost as tall as he was, sat in one of the rosewood chairs, smoking a malodorous cigarette. Three of the chairs were broken; the parlor door had been smashed; Herr Gruber's radio upon its little round table was in splinters, and so was one of the mirrors. The center of the room was littered with broken glass and torn paper and torn clothing. They had searched everything that Herr Gruber had left very, very thoroughly. The little policeman was lounging in the chair, and Señor Eduardo Lopez, in his clean white suit, stood near the heap of litter in the center of the room, fanning himself with an exquisite Panama.

"Yes, my dear, dear friend," Señor Eduardo said, "you now see where Mr. Gruber lived. Ah, those pictures, are they not beautiful? And the cuspidors—they are much handsomer than any in my poor house. Yes, Señor Gruber must have been here that very morning when you reached Santa Rosa, and our dear friend, Herr Bauer, must have been here, and that unpleasant fascist beast, Martinez. They all must have been here, my dear

friend. It was here that it started. I bring you now to see, because you and I are romantic at heart, my dear Winslow, you and I have the souls of poets. Let us shake hands."

Señor Eduardo was always shaking hands. It was true, he was very sentimental, and his sentiment was always embarrassing to Winslow Greene.

"I'm not a poet," Winslow told him. "I don't think I want to be one."

"You're a poet, my friend," Señor Lopez said, "like me, and we both have the courage of conquistadors."

"There's no use saying that," Winslow told him. "I'm not a conquistador, either."

"If we had lived in the old days," Señor Eduardo said, "we would have sought together the city of gold. Let us shake hands, my friend. Our countries must be very proud of us. Some day a plaza, or at least a small street, will bear my name. Let us shake hands."

"I'll shake hands any time you want," Winslow said, "but I'm not a poet." And once again he and Señor Eduardo shook hands.

"Yes," Señor Eduardo said, "they were here that morning. Gruber and Bauer and Martinez. They knew the supply ship was sunk that morning. Ah, my dear Winslow, then we were acquaintances; now we are brothers. All that I have is yours."

It must have been at six o'clock that very morning when Herr Gruber sat there in his shirtsleeves, a genial man, a little short of breath, with a thick neck and bristly gray hair and quiet eyes. There would have been coffee cups on the table, and sugar and a pot of coffee syrup, and a pitcher of boiling water. Herr Bauer would have been sitting near the table, tall and deeply tanned and watchful, and with him Señor Martinez, thin and sallow, with his gentle cough.

"You are sure the British know?" Mr. Gruber must have said.

But of course the British must have known. That was the day a British destroyer had stopped the little coastal vessel which was carrying oil to the German raider as she waited at a rendezvous out of sight of land.

Winslow could imagine Herr Bauer scowling and tapping the table with his finger. They wanted oil for the engines out there, and now there was no money for more, and German credit was not what it had once been. The difficulty was the lack of money, and you could not charter a tanker without money.

It must have been Martinez who talked about the gold, for he was one of those men who knew everything.

"The Americans," he said, "ship out gold bars from the Boca Grande Mine—two hundred thousand dollars at a time."

Herr Bauer listened very carefully. Herr Bauer had a trained mind and a practical intelligence.

"It comes here?" he asked. "How does it come, my friends?"

"There are two ways," Martinez had told him. "They either carry it to the river and take it down on the company boat, or they carry it to Pinas in the mountains and ship it down by plane."

Herr Bauer turned his head slowly from Mr. Gruber to Señor Martinez, while all the rest of him remained motionless, his broad shoulders and his lean muscular hands giving a deceptive impression of relaxed tranquillity.

"Americans," Herr Bauer said, "are very unsuspicious. Why bother until they ship it? Why not get it at the mine?"

But there was a military post at Boca Grande, a troop of carabineros commanded by Colonel Rostas. It might be possible to make a raid, but it would be very complicated.

"It will be necessary to get all details," Herr Bauer must surely have said, because his training for his work was excellent. "I shall want to know when the next shipment may be expected. When I know the details, you may leave the work to me."

He was there, of course, from the German armed merchantman *Sieglinde* that was waiting off the coast. They had landed him at the mouth of the bay when the oil had not arrived. It must have been a blow when the oil was intercepted, but the officers and crew on that raider knew how to change their plans, or they could never have slipped out of Kiel and have existed invisibly for almost a year at sea. Day and night, the sword of sudden death was suspended above their heads by the slenderest fiber of chance. It could not even have been healthy for Herr

Bauer to be in Santa Rosa with the secret agents of his country. Germans on the west coast of South America were not as popular as in the past.

"Find out all you can tell me," Herr Bauer said. "This gold may be very necessary, but fortunately there is time."

Señor Martinez was the one who knew every detail of the country and all the gossip along the waterfront.

"The company river boat arrives today. The clerk at the company office has told me. They come to pick up mail and a passenger from the Pacific Mail ship, and one of the mine engineers is coming down. I might talk to him."

It always seemed strange to Winslow Greene to think that those three must have discussed him when he knew nothing of them whatsoever.

"An engineer?" Herr Bauer knew Americans. "Perhaps you could introduce him to some nice girls, eh? Take him somewhere and get him drunk and make him talk."

Winslow could even imagine Señor Martinez's reply. "Not this one—not Señor Winslow Greene. He is very serious. He is a man of science. He is on his way to join an American prospecting camp in the Oriente."

Yes, Winslow was sure that they must have talked about him. He was also sure that Mr. Gruber, who was an able agent, must have had his description and his antecedents on file among his other useful papers. They would have known that he only drank moderately, that he was shy and not a great success with women,

that he spoke Spanish well and had travelled through much half-explored country.

"Well," Mr. Gruber said, "Martinez will meet him today and watch the office. Martinez and I will see if we can chat with Mr. Greene, and then perhaps Martinez can get news from Boca Grande. As you say, it will take planning."

That was the way the conversation must have gone on in Mr. Gruber's apartment. Sometimes, when he thought of it, Winslow could embroider on it, making it more sinister, adding a touch of melodrama—but essentially, that was surely the way it went. Long before he had ever heard of them, those three men had talked of him—Mr. Gruber, ostensibly a German commission merchant and a respected resident of Santa Rosa; Señor Martinez, a political renegade in the pay of the German Reich; and Herr Bauer, a German officer and saboteur, and a handy man at anything.

The sun was just rising when the shallow river boat tied up at the wharf, and the mist from the river was rising with the sun. Already Winslow could see the buildings by the waterfront, and the elaborate but crumbling façades of Santa Rosa's buildings with their tiled roofs and their balconies and their arcades, designed to protect the pedestrians from the heat. He could see the royal palms and the plantains and the traveller palms that rose above the walks of Bolivar Park, and he could see the statue of the great general himself, South America's liberator and man of dreams, standing high on his pedestal, facing the Avenue of the Twenty-fourth of September. The dampness and

the cool of the river were vanishing already, and in their place was coming insupportable, enervating heat. Winslow Greene shook hands with the captain and the pilot.

"Tomorrow morning," he said, "you will be taking back the American lady, and Señor Bird should be going back. They will tell you the time at the office."

"There should be whiskey for Señor Bird," the captain said. "A successful trip, Señor." And Winslow climbed up on the wharf and told a boy to carry his bedding roll. He would walk to the hotel, but before he started he took off his glasses and wiped them carefully. The ship of the Pacific Mail line was already in; he could see her anchored in the canal perhaps a mile downstream. Her high black hull and superstructure spelled the power and security of home. The idea that he would go aboard her in a little while and see the fresh linen in the dining salon and ice in the water glasses gave him a sense of pleased anticipation.

"The Hotel Continental," he said to the boy who was carrying his bedding roll, and he began to walk slowly. It was important to walk slowly, even in the early morning, if you did not want to feel the heat.

The Hotel Continental was new and modernistic. It represented Santa Rosa's hope for the future, although it was hard to believe that the seaport could have much more of a future than it had a past. The chromium frames of the chairs in the hotel lobby reminded him vaguely of dentist's chairs. The lift took him slowly to a room on the fourth floor, and one of the room boys appeared dressed in a white flannel jumper that

made him look singularly like a little boy in pajamas. He pushed back the shutters, and Winslow Greene took off his coat and ordered coffee. He was standing looking over the tiled roofs and listening to the gradual increase of sound in the streets outside, when there was a knock on the door.

It was Milton Bird, the metallurgist of the Boca Grande Mine, who had come down to Santa Rosa a week before on some complicated piece of business which Winslow had forgotten. Whatever his errand had been, it was clear that Milton had not been giving it his undivided attention. He was in his dressing gown, and he was holding a whiskey bottle and a glass.

"Hi," Milton said. "I thought you might be in. How was the trip down? How about a drink?"

Winslow said that he did not drink in the morning. He tried to say it like a man of the world, but he was afraid he sounded like a prig. Milton sat down on the edge of the bed, poured some whiskey, and gave a deep, satisfied sigh when he had swallowed it.

"How's Jane?" he asked. Milton was referring to his wife back at Boca Grande. "Just as well she isn't here," he went on, and Winslow was sure it was just as well. "So you're going into the bush, are you? I'm glad I'm not going with you."

"I'm glad you're not, too," Winslow said. "You couldn't take it."

"All right," he said, "all right; don't start giving me a calling down. Jane'll give me hell enough at Boca Grande. She always knows when I've been drinking."

Winslow did not answer. There was no use giving anyone like Milton Bird a lecture.

"There's been a lot of celebrating around here lately," Milton said. "There was a British destroyer in, and maybe those boys can't drink."

"Oh," Winslow said. He remembered he was not much interested. "What were they doing here?"

"After a raider," Milton told him. "There's a German raider named the *Sieglinde* hanging off the canal. She's sunk two Britishers and a Dutchman."

"Oh," Winslow said.

Without desiring to be rude, because he never liked to be rude, he wished that Milton would go away. Milton poured himself another drink.

"The trouble with you," Milton said, "you don't get any fun. You want to be careful in this country. If you don't relax, you may go native."

Winslow considered for a moment.

"I always thought you went native," Winslow answered, "if you had too much fun."

He thought there was a flicker of embarrassment in Milton Bird's eyes as he watched him, and also a faint light of resentment.

"I don't mean raising hell," Milton said. "Now take me, I make friends every time I come down here. For instance, did you ever hear of a man named Martinez?"

Winslow shook his head.

"Well, now, there's a fine boy. One of the first families here, and I just picked him up at a café. That's the way you learn about life."

Winslow did not answer. All he wanted was for Milton Bird to go away.

"And then there's a man named Gruber," Milton went on, "a great boy, Gruber—the best two-fisted drinker you ever saw."

"Gruber?" Winslow said. "You ought not to play around with Germans, Milton. The company doesn't like it."

Milton Bird began to laugh, half-vacantly, half-boisterously.

"I suppose you think he's a spy," he said. "Hell, Hitler doesn't want to fight us and the Japs don't want to fight us. Why, the Japs are in Washington now trying to make up."

Winslow got up and put on his coat and picked up his hat from the bureau.

"Where are you going?" Milton asked.

"Down to the Customs dock," Winslow said—"out to the ship."

"What for?" Winslow winced when he heard the question.

"I have to go down to meet a girl," he said, and he winced again as Milton whistled elaborately. "Jim Walters told me to meet her. She's going up to Boca Grande to work in the office, you know."

Milton sat up alertly. He was always alert when women were mentioned, and it was clear he did not know.

"Who is she? Is she pretty?"

"Her name is Simpson," Winslow said. "How should I know whether she's pretty? Frankly, I don't care."

Milton gave a disgusted snort.

"Boy," he said, "haven't you got any red blood in you? I care if she's pretty. I've got to go up-river with her, haven't I? Say, why didn't Jim ask me to take her through the Customs?"

"Maybe he knows too much about you," Winslow said.

Milton's eyes narrowed slightly. You could not rely on Milton Bird when he was in Santa Rosa.

It was half-past seven, too early to go out to the ship, but it was better to get there early than to talk to Milton Bird. It pleased Winslow to think that in another day he would be away from personalities. He would be away from all the jealousies and gossip that tormented people in a little mining town like

Boca Grande. He would be out where the vines dropped from the white limbs of tall trees. He would be following a river which very few white men had ever followed. He would stop at a Jivero village and talk to the men with their blow guns and their poisoned arrows. The parrots would be flying in noisy flocks. The monkeys would be chattering in the tree tops. There wouldn't be any Milton Birds or any bickering American wives where he was going.

When he stepped out of the elevator, and walked past the rows of dentist chairs toward the front door of the hotel, he noticed that a man sitting on one of the chairs was staring at him. He was always self-conscious when he was stared at. It made him walk more quickly, and when he saw the man stand up he walked more quickly still, but when he heard his name called, Winslow stopped. The stranger was a South American in spotless white, holding one of the most beautiful Panamas that Winslow had ever seen. It was the hat which first arrested Winslow's attention; it excited his scientific curiosity, for the infinite fineness of those woven hats, he had always thought, made them the most wonderful objects that came from South America. That Panama which the stranger was holding was as light as a feather, and woven so closely that it could have been passed through a small ring. Even in Santa Rosa, where fine hats were common, that Panama would have been worth well over a hundred dollars.

"Pardon," the stranger said in Spanish, "am I speaking to the Señor Winslow Greene?"

Winslow's eyes moved from the hat. The stranger was slight, almost delicate, and very handsome—dashing, Winslow thought

disapprovingly, with the grace of a professional rhumba dancer —black hair, wide black eyes, very even teeth, and a quick, bright smile. He first suspected that the man wanted to sell him something until he remembered the hat, and the hat put its owner into some unknown category.

"How did you know me?" he asked. He spoke stiltedly, using all the conventional phrases of politeness. "I do not think I have had the pleasure, but I sometimes forget names and faces."

The stranger drew an alligator wallet from his inside pocket. His hands moved very gracefully and quickly as he extracted a visiting card with a flourish which Winslow could never have imitated. On the card was written, "Eduardo Lopez."

"I see," the stranger said, "that you like my hat." His eyes met Winslow's, and Winslow's sallow cheeks flushed.

"Yes," Winslow said, "that was rude of me, to stare at it."

"Far from it," Señor Lopez said, "it was discerning. It is yours. I beg you please to take it."

It was a pretty custom of South Americans, that convention of offering you their lands, their houses, and their horses, though a gesture not to be taken literally. Winslow found himself saying the Señor was too kind, but of course he could not accept.

"I am very bad with names and faces," he continued. "If I have met you before, please excuse me."

Señor Lopez took a step forward, his eyes still fixed on Winslow.

"No, you have not, Mr. Greene. I am the police."

Señor Lopez's hands were swift and adroit as he pushed his alligator skin wallet back into his pocket. "I'm secret police. I belong to a political party. My bedroom is on your floor."

Winslow still could think of nothing to say, but in the pause that followed he felt that Señor Lopez wished him to say something.

"It is nothing you have done, my friend. It is only something that may happen. In these days this is such an interesting city, and what a time it is to live in." He sighed. "I'm glad that I'm alive."

He paused, apparently waiting again for Winslow to say something.

"The more you know in these days," Señor Lopez went on, "the harder it is to stay alive."

"Well," Winslow said slowly, "I am only a professional geologist at the Boca Grande Mine. It won't be hard for me to stay alive, because I don't know anything."

Señor Lopez's teeth flashed in another smile.

"I am only going to ask you a favor. It is nothing to worry about."

"I'm afraid I can't help you," Winslow said hastily. "I'm leaving here tomorrow."

"I know"—Señor Lopez nodded—"for the Oriente, where there are snakes and not nice Indians and little fish with teeth. I'm just asking you to do something for me in case something happens."

It all seemed to Winslow rather unusual and irregular.

"Maybe you'd better tell me first," he said, "just what is going to happen."

Señor Lopez put his head slightly to one side.

"It is not difficult," he said soothingly. "I think before you leave Santa Rosa that two gentlemen may speak to you, neither of whom, I think, you know. Do not look startled. They will be most engaging. One of them will be a Mr. Gruber, and the other one of my compatriots, a most polite man of very good family, a Señor Martinez."

Señor Lopez must have been very quick, for even before Winslow could speak Señor Lopez had noticed the change in his expression, for he added: "Do you know them already?"

Winslow shook his head. Señor Lopez's voice had grown silkily, beguilingly soft.

"Then you have heard of them. Please do not think me impertinent. How does it happen you have heard of them?"

"I was just talking to our metallurgist," Winslow said, "Mr. Bird—a minute ago—he knew them."

Señor Lopez frowned.

"Of course," he said. "It was dull of me to have asked, but I think they will talk to you, because, perhaps, Mr. Bird cannot answer their questions. If they see you, it would be a kindness if you should tell me. I ask it as a favor of you, please. It will be nothing that can do you any possible harm. I am in room 410. Knock on my door at eleven o'clock tonight."

"What's the matter with them?" Winslow asked.

Señor Lopez did not answer directly, but his forehead wrinkled thoughtfully.

"Have you a minute?" he asked. "Then let us sit down, Mr. Greene." He waved his hand toward a shady corner. "The clerk is one of our men, and it is still early, so we shall not be disturbed. I have been thinking—your work and mine are very much alike."

Señor Lopez was being most agreeable. His slender hands moved as though he were modelling a figure out of the space between them.

"We both look for things we do not see. You search for a vein of gold-bearing ore. It pinches off; it shatters; it appears again. I search for another sort of vein, also in the dark. I have been once in the Boca Grande Mine."

"Oh," said Winslow. "When was that?"

Señor Lopez's hands were moving again in little curves and arcs. "There was a man we wanted there some years ago. You may laugh at me, but the dark, the foul air, the stillness down there made me very much afraid—those miles of passages

leading nowhere, those ladders leading up and down from different levels. I learned how you follow the vein wherever it might wander through the rock. I learned how men die following it when the galleries cave in. I saw where the vein would lose itself. That's why I say we're alike."

"I see," Winslow answered. "What are you digging for now?"

Señor Lopez's hands ceased moving.

"I don't tell you," Señor Lopez said, and he moved his shoulders in an elaborate defeated gesture, "because I do not know. I see a little mineral here and there, but I am working in the dark. There is something happening among people here, and I have been sent to watch. I cannot understand what it is they wish, but may I ask a question? When you came down the river, did you bring gold with you—gold from Boca Grande?"

There was a moment of silence, and Winslow smiled faintly.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I don't know you well enough to tell you that."

Señor Lopez laughed, and his laugh was completely good-natured.

"You are quite right," he said, "but I should be very grateful indeed if you were to tell me tonight if anyone else should ask you that same question—say Mr. Martinez or Mr. Gruber. There is something here which is hiding, my friend—hiding like the gold beneath the earth."

His voice was casual, but it made Winslow sit up straighter.

Señor Lopez rose and held out his hand. "And now I must not keep you. You are going out to the ship."

"Just how," Winslow asked him, "do you know where I'm going?"

Señor Lopez laughed.

"Where else would a citizen of the United States be going so early in the morning? It has been a pleasure, Mr. Greene."

It was eight o'clock by then and the streets of Santa Rosa lay simmering in the brilliant morning sun. The newsboys and the vendors of lottery tickets and the sellers of cakes and oranges and poisonous-looking colored drinks were crouching in the shade of the buildings. An autobus rushed down the street with its horn blowing continuous blasts. Down by the Customs dock the glare from the muddy water of the river made Winslow blink his eyes. The ship lay in midstream with her ladder down, and the lighters were already clustered about her to take off her cargo. Winslow was glad to get beneath the awning of the little motor launch that was waiting.

The promenade deck of the big ship gave him an immediate sense of luxury and comfort which no travel folder had ever adequately described. He could see the profusion of food in the dining salon. The deck chairs were out, ready for reclining passengers. The vendors of souvenirs were already aboard, squatting beside their sales displays on the deck. There were the usual Panama hats and bits of antique brass and the hide of a huge boa constrictor for sale, and pathetic imitations of Indian

bows and arrows. Those tawdry goods were all that most passengers would ever know of that country where the ship was anchored. A few travellers who were examining the Panama hats looked up at him. They knew that he was not one of them. They knew that he lived there, and they must have wondered what he was doing.

"I am looking for Miss Simpson," he told the deck steward. "Miss Henrietta Simpson. Could you send for her?"

The way the steward looked at him made him more self-conscious.

"Yes, sir," he said. "She said that she was expecting someone from the Boca Grande Mine."

He said that he would be waiting at the purser's desk, and he walked down to B deck.

"Hello, Mr. Greene," the purser said. "Nothing to go in the strong room this time?"

Winslow had not expected the question. It must have been his talk at the hotel that made him apprehensive. It seemed to him that two of the Customs guards were watching him curiously.

"I don't know," Winslow said. "I'm on a prospecting trip, not running errands this time."

"Miss Simpson's been waiting for someone," the purser said. "There she is now."

Winslow turned and saw a girl walking down the stairs. He

never liked meeting women, even when he was at his best, because he could never think of much to say to them. He had hoped that Miss Simpson would not be pretty, because a pretty girl always made him feel particularly inadequate. She was not the type he had expected at all to come from New York to work in the office at Boca Grande. She looked more like a magazine advertisement—graceful, cool and artificial. Her hair was a delicate blonde, her eyes were wide and gray, and she wore a diamond bracelet—at least it looked like a diamond bracelet. She had on high-heeled slippers that were open at the toes, the last thing you could walk on, particularly on the cobbled streets of Santa Rosa. She must have read about the tropics in Somerset Maugham, he thought. She had on a white dress and a little cape. She was carrying an expensive white suede bag.

He crumpled his hat in his left hand and walked toward her.

"Miss Simpson," he said, "Jim Walters—he's manager, you know—he sent me to take you off the boat."

"Oh," she said, and he thought she looked disappointed when she saw him. "Well, I'm all ready. Where's the mine?"

"We go to the head of the river," Winslow told her, "and then overland. About two hundred miles from here, the way we have to travel."

She looked as though she did not believe him.

"Oh," she said. "I thought it was right here. Well, my bags are locked, and my trunk is up from the baggage room."

"A trunk?" Winslow repeated.

"Why," she said, "a wardrobe trunk, of course."

Winslow scratched the back of his head. It was a habit which he tried to stop, but he always did it when he was embarrassed.

"That's going to be bad," he said. "You'll have to leave the trunk at the hotel, and we'll buy some bags. You see, everything for the mine goes in on mules."

"But isn't there a motor road or a railroad?" she asked. "The travel folder says you can motor through the Andes."

"No," Winslow said, "there isn't any road. The mine's right in the middle of nowhere. That's where gold generally is, right in the middle of nowhere."

"Well," she said. "Let's go."

Winslow hesitated for a moment, and cleared his throat.

"All right," he said; "the hotel porter here can take care of your baggage. But would you mind, before we leave I'd just like to go up to the smoking room——"

"Now, that's too bad," she said, and she smiled at him, "but the bar is closed in port."

Winslow stammered, and before he could prevent himself he scratched the back of his head again.

"I know," he said, "but all I want is just a little ice water."

"Ice water?" She gazed at him blankly.

Then they were sitting at a table in the smoking room, and Winslow sipped his tall glass of ice water slowly.

"That's awfully good," he said. "Sometimes I dream of ice water."

"I don't see that it's much to dream about," she said.

That remark of hers made him feel a little old and weary.

"Of course, at Boca Grande the ice is all right," he told her. "We have electric refrigerators, and we use boiled water, but you can't trust the ice anywhere else. Dysentery, you know. You see, this isn't a very healthy country." He looked at her bare blonde head.

"Where's your hat?" he asked.

"Why," she said, "I haven't got a hat. They don't wear them much now in New York."

"Well," Winslow said, "you'll have to buy one of those Panamas on deck, then. There's the sun."

Then she looked at him the way other women had.

"It seems to me you're awfully careful about your health," she said.

"Believe me," Winslow answered, "you need to be here. You can't get off this boat without a hat."

He did not care any longer what she thought of him. The truth

was that she was not the kind of person who should have been sent down there at all, but it was up to him to look after her until next morning, to see about her baggage, to see about her clothes, if necessary. They did not speak for a while as the launch took them toward the Customs dock. She sat gazing at the wharves, and blinking at the glare from the water. The way her eyebrows were puckered reminded him that he must get her colored glasses. Her luggage was in the center of the cockpit. The wardrobe trunk and all the suitcases, down to the smallest one, which looked like a jewel case, were new and carefully matched. Certainly no girl who travelled with luggage like that would have to work for her living. No woman in her right mind would have brought such luggage to Santa Rosa.

"I'm afraid no one told you what this would be like," he said.

"I didn't ask," she answered, "but I've travelled a good deal."

She might have gone abroad on the *Normandie* before the war, but she certainly had never been to a place like Boca Grande.

"Once you get outside the city it's pretty rough," he said. "I hope you have some plain clothes."

"I have sport clothes," she answered.

He asked her if she had riding breeches, and she shook her head.

"We'll have to try and buy you some," he told her. "Some dungarees, or something. And you'll need a raincoat. And, excuse me, have you any walking shoes? Something that can

stand a little wear?"

She shook her head again.

"I guess you think I'm an awful fool."

"Oh no," Winslow said—"why, not at all."

"I don't blame you. It's awfully flat here, isn't it? I thought there would be mountains."

He told her they were on the coastal plain, too far away to see the mountains, but that Boca Grande was in the beginning of the mountains. He told her that Santa Rosa was hot and sticky, that yellow fever had been there once, and that there was still cholera.

"It may not seem like much of a town to you," he said, "but you'll think it's a big city when you get back from Boca Grande." He laughed, and she did not answer.

The officials in the Customs shed were meticulous and slow. He stood watching them groping through piles of lingerie and silk stockings, and party dresses and print frocks. He tried not to be curious because he felt that it was indelicate to know so much about her, but it did not seem to him that any of her clothes were right.

"Well," she said, "you certainly know what I have on underneath.'"

Winslow turned brick red. He tried to think of what someone like Milton Bird would have said, but he could think of nothing.

"Doesn't anyone speak English here?"

"No," he answered; "you'll have to learn Spanish if you don't know it."

"I speak German and French and Italian," she said. "I went to a convent school in France, and we used to spend our summers in Germany."

They sat together in the back seat of a grimy automobile on the way to the hotel. As the car skidded around a corner, she was thrown heavily against him.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said,

"It isn't your fault," she answered. "Everything looks like papier mâché, doesn't it? Aren't there any old buildings?"

He told her that there weren't. He told her they kept having fires in Santa Rosa. He pointed out the post office and the prison, whose inmates clung to the barred windows staring at the street. "It's not an interesting town, but the people who live here think it's the center of civilization. They like elaborate French architecture—a lot of icing on the cake. Well, here's the hotel."

"Oh," she said. "I didn't think it would be like this at all." She was staring at the chairs that looked like dentist's chairs. They went slowly upward on a lift amid smells of open drains and cooking.

"I didn't think," she said again, "it would be like this at all."

"Maybe nothing is what you think it's going to be," Winslow said, but his answer did not cheer her up. She looked discouraged, and Winslow felt somewhat discouraged himself. He would have to run errands for her all that day and make all the arrangements about that preposterous luggage and about how she would get down to the company's boat the first thing in the morning. The room boy opened her door and pushed back the shutters, and she stood helplessly in the center of the room while the wardrobe trunk came in and then the bags. The room was high and clean. There was a large bed with a mosquito net, a bureau, two chairs and a pier-glass. There was also a bathroom.

"I'm across the hall in number 407," Winslow said. "If you want anything, just knock on my door. I suppose you'd like to—wash—and rest for a while."

"I'm perfectly clean," she said, "and I've been resting all the way from New York."

Winslow tried to think of something else to say. It occurred to him that he had never been alone in a bedroom with a girl in his life. It certainly was not delicate for him to remain there.

"You have a nice view of the river," he said. "That's the river you'll be going up tomorrow. If the plumbing doesn't work, let me know. The plumbing isn't very good here. I'm right across the hall, room 407, if there's anything."

She had been standing motionless looking straight ahead of her, but she spoke very quickly.

"Don't," she said, "don't go away." A change in her voice made him stare at her, and then, before he even guessed what

was about to happen, she burst into tears. Her shoulders shook with a sharp sob, and she groped blindly at the catch of the little suede bag and pulled out a handkerchief and dabbed at her eyes. Winslow had never been so embarrassed in his life, and he could think of nothing to say or do.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I'll be all right in a minute. It's only that it's all so—I didn't think it would be like this at all."

Then he knew what was the matter. She was homesick. He had felt that way himself when he had first come there years before.

"Let me get you a glass of water," Winslow said. It was the only thing he could think of, but she only made a choking sound.

"Oh, Lord," she said, "I don't want water. Just don't leave me alone here—just for a little while—please. I'm all right now. Don't give me water. Give me a cigarette."

She sat down and wiped her eyes with the back of her hand, and Winslow handed her a cigarette. He broke three matches before he could light it for her. The matches were a government monopoly and very bad. He wanted to think of something to say. At least she had stopped crying.

"I'm not this way usually," she said. "It was the smell of the cooking. It was just everything all at once."

"It's the heat," Winslow said hopefully. "It's a very hot day—but then it's always hot here."

"No," she answered, "it isn't the heat. Oh, never mind."

They were silent again. Winslow walked over to the window and looked out at the river because he did not want to stand there, but she did not speak. It would have been better to leave her there, but she had asked him not to go away. He glanced at her to see what she was doing. She was doing nothing, simply sitting staring at the handkerchief between her fingers.

"Miss Simpson," he said, but she did not answer. If she was this way at Santa Rosa, he wondered what would become of her at Boca Grande. He thought of the American wives there, most of them practical and competent, and of Miss Jenkins, the trained nurse with whom she would live, and of all the dull routine of the working day.

"Miss Simpson," he said, "it's none of my business, but of course you don't like it here. This is a pretty plain place, Miss Simpson, and it takes quite a while to get used to it. Why don't you get back on the boat and go home? No one would blame you. I know I wouldn't."

"No." She looked up at him, and the color rose in her cheeks. "No, I won't do that. I came down here to get away. I came down here so I wouldn't be married."

Winslow had a distinct feeling that she should not have made that last remark, that she did not know him well enough, and he wanted very much to change the subject, but she did not give him time.

"I don't suppose you understand anything like that," she said.

"No," Winslow said, and he took off his glasses and put them on again. "No, I guess I don't. It's a little out of my line."

"You've never been caught up in anything, have you? And been all mixed up emotionally, I mean. You've never thought you loved someone and then found you didn't, and just couldn't go on with it?"

"No," Winslow said slowly, "no, I guess I haven't. No one's ever been enough interested in me for that."

He wished she had not told him. In a way it was like seeing her lingerie at the Customs.

"Well," she said, "that's why I'm here."

Winslow Greene became shyer and more tongue-tied than he had been before. He was very sure that she would be sorry for this sometime later.

"You're awfully nice," she said.

"What?" Winslow said.

"You're awfully nice. I wouldn't have acted this way if you weren't. You're so impersonal. You're just like a policeman."

"I guess that's so," Winslow said. "I guess I am pretty impersonal. They laugh at me sometimes about it up at the mine. All I think about is rocks—that's all I'm good at. I don't know about people, only about rocks."

"Rocks?" She looked blank.

"I'm the mine geologist," he told her. "Ever since I was a kid I liked stones—I liked getting away by myself and looking at

them. I still like it, I guess, and I like animals and Indians."

He stopped and blushed, when he saw her watching him. It was more than he had ever said to any girl, and it sounded like something from a primary school reader.

"Tell me where the mine is," she said. "Tell me where we're going."

Winslow drew a deep breath and took a notebook and a pencil from his pocket, and opened the book to a clean page. He was glad to change the subject, and making sketches gave him something definite to do.

"Well, here's the way it is." He pulled his chair closer to hers, and she leaned toward him and looked at the notebook on his knee. "Here's the Pacific Ocean and here's where the Santa Rosa River flows into it. And here we are at Santa Rosa, just about here. The river rises up here in the mountains, and every thing for the Boca Grande mine goes up it on light-draft river boats. You'll go up that way tomorrow. The river gets mighty shallow and maybe you'll see a crocodile, but you can get up as far as here. It's a little town, and the company has a landing and warehouses. Then there's a trail. You go up the trail on mules. It takes about twelve hours winding up into the mountains. And there's Boca Grande, in the foothills of the Andes."

She looked intently at the sketch he had drawn. He could see her profile, and she was undoubtedly very pretty, but he was not self-conscious any more.

"I see," she said; "isn't there any other way of getting there?"

"If you're in a hurry," he told her, "you can take a plane from Santa Rosa to a mountain town called Pinas, up there, away up in the high Andes at twelve thousand feet. Then you can ride down to Boca Grande on a mountain trail. Plane travel is changing everything, but all the heavy stuff for the mine must go up the river, of course. It's nice up in the Andes. It's like a different world. You get to like this country if you live here long enough."

"Tell me about Boca Grande," she said.

"Well," he said. "It's this way," and he closed his notebook. "Boca Grande is a pretty big mining operation. The mill there handles four hundred tons of ore a day. The mill and the main shaft are right on the side of a stream. If you want to, you can travel about ten miles underground, but I wouldn't want to." He smiled at her. "The miners and their families live in most of the town. They have their recreation center and their houses. And then there's a company of soldiers stationed there. The Americans, the engineers and their families, live in bungalows on the side of the hill. There's a club and a swimming pool, and we have dances on Saturday nights. Jim Walters is the boss—it's quite a job running that whole community, the store and the hospital and the machine shop. We all get on each other's nerves sometimes, but everybody's all right on the whole. You'll be in the office typing reports and handling the files." He paused and frowned. "Do you know anything about doing things like that?"

She nodded and she looked happier.

"The family were funny that way," she said. "They have an idea that girls ought to be able to earn their own living. Yes, I

went to a business school one year. You mustn't get a wrong idea about me. I'm not as bad as I look."

"You don't look bad," Winslow said, and then he blushed. "I mean, I've been sort of out of the way most of my life, so I don't know how anyone ought to look, really." He cleared his throat and went on hastily. "It isn't bad up there. It's sort of one big family. You get to know everyone pretty well after the rainy season."

"Do you think I'll like it?" she asked.

Winslow cleared his throat again. "Well, I don't know," he said. "Maybe you'll find it sort of different."

"Do you like it there?" she asked.

"Well," Winslow said slowly—"well, no, but then that doesn't mean anything. I never was good mixing with people. You don't want to take me as a measure for anything, I'm more at home in the bush. I seem to get on better there."

"Well, I'm going to like it," she said, and in some way Winslow felt that they had become friends. "You'll be surprised. But you're right. I'll have to get some other clothes." She stood up. "Let's go out and get them now."

"All right," Winslow said.

"You don't mind looking after me?"

"No," Winslow said—"why, not at all."

As a matter of fact, he often thought how much he had enjoyed that morning. He felt useful taking her to the shops and arguing with the tradespeople. She had to depend on him so completely, and he liked it. He liked it when she asked his advice. He liked it when she asked if something were becoming.

"Why don't you call me Henrietta?" she asked, by the middle of the morning. "It's easier."

"Why," Winslow said—"why, thank you very much."

"I'm glad you're taking me up there. It won't seem so strange."

Then he told her he wasn't taking her up there.

"You see, I'm taking the plane at four o'clock tomorrow morning. I'm going to the east slope."

"Oh," she said; "when are you coming back?"

And he told her not for quite a while. Not for a couple of months, perhaps.

"Oh," she said, "I'm sorry."

"You know," he said, "I'm a little sorry too."

And then she did something which surprised him very much. They were walking along beneath one of those arcades, and he never forgot the place. It was just by a news stand and a greasy little food shop. A row of donkeys was plodding slowly up the street. A boy was shouting a number for the lottery. When he told her he was sorry too, she turned and rested her hand on his

arm for a minute.

"I'm glad I came," she said.

"That's fine," he said. "I'm glad you're here, too." He found himself blushing, but what he had said did not seem out of place.

There were a number of things which he had planned to do that day, but as time went on they did not seem important. He began to feel that there was something rare about that day, something which he could not afford to miss, and he began thinking how soon it would be over. He had always found Santa Rosa insupportably dull, but for once it seemed to be a lively place. He had never realized that there were so many things that he could tell anyone. He showed her the cocoa beans drying in the street. He showed her the warehouses on the waterfront. He showed her the river boat which would start with her the next morning, and he explained to her about sugar cane and balsa wood. They had lunch in the hotel dining room, and after lunch he told her she should rest for an hour or two because it was customary in the tropics. He was afraid that they had done too much that morning. He did not want her to be over-tired.

"I'll knock on your door at five o'clock," he said, "and we'll go out to dinner. There's one quite nice restaurant in Santa Rosa where everybody goes."

He left her at the hotel elevator, but as far as he was concerned, he had no desire to rest. He crossed the lobby and opened the ground glass door to the bar room, the latest addition to the Hotel Continental—a modern American bar with small round tables and soft lights. Four citizens of Santa Rosa sat

about one table, dignified, almost austere, drinking French Vermouth. At another table, the local head of the airlines and the manager of an agricultural machinery agency were shaking dice.

"We've got your place on the plane tomorrow," the airlines man said. And then he added: "Have you heard the news?" Winslow shook his head, and they asked him to sit down.

"It's this way," the manager said. "I was down at the British Consulate this morning, and Bill, the Vice-Consul—you know old Bill——"

With the exception of the Germans, every foreigner knew every other foreigner in Santa Rosa.

"Well, right when I was there, a code message came in. It was from their destroyer, you know, the *Artemis*. She was in here only the day before yesterday. When she left she ran down the coast to Lima. About dawn she sighted one of those coast steamers, about three thousand tons, heading right due west. It looked a little queer—a coast boat on that course. When they went after her, she tried to run for it. She was full of oil. They got aboard her before the crew could scuttle her. Half of them were Germans."

He paused and glanced across the room, and lowered his voice, as one did lately when one spoke of Germans.

"There wasn't any doubt about it. She was running out to that raider. You know—the one that's been off the canal. The Germans are off there somewhere. Bill said they could spot that raider now, if they only had some planes. She can't be far offshore, and she's running short of oil."

Winslow recalled that Milton Bird had spoken about the raider, but he was not interested at the time. Even the name of the ship escaped him, and he did not mind. He ordered a quinine tonic and a dash of lemon, and listened to their talk. Winslow sat and listened while they talked about the war, but none of it seemed important then. He listened and he even spoke sometimes, but his mind was not on any of it.

He was thinking of Henrietta Simpson. He had told her a good deal about himself, but somehow it had seemed quite natural to tell her. He had told her about the town where he had lived in Iowa, and that he had never liked it much. He had told her about the Colorado School of Mines. He had told her about his first job in British Columbia and about the winter he had spent in Alaska, and how he had come to Venezuela with an exploration company, and how he had come to Boca Grande five years before. He had never realized that anyone would care to hear about it much. He hoped that she did not think that he was boasting when he told about the paper on occurrences of Andesite which he had read at a Geological Congress the only time he had been to the States on leave.

"Aren't you ever lonely?" she had asked him.

"No," he said, "I'm used to it. I've always been sort of restless. I rather like to be alone."

"You don't look like the sort of person who goes to places like that."

He knew very well what he looked like. He was lean and stringy with stooped shoulders. He was lantern-jawed, and he

suffered from astigmatism. He did not look like anybody who might amount to anything. He began to wish that he looked more like Milton Bird.

Just as he was wishing it, Milton Bird pushed through the door to the bar, plainly making the most of the time which was left before he went back to Boca Grande.

"Say," Milton asked, "have you heard the news? She was a supply ship all right." And then he slapped Winslow's shoulder. "Where's the office girl? Is she pretty?"

"She's taking a rest," Winslow said, and for some reason his answer made Milton laugh.

"Well, I'll see her later, down at the boat at six o'clock tomorrow morning."

Milton walked whistling out of the hotel bar, and Winslow wished that he had Milton Bird's lack of self-consciousness. He wished that he could get on as easily with casual acquaintances, and he wished particularly that he did not always feel that people were looking at him. As Milton left, he felt that someone was just behind him. He told himself it was ridiculous, but he could not get away from it. It was exactly the feeling which he had had once before in a very lonely piece of country near the headwaters of the Amazon. He had been paddling down a stream in the bow of a dug-out canoe. An Indian whom he had always thought of as friendly was paddling in the stern. He had that same feeling now between the shoulder blades, and that other time it had saved his life.

The dice boxes kept banging on the table in that endless game

of poker dice which the airlines man and the agricultural agent were playing. There were sounds of laughter and snatches of Spanish and English conversation. Winslow finally turned around.

Seated in a corner was a man in spotless white, reading a newspaper. Winslow could not see his face, but he remembered the hands, and he remembered the Panama hat which was hanging on a hook near the table. It was Señor Lopez, who had been watching him over the top of the newspaper. Winslow turned back to the dice-players.

"There's a man in the corner behind me," he said, "reading a newspaper. Do either of you know him?"

The sound of the dice stopped.

"I've never seen him before," the airlines manager said. "Have you ever seen him, Jim?"

The other shook his head.

"No," he answered. "He looks like a planter—one of those hacienda owners who comes in once a year for a good time. Look at his hat."

"That's funny," Winslow answered. "He spoke to me this morning. He said he was from the police."

His mind went back again to Henrietta Simpson. He was trying to recall the exact inflection of her voice. She had told him she was glad she had come, and that ordinary remark still seemed to him surprising, but that evening surprised him even

more; he was sure that he would never forget that evening.

Just as the sun was going down, he stood with Henrietta Simpson in the center of the large plaza watching the daylight fade. The rain clouds which gathered above them had turned to a smoky rose color, not unlike the façade of the cathedral that stood on one side of the square. The three other sides were bounded by sidewalk cafés and by restaurants where Santa Rosans were beginning to gather to watch the ending of the day. A street singer was playing a guitar and singing a gay, endless song of some ancient love affair.

"It gets dark quickly, doesn't it?" she said.

"Yes," he answered. "It always does near the Equator."

He could not understand why his answer made her laugh.

"I knew you would say that. I never thought that anyone so literal-minded could be so kind."

"I've only been selfish," he said. "It's been a pleasure."

For some reason that answer of his seemed to amuse her, too. It was growing darker, and he could see her looking up at him through the dusk, smiling, and he smiled back. There were a number of things that he wanted to say, but he felt that he had to know someone for a long time even to dare to say half of what he was thinking.

"You don't talk much, do you?" she asked.

Winslow blushed. He was glad it was too dark for her to see

him clearly.

"I was thinking that I've known you quite a long time," he said. "It's queer that it's only been today."

She paused a moment, and there was a new note in her voice.

"Yes—I know," she said.

That was all she said, but her voice was a little sad. He pointed to a row of lights at the far end of the plaza.

"The Seville Restaurant is over there," he said. "It's early, but we might as well have dinner."

He thought later that it was an awkward thing to have said, yet if he had stood there any longer he would have said something that would have made him entirely ridiculous.

The Seville Restaurant was brightly lighted and opened to the street. He would not have gone there ordinarily because it was too bright and garish, but it fitted his mood that night. It was a place that did its best to be sophisticated and continental. It had a counter heaped with cakes and pastries. There were glass cases filled with assorted liquors. There were clean white cloths on the tables surrounding a dance floor, and in one corner was an American importation—a juke box, glowing with rainbow-colored lights, and blaring out dance music.

He was careful to give her simple food. And he ordered a bottle of Chilian wine. He was pleased when she asked him questions. He had never realized that anyone like Henrietta Simpson could be interested in anything he did.

"Tell me about where you're going," she asked.

He told her he was going by plane to a landing field near a town with an Indian name. Then he would go by motor, and then by mule to the base camp. The base camp would be reasonably comfortable in spite of its remoteness. There was a short-wave radio which communicated every night with the mine at Boca Grande. From the base camp he was going alone to a stream which the Indians had said contained large deposits of gold-bearing gravel. He could not tell how long it would take him to travel from the base camp to that stream. He would have good hunters with him, so that it would be possible to live off the country. There were fish and wild pigs and monkeys, and an animal called a kinkajou that was something like a racoon at home.

"It sounds better than Boca Grande," she said.

"It's better if you're used to it," he told her.

Then she leaned toward him across the table. "I don't suppose you'd take someone else along? I mean it. I'd like to go."

What surprised him was that she really meant it.

"That would give them something to talk about up at the mine," he said.

"Would that bother you?" she asked. "You needn't worry about the money. I can pay my way."

Then she must have realized it was impossible because she shook her head quickly before he had time to answer her.

"It isn't so bad at Boca Grande. You'll get used to it," he said.

"Why don't you like it there?" She looked at him curiously, waiting for his answer.

Nearly all the tables were filled by then, and the music from the juke box was still louder.

"I guess because I'm shy," he said. "I'm no good at dancing or at talking. It's pretty social there."

"Out where you're going"—she had to raise her voice against the juke box—"is it dangerous?"

"None of this country is dangerous if you're used to it."

Then he saw that she was not watching him any longer. When he turned to follow the direction of her glance, he felt a spasm of disappointment, almost of resentment. Milton Bird was walking toward their table, followed by two men he had never seen before. One of them was short and stoutish with close-cropped gray hair. The other was thin and sallow with very deep-set dark eyes. Winslow pushed back his chair and stood up. Milton was not looking at him. He was looking at Miss Simpson.

"This is Mr. Bird," Winslow said. "He'll take you to the mine on the river boat tomorrow."

"Well, well," Milton said, "I thought you'd be forty, wearing glasses. Say, there must be a mistake somewhere. Why didn't you call for me sooner? You and I are going to have a swell time at Boca Grande." It occurred to Winslow that Milton held her

hand a good deal longer than was necessary. There was something flattering in his admiration, something in his elaborateness which women always liked. Winslow had never felt as he did just then—it was a hot sensation of jealousy combined with a sort of panic, for he saw at once that Milton Bird was impressed by her.

"I suppose he's been telling you to keep out of the sun," Milton said, "and not to drink the water. Well, don't you let Winslow worry you. I'm looking after you now. What are we all having? What about Champagne?"

Then the sallow man coughed, a short, delicate little cough.

"Do not forget your friends, if you please," he said.

"Why, boys"—Milton turned to them cheerfully—"do you blame me, boys? This is Mr. Gruber, and this is Mr. Martinez. And now, excuse me, please. I know what the lady wants. She wants to dance. Come on, Señorita. Why didn't I know you ten years ago?"

Milton Bird was always a part of the music when he danced. Winslow could see them weaving in and out among the other couples. As he watched them he noticed Señor Lopez's hat on a rack across the room. He recognized it even from that distance because the crown was too high for the current style, and the breadth of the brim gave it an unusual proportion, but as his glance searched the tables he could not find Señor Lopez. He could almost imagine that Señor Lopez had made himself invisible, all except his hat, and with that thought came another. Señor Lopez had told him that a Mr. Gruber and a Mr. Martinez

would speak to him, and, sure enough, there they were.

They had arrived casually enough at his table, and now they were smiling at him. Their presence was the only thing that day which gave Winslow Greene any real uneasiness, for it made him acutely aware that there was something going on which he did not know about—certainly there was something. Mr. Gruber had folded his thick hands upon the table. Mr. Martinez coughed again and smiled.

"Our friend Mr. Bird forgets us," Mr. Martinez said. "He has a way with the ladies. If I had a wife, I think I should keep her locked up from Mr. Bird."

"Yes." Mr. Gruber gave a comfortable chuckle. "Mr. Greene, I am afraid he will take your girl away."

Winslow glanced at the dance floor, and again at Señor Lopez's hat.

"But if he does," said Mr. Gruber, "shall we three mind? There are other fish in the sea for a so handsome man like Mr. Greene. Let us leave and make a night of it, eh?"

"Thanks," Winslow said, "I couldn't do that, really." But he was afraid what they implied was true. Henrietta Simpson would have no use for him now that she had seen Milton Bird.

"It is because I am a German you refuse, I think," Mr. Gruber said. "It is a misfortune these days to be a German. Myself, I hate the Nazi Party."

"That is true." Mr. Martinez spoke softly, as though he were

disclosing a secret which only Winslow Greene must know. "It is sad for him here because he hates the Nazis."

"Yes," Winslow said, "that must be sad," and Mr. Martinez coughed again.

"How is it at Boca Grande?" Mr. Martinez asked. "I hear the quality of the ore is growing richer, particularly in the vein to the north-east. You see, I have a brother in the timekeeper's office."

"You have?" Winslow frowned. "I don't remember anyone there named Martinez."

"You have an eye for detail," Mr. Martinez said, and he smiled in the most disarming way. "It's a half-brother who bears a different name, but he tells me so much about the work at Boca Grande—a very loyal man."

Winslow took off his glasses and blinked at Mr. Martinez.

"All those workers," Mr. Martinez went on, "all those tons of material being carried to that mine, and so little to show for it in the end—just a few hundred pounds a year of useless metal. How curious it is to reflect upon the futility, if one is philosophically inclined. You cannot eat the gold. You can make nothing of it useful. Have you ever thought of that?"

"Yes," Winslow said. "I have sometimes."

"There it is in little bars," Mr. Martinez went on enthusiastically, "packed in flat wooden cases weighing fifty pounds—you see, my brother has told me. A few cases on mule-

back, that is all which comes from your mine, Mr. Greene. It takes up very little space in the strong room of the ship on its way to New York."

"Yes," Winslow said, "that's true." His glance strayed from Mr. Martinez. He saw that Henrietta Simpson and Milton Bird were laughing as they danced. The sight made his mouth grow thinner, and once again he found himself examining Señor Lopez's hat.

"I suppose," Mr. Martinez said, "you may have brought some downriver today."

"Brought what?" Winslow asked.

Mr. Martinez coughed, but his eyes remained fixed on Winslow's face.

"A case or two, perhaps, for shipment to New York? Or those gold bars? My brother says you ship usually each month."

"I'm not running the Boca Grande Mine," Winslow answered. Señor Martinez stopped smiling. He flashed a glance at Mr. Gruber. "I'm sorry, Mr. Martinez."

"It's my fault," Mr. Martinez said. "It was an impertinence on my part. I hope you'll excuse me."

Then Mr. Gruber spoke. His words came more slowly than they had before, and so compellingly that Winslow sat up straighter.

"My friend, what is it, please, that attracts your attention

across the room?" In the pause, Winslow saw that both those strangers were watching him, as though they wished to read every line upon his face, and he remembered what Señor Lopez had said that morning, that there was something wrong somewhere, but it was all like searching in the dark. Winslow put his glasses on again as he considered what to say.

"Frankly, I was looking at a hat," he said.

"A hat?" Mr. Gruber repeated, and his voice rose incredulously.

"There, on the rack across the room," Winslow said: "it's one of the handsomest Panamas I've ever seen."

They stared across the room at the hat-rack. There was an intensity in both their faces that they could not conceal, a sharpening of their features. For some reason that hat surprised them both.

"Ah, yes," Mr. Gruber said; "I had not noticed."

"Ah, yes," Mr. Martinez said; "it is a beautiful hat. Excuse me. I must be going now. It was such a pleasure, Mr. Greene. You will both excuse me, I hope. It is getting late." He stood up and held out his hand. Latins were continually shaking hands. "Good night. It has been a pleasure, Mr. Greene."

"Martinez is always busy," Mr. Gruber said. "But it is so—it's getting late."

Then the music stopped. The couples were leaving the dance floor, and Winslow Greene stood up when Henrietta Simpson

and Milton Bird reached the table.

"How about getting out of here," Milton asked, "and listening to some Spanish music?"

"Not tonight." Henrietta Simpson looked from him to Winslow, and her answer made Winslow feel years younger. "Thanks just as much. We'll dance again some other time, won't we?"

It had been a long time since Winslow had felt so happy. The conviction dawned upon him like a bright effulgent light that Henrietta had perceptions that were far above the average. Winslow's smile grew broader when he saw that Milton Bird had been set backward on his heels. Henrietta was smiling too, even more sweetly. "That is," she added, "if your wife doesn't mind."

For a second Winslow Greene came very close to laughing, and now he knew exactly what Milton had been saying. One of Milton's favorite lines and one of his most successful was that of the misunderstood husband, and obviously he had been trying it again, telling of a wasted life and lack of sympathy out there on the dance floor.

"All right," Milton said, and he scowled at Winslow. "You're safe with Winslow Greene, in case that worries you. You couldn't be safer with anyone in this hemisphere, but me—this is my last night. I guess I'll be pushing off."

"Remember you're leaving at six tomorrow," Winslow said, "and the captain won't wait."

Milton Bird scowled again, but before he could answer, Mr. Gruber spoke.

"I must be going, too," he said. "It's getting late. Which way do you go, Mr. Bird?"

The music from the juke box seemed softer. Henrietta Simpson was smiling at him.

"I'm glad they're gone," she said. "What are you looking at?"

"Nothing," Winslow told her. "I was just afraid they might be coming back."

It was not true. He was looking for Señor Lopez's hat, and in that interval of partings the hat had also disappeared. Everything that might possibly worry him was gone, and only Henrietta Simpson was left.

"Can't you dance at all?" she asked.

"I'd step on your toes," he said; "you wouldn't enjoy it. Not after Milton Bird."

"I'd enjoy it a great deal," she told him, "particularly after Milton Bird."

They started back to the hotel a half-hour later. Walking under the arcades past the shops, he told her it was better to get a good night's sleep, since she was going to make an early start, and that he was starting even earlier. Most of Santa Rosa was sleeping

already, and most of the lights were out. Doors to the courtyards were closed and barred, and the iron shutters of the shops were down. They walked down a street called the Street of the Opera, though he never knew just why, and then they turned to the Street of the Twentieth of August. Both the street and the sidewalks ahead of them were blankly empty beneath a few dim street lights.

"You'll come back, won't you?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered—"oh yes. I——" And then he stopped. A man had turned from a side street about a block ahead of them, moving in the direction which they were taking, so that his back was turned to them, straight and white—but once again Winslow recognized the hat. There was no use telling Henrietta, because he had other things to say.

"I wouldn't miss coming back for anything," he said; but he was never sure whether he said it or simply thought it, because that was when the shots came from the shadows of a doorway just a block ahead.

He could see the flashes just as he heard the sound, and instinctively he threw his arm around Henrietta's waist and pushed her to the wall of a building and stood in front of her. He had seen such things before, but he had never been so shaken. There were four shots that came almost together. There was a sickening fascination watching that figure with the Panama. First it halted, then, as it was hit again, the impact of the bullet made it whirl sideways. Then it fell and the hat rolled in the gutter. Next there was a thud of footsteps as two dark figures detached themselves from the doorway and ran and finally the street was

full of voices. People seemed to spring up from the ground, running toward the crumpled man who was lying on his face.

Winslow did not realize until then that he was holding Henrietta Simpson's hand.

"Come," he said, "let's get out of here." But his heart was beating painfully. He was thinking of how Mr. Martinez had looked when he had seen the hat.

"Did they"—she stopped and caught her breath—"did they kill him?"

"Yes. Please try not to look. We'll be around the corner in a minute."

Then they turned a corner, walking very quickly, and the sight was gone.

"Try not to think of it," he said. "These things happen here. There are always riots and revolutions." He felt her fingers tighten over his. "It hasn't anything to do with you or me, but I'm afraid it spoiled your evening."

"No," she said, "don't say that. It was such a nice evening. Do you think——"

"Don't talk about it," he said. "The police will be there now."

If she had not been with him he would not have minded, for his life in mining camps and his life on the fringes of South American countries had made him inured to violence and to sudden death by accident or otherwise. He had seen a revolution

sweep through a small town once, and sometimes he still would awaken with a start because his memories of the street fighting had disturbed his dreams. He had seen drunken men from the hill country fighting with machetes, and he had seen miners hideously mangled by accidents underground. He certainly would not have minded if she had not been there with him. He tried to talk to her casually about other things, but his voice at first sounded elaborate and unnatural. He explained to her that Captain Garcias would call for her in the morning, and he repeated to her all the details of the trip she would make to Boca Grande. He wanted to put that moment from her mind, and he was sure that the best way of doing it was to resort to simple facts. He was glad to see that she was listening, and gradually his own mind dwelt only on her again, for he began to realize that he would not see her for a long while, and that the day they had spent together was almost over, and still the minutes were slipping by.

The lift moved slowly up to the fourth floor. She unlocked the door of her room, and then she turned on the lights. Her wardrobe trunk was packed with the things she would not need. He had gone over most of the details with her that afternoon.

"You're sure your bags are all closed tight?" he asked.

"Yes," she said. "You closed them."

"Well," he said, "we checked over everything, didn't we? There'll be mosquito netting on the boat, and your stateroom windows are screened, but I wouldn't keep your lights on too long on the boat tomorrow night, particularly if she sticks on a sandbar. The malarial mosquitoes are thick upriver. Wait a

minute. Have you a hot-water bottle?"

"What on earth would I need one for?" she asked. "It's hot enough without one, isn't it?"

"You can have mine," he said. "I always travel with one. What are you laughing at?"

"I didn't mean to laugh," she said. "I only did because it's like you. No, keep your hot-water bottle."

"Well," he said, "I guess everything's all ready. The hotel will keep your trunk."

"Yes, I'm all right," she said.

"Well," he said, "I mustn't keep you up any longer." But he still stood there in the center of her room. It was the first time in years that he had felt lonely.

"You'll come back, won't you?" she said.

"Oh yes," he answered. "I'll come back. Well, good night."

"Good night." She held out both her hands, and he took them.

"And don't worry about—what we saw," he said. "Those things happen sometimes."

"Of course," she answered. "I'm not thinking about that."

"Well," he said again. "Good night."

He never understood how he could have dared to kiss her, and he was sure that he had never consciously thought of taking such a liberty. It must have happened because the shooting had upset him. He felt a shock of surprise when his lips touched hers, and the next instant he was mortified and felt sure that he had spoiled it all.

"I'm terribly sorry," he said. "I didn't mean to do that. Please excuse me."

He repeated what she said next in his mind for days and for weeks afterwards. He hardly knew her. That was the amazing thing about it. It was unbelievable that such a thing could happen in the course of a single day.

"Why, I don't mind," she said. "I've been hoping you would all day. You can do it again if you like, so—so we'll both remember."

That was what she said. There was absolutely no doubt about it—"so we'll both remember." The words still pulsed in his temples when he walked across the hall and unlocked his own room door. Nothing like that had ever happened to him before. She had let him kiss her again, so that they would both remember; it might have meant a great deal or only a little; it might not be serious for her, but it was deadly serious for someone like him. He wondered whether she had realized that.

Thoughts such as these ran through his mind even when he closed his door and switched on his light. He was so bewildered by then that it was a minute before his instinctive sense of order told him that things were not exactly as he had

left them. His bedding roll, still on the floor by the foot of his bed, jutted into the room at a slight angle, and he certainly had not left it so. He looked up from it slowly to the top of his bureau, where he had left the battered leather case that contained his field notebooks and the engineering reports of the Boca Grande Mine. He placed the case exactly in the center of the bureau out of his finicky instinct for order. He found the case closed, but it was not just where it had been left. Winslow moved very quickly and quietly to the door of his clothes closet and jerked it open. The closet was empty except for his travel-stained trench coat.

When he opened the leather case, his notebooks, his papers, were all there, but the Boca Grande report was on top. It just happened that he was literal about such matters, and he recalled distinctly that the Boca Grande report had been at the bottom. There was nothing of any importance in his leather case; it was simply the general idea that disturbed him—that someone had been furtively watching him and that someone had known when his room was empty.

He was sure that if he were to ring for the room boy that either the boy would know nothing, or else he would have been bribed to be quiet.

Señor Lopez had asked him to call his room that night, room 410, and the room would be about twenty paces down the hall.

"I wonder," Winslow whispered to himself, and he knelt and loosened the straps of his bedding roll, and pushed his arm inside.

His Colt forty-five revolver was safe in its holster, wrapped in his spare clothing. He put on his raincoat and thrust the revolver into the right side pocket, and opened his room door softly. The corridor outside had that dreamy look peculiar to all hotels in the middle of the night.

The room boy was in his little cubby-hole near the elevator shaft with his head pillowed in his arms on a table in front of him, sound asleep, and above the table, hanging from a nail, was the pass key to the rooms. It was new in Winslow's experience, but it was very simple to take the key from the nail and walk quietly down the hall.

Someone was inside Señor Lopez's room, for the glass transom above the door was bright with electric light, and when he listened he could hear the sound of someone stirring. Winslow put his right hand in his coat pocket and turned the pass key noiselessly with his left. The door of 410 opened in an instant. The electric light from the ceiling was burning, and so were the lights by the bed and bureau. A man who had been seated in a chair by the window had dropped a paper-covered novel to the floor and was on his feet. He must have started the instant the key was turned in the lock.

"Wait a minute," Winslow said. "Don't move."

Winslow saw at once what the man wanted. He was reaching toward an automatic pistol which was lying on the foot of the bed, and his hand, with delicate tapering fingers, was just a foot over it when Winslow spoke. In an instant Winslow recognized him. It was Señor Lopez in his shirtsleeves with his blue soft shirt open at the neck. Señor Lopez drew his hand back and his

white teeth flashed in a most engaging smile.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he said. "Excuse my instinctive gesture. Good evening, Mr. Greene."

If Señor Lopez expected him to be surprised, he was mistaken, and Winslow did not move his hand from his pocket.

"So they didn't get you," Winslow said. "I thought it wasn't you. I don't want any trouble, but you mind your business, Lopez, and I'll attend to mine."

Señor Lopez was still smiling, and now he laughed.

"Please, Señor Greene," he answered. "If I had wanted trouble I should have moved much quicker. I stopped at once when I saw it was you who unlocked my door and did not knock, but you are welcome. Everything I have is yours."

Señor Lopez's words were engagingly bright and merry, but Winslow Greene still watched him.

"About an hour ago they shot someone who wore your hat," he said. "That isn't news to you, is it?"

"Oh yes." Señor Lopez moved his hands in a disarming gesture of pantomime. He swept an imaginary hat from his head and bowed. "That deadly beautiful sombrero. I left it at the restaurant. Careless of me, wasn't it?"

"Was it?" Winslow asked him.

Señor Lopez sat down and picked up the paper-covered

novel he had been reading, and tapped his finger gently on the gaudy colored cover.

"Señor Greene," he said, "you are nobody's fool, my friend. No, it was not entirely careless of me. I had a little idea that I might be happier if I left without that hat. So many useless fellows were hanging about on the sidewalk by the restaurant. I thought someone might take the hat and that I might observe what happened."

Señor Lopez paused and sighed, and his dark twinkling eyes met Winslow's frankly, as though he had explained everything, but Winslow still gazed at him coldly.

"What did you want in my room?" he asked.

"In your room?" Señor Lopez repeated. "My friend, was your room searched?"

"I guess you know it was," Winslow said. "Why did you want to look at the mine report?"

Señor Lopez raised his dark eyebrows.

"So that is what they wanted." He raised his hands protestingly. "But, my dear friend. You are mistaken. I was not in your room. Believe me, I am a gentleman."

Winslow gazed at the lithe, delicate figure of Señor Lopez in his shirtsleeves, at his smooth, shiny black hair, at his handsome aquiline face.

"I don't know what you are," Winslow said slowly, "or who

you are. I just want to mind my own business and for you to mind yours. You said this morning you were from the police. I asked about you in the bar this afternoon. My friends said they had never heard of you, and they know a lot about Santa Rosa."

"But my dear Señor Greene"—Señor Lopez shrugged his shoulders eloquently and patiently—"of course they do not know me. I am from the President's own private bureau, and this is a delicate affair that cannot go on any record. I cannot show you my papers because I do not travel with them, but my word of honor—my word of honor as a gentleman——"

But Winslow was not impressed. He had a number of ideas as he stood there gazing thoughtfully at Señor Lopez.

"That would sound better," he said, "if you hadn't offered me that hat yourself this morning. How do you answer that one, Lopez?"

Señor Lopez looked as though the idea were entirely new to him. He sat silent for a moment, looking at the floor.

"I can see," he said, very sadly, "I can see why you cannot like me."

"That's bright of you," Winslow said.

"No," Señor Lopez answered, "not at all. It is you who have used your mind, very admirably, Mr. Greene. You came into this room and you did not think it was I who had been shot. I fear the others also know it. I only came back a few minutes before, after those events outside, yet in the few moments you have been here your mind has worked, you have formed a natural

conclusion that I have been prying into your affairs. I can only tell you that I have not. I can only add that it was late this afternoon that I found out something, only a very little something, that made me what you Americans call 'hot.' I knew I was 'hot' when I saw that poor fellow killed tonight. I am so 'hot' that I shall leave this hotel in a few minutes and arrange to go where I hope certain persons cannot find me. But I did not search your room. I wish you would believe me."

Señor Lopez ended his speech almost pleadingly, and his eyes looked wide and hurt.

"Maybe you can tell me who did, then," Winslow said.

Señor Lopez nodded slowly.

"You have every right to ask. I think it was either a gentleman named Mr. Gruber or another one named Martinez. It was either Mr. Gruber or Mr. Martinez who tried to wait for me tonight. Ah, now I see you are interested. What did they say to you in the restaurant? Remember, I said that you would see them."

Winslow hesitated. It occurred to him that Señor Lopez had not explained much.

"Why do you want to know?"

"It is difficult, you see," Señor Lopez said. "For the last two days these two gentlemen have suddenly become very interested in gold bars from Boca Grande; yet neither of them is a thief or bandit. They are not that type at all. That is why their interest is puzzling to me, for I have been concerned with them for an entirely different reason. Did they ask you when the gold was

being shipped?"

Winslow nodded.

"Did you tell them?"

Winslow shook his head, and Señor Lopez's teeth flashed in another of his smiles.

"You have been more helpful than you think, Mr. Greene. Believe me, this means very much—much more than I am free to explain. It may concern something which is international. I have fought in the Loyalist Spanish Army. I was in Madrid before the end. I do not like the fascists, and a clique high in our government likes them even less. Shall we let it go at that?"

When Señor Lopez waved his hands he seemed to be twisting the neck of a fascist.

"Yes, we shall let it go at that. You shall like me if we live to know each other better. You shall call me Eduardo, and we shall have wine, and I shall play the guitar and sing. But not now. Right now you are fortunate that this is no affair of yours. I suppose in your papers you may have had some reports of the Boca Grande Mine?"

Winslow nodded, and Señor Lopez nodded back.

"This gold shipment is what interests them, and yet, mind you, they are not thieves. Yet they are so involved that they are rash enough to do murder. Ah, Mr. Greene, I have an interesting life. But I repeat, this is no affair of yours. You are leaving tomorrow and I want your mind to be easy. Your only danger will be

Indians' poisoned arrows. Yes, you must not bother. You must consider this all an episode. So must the young lady, Señorita Henrietta."

"Wait a minute," Winslow said; "how do you know her name?"

Señor Lopez rose.

"The passenger list. I am susceptible. She is so beautiful. And now I must be going, Mr. Greene. I only came here for our little talk. We must wait until a happier moment. This place is too 'hot' for me. Mr. Greene, I like your coat."

Winslow was a little taken aback by the swift flow of Señor Lopez's speech and by his sudden jumps from one subject to another.

"It isn't much of a coat," he said, "but I happen to need it myself."

"But useful," Señor Lopez answered. "It has a protective color, and anybody wearing it will look like a Gringo. I must borrow it tonight."

Then Señor Lopez moved. He moved like a streak of light, and his co-ordination was beautiful. Before Winslow was aware of it, Señor Lopez had snatched up the pistol from the bed where it was lying, and Winslow was blinking into its muzzle. But Señor Lopez was still smiling.

"You see, I move fast," he said. "You must believe now that I was well intentioned. I only want your coat, Señor Greene,

without any argument. I only want your coat because it may save my life when I leave this place. Take it off quickly, please, and do not touch the pocket."

Winslow unbuttoned his trench coat.

"You're right," he said; "I wouldn't have given it to you. It's the only one I've got. I need it where I'm going."

"Exactly"—Señor Lopez's voice was soothing—"and that is why I am rude. Toss it on the bed sideways." And he laughed. "You were thinking of throwing it at me, weren't you, Mr. Greene?"

"I was thinking," Winslow said, "that if you'd put down that gun I'd like to break your neck."

Señor Lopez laughed again, and Winslow tossed the coat sideways on the bed. Señor Lopez edged toward it carefully, reached in the pocket and extracted Winslow's revolver, dropped it on the floor and slid it beneath the bed with his foot. Then he put the coat around his shoulders.

"I am only borrowing it," he said. "If nothing happens to me it will be waiting for you at the plane in the morning. I am sorry to be so rude." And he slid past Winslow to the door.

"Put up your gun," Winslow said suddenly. "You can handle them better than I can. You're welcome to take the coat."

They looked at each other for a moment, and then Señor Lopez dropped his gun into his pocket.

"You're a nice fellow, Mr. Greene. You and I are gentlemen." He held out his hand, and Winslow found himself shaking hands with him. South Americans were always shaking hands.

"It is best," Señor Lopez said, "to have none of this on your mind. I am sorry to play tricks with you, but I did wish to show off a little, and I did wish to borrow the coat. Good night and all my compliments."

A second later Winslow Greene was staring at the softly closing door. It may have been because he was past feeling astonished that he felt no resentment. He raised his hand and pushed his glasses more firmly on his nose, and then he scratched the back of his head. It had been an evening such as he had never known—quite an evening.

"I can't understand it," he said softly to himself; "I really rather like him."

The best thing, Señor Lopez had said, was for him to have none of that business on his mind. It would have been hard for a certain type of person to have avoided it, but a prospecting trip was always an avenue of escape for Winslow Greene—his favourite way of avoiding issues. The next morning at the first streak of dawn the troubles of Señor Lopez already seemed remote. At the airport you were in what amounted to an international zone, a little country all its own, possessing the same brisk efficiency of every other airport in the world. The south-bound Pan-American clipper was just gliding out of the sky as Winslow arrived. It rolled slowly up to the neat

passenger building with its motors idling. Almost before it stopped the mechanics had run to it and had begun working beneath its wings. Then the attendants were rolling up the gangway. A bell rang and out came the pilot and co-pilot, and the passengers stepped out for a breath of air. There were business men from New York and well-dressed tourists who stared incuriously at the dull landscape, and in ten minutes they were aboard again. The huge plane taxied across the field and turned to face the early morning wind, and each of the motors roared in turn, and all of them roared in unison. Then the clipper was in the air gliding toward the south. Although Winslow had seen the sight many times before, it gave him the feeling which he had experienced as a child on his grandfather's farm when he stood by the railroad and watched the trains go by. It was the same half-restless, half-homesick feeling. He was not thinking of Señor Lopez at all, but of Henrietta Simpson. In a few minutes his own plane would be coming in. In a few minutes that smaller plane would carry him off, across the Andes, and he would be as inevitably and completely separated from her as though she had never crossed his horizon. It was all like the Berkeley philosophical theory which he had studied long ago—you could only be sure of the existence around you of the objects which came into the narrow circle of your sight and hearing. He already was beginning to wonder whether Henrietta Simpson really existed and whether everything that had passed between them was not a part of his imagination, when one of the airport attendants touched his arm.

"Your baggage is weighed, and your tickets are ready," he said, "and here is a package for you, Mr. Greene."

He was holding a bundle wrapped in rough brown paper. It

was Winslow's trench coat, and pinned to it was an envelope which bore his name. The script was written in elaborate flourishes with broad and fine pen strokes, reminiscent of copybooks back at home in the days when penmanship was an art.

"Thank you so much for the coat, my dear friend," Winslow read. "It is in the same condition in which you left it, and I beg that you excuse my rudeness which took it from you. I beg of you to remember me, but to forget if you can the circumstances of our meeting. Should you wish to communicate with me again when you return from what I hope will be a successful and happy journey, I am stopping in a pleasant secluded place, the address of which I shall give you—North Plaza number 28, the rear apartment on the third floor. Three short knocks, a pause, and then two. If I am not there someone will tell you where to find me. I think I shall be busy for a while studying our friends, Mr. Gruber and Mr. Martinez. Some day I hope to tell you more about them. In the meanwhile all my most respectful compliments and felicitations, and with them go my heart and hand, and all that I have is yours. Respectfully and obediently, your servant,

"EDUARDO LOPEZ."

The attendant touched his arm again.

"Mr. Greene, your plane is coming."

In the afternoon only three days later Winslow reached the base camp. It stood on the last high ground overlooking a mysterious sea of tangled vegetation and marshy land and rivers, thousands of miles of unmapped country which stretched to the Atlantic coast. He had reached one of the frontiers of the world, and it was filled with a sinister sort of majesty. When Winslow saw the clearing and the camp tents and the thatched buildings, the city of Santa Rosa and the Boca Grande Mine seemed years away. By the time he had eaten supper at the mess shack he felt that he had been at the base camp always. His chair and his cot were ready in his tent, and his mind had already turned to his plans for pushing out alone, when John Swan, one of the young engineers, called to him.

"We're going to talk to Boca Grande," he said. "You'd better tell them that you're here."

Although it seemed years away in time and in space on the other side of the Andes, you could talk by short-wave radio as easily as though Boca Grande were only a mile away. The instrument was set up on some crates of canned goods in the supply shack. A candle burned beside it because it was seven o'clock and dark. John Swan sat in front of the instrument smoking his pipe and twiddling its dials and looking at his wrist-watch.

"Hello," he called in Spanish, "hello. The base camp at Zamorra calling Boca Grande ... calling Boca Grande...."

He turned toward Winslow. "They're a little slow at

answering tonight, but they'll come through."

Winslow could never get over the strangeness of it. There was an awful sense of mysterious powers as you sat before that box-like thing with its knobs and tubes and waited for it to speak. You could be as familiar with the principles as you liked, and yet it conjured up a spirit world, when a human voice could carry on electric waves across the desolation of the Andes, over plateaus where Indians sat in their ponchos watching their llamas grazing, and thence down to the edge of nowhere. John Swan was not impressed by it. He adjusted the knobs and swore, and then there was a hissing sound, and then, sure enough, the voice came, blurred but insistent.

"Hello; calling the base camp at Zamorra."

"There it is," John Swan said, and he gave the dial another twist. "We've got it now. Hello, Boca Grande."

Winslow hitched himself nearer the instrument.

"Hello." The voice was clearer. It was Jim Walters, the boss of Boca Grande, speaking as clearly as though he were in the room. His voice had the familiar grating sound and the familiar brisk authority.

"Hello, Jim," Winslow said. "I got in this afternoon."

"What sort of a trip did you have?"

"All right."

"When are you starting out?"

"Tomorrow, if I can make it. The *Indios* are here."

The Indians who were going with him were actually at the door of the supply shack. He could see the light on their bare torsos as Jim Walters was speaking. He could see the dabs of paint on their faces, and yet Jim Walters might have been there in the room. He could understand why the Indians were afraid, for he was almost afraid himself.

"Are you taking John Swan with you?"

"No," Winslow answered; "he's busy here."

"You'd better take him with you. You'd better not try it alone."

"No," Winslow answered. He did not want to have the responsibility of anyone else where he was going, and Jim Walters should have known it. "I can handle it better by myself."

"Turn back if things get bad. Don't take any chances. How long will you be out?"

"I don't know," Winslow answered. "A month, perhaps."

"Well, good luck. Is everything else all right?"

"Yes," Winslow answered; "it's just the same here. Jim, how is it going at Boca Grande?"

"Fine," Jim Walters said. "We're getting good values in the north-east vein."

"Remember," Winslow said, "what I said about the faulting.

It's complicated there, and, Jim——" He hesitated and cleared his throat. "Did Milton Bird and Miss Simpson get in?"

"Yes, this evening. She's pretty fancy, isn't she?"

"She's all right," Winslow said.

"What?"

"I said that she's all right."

"Oh," Jim Walters said, "you think so, do you?"

He did not want to broadcast his thoughts across the Andes. It occurred to him that he might not see Jim Walters again if things did not go right, and there was one thing more he wanted to say.

"Down there at Santa Rosa some men were pretty nosy—trying to find out about shipments, do you understand? Ask Milton Bird about it. Maybe he talked too much."

"All right"; but he heard Jim Walters laugh. The laugh was confident and completely reassuring. He thought of the lights in the bungalows at Boca Grande, and of the steady pounding of the mill. "Milton Bird always talks too much. Well, good luck."

Then, with a turning of the switch, Jim Walters and Boca Grande were gone, but he still thought of Henrietta Simpson. Although he was cut off from everything, he was still tremendously aware of her....

Although he was cut off from everything—a single white man in a dug-out canoe with three Indians paddling down a river,

stopping at strange hamlets, speaking a strange language with a halting tongue—he could not lose her. When he saw a shrunken head hanging from the rafters he wondered what she would have said if she could have seen it. When the canoe tipped over in the rapids and he struggled to the shore, he wondered what she would have thought if she could have seen him then. The night before they turned back, when he sat writing his last report in his notebook, and the mosquitoes droned in clouds above the smoke of the fire, he felt happy, even though the rumors of gold in the stream beds had been exaggerated. It seemed to him in the days when they worked back up that river that she was always growing nearer. And one evening, weeks later, when they were out of the level land, climbing the trail along the slope, and when he saw the lights of the base camp ahead of him, he had the most ridiculous thought that she might be there. When he was half a mile off he fired a shot to tell them he was coming, and he walked into the camp about sunset.

He had forgotten all the comforts of the base camp, and the sounds and the smells of the life he had left were unfamiliar to him. His clothing was patched and torn; he was thinner, but he had suffered no illness and he was in good condition. As the people gathered around him, shaking his hand and asking questions, their faces looked too well fed and their hands were too soft. It was always so after a trip like that. It would take him days to get used to the food and a bed.

They treated him with a respect at the base camp with which he was not familiar anywhere else. They treated him so because they all understood what was implied by such a trip as he had taken. They gathered about the table in the mess shack, asking questions and looking at his map.

"It's the same story," he told them. "Of course there's gold. It's like the other places—there's gold in every stream, but not enough to make it worth while to try and get it."

Then he returned to his favourite theory about the gold of the old Inca Empire. Those stories from the Spanish Conquest of gold in the temples, of immense accumulations of the precious metal, were surely not exaggerated. Nevertheless, this might not necessarily mean that there was some secret gold deposit which no one had discovered. Today if you could send a hundred thousand Indians to wash the gold from the streams on the eastern slope, and if some central authority could take the gold and pay them nothing, you could pave a street with it. There were a number of places he had examined where one of those huge placer operations such as existed in Alaska would be profitable—but how could you bring the machines to such a country? The gold must wait until there were roads, and would there ever be roads down there? Personally he hoped that there would never be, for when there were roads no one would ever send him on another trip such as the one he had taken.

"You see," he said, "I like it out there. It's the only thing I'm good at, boys."

And then he had asked how everything had been going. It was characteristic of such a place as that that they mentioned all the tribulations of the base camp first. Everything had been going all right there. There was enough gas for the motor that drove the electric generator, and they had been in touch with Boca Grande every day. In fact, in the next five minutes, Boca Grande would be calling.

"Jim Walters has been asking for you lately," John Swan said. "He's been anxious for you to get in."

It was ridiculous that he should have thought of Henrietta Simpson, but she came immediately to his mind.

"He didn't say what he wanted me for?" Winslow asked.

"No," John Swan told him. "He just wanted you. You can talk to him right now. Boca Grande will be calling."

They were back again, seated before the short-wave radio, and once again Winslow Greene was adjusting himself to the altered values of time and space. There were all those strange blurred noises, and then came Jim Walters' voice, and again Winslow was calling to him across the Andes.

"Yes," Winslow was saying, "I got through all right. No, there was nothing there.... How's everything at Boca Grande?"

"Everything's fine down here. When can you get out? I want you to meet me at Pinas."

"What's the matter?" Winslow asked. "Why do you want me in such a hurry?"

"Keep your shirt on. You're not sick, are you?"

"No. Everything's fine."

"That's the boy." He was familiar with the altered tone in Jim Walters' voice. It was the tone he used when he was going to make you do something that you might not like. "Get cleaned up

and get a good night's sleep, and break out of there tomorrow morning. I want you down at the mine. I'll meet you at Pinas—the Villa Schwarz."

"What's the matter?" Winslow asked again. "Why do you have to meet me?"

"I tell you," Jim Walters said, "nothing is the matter, and even if so, I wouldn't tell you over the air, would I? so all the Western Hemisphere could hear me. Get to that landing field, and get the plane to Pinas. Don't argue over the air. Get out first thing in the morning."

"Jim." There was something else that he wanted to say, but he found himself hesitating and stammering. "If you should happen to see Miss Simpson—I mean, don't make a point of it—but if you should happen to see her tonight, you might tell her I'm back, and give her my regards."

"Give her what?"

Winslow squirmed uncomfortably. Jim Walters would not be alone by the radio in the mine office at Boca Grande. There would be others in the office listening.

"It isn't anything important, Jim. Just give her my regards."

Then he heard Jim Walters laugh.

"Son, I wouldn't worry. She's pretty busy now. Get out of there tomorrow morning, will you?"

That was the way it was. There was no longer any proper

regulation of time or of space or of climate. It was hot at the base camp, but in another day, because of Jim Walters' orders, he would be in a town in the center of the Andes, surroundings as different as another planet, and he would be suffering from the cold. Then in another day he must ride over mountain trails, down the Pacific slope to Boca Grande, where it was hot again. That interval in Pinas would be like an interlude in a dream. Those countries that were cut by the Andes were amazing lands, but Winslow was not thinking of the details of the trip. He was thinking of those last words of Jim Walters. They had a disturbing note, and he had never been as anxious before to get back to Boca Grande. He had always been glad to be away from the complications there, and now he wanted to get back more than anything else on earth.

Winslow removed his eyeglasses, blinked at them, and wiped the lenses carefully. The right-hand bow had broken when he was crossing a stream in the Oriente, and he had mended it, not very successfully, with a piece of adhesive tape.

The plane was losing altitude and the landing field of Pinas was beneath them. When he saw the brown tracks of the runway, Winslow told himself, as he had a dozen times before, that he preferred two weeks on mule-back to the two hours in the air above the Andes.

Out on the landing field the wind blew at the skirts of his trench coat and snatched at the brim of his battered felt hat.

Mr. Valdez, the company's agent, was there to meet him,

wearing a red Indian poncho and a neat brown Homburg hat with a bit of feather in it.

"This is your baggage?" Mr. Valdez asked. "You travel very light, Señor."

"How else can I travel," Winslow said, "back there?"

"True," Mr. Valdez answered, "but with the new spirit which is coming over South America it will all be different soon. The Government will be building highways to the Oriente. In no time this country will be very modern."

The driver of a battered touring car picked up Winslow's bedding roll and placed it in the front seat, and Winslow and Mr. Valdez got in behind.

"Tell him to drive slowly," Winslow said.

The driver placed his left hand on the horn. He held the wheel superciliously with his right hand.

"Soon," Mr. Valdez said, "this road will be improved and there will doubtless be electric lights along it. Ah, before long Pinas will be a metropolis."

"Tell him to drive slowly. He scares me," Winslow said, but Mr. Valdez only smiled.

"There is a room reserved for you at the Villa Schwarz. The plumbing in the villa has been much improved in the last two months. There is another w.c. and a new means of heating water. Señor Walters is waiting for you."

"I know," Winslow said; "he sent for me"; and he would have liked to have asked Mr. Valdez why, but it would not have been discreet. Judging from the appearance of the road, it had been market day in Pinas. The barefooted Indians who had drifted down that morning from the mountains to buy and sell in the plaza were heading back for home, moving up the road wrapped in their brightly dyed ponchos. Their copper-colored faces, broad and smiling, were vaguely reminiscent of the faces in the Maya sculpture of Yucatan—the same broad noses, heavy lips, deep-set eyes. The flat bare feet pattered tirelessly through the dust; men and women were bending under burdens looped in cloth across their shoulders.

The mountains had rolled back, revealing a flat, fertile valley with green fields and eucalyptus trees. The white-and-pink houses of Pinas and the towers of the church and the galleries of the municipal building were in the center of the fields. The car moved slowly through the crowded plaza, past the little booths where a few baskets and brown sugar cakes were still being sold, and where wool was still being weighed, and there was the familiar plaza smell of dust and wool and cattle and vegetable.

"Business is very good," Mr. Valdez said. "The Germans are defeating the Russians. There are three new chairs in the Educational Department of Municipal Hall—very comfortable with soft, plush seats."

They were through the town by then. The atmosphere of the plaza, so like a hill town in Spain, and so different from the frosted cake façades of Santa Rosa on the coast, had disappeared like a memory. Now, instead of being in Spain, they

were in one of those queer self-contained communities not uncommon in South America—a suburb of Pinas which had been known for years as the German colony. The street had become broad and very straight. Villas stood on each side, German villas, pink and blue and white, like the designs of houses which once came with boxes of blocks, fresh from an older Germany. The houses stood behind low walls, each in a garden of carefully spaced fruit trees with whitewashed trunks, each with a freshly brushed path leading up to its front door.

He might as well have been in another land, across another ocean. The car stopped by a soft pink stucco wall that was divided in its exact center by two gate-posts, each with a brightly polished plaque marked "Villa Schwarz." A straight path bordered by stock and mignonette led to the villa door.

Yes, he might not have been in South America at all, except for the Indian woman wrapped in a faded poncho who sat resting by the gate-posts with a great bundle of brushwood beside her, gazing at them with deep, expressionless eyes. Herr Knopp, the proprietor, was hurrying to meet him, a short, nervous innkeeper with a perspiring pink bald head.

"Welcome, Mr. Greene," Herr Knopp was saying. "Mr. Walters is in the garden. You share with him room number 7, the suite which looks on the kitchen garden. Hans, the gentleman's bag."

Winslow got slowly out of the car, feeling tired and dirty. A small German boy was already shouldering his bedding roll and the long Indian blow gun which he was bringing back—purchased from one of the natives on his prospecting trip.

"I'll see Mr. Walters first," Winslow said. "Yes, I know the room."

The hall of the villa was cool and shady, its bare boards waxed and spotless. The door of a bedroom to the left was open, giving Winslow a view of a huge Teutonic feather bed and dark-red draperies and maroon wallpaper. On the bed was a sailor's duffle-bag. It was hard to realize that only a few miles away in the valley of the mountains that surrounded them llamas were grazing and the Indians were sitting in front of huts that looked like haystacks, playing plaintive tunes on reed pipes.

German men and women who dwelt in the villa were seated near the fireplace outside the dining-room door. They were speaking German, and their voices grew hushed as Winslow followed Herr Knopp along the hall. Their faces, because he had stopped there often, were familiar to Winslow, all except one, and a stranger was always conspicuous in a place like Pinas. This stranger was a large man with closely clipped blond hair. He was sitting very straight holding a coffee cup, and when he saw Winslow he set it down, and their eyes met for a moment. The memory of the face stayed with Winslow as he followed Herr Knopp through the rear door to the garden. The eyes had been gray and steady; the face very deeply tanned. The hand which had held the coffee cup looked very strong.

"Who is the large man, Herr Knopp?" Winslow asked. "He's new here, isn't he?"

"The large man?" Herr Knopp shook his head. "Oh no; he has been here always. He owns a hacienda in the west valley. He is Herr Bauer. He deals in cattle."

"He looks more like a sailor," Winslow said.

"Oh no," Herr Knopp answered more quickly than was necessary, "certainly not a sailor. Where would he sail in the Andes?" And Herr Knopp laughed at his little joke. "Mr. Walters is in the summer-house. I shall send out whiskey—good English whiskey, not ersatz." And he laughed again at his second little joke.

The back garden with its wall and its closely clipped hedges and its stiffly pruned fruit trees was a relief to Winslow after the swamps and vines and thickets through which he had been travelling. The flower-beds were done in squares and circles and crescents, so neatly edged that they looked as though they had been cut out of dough with a cookie knife.

"You like it?" Herr Knopp asked. "It is like a bit of the Fatherland. We Germans are like the tortoise. We must carry our shells and customs with us." He pointed to the end of the garden. "There is Mr. Walters in the summer-house."

Winslow did not feel entirely at ease. Out in the jungle, on the eastern slope, it was always necessary to be watchful—even in one's sleep, and that instinct was not entirely gone. As he walked across that garden he remembered how the voices had dropped in the hall. He was conscious of an impersonal sort of scrutiny, neither friendly nor unfriendly.

Jim Walters was sitting in a canvas camp chair, in the open summer-house, reading a typewritten report.

"What are you sitting outdoors for?" Winslow said. "It's cold."

The sun was already beginning to drop behind the highest mountain peaks, so that both the garden and the valley were lined with long shadows, but Jim Walters never minded heat or cold. He sat there with sheets of typed paper lying around his chair. His pipe was on the table and his tobacco was running out of his pouch.

Winslow picked up the papers and closed the tobacco pouch. Jim Walters watched him without a line of his leathery, hard face changing.

"Now do you feel better?"

"Yes," Winslow answered. "There's no use having everything strewn around."

"My God," Jim Walters said. "I don't see how the Indians stand you. Why don't you sit down? Or do you want to dust the chair off first?"

Winslow brushed at the folds of his trench coat and sat down. "If you get a head cold at this altitude, Jim, you'll probably get pneumonia."

"Did you bring your hot-water bottle back with you, son?" Jim Walters asked.

Winslow nodded, but he did not smile.

"Let's go inside," he said. "I don't want to get a chill."

But the older man did not move. The wrinkles at the corners of his eyes and mouth deepened as his gaze, half-friendly and

half-puzzled, fixed itself on Winslow Greene's shambling figure and on his lantern-jawed, near-sighted face.

"My God," Jim Walters said gently, "so you're afraid you'll get a chill. No wonder they think in the States——" He checked himself and began again. "Why, if I didn't know you——" His glance travelled from Winslow to the paths between the geometrical beds in the formal gardens. An aged barefooted Indian with his greasy hair in a long braid was trimming one of the borders. Beyond the wall came a surge of voices and laughter—that odd Quechua language of the Andes natives that could not have changed much since Inca times.

"Afraid you'll get a chill, and I've seen you groggy from malaria carrying through in wet clothes for a month when no one else could walk."

Winslow's bony shoulders moved slightly.

"There's no use taking a chance with anything when it isn't necessary, Jim."

"There you go," Jim Walters said. "No wonder the directors of the company—— But never mind it now. I like it out here because there are too many people inside—too many Germans —or maybe your mind was on metamorphic rocks and you didn't notice."

It was hard to remember that he was at the Villa Schwarz now, where one's life did not depend so much on being careful. Nevertheless, a head cold contracted at a high altitude was always dangerous, but Winslow let the matter drop.

"There's a man in there I've never seen before—he's quite big and handsome. Do you know him?" Winslow asked.

Jim Walters glanced toward the house. "Maybe that's why I'm out here in the cold. Things are getting worse all the time between the States and Germany, and we're a lot nearer war than when you left. Maybe we ought to stop staying at this place when we come up from the mine."

"Knopp said his name was Bauer," Winslow went on, "and that he's got a hacienda in the west valley. You remember, we were up there once looking at an outcrop of andesite. It was there in the country rock—I never heard of anyone named Bauer."

Jim Walters laughed. "Yes, I remember. I ate a cucumber, and you told me I'd get dysentery."

"It's funny, this man Bauer—I thought perhaps he was a sailor," Winslow said.

Jim Walters sat up straighter in his canvas chair.

"Some day, son," he said, "you're going to drive me nuts. You've been by yourself too much; that's why your mind moves every which-way. What would a sailor be doing here?"

Winslow cleared his throat as he buttoned the upper button of his trench coat.

"You get to noticing a lot if you've been out alone with no one to disturb you," Winslow answered. "When I came into the villa the door was open in that big bedroom on the left. I suppose I

glanced in because I haven't slept on a bed for quite a while, and there on the bed——"

Jim Walters began to laugh.

"Don't tell me you forgot yourself," he said.

"Why is it everything I say makes you laugh?" Winslow asked him mildly. "There on the bed was one of those sailors' duffle-bags. Now, what would that be doing here? That's why I wondered if he might be a sailor."

"That's funny." Jim Walters pursed his lips and looked over his shoulder toward the house. There was something in his expression that made Winslow give him his full attention. It seemed to him that Jim Walters was sharing the illusion that someone might be listening.

"What's funny?"

Jim Walters turned his head slowly from the pink stucco façade of the Villa Schwarz.

"You've reminded me of something," he said slowly. "Say, this place gives me the creeps a little. Does it you? It's so neat. It's so confoundedly efficient, isn't it? I suppose I've been reading too much about the Axis network. My back begins to bristle nowadays when I see Germans. There's a feeling—it isn't friendly." His voice trailed off, and he reached toward the table for his pipe. Winslow handed it to him because he was nearer.

"What was it," he asked again, "that was funny?"

Jim Walters filled his pipe and lighted it before he answered.

"When you were down in Santa Rosa I hear you met a man named Eduardo Lopez. Maybe you don't remember, but he said he met you; he mentioned you particularly. He was down at Boca Grande a week or two ago. A bright lad, isn't he?"

"He came to Boca Grande?" Winslow repeated.

Jim Walters nodded. "Yes, and he had an introduction from the Government."

"What did he want?" Winslow asked.

"He wanted to look around. He was telling about some people down in Santa Rosa. He says they'd come to you asking when we shipped out gold."

Mr. Gruber and Mr. Martinez and all that talk in Santa Rosa were things he had very nearly forgotten.

"I should have written you," Winslow said. "I guess my mind was on something else." Then he told about Señor Lopez. He told Jim Walters everything.

"Don't let it worry you, son," Jim Walters said, and he had not even been listening carefully. "Lopez told me. I don't see why it bothers him, and he wouldn't explain. He wanted to know how we guarded it when we carried the stuff out—all sorts of things like that. I wouldn't have mentioned it at all if you hadn't said that about the sailor. Just the morning that he left—he was going back to Santa Rosa—he asked if anyone like a sailor, a German sailor, had been around. He said he was particularly looking for

a German sailor, but he wouldn't tell me why."

Winslow did not answer. He felt cold, but it was not the cold of the garden. It was the sort of chill which he had sometimes experienced when he was far away from everything familiar. Jim Walters' pipe was out, and he lighted it again.

"It doesn't make sense to me," he said comfortably. "Those Germans, maybe we ought not to suspect everything they do." He stopped and shook his head. "We're not in the war yet, even if we're near it. Let's forget it. You've got to leave here tomorrow morning for the mine."

Winslow hitched his chair nearer. "It's the number three vein on the third level, isn't it?" he asked. "I've been worrying a lot about that drift."

Jim Walters shook his head impatiently.

"No, no; that isn't why I called you in. There's a new hitch in our contract with the Government—nothing to worry about, the usual routine. I'm taking the plane to Santa Rosa tomorrow to see the lawyers; we'll have to go up to the capital and argue. I'll be gone for three weeks anyway, and you're about all I've got, boy."

His words grew slower. "You're the only one I know who can stand up if there's trouble. You'll have to take full responsibility for Boca Grande while I'm gone."

Winslow raised his hand to his glasses. He had a sickly feeling in the pit of his stomach. It was the same sensation that he had experienced years ago at school when the quarterback

had given him the signal to carry the ball. It was the same feeling which he had had once at a geological conference when he was asked to get up and speak a few extemporaneous words.

"Jim," he said, "what about Slim Egan?"

"Down in the hospital with a broken leg. What's the matter with you, son? Haven't you any guts?"

"Or Jeffries?" Winslow wiped his hands on his trench coat.

"Back in the States on leave. You can't dodge it, son. I don't like Nelson, and I don't like Milton Bird."

"Jim," Winslow said, "I'm not good with people."

Jim Walters nodded and pursed his lips.

"You've got to pull yourself up to it, son—something's got to pull you. Look at it this way. You've got the makings of a man if you don't let yourself go native like a lot of people in this place. When the dug-out tipped over that time and the whole damned river was crawling with crocodiles—you're all right when you're in a jam, but otherwise you're getting queer."

Winslow looked embarrassed.

"I'm not like you, Jim," he said.

Jim Walters scowled. A light breeze fluttered the papers on the table and his voice grew sharp.

"Are you saying you're going to let me down?"

"No," Winslow answered. "I'm only warning you. I won't be any good if anything comes up."

Jim Walters watched him for a while before he spoke.

"You'd think I'd told you to shoot yourself. There won't be anything to do except to sit there in the office. Why, I'm giving you a chance! You——"

A sound made Winslow turn quickly. He had forgotten that he was at the Villa Schwarz.

"I'm sorry, Jim," he said. "I don't like it when anyone's behind me."

It was only the pale little German who had brought in his bedding roll. The boy was walking up the path carrying a tray of glasses and a whiskey bottle.

"Out there," he said, "you know you have to watch——"

Jim Walters reached for the bottle and tipped it above the glass.

"Well," he said, "here's looking at you, son. Pedro will be waiting for you at the pass tomorrow morning with the mules, and you'll be in Boca Grande by dark if nothing busts. Good old Boca Grande! The timbering needs fixing on the sixth level, and all the wives are quarrelling. And that reminds me——"

"Jim," Winslow began, "can't you get someone else?" But Jim Walters' rising voice continued:

"Good old Boca Grande, that wonder spot where clean-limbed American college graduates are learning to be miners and where bright-eyed girls come out from the States to make homes for them, and cry because it isn't as comfortable as Winnetka, Illinois. Yes, that reminds me——"

"Reminds you of what?" Winslow asked.

Jim Walters took a swallow of whiskey.

"When you get Santa Rosa on the radio, order a steamship ticket for one. We're getting a new office secretary, and she's going to be forty-five or over. As soon as you get there you're firing Henrietta Simpson."

When he heard her name ring loudly across the quiet of the garden he was as startled as though Jim Walters had been reading his thoughts.

"Why," he said, and he paused to control his voice—"why, what's the matter with her?"

It was annoying to see that Jim Walters was only casually interested. Before Jim Walters spoke, Winslow was certain that the manager of the Boca Grande Mine did not understand Henrietta Simpson in the least. He was not the type—he did not have the sensitiveness or the sympathy to understand anyone who was slightly different from other people.

"You met her at the boat," Jim Walters said; "she's just the type that doesn't fit in with us. She's one of those rich girls who

doesn't have to work. You saw that hair and that bracelet and that luggage and those clothes. They've upset all the women in Boca Grande. You know Boca Grande. It isn't a country club."

Winslow cleared his throat.

"Jim," he began, "I think you're being pretty narrow-minded."

He stopped and closed his lips tightly. The discipline at Boca Grande was very strict, and he knew it had to be. He had never before even considered criticizing Jim Walters' judgement.

"Say," Jim Walters said, "since when have you been broadminded?"

"I just mean you ought to give her time, Jim," Winslow said. "I mean, I don't see what difference it makes as long as she's efficient—as long as she does her job."

Jim Walters shook his head.

"I'll be fair," he said. "She does her job all right; maybe she does it too well. Damn it, son, you know how it is at Boca Grande. We can't cope with too much personality. I want to be fair, but there's more to it than that."

Winslow took off his glasses and blinked at Jim Walters.

"Well, Jim," he said, and he tried to speak casually, "you should have told her that yourself. I don't see how you can expect me to give her a ticket home because you don't like her clothes and her personality. Personally"—Winslow was aware that he was blushing—"I like her. I mean, I thought she was a

very nice girl."

"Oh, you did, did you?" Jim Walters was looking at him curiously.

"She was lonely," Winslow said quickly, as though her loneliness explained everything. "I—well, I felt sort of sorry for her. I don't know if you know what I mean. She was so far away from everything."

He had been afraid that Jim Walters would laugh. Instead, Jim Walters looked serious, almost kindly.

"I know what you mean," he said. "Wide-eyed, sort of lonely. A lot of us felt that same way about her. The trouble is, too many did. I don't want to be rough on her if she's a friend of yours."

Jim Walters lifted the bottle and poured himself another drink.

"But what else has she done?" Winslow asked. "What else is the matter with her?"

Jim Walters looked at his glass and shook it carefully. "I wouldn't take it too hard, son," and his voice was very kind. "I'm not getting personal, but maybe what means a lot to you doesn't mean anything to a girl like that. It's sort of bleak at Boca Grande, and it's happened there before. I'm not blaming her, but she's fixed it so that the Milton Birds are darn near breaking up. It's a choice between her and our only metallurgist. One of them has to go."

Winslow reached for the whiskey bottle, something he very

seldom did, poured some into his glass and drank it straight, while Jim Walters sat there watching him.

"You know Milton," he began; "Milton's always——" And his voice trailed off into hopeless, dumb resentment.

"Yes," Jim Walters answered, "that's right. He can't let women alone, but it wasn't all his fault. It's lonely for her, and she's a mighty pretty girl."

Winslow sat up straighter.

"You know how people talk down there," he said; "they make something out of nothing. I don't believe a word of it."

"Maybe it's sort of hard on you, son," Jim Walters began mildly, "I can see."

Winslow put on his glasses again.

"I'll run the mine for you," he said slowly, "but if you ask me to do that, you'll have to fire me, too."

"Now, wait a minute," Jim Walters said; "let's skip it. Use your judgement. Just don't be a fool, that's all."

He stopped. The dinner bell at the Villa Schwarz was ringing.

Herr Knopp had stepped out of the villa door, and just behind him, walking slowly, was the stranger. Herr Bauer had changed for the evening into a blue double-breasted suit. His hair was clipped *en brosse*, and his ears were long and pointed. His lips were turned upward into a thoughtful smile as Herr Knopp

spoke.

"Gentlemen," Herr Knopp said, "may I have the honor to present to you Herr Bauer?"

Herr Bauer bowed from the hips. His alert straightness made Winslow aware of his own perpetual stoop, and his even features made Winslow conscious of his own long nose and of his glasses and reminded him that he had not shaved for a day and that he had been sleeping in his clothes.

"Mr. Greene has been in the Oriente, Mr. Bauer," Mr. Knopp said.

Winslow felt uneasy under Herr Bauer's steady glance. Then Herr Knopp's voice chimed in again, oily and nervous.

"Herr Bauer has a request to make. He is on his way to the river to go to Santa Rosa. He will be passing through Boca Grande."

There was a change in Jim Walters' voice, but it was measured and polite.

"The Rest House is open for anyone passing through," he said. "But don't discuss politics in Boca Grande."

"Politics are dull," Herr Bauer said, "when good fellows get together. Some Germans do not eat children." He laughed, and again Herr Knopp's voice chimed in.

"When I told Herr Bauer that our good friend Mr. Greene perhaps was riding down the trail tomorrow, he wondered if

there might not be an extra mule."

"The mules are hauling timber," Jim Walters said sharply. "We're mighty short of mules. There isn't an extra one. Sorry, Mr. Bauer."

Herr Bauer raised his hand.

"Please, I beg, think nothing of it. I shall make my own arrangements."

He turned and walked back into the Villa Schwarz with Herr Knopp just behind him. Jim Walters grasped Winslow's arm.

"Now, what the hell is he putting his nose in our business for? Pretty shirty, wasn't it?"

Winslow sighed. He was not thinking about Herr Bauer. Herr Bauer was only a shadowy, impersonal figure. He was thinking of Henrietta Simpson and the Boca Grande Mine. All the petty politics of the place were back with him, all its narrowness and bickering and jealousies. He was sure the gossip about her was not true. He told himself again and again it was not.

The dining room of the villa Schwarz was perfect of its kind. It resembled the inns he had known the year he had spent in Heidelberg. It had the same half-musty, half-beery smell which sometimes went with perfect cleanliness. The dishes, the condiment bottles, and the bread with caraway seeds, all were German. The only incongruous note was the waitress—a barefooted Indian girl. All the guests at the tables were German men and women who looked competent and perfectly adjusted, speaking in their native tongue, interested only in themselves.

"I wonder if anything special is going on tonight?" Winslow asked.

Walters looked up from his plate of bean soup.

"Don't be so jumpy, son," he said.

It was true that the diners made him nervous. Certainly no one in the Villa Schwarz could have been curious about them, for the hotel was used to American visitors from the mine, but still he felt that he was being watched.

He forgot his apprehension when Jim Walters began to talk again about Boca Grande. In a little while the personalities of the big gold mine were coming back to him, with all the problems which one encountered in any mining camp, details of behavior and eccentricity which would not have been important anywhere else—anecdotes which no one would have bothered about, but to which the remoteness gave a strange significance. He could nearly hear the voice of the mill superintendent, as Jim Walters was talking, and the aimless clicking of the billiard balls in the Club House. He was thinking of Henrietta Simpson and he could remember everything that she had said. She had said herself once that they would both remember....

"I guess I think too much," he said. Jim pushed back his chair.

"What's worrying you, son? Something's worrying you."

Winslow shook his head.

"I just feel unfamiliar here," he answered. "I just have a sort of feeling—Jim——"

"What?" Jim Walters said.

"Jim"—Winslow put his hands carefully before him on the table—"I don't think you've been fair to her. I really don't."

He saw Jim Walters frowning at him. "I don't want you to think there's anything personal, but I only think——"

Jim Walters stood up.

"Forget it," he said. "Come to my room where we can be quiet. I can't hear myself talk here." Winslow stood up also. It pleased him that the German language was getting on Jim Walters' nerves as well as his. He had never been so keenly aware of the difference between Americans and Germans.

The mine manager's manner had become brisk and business-like.

"I want to see your notes. We've got a lot of ground to cover tonight, and I want you to go over the mine reports. And, by the way, I went into your place at Boca Grande the other day. I hope you don't mind." He slapped Winslow on the shoulder. "They've been yelling for some ore specimens at the Government Mine Bureau. I stole a lot of yours and packed them into a gold box. I'm taking it out with me, and, believe me, it's heavy."

Winslow brightened. At last he faced a problem with which he was completely at home.

"I hope you picked the best ones," he said. "Some of that galena is beautiful—beautiful. I'd better see that they're labeled right."

He wanted to see about the labels, even though he was sure that no one in the Government Mine Bureau would read them, and he heard Jim Walters laugh.

"You always warm up," Jim Walters said, "when anyone talks about rocks. You wouldn't think a small box of galena would be so heavy."

Winslow followed Jim Walters out of the dining room across the hall and then down a long passage.

"They've put us at the end," Jim Walters said. "Room 7, with the bath that doesn't work, but there's one thing about this place. They certainly have room."

It was true. All the rooms in the Villa Schwarz were large and comfortable, all furnished with massive beds and bureaus and hung with heavy drapery. They turned into a passage on the left, long and narrow and lighted by a single dim electric bulb, and their footsteps rang noisily on the bare wood floor. The end room was the room Herr Knopp often gave to the guests from the mine. It was a suite with a little parlor and a huge drafty bedroom with a bath beyond it, and with wide windows that looked over the kitchen garden.

He could see the door of the suite at the end of the hallway, a heavy dark door, with its number on it in white paint. He had been down that dusky passage-way a dozen times before, and he never knew what made him stop dead that night just before they reached the door. It must have had something to do with his nerves and with his sense of order. Jim Walters had pulled the key from his pocket, but there was no necessity for a key, for the

door was ajar, showing a thin dark section of the sitting room behind it. There was not a sound in the passage, yet Winslow felt himself grow cold and tense, just as though he were out again in the jungle listening.

"Wait a minute," he said softly; "the door's open."

Jim Walters turned. "It's that boy. He forgot to close it."

But Winslow Greene knew it was not the boy. He pushed himself in front of Jim Walters.

"Careful," he whispered; "someone's in there."

An instant later, just as he stepped to the crack of the door, there was a sound—not from the sitting room, but from the bedroom beyond—the gentle closing of a window.

"Careful, Jim," he whispered, "careful."

But there was no reason to be careful any longer. Whoever had been in Jim Walters' room was gone.

"You're crazy," Jim Walters said. "It was the wind." And he reached for the switch behind the door and turned on the light.

"No," Winslow answered, "I'm not crazy."

The electric bulb that hung from the ceiling of the sitting room made the place bright and garish. The room was furnished with a round center table covered by a piece of artificial brocade and three stiff chairs. Beyond, in the bedroom, were the two dark beds, and Winslow saw his bedding roll and Jim Walters'

baggage—a battered suitcase with a flat wooden box beside it.

"Do you smell it, Jim?" Winslow asked softly. "Cigarette smoke. You don't smoke them, Jim."

There was no doubt about it. In the still, cool air of the bedroom there was a trace of cigarette smoke.

"Look, Jim," Winslow said, "the box!"

The box by the suitcase was a flat, solidly made case, and one of the boards on the top of it had been pryed up, revealing a collection of dark, rough stones. Jim Walters walked over to it and prodded it with his toe, and his cool gray eyes met Winslow's. The crow's feet at their corners were deeper and his lips were puckered as though he had tasted something sour.

"They thought it was gold bars, didn't they?" he said.

Winslow nodded, and the room was very still.

"Son," Jim said, "I don't like it." And his mind must have followed Winslow's mind. "I ought to be back at the mine."

Winslow did not answer, and Jim Walters kicked at the box again.

"I don't like it," Jim Walters said, but he seemed to be talking to himself as much as to Winslow Greene, and he stood there with his hands clasped behind him, staring at the box. "We've got two hundred thousand dollars' worth of bars in the office safe at Boca Grande."

Then Jim Walters stood for a second thinking. A good part of his life had been spent in making quick decisions. "I guess we'd better——" And then a gesture from Winslow Greene stopped him.

Winslow had moved silently toward the half-opened French window. He stood completely motionless to one side, away from the light.

"Wait," he said, "someone's outside." For a second both of them stood listening, but there was only a muffled clatter of voices and footsteps in some distant part of the house. Outside in the dark there was no sound but the rustle of wind in the eucalyptus trees. Winslow's watchfulness relaxed and he turned toward Jim Walters.

"It's all right," he said; "he's gone now."

Jim Walters' expression was half-annoyed, half-bewildered.

"You're crazy," he said slowly; "there wasn't a sound."

Winslow still stood staring at the window.

"I didn't say I heard anything," he said; "there wasn't any noise."

"Then how in the devil"—Jim Walters raised his voice as though the tension in the room disturbed him—"can you tell that anyone was out there?"

"I can't explain it," Winslow said. "A moment ago it wasn't all right, but it's all right now. It's the way you get if you're out in

the bush, I guess. I've felt it ever since I've been here. Something, someone listening, someone watching. It's the way you get, I guess."

Jim Walters did not answer, but stood scowling at the wooden box which had been made to contain gold bars. A number of casual, apparently unrelated facts were suddenly becoming real to Winslow Greene. It was as though a net had been tossed about him at Santa Rosa and he had broken through the meshes, but now they were around him again, and growing tighter. Mr. Gruber and Mr. Martinez were suddenly distinct and clear, and all that Lopez had said made sense.

"They were in my room at Santa Rosa," Winslow said. "I told you, they read the mine report."

The lines on Jim Walters' face were deeper.

"Yes," he said. "If that's the way it is, I don't want the gold at the mine in an antique safe. The New York ship stops at Santa Rosa on Friday. Do you see what I mean?"

"Yes," Winslow said, "I see."

"It's up to you. You'll be boss there," Jim Walters said. "I want it aboard ship at Santa Rosa. Take it up here and move it out by plane, or take it to Santa Rosa on the river boat, I don't care which, but you go with it and take a good strong guard along. And there's one other thing."

"Yes," Winslow said. He would not mind taking out the gold. It would be better than sitting still at Boca Grande.

"That man Bauer. You'd better keep an eye on him."

"Don't worry," Winslow said; "I'll get it out, but I won't fire Henrietta Simpson."

Jim Walters shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"Get her off your mind," he said. "This is serious. She doesn't matter now."

The mules were standing sullenly twitching their ears in a small mud-walled enclosure in back of a straw-thatched native hut, and they were already saddled, three pack and three riding mules, and there were two muleteers from the mine, Pedro and Ramon. Ramon was barefoot, wrapped in a red poncho, but Pedro wore a leather coat and high boots and carried a pearl-handled pistol in his holster.

"Pedro," Winslow asked, "has anyone gone down the trail?" But Pedro only shrugged his shoulders.

"No; we're early, Señor. Shall we mount, if you are ready?"

The sun was just rising and the wind, rising with it over that bare brown grassland which they called the Paramos, had already kicked up swirls of dust. The clouds, just turning pink in the sunrise, clustered about two snow-capped volcanic peaks which also were beginning to glitter in the sun. The trail wound upward to the ridge and he could see black-and-white vultures gliding with the wind. Winslow glanced behind him at the pack animals.

"Pedro."

"Señor," Pedro said.

"Have you heard them speak of a man named Bauer who owns a hacienda in the west valley?"

Pedro shook his head. He had never heard the name.

When they were out of the enclosure the wind whipped at his trench coat, but once they were over the ridge they would be out of it. In a few hours it would be hot, and there would be trees with air-plants and little streams and mud-holes and perhaps some natives burning charcoal. It would be so hot that they would strip down to their shirts, and the Paramos and that clear, cold air would be as far away as the Villa Schwarz.

A good part of Winslow's time in late years had been spent on mule-back, for mules were better than horses in that rough country. They could go down trails which were almost impassable—like the trail which zigzagged from the high Andes down to Boca Grande. It switched back and forth in an interminable descent, down spurs and through narrow valleys. They stopped at noon at a level bit of ground near a brook, and when Winslow looked back the clouds had dropped lower, as they did at noon-time, and now most of the trail they had taken was concealed by mist. But the sun was shining where the mules stood and butterflies darted from the thickets, bright yellow and orange and blue. The earth beneath his feet was tinged with reddish iron, and it was quite dry.

"The trail is good this year," Winslow said. Those were almost the first words he had spoken since sunrise. And now, as

they rode on, Pedro began telling the news of Boca Grande. He spoke of the July fiestas and the cock-fights.

"You should have been there, Señor. My bird, the Colorado, which you bet on once——" And Pedro's voice went on describing the battle and the wagers.

Winslow looked at his watch again, although it was not necessary, for he was able to judge almost the exact minute by the sun. It was close to four o'clock, and soon the trail would switch into the valley of the stream that flowed through Boca Grande. In a few minutes he would see the ridge, deep green with vegetation, over which they must climb before they reached the mine. Pedro's voice was going on, retailing bits of gossip. The mule belonging to Señor Nelson, the white one, had died. The North Americans had been giving many parties, and there would be a dance that night. Winslow rode on, listening.

"And all the North Americans are well, I hope?" he asked.

"Oh yes, Señor," Pedro answered. "It has been very gay."

"And the new Señorita?" Winslow asked, "the one who came just after I left—Señorita Simpson, is she well?"

He did not approve of gossiping with Pedro, but his mind was back again on Henrietta Simpson.

"Oh yes," Pedro said—"oh yes, Señor." And they rode on in silence.

He was going over in his mind again all that she had said and all that he had said. He was more conscious of her now that they

were drawing near Boca Grande. He was imagining what it would be like when they met. He was wondering what she remembered of the last time, and he thought of Jim Walters' voice:

"Maybe what means a lot to you doesn't mean anything to a girl like that."

That might have been true with a great many others, but he clung stubbornly to the picture his mind had made of her. His reason told him that he actually knew very little of her, and yet it made no difference. It was inconceivable that a girl like Henrietta Simpson could be attracted by anyone like Milton Bird. Yet he could not forget the pang of jealousy he had experienced when Milton Bird had first seen her. He could only remind himself that she had turned from Milton Bird back to him again.

His mule lowered its head as it scrambled up the slope, and Winslow looked approvingly at the animal's sweating neck. It was his own mule, and a very strong, willing one, ready to go until it dropped or ready to stand all day dozing in the sun.

"Steady," Winslow said, "steady, pet." The animal had stumbled, but it had not lost its footing. It was as sure as a cat on the mountain trail. In another hour they would be on the top of the ridge looking down at Boca Grande, which would still be five miles distant; but if they reached the summit by sundown, the rest of the trail could be negotiated easily in the dark. The sun was low enough so that it was cool beneath the trees, and when they passed a cluster of delicate white orchids, he stopped and picked them and handed them to Pedro, telling him to hold

them carefully. They were a rare species, and it occurred to him that Henrietta might never have seen them. At least they would be something to give her when they met again.

At the top of the spur they pulled in their mules. Boca Grande was visible five miles away. He could see the mill and the electric plant beside the stream, and the mine hoist pointing upward like a finger. Their trail, from Pinas, ran along the ridge and did not descend to the river until just before it reached the mine, but a hundred feet below them by the brawling waters of the stream was the river trail leading northward to the town of Bombas. From where he was standing he could see a piece of the track, a thin ribbon of reddish earth close to the boulders of the stream, a part of a view which was so familiar that it meant nothing. In fact, he had hardly bothered to look, but had turned to straighten his saddle blanket, when he heard Ramon behind him whisper something to Pedro, and he heard Pedro laugh.

"What is it?" Winslow asked.

When he turned, Ramon looked stupid and the smile left Pedro's face.

"Nothing, Señor," Pedro said.

"Boys," Winslow said sternly, "when we ride together we share our little jokes. What is this one—about me, perhaps?"

"Oh no, Señor." Pedro's wide brown eyes looked pained. "Ramon and I have too much respect. It is nothing to bother the Patron; it is only——" Pedro stopped and shook his head.

"Well," Winslow asked him, "what is it?"

"It is nothing, Señor"—Pedro shrugged his shoulders—"none of my affair or Ramon's——"

Winslow took a step forward and looked down into the valley. Far below him two mules were tied close by the river with their riders standing near them, and he recognized the two at once in spite of the distance. The man was in white riding clothes and a short-sleeved polo shirt. There was no mistaking the set of the shoulders or the perfection of the riding boots and breeches. Even at the distance he recognized the girl's yellow hair and he knew her laugh. Although that laugh was far away, it was faintly musical. Milton Bird and Henrietta Simpson were there on the river trail alone five miles from Boca Grande, where no one else would be at just that time. Winslow stood looking for a moment, and then he saw Henrietta Simpson turn her head.

"We'll go now," he said.

By morning all the servants would have heard of it; he climbed slowly into the saddle.

"Pedro," he said, "those flowers—they are too much bother. Throw them away."

His voice to his own ears sounded casual, so surprisingly controlled that he could hardly believe it was he who was speaking, for he could feel anger running through him like poison, and he had never felt that way before. When he saw Pedro toss the orchids carelessly beside the trail, he suppressed a desire to burst out laughing because everything was tossed away with them—all his illusions of Henrietta Simpson. The

only conceivable reason she should have ridden out five miles was because she wished to be alone with Milton Bird. It meant that he must forget everything which he had been thinking. It meant that he had been a fool, but he would get over it soon enough. He was the acting boss of Boca Grande now, and Jim Walters had been right. Henrietta Simpson would have to leave, and the sooner the better as far as he was concerned. He would tell her so that night.

It had sometimes seemed to Winslow Greene that more of his life at Boca Grande was spent at social functions than examining the levels of the Boca Grande Mine. Nearly every evening he had to watch a basketball game, or an exhibition of native dances in the big new room of the Boca Grande Miners' Club, and converse with freshly washed, dark-eyed men in the club rooms. It was all a part of the effort to show South America that the Boca Grande Mine was not a predatory institution, that instead it had a real interest in the health and progress of the entire region. He did not mind these parties as much as he did the ones at the American Club. Miners were the same anywhere, and Winslow always got on with them, but it was different at the American Club.

There the dances and gatherings always gave him the impression of being forced and artificial, although the people were all his friends and fellow-countrymen. The trouble was that everybody had seen too much of everybody else, and still had to be polite enough to pretend they had not.

When Winslow rode up the street of Boca Grande that

evening, his mule's hoofs clicked and slipped on the cobbles. He passed the houses of the straw bosses and the lighted veranda of the army barracks and the jail, and then his road turned to the little plaza with its stores and church and wound uphill to the Americans' bungalows. He knew it was dance night because the Japanese lanterns were lighted on the Club House veranda, and more were strung from the trees on the edge of the swimming pool. Stefano, his boy, was waiting for him in his little three-room bungalow. Stefano was part Indian and part Spanish, small and nervous and smiling; and Stefano knew it was dance night, too, for he had placed white clothes on the bed. Stefano was glad to see him, and began telling him the news. Stefano had been to his native town twenty miles back in the hills, to the fiesta.

"Everyone asked for you, Señor," Stefano said. "The Mayor himself inquired. Will you be late tonight, Señor?"

Winslow told him to go to bed, and to awaken him at six the next morning. Then he stood, gazing at all the familiar objects in his living room, at the broad stone fireplace and at the chairs and tables which had been made by the mine carpenters, and at all the possessions he had accumulated—the poisoned arrows from the Oriente above the mantelpiece, his radio, and the rock specimens beside it from the mine, the photographs from home on his writing table, and the woven wool rugs, bought from the market at Pinas. With a contented sigh he reached in the pocket of his trench coat and pulled out his compass, and then he drew out his revolver and placed them both on the writing table. His silver spurs and his riding crop were hanging on the wall, and his geological hammer and his drawing board were on the floor beneath them. Stefano had left out the whiskey which Winslow

always had ready for guests, and two glasses. This time he started to pour himself a drink, but stopped as Stefano entered holding a small square envelope.

"The Señorita Simpson has left it for you," he said.

Winslow opened it carefully. The writing was half script and half print, which showed that she had received her early discipline at one of those progressive schools.

"Thank heavens you're back," he read. "I've thought of you a lot. I hope you'll be at the dance tonight."

Up at Pinas, ten thousand feet above the sea, it had been cold, but here at the mine, halfway to sea level, there was no chill, even in the evening air, and no breeze stirred in the mango and eucalyptus trees which the company had planted around the Club. There was a plaque beside the front door which read:

"This building, erected by the Boca Grande Mining and Exploration Company, is dedicated to the recreation and good-fellowship of those of us who give our days to the Boca Grande Mine."

As Winslow entered the front door the large phonograph in the corner was playing "The Night We Called it a Day"—showing that there still were no new records.

> "Darling, the beautiful ways you had;
> We were nuts about each other,
> Neither glad nor sad,
> And now my heart is breaking.
> Was it good or bad?

That night when we called it a day."

That tune represented everything that he had always avoided at home. It sounded like a party in one of the fraternity houses at college, and yet out there the words coming from the battered phonograph made him slightly homesick.

Everyone was dancing. Mr. Carlos, the Club steward, stood on duty beside the non-alcoholic punch bowl. Morris Greeley, the latest young shift-boss from the States, who should have been doing his part by dancing, was reading magazines in the corner. Jim Walters had said the boy was homesick and had no guts. Bob Nelson, senior employee at the mine after Jim Walters and Winslow, was dancing with Mrs. Bird and telling her one of his familiar stories. Mrs. Nelson was dancing with the red-headed boy from the day shift at the mill, and Colonel Rostas, the Commandante of the local military police, in shiny boots and a Sam Brown belt, danced with Mrs. Melville, the wife of the mine superintendent. They were all out on the floor, all ranks and gradations of their little society. He saw that Henrietta Simpson was teaching Milton Bird some elaborate step which seemed to consist of assuming a squatting position and kicking. He noticed that Mrs. Bird was watching over her partner's shoulder, and looked as though she were about to cry, which was not unusual. Elsie Bird was always just as happy as she could be, or else she was crying.

When the music stopped, everyone saw him.

"Look who's here," Bob Nelson shouted. "Why, here's Win."

As a matter of fact, Winslow knew that Bob Nelson had tried to crowd him out of his job a year before, when two of the directors had come from New York, and Bob Nelson had said enough against him to have made it bad, if Jim Walters had not intervened, but Winslow bore him no particular grudge. No matter what you thought of anyone, you had to pretend to be friends. All the men were shaking hands with him, and Mrs. Nelson kissed him, which was perfectly correct, since she was the senior wife present.

First he danced with Mrs. Nelson, and then he danced with Mrs. Bird. It was like all the other parties; there would be talk if he did not dance with everyone in approximately the right order according to rank. He danced with Henrietta Simpson last, certainly not because he wished to, but because it would have been needlessly conspicuous for her if he had not.

She had on a green dress, one which he remembered having seen in her trunk at Santa Rosa. They had got back to "The Night We Called it a Day" again. He tried to believe when he held her in his arms that dancing with her was a completely formal gesture. He tried his best to be impersonal, and he asked her how she was and whether she minded the heat.

"Let's stop and go out on the porch," she said. "There's so much I want to ask you."

Her suggestion showed that she had learned nothing at Boca Grande. Everyone would have gossiped for a week, even the old lady who sold oranges in the plaza, if they were to go out on the porch in the middle of a dance.

"Oh no," he said; "I like to dance, unless you want some lemonade."

"Anything," she said, "but lemonade. I'm awfully glad you're back. Did you get my note?"

"Yes," he said. "Thank you very much."

It was an ungracious sort of answer, but then he knew exactly how glad she was that he was back, and his knowledge made every word they spoke a hideous sort of travesty against the background of that sentimental music.

"Do you remember what you said," she asked, "about the life here? I like it now, I really do—especially now you're back."

"Oh," Winslow said. That last remark was needless—the sheerest piece of hypocrisy, and he wanted to tell her so, but he checked himself.

"I'm getting to be a part of everything now," she went on. "I've fixed all the files at the office and I've cleaned the desks, and I'm teaching English at the Girls' School."

Winslow did not answer, and she looked up at him quickly.

"Aren't you glad to see me?"

"Why, yes," he said slowly. "I—I've thought about you quite a lot."

"Then look as though you were glad," she said. "Don't look the way you looked when I first saw you on the ship."

Then the music stopped and he saw Milton Bird hurrying toward them, and Winslow watched, outwardly perfectly cool.

"Tell me you'll walk home with me," she said—"quick, before he asks me." It was scandalous that Milton Bird should be such a fool as to ask her, and to let his wife walk home alone, but it was better that way. It was better to have it over, entirely over.

"Of course," he said. "If you'd like. There's something I want to tell you."

Then Milton Bird was dancing with her again, while Winslow stood beside the wall and polished his glasses. He was always out of place at those Boca Grande dances, but he had never felt so completely alone as he did when he watched Milton Bird.

There was one good thing about those weekly dances; they always ended sharp at eleven o'clock. When the music stopped the girls all sat in a row along the wall and changed their slippers for walking shoes.

"Mr. Greene's taking me home," he heard Henrietta call to Miss Frear, the hospital nurse. "Don't bother to wait up for me."

Winslow tapped the Commandante on the shoulder.

"Could I trouble you on Tuesday," he asked, "for four of your best men?"

The Commandante was very discreet, but he understood at once that Winslow was talking about the gold.

"But certainly, Señor, I shall make arrangements," he answered. "I had not heard it was going out yet. Whom will you send in charge with it?"

Winslow answered the question carelessly before he thought.

"I'm taking it myself. I want to see the river."

If it had not been that he was tired, and if his mind had not been on Henrietta Simpson, he would not have said so much.

"Ah," the Commandante said, and twisted the end of his moustache, "so this time it goes by river?"

"Don't mention the route to your men," Winslow said. "I'm taking extra precautions this time because——" And then Henrietta Simpson interrupted them.

"What are you two whispering about?" she asked. "Are you sending out the gold?"

"Don't," Winslow said severely; "we never talk about it."

She must have been startled by the change in his voice.

"I'm sorry," she said. "They've been inquiring about it from New York. I'll know better next time."

Outside in the bright starlight most of Boca Grande was already sound asleep, and the steady pounding of the ore-crushers in the mill only served to emphasize the silence around

them. Winslow and Henrietta Simpson walked up a narrow stony path away from the Club House. He could see a halo of light glowing from the mill in the valley beneath them, and the rhythmic pounding of the ore-crushers was like the heart of Boca Grande pounding, pounding out the gold which had brought them into the South American mountains. When the mill stopped, all of Boca Grande stopped. If the mill should stop for good, as it would sometime, for the life of a gold mine had limits, like a human life, Boca Grande would die. The people living there would leave for the sea coast or move away along the mountain trails. The Boca Grande Club and all the bungalows would be deserted, and the forest would begin to grow over them. The sound of the mill was all that held that community together—the only reason why he and she were there that night. Personally, he had never liked the sound, nor did he care for the mechanics of extracting gold. He cared more for the infinite complexity of the rock formations, and for him Boca Grande was the end, and not a beginning. He wanted to be away from it where something new was starting. He had never wanted to be away from it as much as he did that night. There was a mocking futility in the pounding of the mill.

When Jim Walters came back, Winslow was telling himself, he would get another job, away from everything, especially from women. She seemed so completely oblivious of the way he felt as she walked there beside him. She had a white silk cloak tossed carelessly over her bare shoulders, and her yellow hair looked very shiny in the starlight. She was humming a snatch of a tune beneath her breath while he kept trying to face the facts. It might even have been true that she was glad to see him, simply as she would have been glad to see anyone. It was not her fault, but his, that he had taken her seriously—his fault, because she

had never intended it. He tried to tell himself that he was not angry with her, but only with himself. He tried to tell himself that she had taught him never to take anyone too seriously.

"Aren't you listening to me?" he heard her ask. She must have been talking without his having heard a word.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said. "I was thinking."

"I was only saying I've often thought how nice it would be when you came back."

It was not kind of her to have said it, but he knew enough now not to make a fool of himself again. It gave him a sort of savage pleasure that he could answer her with perfect self-possession.

"I told you I'd thought about you quite a lot," he said. "I guess I'm not very"—he cleared his throat—"not very used to anyone like you."

Instead of answering, she slipped her arm through his, but it only made him realize how little importance he had to anyone like her.

"I could walk and walk tonight," she said.

"Could you?" he heard himself answer, although only a part of his mind was on what she was saying. "Maybe I've done too much walking lately."

"Then let's go up to your house," she said; "there's such a lot to talk about."

It showed again that Jim Walters had been right, that she did not fit in at Boca Grande. She should have known that everyone would talk if she went to his house alone at such an hour.

"I've looked at it and looked at it. I've wondered what it would be like inside, whether it would be like you."

It gave him a twinge of pain, because he had thought of her so often sitting in the living room.

"It's pretty late," he said; "but, well, all right."

He set his lips together grimly. He was acting as the boss of Boca Grande Mine, and not thinking about himself. She was coming to his quarters as an employee of the Boca Grande Company. He might as well tell her there as anywhere else. He wondered how to begin, because he did not want her to think that he cherished the slightest personal resentment.

When he turned on the lights in the living room, she tossed her cloak over a chair, and stood on the woven wool carpet directly in front of the empty fireplace.

"It looks like you," she said; "I thought it would." And then she glanced at the writing table. "Do you always carry that?" she asked. She was looking at his revolver. Winslow picked it up quickly and dropped it into the table drawer.

"I shouldn't have left it out," he told her. "I took it on the trip —but a gun's not much use."

"Why not?" she asked.

"When you get to a point where you really have to use one," he told her, "it's generally too late for it to help."

She began moving about the room, looking at his pictures and at his riding crop and spurs. It was hot, even with the windows open, and the moths were bumping against the screen. He could hear the sharp whirr of their wings and the metallic pounding of the large ones as they struck against the netting.

She was standing by the mantelpiece. "What are those?" she asked, and in two steps he was beside her.

"Don't touch them," he told her anxiously. "They're poisoned darts—tipped with curare poison. If one of them were to scratch you——"

She drew her hand away from the little clump of splinters hanging in their bamboo quiver.

"Yes," she said—"well, what would happen to me?"

He was close beside her, but she was still looking at the darts with a puzzled sort of interest that made her very pretty. For the moment he had forgotten everything except that she might be hurt, and somehow this brought back a little of their old relationship. He was taking care of her again.

"I didn't mean to startle you," he said, "but you have to know about those things before you handle them. The points of those darts are almost as sharp as needles." She turned and looked at him. "If one of them should scratch you—they look like simple little things, don't they?—but if one of them should scratch you —that black poison on the end works very fast in the blood

stream. It induces a form of paralysis. It's a mysterious sort of poison."

It was just as though they were at Santa Rosa again when she looked at him. She was the only person he had ever known who could make him talk, and she still could make him feel that she valued everything that he had to say. He picked one of the darts carefully from its bamboo quiver and handed it to her.

"They come from where I was on the eastern slope," he said. "The Indians there—the Jivaros—do most of their hunting with those poison darts. They carry the poison with them in a little calabash gourd, and they shoot the darts from a blowgun, and they're pretty good shots, too. Have you ever seen a blowgun?"

"No," she said; "I've only read about them."

It was no time to tell her about blowguns and curare, for it was a subject which in no wise led up to what he had to say, yet he could not have stopped even if he had wished. Afterwards he sometimes thought that his vanity must have led him on—some obscure desire to make her see that he had certain exceptional abilities.

"Well, I brought one back with me this time," he said, "if you'd like to see it. I brought some arrows and some poison and a few other odds and ends."

He stepped into his bedroom and returned in a moment holding a long blowgun and a bundle wrapped in dried leaves. He laid the bundle and the blowgun on the hearth in front of her.

"There it is," he said. "It's a very ingenious piece of work. It's

made from the black palm tree. A curator from the States asked me to get him one, and I'm going to send it to him from Santa Rosa. If you look at it you can see how beautifully it's made."

He handed her the long tube, and he showed her how to hold it. He showed her how the darts were fitted with a bit of wood fiber, and for a little while his own enthusiasm made him happy.

"Isn't it beautiful?" he said. "I wish you could see how long they have to work to make a thing like that."

"I wish I'd been there," she said. "I wish you'd taken me."

Then Winslow felt uncomfortable again. He was thinking in a desperate sort of way—if only Jim Walters had not told him, and if only he had not seen her on the trail with Milton Bird.

"What's in the bundle?" She had knelt down beside the bundle of leaves, and he knelt down too and cut the braided grass that held it. He showed her another quiver of the darts, and a little gourd that carried the poison.

"What's that?" she asked, and pointed to a small rag package. He had not meant to show her that.

"You've heard of them, of course," he said, "but I wouldn't look at it if I were you. It's a shrunken head. I'm sending it with the blowgun, or I wouldn't have brought it back."

"Of course I want to see it," she told him. "Please."

As he knelt on the floor beside her, he found himself explaining about shrunken heads. He was anxious to make it

clear that the Indians in the Oriente did not shrink heads for fun.

"Out there, when you kill a man," he heard himself explaining to her in an almost sprightly way, "you have the usual struggle with your conscience, I suppose. Oh yes, primitive men have highly developed consciences. You shrink his head to drive away his spirit. You stitch his lips together so his spirit can't talk back."

He unwrapped the cloth slowly as he spoke. There was a tangle of black hair which he brushed gently aside with his long fingers, and there was the head, smoky black, smaller than a man's clenched fist, the eyelids drawn tight shut, the lips stitched with long white fibers that hung in strands below the chin, and all the features perfect in hideous miniature.

When he saw her expression of revolted surprise he wrapped the thing up quickly.

"I only got it for a museum," he said, "but if you think of it objectively it's quite a piece of work, shrinking a head like that. It's all the way you live, you see. The Jivaros are nice people, if you get to know them—friendly, if you understand how to behave. Well, I guess that's all I brought back."

Then his enthusiasm ebbed away. He had not asked her there to talk about heads or poisoned arrows.

"Help me up," she said, and she reached out her hands to him. Her hands rested in his for a moment as they stood there, and her head was tilted back so that she could see him.

"Well?" she said, and she smiled, and Winslow dropped her

hands.

"I've been talking too much," he said. "Perhaps you'd like a drink."

She nodded, and then she sat on the couch by the writing table, and he handed her a glass.

"I love to hear you talk," she said. "It's like Desdemona listening to Othello."

"Othello?" he repeated, and he stood there in front of her.

"Winslow," she said. He had always been startled when she called him by his first name, and he was pleased, although he had no business to be. The color in her cheeks was higher. "Winslow, you—aren't—aren't sorry for anything, are you? I mean—at Santa Rosa?"

Winslow straightened his shoulders and took off his glasses. The moths were beating against the window screens, and he could hear the buzzing of their wings.

"Why, no." He tried to speak slowly. He tried to tell himself that everything was over, and that he wanted it to be over, and that the whole incident meant as little to him as it did to her. "Why, no; what makes you ask?"

"You've been so impersonal; you've been so—well, never mind." And then there was a dull, queer sort of silence.

He told himself that it was not her fault that he had taken her so seriously, that she had said the same thing to dozens of men

before.

"I wanted to talk to you," Winslow said. His voice had an unnatural sound and he coughed. "I'm going down to Santa Rosa the day after tomorrow on business. I'd like it if you got ready to go down with me. It looks as though I'm always travelling, doesn't it? We'll go down on the river boat."

She laughed. He had not expected her to laugh.

"You have the queerest way of putting things," she said. "There's the office, you know—but then, you're the boss now, aren't you?"

Winslow cleared his throat again, and stood looking down at her.

"I guess you don't understand me." He did not want to sound grim. He wanted to speak to her kindly. "You remember when I asked you whether you were sure you wanted to come here? Well, you shouldn't have. You should have gone back home again. I had an idea in the beginning that it wouldn't work. I mean, it isn't your fault. Yes, I'm the boss here while Jim Walters is away. He spoke to me about you, and you have to do unpleasant things when you're the boss. I mean, we're going to send you home."

It was kinder to be blunt, and it was better to get it over with as quickly as possible, but the stricken look on her face made him acutely uncomfortable. He should have led up to it more carefully, because it obviously had come to her as a complete surprise. She was sitting up very straight. She was putting her glass back on the writing table, and her hand was trembling.

"Why?" she said, and she drew a sharp breath. "What have I done?"

"You haven't done anything." Winslow did his best to speak gently and kindly. "A good many people come here who don't fit in, you know. You're not like the rest of us, not exactly our type, and that isn't your fault at all. We're pretty simple people here, and I guess—I guess you're the sort of girl who likes to have a good time."

"A good time?" she repeated after him, and there was an incredulous catch in her voice.

"I mean"—Winslow put his glasses on again. He hated to go on with it, but he had to make it clear, and somehow it was important that she should understand him—"I mean we're a simple sort of crowd here. We take everything seriously, and that's our fault. Things that don't matter to a girl like you, things you'd never think about again—well, they matter quite a lot to us here. I guess we're lonely, out of the way from everything. I mean—well, take one little point." He found himself blushing, but he went on. "You and I—that night at Santa Rosa. Well, I had no business to take it seriously. I only mention it as an example—maybe not a very good one."

He stopped and stood there fiddling with his glasses.

"Don't you think"—there was a break in her voice—"that I—I took it seriously?"

Winslow glanced at the package of poisoned darts upon the floor, not because they attracted him, but because he did not want to look at her.

"Of course you didn't," he answered, "and that's a case in point. We're very literal here. Things you might do at home that don't matter, matter here. I know I'm sounding clumsy, but I only want you to see—well, for example, I hate to be personal, but there's been a lot of talk. That's the trouble with this place, talk. Well, there's Milton Bird. It—well, you see, it's better for you to go."

He heard her move. She was standing up and moving toward him slowly, and her cheeks were scarlet.

"What——" She stopped as though she found it hard to speak. "What do you mean by that? You have no right. Not the slightest right——"

Winslow gazed at her steadily, and he felt better now that it was in the open.

"It wouldn't matter a bit except in a place like this," he said. "I'm not criticizing you. I'm only saying we're literal here."

"Yes," she said slowly, "you're literal. But do you think it's fair—fair not to tell me what I've done?"

"It's better not to," he told her quietly. "Really, I think it's better. But if you want, I can give you one example." He looked down at the wool carpet and back at her again. "I'll only make you angry, though, I'm afraid. Up at Pinas Jim Walters said there was quite a little talk. I wish you wouldn't make me go on. I don't like this any better than you do."

He would have given a year of his life not to have gone on. He hated to see the hurt look in her eyes. She looked as though

he had struck her.

"I told him I didn't believe it," he said. "The life here makes us all imagine quite a lot. He wanted me to tell you to go, and I told him that I wouldn't. And then this afternoon—— I'm awfully sorry. I know it won't seem fair to you."

"What isn't fair?" she asked when he stopped again. "You might as well go on. You can't make it any worse."

He saw that it was true. He could not possibly have made it any worse.

"This afternoon," he said, "when I was riding over the ridge, I looked down at the other trail, and you were there with Milton Bird. Five miles out of camp. Wait, please. It's just things like that—that don't mean anything anywhere else——"

"Why"—her voice was louder and it stopped him—"why, I just went out alone. I never knew he'd be there. We all heard you were coming. Please, that isn't fair at all. I rode out—I hoped I'd meet you."

Winslow did not answer. He felt his face grow set and cool. She was wrong about that last remark, absolutely wrong.

"Don't you believe me?"

"I might if you'd been on the right trail, but you weren't even on that," he answered quietly.

"How can I know about trails?"

"I'm awfully sorry," Winslow said; "let's not go on with it now. If you want to talk about it tomorrow, I'll be at the office."

She clenched her hands, opened them, and let them hang limply at her side.

"No, there's no use going on. I don't mind about the rest of them, but I didn't think you'd be so unkind. I didn't think——" Her voice choked. "Don't worry; I'll go. I'll be very glad to go—very glad."

"Well," Winslow said, and he had a wretched feeling of relief. He had done very badly, but at least that scene was over. "I'll be taking you to Santa Rosa the day after tomorrow. You can spend tomorrow packing."

"Do you mean to say you think I'll go there with you?" she said. She sounded completely incredulous. "I'll leave here tomorrow if I have to walk, and I hope—I hope I'll never see you again. I hope I'll never hear of you again."

She had been so completely quiet that he never suspected she was angry. He thought that it would be finished in a perfectly orderly way.

"Now, please," Winslow said. "You mustn't take it this way. I didn't mean to upset you."

"Upset me?" she said, and she gave a little choking laugh.

"No," Winslow said, "of course I didn't. I'm only trying to do my job here. You can't leave tomorrow."

"Don't worry," she said; "I'll find some way. I've listened. I've tried to behave, but I never want to see you again. I wish I could hurt you the way you've hurt me. That's all there is to say, I guess."

She turned and picked up her cloak. "Wait a minute," Winslow began. "You can't go home alone"; and then something broke inside him. All at once he could see how she must have felt. "Please don't be angry. I don't know much about these things. Please let me talk to you."

He remembered later that he had forgotten about Boca Grande. He had forgotten about everything but her and his desire to tell her that he was sorry. But he had no chance to tell her. Just as she was moving toward the door, just as he was about to speak again, there was a heavy footstep on the porch outside and a sharp knock. Winslow had been holding his glasses. The last thing that he wanted was to receive a visitor, because she should not have been in his house so late at night. Before his glasses were on, the end of the room by the doorway was blurred, and even with his glasses on he could only see a shadowy figure in the dark outside.

"Come in," he called. "Who is it?" He tried to think of some possible explanation which he could give, for whoever was on the porch must have heard them.

The screen door opened slowly and Winslow saw Herr Bauer. Herr Bauer was dressed in riding breeches. He was holding his felt hat in his left hand, bowing from the hips.

"They said the light was in your home," Herr Bauer said. "I

asked when I was freshening at the Rest House. It is only a call of courtesy. I hope I do not intrude."

There was an upward, almost playful inflection in Herr Bauer's voice, and the implication was clear enough. Herr Bauer was bowing a second time, more elaborately, to Henrietta Simpson.

"No," Winslow said, "of course you don't. This is Herr Bauer, Miss Simpson. Herr Bauer's come down from Pinas."

Herr Bauer clicked his heels together and bent over Henrietta's hand. Winslow never could understand how Continentals could make such a gesture appear natural, and though Herr Bauer was a big man, every motion was deft and graceful.

"Such a pleasure at the end of a journey," Herr Bauer said, "but if I intrude——"

"No, no," Winslow answered again, and he found himself growing nervous and over-effusive, "not in the least, Herr Bauer. Miss Simpson and I were just back from the dance."

Herr Bauer was standing straight again.

"A dance?" Herr Bauer said. "And waltzing? I wish I could have had the pleasure."

"Sit down, Herr Bauer," Winslow said, though Herr Bauer still made him nervous. "Let me pour you a drink. I didn't think you'd be here so soon. It's hard riding in the dark."

Herr Bauer sat down in an armchair, pulling it a trifle away from the window so that his back was to the wall.

"Ach," Herr Bauer said, and his tan cheeks below his high cheekbones wrinkled in another smile, "I am used to the dark. Thank you, I should appreciate a drink."

Winslow stepped toward the glasses and the tray, but Henrietta Simpson was ahead of him.

"No," she said, "let me. Say when, Mr. Bauer."

It was not necessary for Herr Bauer to look at her so long, as she stood there holding the glass and bottle.

"To see you pouring, Fräulein"—the man's voice was still amused and more deliberate—"I could watch forever; but there, that is enough. No water, thank you. Prosit, Fräulein."

The girl smiled back at Herr Bauer and answered him in German so fluently and rapidly that Winslow found it hard to translate her speech and Herr Bauer's reply. He remembered that she had told him in Santa Rosa that she spoke German. Although he had never liked the language, the sound of it had never been as distasteful as it was then. Yet he knew enough to grasp the gist of what they were saying—that she had been in Switzerland at a German school, that her family always spent a part of its time abroad, and that she had walked often in the Tyrol. And Herr Bauer was asking what mountains she had climbed there and if she did not love Nuremberg. Then, as though she had forgotten herself, Henrietta stopped and shrugged her shoulders.

"But we really should speak English," she said. "Mr. Greene does not understand German—do you, Mr. Greene?"

"Only a very little," Winslow answered, and she smiled at Herr Bauer.

"There's nothing more provincial than Americans—particularly our middle class."

"She means," Winslow said slowly, "that we're middle class here, Herr Bauer. We are. We're pretty ordinary."

Herr Bauer tipped the glass quickly, poured the whiskey down his throat and coughed. "Ach, that is so much better after a long ride. Ah, what is that? A blowgun?" And he pointed to the fireplace. "And darts? Are those the ones with poison on them? I have heard it is deadly—and very quick, not so?"

"If it gets in the blood stream—yes," Winslow answered. "But you must have seen these before if you live in the west valley."

Herr Bauer set his glass down noiselessly and moved his hand slowly away from it.

"No," he said slowly, "I have heard talk, but have never seen. I have been too busy to be curious. I should not care to die of it."

"Now that you mention it," Winslow answered, "neither should I—but they say curare is painless."

Herr Bauer stood up. "I must not intrude longer," he said. "I

called only to give thanks for the comfortable room and bed at the Rest House. I wish I might stay longer and observe the so interesting workings of a gold mine, but I leave tomorrow morning. Many thanks."

"So soon?" Winslow asked, but it was not a part of etiquette to be curious about a stranger.

"Some other time," Herr Bauer said, "I hope to know you better. I am leaving for the river, where I hope to find a boat, and then to Santa Rosa—business, always business."

Then Henrietta Simpson spoke.

"If you're going there," she said, "I wish you'd take me, too. I'm leaving tomorrow myself. I'll pay my way and I won't be any trouble, Mr. Bauer."

"No, wait a minute," Winslow said. "That isn't necessary. You can't do that."

But she was not looking at him. She was smiling at Herr Bauer.

"I won't be a nuisance. I want to get away from here. I have to."

"Wait," Winslow said again; "you can't do that."

"Oh, can't I?" She turned on him suddenly. "Don't you remember what I said?"

Herr Bauer shrugged his shoulders and raised his eyebrows.

"It will be perfect," she said, "if Mr. Bauer will take me. Will you, Mr. Bauer?"

"I have no right to interfere in a quarrel," Herr Bauer said stiffly.

"It isn't a quarrel," Winslow said, "but I'm going down myself on Tuesday." And then he checked himself. Herr Bauer's expression had not changed.

"I do not wish to interfere," he said again, "but if the lady wishes, she will be quite safe with me. I can give you my word for that, the word of a gentleman."

It came over Winslow Greene that he was completely incapable of handling such a situation.

"Miss Simpson," he began, "I'm responsible for seeing you safely down there."

"Mr. Bauer looks perfectly all right to me," Henrietta said. "I should much rather go down with Mr. Bauer."

"It will be a pleasure." Herr Bauer bowed again. "Shall we leave it, sir, as the lady wishes? She will get to Santa Rosa very safe."

Winslow's thoughts moved desperately, but they took him nowhere.

"This is all foolishness." His voice shook. "I'll take you home now, Miss Simpson."

"Please don't bother," she answered. "Mr. Bauer can take me up the hill."

Herr Bauer's cool eyes met Winslow's again.

"If the lady wishes," Herr Bauer said.

Winslow Greene pulled himself together. He did not like Herr Bauer.

"I'm going to ask you to excuse us for a minute, Mr. Bauer. Before Miss Simpson leaves, I want to speak to her alone."

He said it politely, with his shoulders bent forward, staring at Herr Bauer through his glasses. For a moment he and Herr Bauer stood motionless and there was no sound in the room except the beating of the moths against the screen. Then Henrietta Simpson's voice broke the silence.

"I'll meet you by the gate at the road, Herr Bauer," she said.

Herr Bauer bowed. Winslow wished that he would stop bowing.

"I have said before I did not wish to interfere," he said. "You will excuse me, I hope."

"Certainly," Winslow said. "Good night."

Winslow watched while Herr Bauer opened the screen door and closed it behind him. He heard Heir Bauer's steps move across the porch. He listened to Herr Bauer's footfall along the path.

He wished that he might be anywhere except where he was. He had always hated quarrels, complications, and the necessity for making up his mind. Although his life had made him practically impervious to fatigue, he was feeling tired. A dozen complications had gathered about him. There was that day at Santa Rosa, and the shooting, and now it was Henrietta Simpson and Herr Bauer. If it had not been for that box of ore at Pinas, the sudden appearance of Herr Bauer would not have upset him much. He wondered if he were not being silly, but there was no time to think things out with Henrietta Simpson standing there. There had been that talk about a German sailor, but it was absurd to suspect everyone. Herr Bauer might just as well be what Herr Knopp said he was; a self-respecting rancher. After all, his manners had been good. But should he let her travel to Santa Rosa with Herr Bauer? Did he have any real right to stop her?

"I wish to heaven I had never come back," he said, as much to himself as to her. And her answer did not help him. It was cool and final, giving him a sense of something completely broken.

"I wish you never had."

Winslow took a few quick steps back and forth across the room.

"I told Jim Walters that I wasn't any good with people."

It was no help to have her standing there cool and aloof, regarding him with wide, hostile eyes. In some way she had managed to make him feel completely unsure of himself. In some way she made his thoughts move in a dozen directions at once

just when he needed to be calm and collected.

"Please don't look at me like that," he said; "don't you see I love you? Don't you see I——"

There was no doubt that he was tired and had lost his self-control. She just looked at him without any change of expression, as though he might have been a stranger.

"That's interesting," she said, "coming on top of everything. If that's all you have to say, I'm going. And please don't say it again."

"I won't," Winslow said; "I'm sorry. I haven't any business—I'm sorry." He was thinking of Herr Bauer again. "Don't you see you can't go with that man? I don't know anything about him."

Her lips curved upward in a faint, cool smile.

"If he's willing to go to Santa Rosa with me, I'm going," she said.

He started to speak, but she stopped him.

"I'd be better off with him than with you."

"All right," Winslow said, "if you want to go so much, I'll send you off tomorrow."

"Don't bother," she answered, and she adjusted her silk cloak over her shoulders. "I don't want to be obliged to you for anything."

"All right." Suddenly Winslow Greene felt icily, coldly polite. If she wished it that way she could have it, he was thinking. He did not care, did not care at all. "Try it if you like and see how you get along. You can see Mr. Walters at the Santa Rosa office. He will give you your money and your steamship ticket."

"Then I can go?" She spoke coolly and mockingly. "As long as I'm not an employee, I don't suppose I have to listen any longer."

He wanted to tell her to go and be damned. He wanted to say that he wished he had never seen her, but instead he looked at her without speaking. She had turned her back. She had picked up the bag that held her dancing shoes. She was walking to the door.

Then the screen door slammed shut behind her, and Winslow was alone in the center of his room. He stood for a minute, listening, and then he picked up a glass from the table and a whiskey bottle. He was surprised that his hand shook and he set the glass down again. Outside the pounding of the mill came to his ears.

"Well," Winslow said, "that's that."

He stood staring at the screen door, but he was not conscious of anything around him. His mind was going back to what she had said and what he had said. In the silence of the room he could hear the echoes of their voices.

"All right," he said softly, "that's that."

He wanted to put it from his mind, for in a very few hours another day would be stirring. He would have to be at the mine office and send word down river so that the company's river boat would be ready. The office safe would be opened and the gold bars must be packed. There would be any amount of directions to give, if the gold went out on Tuesday. Ordinary details, dull and exacting, were closing around him again. After all, those words with Henrietta Simpson had left him just where he had been before he had ever met her, except that the room seemed lonely and his head was aching.

Once in the Oriente Winslow Greene had attempted with two Indians to cross over a mile of valley to rising ground opposite. The forest had been exceptionally heavy and they had hacked their way through tree barriers and barriers of vine until there seemed to be no firm ground beneath their feet at all. Then suddenly Winslow had seen the reason why the footing was not good, for he found himself looking through a tangle of vines down into the valley from a height of fifty feet up in the trees. In cutting their way through the green wall they had unwittingly left the ground.

When Winslow sat in the manager's office the next morning he had very much the same sensation. He did not belong here in the office with its huge safe and bare tables and shuttered windows. And on top of not belonging, the problem of Henrietta was still with him. At eight o'clock, just as he was going over the last reports, Milton Bird hurried into the office and closed the door. Milton's face was puffy and flabby. He did not bother to say good morning, but leaned his hands on the table where Winslow

sat looking at the papers.

"Henrietta Simpson's gone," Milton said. "Six o'clock this morning. There was a German and four mules. She left with him. She took her baggage—everything."

"Yes," Winslow said, "I know."

"You know?" Milton raised his voice to a shout. "Then what the devil are you going to do about it?"

"Nothing," Winslow said.

"Nothing?" Milton shouted. "What happened? I want to know what happened. You've got to send after her. You can't——"

Winslow got up and walked around the corner of the table.

"Mind your own business," he said. He was amazed at his own rudeness.

For a second Milton's face was blank with astonishment.

"You heard me," Winslow said. "I mean it. If you don't like it, ask Jim Walters. It was you or Miss Simpson, and she's gone."

"I'll speak to Walters," Milton Bird said. "Of all the damned ——" And then his voice trailed off. "Why should everyone pick on me? It wasn't the girl's fault; she—you should have talked to me, Winslow. I could have explained. I'll give you my word that there wasn't any reason——"

So, after all, it was just what he had told Jim Walters, and

now she was riding down the trail to the big river with a strange German named Bauer.

"We won't talk about it now," he said. "I'm busy."

Then as Milton Bird was leaving the wall telephone rang. It was Mrs. Nelson calling, and it was natural for Mrs. Nelson to have her finger in the pie.

"Winslow," she asked him, "have you heard? I've never been so surprised. Something dreadful must have happened last night. The Simpson girl has left, bag and baggage, without saying goodbye to anyone. They say that she met a strange German—you know the way she is."

"It's all right," Winslow said. "It was a Mr. Bauer from Pinas." He stopped because he was never good at prevarication, and he could not tell where it might lead him. "He's taking her to Santa Rosa. She's going home. It's perfectly all right."

Then there was a knock on the door. It was Colonel Rostas. Winslow remembered that he had sent for Rostas, and with an effort he greeted the Colonel cordially. Officials, particularly the military in South America, were very proud and sensitive, and Colonel Rostas' dignity must be considered, since he was in command of the small military post. It was necessary to shake hands warmly, to inquire about the Colonel's health, although he had done so the night before. Rostas sat down, crossed his polished riding boots and lighted a cigarette.

"You have been told?" he inquired. "The Señorita Simpson left this morning with the German who arrived last night."

Winslow replied that he knew. The Colonel exhaled a cloud of cigarette smoke. Being a man of the world, he asked no questions, and it seemed to Winslow much better to leave it so.

Colonel Rostas glanced at the great door of the safe.

"You wish to see me?" he said. "Regarding the gold shipment, I suppose?"

Winslow nodded. It was a relief to have his mind away from her.

"Yes, I'm taking it down myself."

"Yourself?" The Colonel raised his eyebrows.

"This time," Winslow said, "I should like to be particularly careful. At Pinas, when I was there, there was a little difficulty." He felt that it would do no harm to tell the Colonel about the box in Jim Walters' room at the Villa Schwarz. Rostas lighted another cigarette and shrugged his shoulders.

"What of it?" he asked. "Pinas is full of thieves. It is different in this country—composed of orderly, quiet people. The guard will be enough to frighten anyone. Four good men. When will you wish them, Señor?"

Winslow had seen the gold leave often enough before, and it had always been a routine matter which was handled with great efficiency.

"Tomorrow morning," Winslow said. "I've sent word for the river boat."

The Colonel nodded in bored agreement.

"No one yet knows, my friend, that it goes by river? Only a precaution."

"No," Winslow said; "that is——" He paused and tried to think. Henrietta had known, but it seemed a small matter at that time. "Of course, it's hard to keep it entirely quiet——"

"Tomorrow morning, then," Colonel Rostas said, and they shook hands.

He followed Colonel Rostas to the open door and glanced down the corridor to the outer office, where clerks in their white shirts were bending over tables.

"Mr. Sanchez," he said, "tell Mr. Nelson to come in and bring the boxes." Mr. Sanchez, who had been at the mine for years, understood him perfectly.

The office looked out on the main street of Boca Grande. A string of mules was passing and some farmers from the hills were following, carrying vegetables on their backs. Two little boys were throwing stones. Winslow drew the blind all the way across the window, and then he turned to the safe. Fifty-eight, and four to the left; forty-two, and three to the right. Jim Walters had given him the combination. Then he pulled the heavy door back, and there were the bars in a neat pile, soft and yellow.

Winslow sighed. They would go on pack mules tomorrow morning down to the launch at the river landing, and he would be going with them to the Purser's Office on the ship at Santa Rosa and would return with the receipt. He might see Henrietta

there, the last time he would ever see her.

Later, when Winslow Greene tried to piece it all together, he was compelled to admit that his judgement had been faulty, that he had not done as well as he might have if his mind had been clearer. Still, it was easy enough to criticize one's lack of judgement at some later time, when all the sums were added. He only half realized when he sat in the Boca Grande office that morning, watching them weigh the gold, that he was already in a dangerous game. The unseen forces that would all reveal themselves later were only shadows then. There was a German raider off the coast, rocking on the oily swell of the Pacific. There was Mr. Bauer, who had ridden down to Boca Grande in the dark. There was a man who had died in Santa Rosa close to midnight. But there was no valid reason why he should have suspected that facts like these so foreign to his experience had any relationship to him. Yet the sight of those gold bars must have given him a momentary flash of insight, for an idea came to him as he watched Bob Nelson and Mr. Sanchez packing the bars and checking their weights.

"You know," he said, "I'm thinking of changing my mind." He had no way of knowing that a good deal of his life would have changed too if he had changed his mind, but he always recalled afterwards that something inside of him must have spoken a word of warning. The two men looked up from the boxes as he spoke.

"I think I'll switch over and go up to Pinas and take it out by plane."

"Why change everything, for heaven's sake?" Bob Nelson asked in a supercilious way. "It's pretty late to change your mind."

"I didn't say I was going to," Winslow answered, flushing slightly. "It's just a hunch."

"The company's been shipping gold out of here for twenty years"—Bob Nelson's voice sounded superior and tolerant —"and nothing's ever happened to it."

He did not want to argue with Bob Nelson. He knew that Bob Nelson had always considered him vacillating and fussy, but the idea stuck in his mind. If there were any conceivable chance of trouble the safest thing would surely be to change, and he could do it with a single order in the morning. The idea stayed with him long after the gold was packed and back in the safe again. It was with him when the noon whistle blew, and there was another knock on the office door.

There was a man outside, Mr. Sanchez told him, who wished particularly to speak with Winslow Greene, one of the men from the day shift of the mill. He would not tell Mr. Sanchez what he wished, except that he wished to speak to Mr. Greene—alone. If it was not one thing at Boca Grande, it was bound to be something else. Winslow had meant it when he had told Jim Walters that he was not good with people, and of course he had to see the man because it was one of the rules of the mine that anyone at Boca Grande was free to see the boss, and it was not a bad rule, either.

"Who is he?" Winslow asked.

His name, Mr. Sanchez told him, was Juan Jiminez. He knew nothing of the man except that he had sought employment about two months before.

"All right," Winslow said, "show him in."

Juan Jiminez was tall and thin in greasy mechanic's overalls. As he stood in front of Winslow's desk his glance moved about the room as though he saw everything at once. He looked too handsome for a mine laborer; his manner was too assured and his hands were too delicate.

"May I have a moment of your time, Patron?" he asked, and the precision of his Spanish was not like a laborer's Spanish, either. "You don't know me, so I take the liberty to introduce myself. Señor Lopez sent me here. I believe you know him, Señor Eduardo Lopez. I am in the Government police. My paper, if you please."

He reached inside his overalls and produced a paper. His name was on it as a Government investigator, and there was no doubt that it was genuine, for it was signed by the State secretary and bore the seal of the republic. To Winslow it was another confusing element in a very confusing day.

"What's your business here?" he asked. "Why hasn't anyone been told?"

Señor Jiminez shrugged his shoulders.

"I understand you, sir," he said, "and I beg of you not to be annoyed. I am not interfering with the mine management. I was sent here to watch for someone. My orders were not to speak

unless it was important, and now I must give you a piece of advice, Señor."

The man's tone was grave and completely confident, and Winslow stared at him in growing surprise.

"How do you mean you are giving me advice?" he asked. "What sort of advice?"

The man rested both his hands on the desk and leaned toward Winslow and lowered his voice.

"You are going to ship the gold tomorrow to Santa Rosa by the river?"

"What?" Winslow asked. "How do you know that?"

"It is not difficult, Señor. At the stables the order has gone out for mules. The message has already gone ordering the boat. The soldiers in the barracks know already and are drawing lots for the opportunity of the trip. I do not wish to give advice, but I think it would be safer not to take the gold out by river." Winslow did not speak, and the other's voice went on. "I told you I was looking for a man. I think he came through here last night. If he is who I think he is, he is very dangerous. He left this morning, going toward the river."

Winslow felt his muscles grow taut, but he did not move.

"Who do you mean," he asked, "the German?"

"Yes. I am sorry I cannot tell you about him, but I should be very careful, Mr. Greene. If I were you, I should go the other

way. It would be safer."

"What's the matter?" Winslow asked, and his mouth felt dry. "What's wrong with him?"

"I'm not sure." Mr. Jiminez shook his head. "That is the difficulty, no one can be sure of anything, but I think that man is very dangerous—that is all I can say. That is why I advise——"

Winslow's chair made a harsh grating noise on the office floor.

He was not thinking about the gold; he was thinking that Henrietta Simpson had left that morning with Herr Bauer.

"Go ahead," he said; "don't say you can't tell. What's wrong with him?"

"I think"—the other's voice was slow and careful—"I think he is a German naval officer, Mr. Greene. I think he is here looking for money. Well, there is the gold."

But Winslow was still thinking that Henrietta Simpson had left that morning with Mr. Bauer. It was an idea that obscured his better judgement. If anything had happened to her, he would learn along the trail. He could inquire at the river whether they had taken a boat.

"All right," Winslow said, "if he wants to, let him try and get it. He can't get it by himself."

"But, Señor, there may be others with him. I should keep away from him—if only to be cautious."

The last thing Winslow wanted was to keep away from Mr. Bauer. He would have liked to have started for the river at once, but already it was too late to start that day.

"If he wants trouble, he can have it," he said.

"Señor"—Mr. Jiminez shrugged his shoulders—"I am only advising. I may be entirely wrong, but I beg you to think it over."

Winslow stood looking out of the office window after the man had gone, but he paid no attention to the sights and sounds outside. He was trying to convince himself that everything he had heard was absurd, and he did convince himself. Those South Americans were always melodramatic. The company had been carrying out gold for years. He was going down by river. But even as he convinced himself, he knew why he was going. If anything had happened to her, he could find it out. But he told himself that nothing could have happened to her, that it was all ridiculous.

He had that same conviction in the morning, that it was all ridiculous. It had all been so lazily quiet in the morning, with the warm sun and the patient line of mules. Only later he thought of all the dull details of saddling and loading, and only later they seemed like the quiet before a tropical storm. For it had all struck as suddenly as one of those squalls at sea. He had been warned and he had not taken the warning. He never should have gone by river.

They had started at six o'clock, four pack animals, the very best and steadiest of the company mules, with Pedro just behind

them, and four of the Commandante's soldiers, nice young boys from the hills dressed in clean, faded khaki tunics which were too big for them, each soldier mounted on a mule and each with an old-fashioned carbine slung across his back. He had asked the Commandante for men who were good shots. The Commandante, who had looked hurt, said that all his men were trained soldiers and ready for any combat. Yet to Winslow they looked like farm boys riding to market—young boys in their teens, delighted with the idea that they should go down the river to a city like Santa Rosa. Two of them rode behind the mule train, and two of them in front. Winslow himself rode a short distance ahead with his automatic pistol in the side pocket of his canvas jacket. Occasionally he would call to the boys to close up, but the trail to the river was easy.

Two of the pack animals had canvas tarpaulins lashed over their loads to conceal the four flat wooden cases. Two more carried mail sacks and Winslow's luggage. He upbraided himself for his decision to send back the blowgun on this trip, as he had to carry it himself over his shoulder like a fishing rod, for though it was light, it was too long to lash upon a mule. The bamboo quiver with the darts and the two small gourds with vegetable fiber and poison were safely in a canvas bag strapped upon his saddle. Occasionally Pedro would ride up to him with an offer to carry the blowgun, but Winslow refused. It was light enough, and he wanted to carry it safely.

There had been a shower at noon, but it had not lasted long enough to hurt the trail. By one o'clock the sun was out again and steamy vapor rose from the heavy thickets, making the hillside soft and vague, and clouds half-concealed the bases of the great white-trunked trees, festooned with vines and air plants, and he

could hear the chattering of parrots. The trail was winding out of the hills, passing through thickets of plantains down to the Pacific coastal plain. By two o'clock they passed a small settlement of bamboo and thatched huts where there was a plantation of cocoa. Women and children stared at them dully when they stopped at the doorway of a cantina—a little wattle and daub building advertising beer. Some mangy dogs and two pigs moved slowly from the road and the proprietor greeted Winslow languidly.

"Good day," Winslow said; "you are well, I hope?" The man was barefooted and in ragged breeches and a soiled shirt; he said that he was well, which was not true, because along with the whole region he was malarial. His shrunken cheeks and wide, lack-luster eyes made Winslow particularly anxious to reach the river before sundown.

"You go to the river, do you?" the man said. "A pleasant journey." And Winslow thanked him cordially.

"Did travellers pass here yesterday," Winslow asked, "going to the river?"

The man shook his head. There were always travellers. The trail was very crowded. Goods were going to the mine, enormous lots of animals always. It was hard to notice strangers.

By three o'clock they were out of the hills, crossing swampy bottom land, and there were no more houses, only heavy jungle, and the trail was wider, corduroyed with logs. The soldiers had begun singing a country drinking song, and Pedro was talking

cheerfully. They would certainly be at the river settlement by five o'clock, Pedro said, and tomorrow there was a fiesta and cock-fight; so he would stay to see it before he returned with the mules.

It was dull, like every other trip to the river. The trail had turned to the right, leading to the banks of the small, sluggish stream. Winslow's eyes were on the mud by the ford, which was churned by the hoofs of all the animals which had crossed it, when he saw a motion in the thicket beyond the stream, which was unusual in that deserted place. He could see the heavy leaves of the plantains move, and then, when he urged his mule forward for a better view, he caught his breath. A girl had stepped out of the path, a girl dressed for riding. She stood there in the center of the trail and waved her hand to him. Winslow pulled sharply on the reins, and he heard Pedro's voice just behind him.

"It is Señorita Simpson," Pedro called. She and Herr Bauer should have reached the river the day before, barring such difficulties of travel as sudden sickness or stampeding animals. He had been right to have come to the river, because Herr Bauer must certainly have encountered some sort of trouble, since she was there alone. She was standing silhouetted against the dark-green plantain leaves, and in spite of the distance he saw that her face looked drawn and white.

"Hello," Winslow called across the stream. "What is it?"

"There—there's been an accident," she called back. "Come here. Please, please come here quickly."

"All right," Winslow called. "I'm coming. Where's Bauer? Is he hurt?"

The mule train and the four soldiers were plodding slowly around the bend. He would have known better if the sight of her alone had not convinced him that there had been an accident. He clapped his spurs into his mule's flanks and galloped toward Henrietta Simpson, splashing, stumbling across the ford and scrambling up the bank.

"What is it?" he called. "What's happened?"

Then he saw she was not looking at him. She was staring at the string of mules and riders across the stream.

"Where's Bauer?" Winslow asked her again. "What happened to him? What's the matter?" She was only two paces away from him by then. Her breath was coming fast; she tried to control her voice.

"Won't you get down?" she said. "You'll have to help."

Winslow was out of his saddle in a second, walking toward her.

"Is Bauer hurt?" he asked. "Are you all right?"

All his attention was on her, and later he knew that this was exactly what had been wanted.

"They won't hurt you," she stammered. "Just please don't ____"

The time was too short for anything but impressions, but he did sense that she was frightened. He remembered that she tried to tell him something, and that then there was a burst of rifle fire by the ford behind him. As he turned he saw a tangle of thrashing mules. Two of the Commandante's boys were down, and the other two were snatching at their rifles. Pedro had whipped out his pearl-handled pistol.

He had just time to thrust his hand into his coat pocket.

"Oh," he started to say, but he never knew whether he said it to her or only thought it, "so that's it."

It was all completely clear, all the plans and arrangements. They had told her to call to him and to get him away from the pack train, and now he was fifty yards ahead. If he had been back with the mules, he might have kept the men together. Now he was not even mounted. He was simply standing in the trail.

"Pedro," he called, "get them. Turn them around."

And then he was seized from behind, and she must have known about that, too. His head was jerked backward, an arm was clamped across his throat, choking off his breath. Winslow threw his whole weight backwards and to the right to wrench himself free. There was a blow on the back of his head, and that was all he remembered.

Winslow Greene was aware of the vibration of an engine blending with the throbbing in his head. He was passing through one of those nightmarish interludes between consciousness and

unconsciousness when it is impossible to separate fact from illusion. He recalled that he had been knocked unconscious on the trail about five miles from the river landing. First, as his memory came back, he felt a sense of shame at his complete stupidity, and then surprise at the pulsing vibration beneath him. It was exactly like the vibration of the light draft boat which had been going to carry him to Santa Rosa, and the smell around him was familiar, a musty smell that rose from the yellow waters of the river. He could have sworn that he was on one of the boats belonging to the Boca Grande Exploration Company which carried supplies from Santa Rosa to the trail leading to the mine. He could have sworn that he was aboard the very river boat, the *Shageras*, which he had ordered to wait for him, and when he opened his eyes he saw that he was right.

He was lying on the single berth in one of the staterooms which were customarily reserved for company employees. The blind was drawn over the stateroom window, but daylight came through the cracks, filling the little room with dusky light. Ahead of him would be the captain's quarters and the pilot house, and across a narrow passage would be another stateroom, and aft of that the engines and the galley and the quarters of the crew. It was all so completely familiar, so completely reassuring, that Winslow was bewildered. He could not understand the daylight. through the shutters, for he had not expected to board the *Shageras* until nearly dark, and now the light gave him the impression that it was afternoon; but there was no doubt that he was aboard the *Shageras*, because the proportions of the stateroom were unmistakable. There was a bench in the corner of the box-like room exactly where it should have been. Upon the bench were the four wooden boxes which contained the gold from Boca Grande. He closed his eyes and opened them,

believing it to be his imagination, but it was not. The boxes were there, and beneath the bench was his bedding roll and on top of the boxes were the gourd of poison and the bamboo quiver of poison darts—everything just as he would have arranged it himself.

Then he turned his head, with difficulty, because his neck was stiff and the back of his head was aching. Henrietta Simpson, still in her riding clothes, was standing at the foot of his berth, and Herr Bauer was standing beside her. Winslow lay staring for a moment, and when he tried to speak his voice was not much louder than a whisper.

"What," he heard himself asking, "what is it?" A blanket was over him, and when he tried to move his hands he discovered that they were tied. The figures of the man and girl in front of him grew blurred, and then came back into sharp focus.

"Are you with us again, Mr. Greene?" he heard Herr Bauer ask. Herr Bauer smiled and spoke to Henrietta. "Give him some tea from the thermos bottle."

She leaned over him, holding the cup.

"Don't talk," she said; "drink this." But Winslow spoke again.

"How did you—get here?" he asked. "What—what is it?"

He heard Herr Bauer laugh softly. She had put her arm around his shoulders and he struggled to sit up.

"Put a pillow behind him," said Herr Bauer. "Wait, my friend; I shall untie your hands." Herr Bauer's face showed no concern.

It was impersonal, professionally watchful, and what Herr Bauer saw appeared to reassure him.

"You are as weak as water—what? It is better for you so."

Herr Bauer had been perfectly right. When Winslow sat up he was seized with such an attack of giddiness that the whole small cabin whirled about him. As he fought against his weakness he felt his face grow clammy with perspiration and he reached for the teacup. When he tried to take it in his own hands he discovered that they were numb and useless, and Herr Bauer's face was dancing in front of him grotesquely, now large, now small.

"Feeling bad, eh?" he heard Herr Bauer say. "Here, let me look." Herr Bauer's thin nose and steely eyes came closer, and he heard Herr Bauer's voice again through the ringing in his ears. "Pupils still dilated and still concussion. No trouble from you, my friend."

Winslow struggled against his dizziness by sheer force of will, and when Henrietta Simpson put the cup to his lips he drank mechanically, forcing the lukewarm tea down his throat because he knew he needed it. He was doing everything he could to pull himself out of that humiliating weakness, and the grimness of Herr Bauer's voice helped him. When he finished the tea he felt better. He leaned back on the pillows, drenched with perspiration, staring at them, and then he found his voice again.

"Will you tell me what happened? How did you get here?"

"Don't!" It was Henrietta Simpson speaking. "Don't bother

him." And he heard Herr Bauer's laugh again. Herr Bauer was seated at the end of the berth. He pulled a package of cigarettes from his pocket and lighted one. He inhaled deeply and blew a cloud of cigarette smoke toward Winslow.

"I hope smoke will not make you sick, my friend," Herr Bauer said. He spoke with an elaborate courtesy which Winslow supposed was intended to be amusing.

"Don't," he heard Henrietta say—"oh, don't." But Winslow's attention was riveted on Herr Bauer. The cigarette smoke had increased his dizziness, but he would not have mentioned it if it had killed him. His whole mind, as he struggled with his weakness, was intent on trying to understand.

"Surprised, are you not?" Herr Bauer said. "I should be, too, if I were you. I'll tell you where you are. You're safe aboard your own boat. It was an idea of mine. You are going down the river, just the way you wanted, Mr. Greene. There is no trouble. Your own captain, your own crew, are taking you down the river. I have told them that you have a bad tropical fever. I have explained to them that Miss Simpson and I are taking you from the mine to the hospital at Santa Rosa."

Herr Bauer sat there, icy and imperturbable, observing the effect of his words, and his tonelessness and his accent had a peculiarly grating effect. Although Winslow considered the speech as carefully as he could, he still could not grasp its implication.

"What—what time is it?" he asked.

Herr Bauer smiled.

"Mr. Greene," he said, "that is a sensible question." He raised his hand and looked at a watch on his wrist.

"You Americans and English are good fellows. Yes, I will tell you what time it is, Mr. Greene. It is about one half after three in the afternoon, one day after I struck you on the head. I am sorry I struck so hard." But Herr Bauer did not look sorry. "It was necessary. You have been unconscious for nearly a day—concussion and morphia, Mr. Greene. I myself administered the morphia. It was important that you should be very sick."

If it were important, Winslow told himself, then Herr Bauer had done a first-rate job, and Herr Bauer seemed to read his thoughts.

"Accept my apologies," he said, "but it was necessary. It was an idea of mine—dangerous, but the best I could think of. I unfortunately had no transportation on the river. When Miss Simpson and I brought you to the boat, it was simple to explain that we had hurried ahead of the rest of them—with the gold, of course—because you had been taken ill. Mr. Greene, it was a good story." Herr Bauer's smile grew broad and became quite engaging. "Behind us there must be confusion, but not here."

Herr Bauer paused again, and Winslow gradually began to see that it was possible. If they had brought him unconscious to the river, the crew might have believed that he was ill.

"Yes, my friend," Herr Bauer continued, "your luggage was brought along so that it would look natural—even those poison darts of yours. That blowgun, I regret to say, was broken, as I should have liked it as a souvenir, but I am keeping the little

head, with your compliments. I beg you, do not look bewildered, Mr. Greene. The captain and the crew have been anxious about your health. The orders are that you are not to be disturbed. You are locked in, Mr. Greene."

Winslow moved his head slowly from side to side.

"I don't suppose you brought my glasses," he asked. "I could see better if I had them." He had intended his remark to be ironical, and only as an interjection while he tried to get things straight about Herr Bauer.

Herr Bauer laughed in a mechanical way.

"I like a good fellow, Mr. Greene," he said, "who can hold up through all things. When I saw you at Villa Schwarz I remarked to myself, 'Bauer, there is an American who is a very good fellow, someone whom you would enjoy to have a beer with.' Yes, your glasses are right here. They popped off you, but I picked them up. In work like this it is well to think of everything. It would not be like my poor sick friend, Herr Greene, to be without his glasses when he came to the boat. Give them to him, Fräulein, One of the lenses is cracked, but they are clean."

She handed him his glasses, and Winslow took them without a word. His hands were steadier when he put them on his nose. Now that his sight was clearer, his dizziness decreased.

The appearance of the glasses convinced him that Herr Bauer was endowed with the deadly sort of mind that thought of everything. He could now see Herr Bauer much more clearly. The man had that freshly washed look which Winslow had

noticed before. His linen looked clean and unrumpled, his face was cleanly shaven, his riding coat was cleanly brushed, and his hands, long and muscular, were clasped about one knee.

"What happened to the rest of them?" Winslow asked. "Pedro —and the men?"

Herr Bauer raised one eyebrow and lowered one corner of his mouth.

"Mr. Greene," Herr Bauer said, and he spoke gravely, like a doctor who brings bad news, "understand first that this is not what you Americans call a monkey business. I had help, of course—some good fellows from Pinas. Two of your mule boys were killed and two soldiers. The rest are back in the bush now, where it will be hard to find them. Give him some more tea, Fräulein."

Herr Bauer lighted another cigarette and Winslow drank the lukewarm tea slowly. To think that he had told Henrietta that most of life was very dull. Here was one of those moments which had come out of nowhere, sickening and terrible. When he thought of Pedro and those other boys, courteous and kind and simple, he wished that he might have been killed with them. He had once seen a picture in an illustrated magazine of a row of men especially selected to form Hitler's guard of honor. Their youth and beauty had impressed him. They had seemed almost like a species of animal, bred for a certain purpose, but what had impressed him most was their utter absence of kindliness. He had looked in vain for anything in those features which was likeable, or anything which might form a basis of understanding between himself and those men. And now Herr Bauer, seated on

the edge of his bunk, looked exactly like one of them. It was not necessary for him to say that it was serious.

"I should like to make this clear," Herr Bauer said, "so that you and I can understand each other, Mr. Greene. I think you are a gentle sort of fellow. Am I right about you, Mr. Greene?"

"Yes," Winslow said, "I guess you're right, Herr Bauer."

"So understand me, please," Herr Bauer went on. "There is only one thing I want"—Herr Bauer flicked his thumb carelessly toward the boxes on the bench—"it is those gold bars, Mr. Greene."

Winslow could hear the steady throbbing of the engine. He could even hear the soft splash of the river water off the bow. There was no reason not to answer Herr Bauer politely. There was no reason for any display of temper or for any more animosity than Herr Bauer himself was showing.

"Would you mind telling me who you are?" Winslow asked.

"But truly, I do not mind." Herr Bauer said. "I am a naval man —an officer in our Fuehrer's navy at present attached to the raider, the *Sieglinde*, which is now somewhere off this coast. Perhaps you have heard of us—no?"

Herr Bauer paused as though he expected Winslow to be surprised, but Winslow was not surprised, for everything that had happened since he had first set foot in the Villa Schwarz was beginning to explain itself.

"I thought you were a sailor," Winslow said.

Herr Bauer's forehead wrinkled in a quick, sharp frown.

"What?" he asked. "Why did you think that?"

Winslow's voice was clearer, but it was still weak. "At the Villa Schwarz," he answered, "there was a sea bag on the bed."

"Ach," said Herr Bauer.

Winslow turned his head slowly from side to side, fighting against his giddiness.

"When we went to our room that night you were in there, weren't you? You were the one who broke open the box, Herr Bauer."

"Exact," Herr Bauer said, "check, as you Americans say. But do I fatigue you? I see Fräulein looking worried. If you wish to rest——"

Winslow had closed his eyes, but he opened them again.

"No," he said, "go on." And Herr Bauer went on carefully.

"We had been told," he said—"we have friends here, many friends—that gold would be shipped from your mine, Mr. Greene. Since there was an attempt to steal it at Pinas, it would surely not go out that way, but down the river. I think I am a type of someone you have never seen, not so?"

"Yes," Winslow said, "that's true."

Herr Bauer dropped his cigarette on the deck, stepped on it

carefully, and looked thoughtfully at his feet.

"Yes, my friend, I come out of a different world from yours. My generation was born in despair, brought up in starvation and hopelessness, caused by your people, Mr. Greene. It makes us very hard. I have been trained in a school of espionage and sabotage. I know how to organize a revolution or blow up a factory. I shall tell you about the *Sieglinde*, since it makes no possible difference. We are off-shore, crippled because of shortness of motor fuel. Our supply ship had trouble, and it did not meet us at the rendezvous. It is necessary for us to buy a load of oil, and German currency is not welcome on the coast. I was sent ashore, Mr. Greene, to find the sum of money from our friends. I went to Pinas for the money. My people couldn't raise it, but assure yourself, Mr. Greene, we have ways of knowing everything. There was the gold at the Boca Grande Mine, see? We can buy oil for gold in certain quarters. You see, there is no personal animus, Mr. Greene. I do what I can for my country, that is all."

"Yes," Winslow said, "I see." And he closed his eyes.

Although Herr Bauer had stopped speaking, Winslow could not get away from the dry preciseness of his voice. He could see the *Sieglinde*, one of those gray German merchantmen with streaks of rust running down her sides, rolling on the blue waters of the Pacific, somewhere out of sight of land. He could see the deck awnings, rigged to keep off the pitiless sun. He could see Herr Bauer in the captain's cabin off the bridge, and he could see Herr Bauer climbing down a ladder to a boat. There were some things which Herr Bauer had not told, but Winslow could fill in the blanks. Like everyone else, he had

heard about Nazi cells in South America, of their propaganda, their subsidized airways, their maps and their radios. He had read, like everyone else, of German espionage, and now he saw the reality in Herr Bauer, precise, scientific and ruthless. No human considerations would affect a man like Herr Bauer. When Winslow thought of his own position, he realized that he was completely finished. He was responsible for the Boca Grande gold, and he had lost it. He had not obeyed his better judgement, and he had not listened to advice. He opened his eyes and stared at Herr Bauer.

"All right," he said, "you've done pretty well, but I don't see how you're going to get away with it, Mr. Bauer."

Herr Bauer thrust his hands into the pockets of his riding coat and glanced first at Henrietta, who had been standing all the while without speaking, and then at the closed door of the cabin, and finally back at Winslow Greene.

"It is odd," Herr Bauer said thoughtfully; "that is what your people always say—we cannot get away with it. When we marched into Norway the British said we had missed—what was the word?—the bus. When we went into France we could not get away with it. Believe me, we know what we do, Mr. Greene. Why can I not get away with it? I have done this much already. Why can I not? Suppose you tell me, Mr. Greene."

Winslow thought for a moment.

"Why should I? Suppose you work it out yourself."

"Do you think that is nice," Herr Bauer asked, "when I have been so kind to be so frank, Mr. Greene? But I know what you

are thinking, my dear friend. Back in that wilderness where your mine is they have radio communications. They will have heard of all this trouble, will they not? from the boys who escaped. And they will bellow over their radio transmitter down to Santa Rosa that you have been robbed. Am I such a fool that I don't see it? My good friend, I am not going to Santa Rosa."

For a moment Herr Bauer's attention seemed distracted from what he was saying. He appeared to be listening for some sound outside, although Winslow could hear nothing out of the ordinary. Then Herr Bauer's gaze turned back again.

"You look somewhat doubtful, do you not?" Herr Bauer asked. "My friend, I wish I might take you for a day to the Bureau where I have studied for two years. Intellectual and physical fitness most complete were demanded. What we learned most thoroughly were courses in ways of killing and in ways of extracting information. There were the foreign languages, the sciences of street fighting and sabotage. Set one of our scholars down anywhere with a few notes and a compass and he will get along. Recollect that we use the radio, too. The *Sieglinde* is in communication with shore points. Wait, and I shall show you where we are, if you should care to glance through the window."

Herr Bauer rose and jerked down the shutter from the cabin window, and Winslow blinked through his glasses at the light. He could see a wide stretch of yellow water with small clusters of water hyacinth floating upon it. The shore line was a long way off, a low stretch of mangrove and brackish swamp. Winslow only had a glimpse of it before Herr Bauer closed the shutter quickly.

"You see where?" Herr Bauer inquired. "We are not far from the ocean. We shall be in the bay by five o'clock. The *Sieglinde's* cutter is waiting for us in one of those inlets. She should sight us soon now, and she will come alongside at dusk with a few good fellows, and off I step with what I want. Later we can make purchases on shore through friends." Herr Bauer moved his hands, palms upward, in a quick, conclusive gesture.

It was as simple as the solution of an engineering problem. As Winslow watched Herr Bauer, he was sure that there was no bluster about it.

"It's nice of you to tell me this," Winslow said. "You seem to be very good at your job, Herr Bauer."

Herr Bauer nodded in grim agreement.

"You take it in the right way, my friend," Herr Bauer said. "Now, listen carefully." Herr Bauer took a quick stride and stood leaning over Winslow Greene. "You are very lucky, Mr. Greene, as Fräulein Simpson, if she likes, can explain and give the reason." All at once his manner changed. His hand shot out and he struck Winslow Greene a blow across the cheek. "Get up —let's see you stand up, you swine!"

The blow and Herr Bauer's voice, Winslow realized later, had exactly the effect on him that Herr Bauer had intended. He pulled himself to a sitting position, but when he tried to stand his knees buckled under him and he sank back on the berth, seized with a spasm of retching while he tried to catch his breath.

"That is all right," Herr Bauer said. "You were not deceiving,

then, were you, Mr. Greene? You are only good for the hospital, and that is very lucky. You can lie there now, and please to make no trouble. It will not pay you to try. I am leaving you for a while now, because I am otherwise busy. I am locking the door, and Fräulein Simpson will stay with you. If you raise your voice, if you try to call, I am only a few feet forward in the pilot house, and I shall come back at once. Do you understand me, Mr. Greene?"

Winslow struggled through the faintness which had seized him, and found his voice.

"Yes," he said, "I understand you."

If he could have got to his feet he knew that he would certainly have tried to kill Herr Bauer. That blow across the cheek had filled him with a rage of which he did not know he was capable, and yet at the same time his weakness had brought tears to his eyes. He hated to think of the humiliating sight he made as he lay there with Herr Bauer staring at him, smiling. Herr Bauer rubbed the palms of his hands carefully on his riding coat.

"Good," Herr Bauer said; "then it is quite clear with both of us."

Winslow found his voice again.

"If I could get up," he said, "I'd kill you, Herr Bauer."

Herr Bauer's hand was on the knob of the stateroom door, but he turned when Winslow spoke, and looked at him thoughtfully.

"It is better not to talk rubbish with me, Mr. Greene," he said. He pulled aside his coat, and Winslow saw a pistol in a holster on his right hip. "I have something here that speaks much better." His glance travelled about the room and came to rest on the quiver of poison darts. "You may hand me those, Miss Simpson," Herr Bauer said. "You see, my friend, I might not have given them thought if you did not have a loud mouth. Stay quiet and give thanks it is no worse for you, Mr. Greene."

Herr Bauer closed the cabin door behind him softly, and Winslow heard the key turn in the lock. Then he heard Herr Bauer's voice in the entry outside, speaking Spanish. He was speaking to Winslow's old friend Captain Garcias, of the river boat. Winslow could imagine Captain Garcias outside, a heavy, perspiring man in an undershirt with a drooping black moustache.

"Señor Greene is a little better, Captain," he heard Herr Bauer say. "But he is very low."

Winslow closed his eyes.

Herr Bauer had been needlessly careful. Winslow had not thought of those darts, and he had never observed the effect of curare-poisoning upon a human being. He had seen the natives shoot at monkeys with their blowguns, sending the darts through long distances with great accuracy. They were notched near their points so that if the monkey snatched one from his body the point would remain. He had heard it said that if the whole dart were snatched out quickly the poison would have no effect, yet he had seen a larger animal than a monkey fall in a matter of minutes. There would have been no way of hurting Herr Bauer

with one, for Herr Bauer would have been like the monkeys—he would have snatched it out. He was mildly surprised that Herr Bauer had not heard of this. It must have been that curare was not in the curriculum of that school which Herr Bauer had attended.

"Winslow." It was Henrietta's voice.

Her voice sent the blood back to his face. He had forgotten she was there. She was standing near him, bending over him. She reached for his hand, and he pulled his hand away.

"If you have to watch me," he said, "get as far away from me as you can."

"I couldn't help it—I swear I couldn't. Give me a chance to explain. I know what you think," she said.

Winslow raised himself on one elbow.

"No, you don't," he answered. "You don't know half of what I think."

"Don't," she said, and her voice choked in a sob. "Isn't there anything I can do?"

"Not much," Winslow said, "that you haven't done already." And then he thought of something. "If you haven't stolen it, you'll find a flask of brandy in my bedding roll. Even from you I'd take a little brandy." He thought she was going to answer him, but instead she turned obediently and dropped to her knees and pulled the bedding roll from under the bench, while he lay motionless watching her. The brandy was in a cheap metal flask,

and he did not thank her when she gave it to him.

"Don't bother," he said. "I can take the top off." He unscrewed the top very carefully, took three deliberate swallows, and screwed the top on again. The brandy made him feel better, almost grateful to her. He thought of other times when he had been ill, of the time Jim Walters had spoken of, when they had been half delirious from malaria. That was an occasion when no matter how ill you were you had to go ahead. He was used to fatigue and hardship, and he had always been proud of his powers of resilience; already he was feeling better. His mind was growing clearer and that ringing sound was leaving his ears.

"Well," he said, "I guess you've got me where you want me."

Then he saw that she was crying, and he recalled how her crying had upset him once. "Don't speak so loud," she said. "He —he may be listening."

Winslow looked at her curiously. There was no need to conceal the distaste he felt for her.

"That was a nice game you played," he said, "back there on the trail. Do you remember that I said I loved you? That shows what a fool I am."

"Winslow," she cried, "don't." Winslow unscrewed the top of his flask again and took another careful swallow of brandy.

His curiosity partly overcame his resentment, and he tried for a second to analyze her motives. "I can't understand it," he said slowly, and almost dispassionately—"I can't understand hating

anyone as much as that. You never struck me as vindictive. No matter how much you disliked me—I don't see how you could have taken part in that business."

"Winslow," she sobbed, "don't. If you had seen the faces around the fire when we stopped the night to wait for you. If you had heard what he told me all day while we waited. If I hadn't called to you that way—— He means all he says. Please be careful."

"He told you to get me away from the rest of them, of course. I might have managed something if I'd been back there with the boys. That is, if I hadn't been killed." He was able to treat it all impersonally. "I wish I had been killed."

He was not bothered by her distress. His full attention was centered on himself and on his physical condition. He propped himself up on both elbows and shook his head. He was still feeling groggy, but he was undoubtedly feeling better. The sickness and dizziness were leaving him. He pulled himself to a sitting position and swung his legs to the floor. His head began to swim again, and he rested his elbows on his knees and his head on his hands.

"I wish I could understand you," he said, and he found himself speaking when he thought he was only thinking. "I suppose you feel ashamed now. I would. I suppose you wanted to get even, maybe without thinking much. Well, I was never any good with people."

He pushed himself up to his feet and stood swaying for a moment. He saw that he was still dressed in his mud-smeared

shirt and riding breeches. "Winslow," he heard her say, "you mustn't try. Don't get up. What are you going to do?"

"Shut up," he told her, and his rudeness did not seem out of place. "I'm going to get some tea, and I guess it will taste better if you don't give it to me."

He took two uncertain steps to the washstand in the corner and poured himself half a cup from the thermos bottle, and drank it slowly.

"Well," he said, "I wonder if you've thought what you're going to do? Is he going to take you off with him to that ship?"

She nodded, but she did not speak.

Winslow walked slowly back to his bunk and sat down heavily and held his head in his hands again.

"Lord," he said, "I'm feeling rotten." He was speaking to himself rather than to her, but he was thinking that he was not as badly off as he might have been. Those few steps in the cabin had started his circulation going. His head was aching, but his stomach was more settled.

Then he riveted his attention again on the girl in front of him.

"So you've thrown over your past and your future," he said. "You must be a little sorry about it. It's funny, I thought quite a lot of you."

She looked as though he had struck her.

"Can't you believe me?" she asked him. "I had to call to you. There wasn't any other way."

Winslow shook his head.

"And then you came right down to the company wharf," he told her, "and down to the boat with him. He was holding me on my mule, I suppose?"

She nodded. Winslow could picture the scene in his imagination. Heir Bauer would have been very solicitous and very careful.

"And all you had to do was to cry out once for help, but you didn't—out of spite. Yes, you wanted to get back at me, I suppose?"

The look of hurt surprise had not left her. She even seemed surprised at the explanation he had given her.

"Well," he went on when she did not answer, "you've got me dead to rights so I won't be able to show my face anywhere again. Yes, you're better off where you're going."

Henrietta Simpson did not move, and her look of surprise was gone.

"So that's what you think," she said. "Don't you see why I'm leaving with him?"

"No", Winslow answered wearily; "physical attraction, I suppose?"

Henrietta Simpson started to speak, and then he saw her small white teeth bite on her lower lip. Her face had grown bright red.

"You're right there," she answered slowly, "if you're referring to Herr Bauer. I seem to have bowled him over, and it's lucky for you I have."

She tried to speak lightly, but the attempt was a pathetic failure.

"Why should it be lucky for me?" he asked. He sat up straight, studying her face.

"Oh, never mind," she said.

Winslow shrugged his shoulders with elaborate indifference. "I don't blame you for wanting to change the subject."

Her voice when she answered had the same burning intensity as her eyes.

"So you don't know why I'm going on that ship with Herr Bauer?" she asked. "All right, I'll tell you," and she went on before he had time to answer. "Why do you think you're alive now? Why didn't he kill you long ago? Because I promised I'd go along with him if he didn't. He was ready to kill you if I called for help. He's ready now. How do you like that, Mr. Greene?"

Even in the height of his incredulity he saw that she was not joking.

"Good God," Winslow said; "of course you can't do that."

She looked as she might have if something fragile had slipped through her fingers and had dropped at her feet. Fear had broken through the mask of her anger.

"Why did you make me so mad?" she sobbed. "I didn't mean to tell you."

Her face was turned up to his, and she started to say something more, but stopped. A second later his arms were about her, and she was sobbing against his shoulder. Moreover, it seemed perfectly natural for her to be there.

"Of course," he said, almost briskly, "we've got to think of something. Don't cry. Stop it, for heaven's sake. I've got to think." And then the enormity of the problem they were facing drove everything else out of his mind. He pushed her gently away from him. "Stop," he said again; "don't cry."

That revelation about Herr Bauer's plans had done him more good than the brandy. The pain in his head was entirely gone, and with it much of his physical weakness.

"You can't do that, of course," he said.

And for no particular reason a fragment of an earlier thought of his came back to him—the monkeys always pull them out.

"I suppose you'd rather have him kill you," he heard her say, "just because I want him to save your life?"

She had interrupted his line of thought, and it made him very impatient.

"Please be quiet," he said. "Monkeys always pull them out."

"What?" she asked him, and he realized that he had spoken his last thought aloud.

"Never mind," Winslow answered. "What happened to my coat? I had a penknife in one of the side pockets."

The coat was hanging on a hook near the wash-basin, and the little knife was where he had left it. He opened one of its blades.

"Winslow," he heard her ask, "what are you going to do?" He glanced up at her disapprovingly.

"I'm going to try to get us out of this," he said. "We've certainly got to try."

"But you can't," she began.

Winslow did not answer. He was on his hands and knees cutting a long sliver of wood from the bare planking. He whittled it down to a slender pointed dart and tested its strength and sharpness with his thumb.

"Now," Winslow said, "never mind whether I can or can't. It won't help any, talking, and it won't do any good to think. Just do your best not to think. Just stand there, and when he comes in, please don't move. Don't speak—don't do anything."

It did no good to consider risks. He glanced at the space between the cabin door and the berth. The space itself was not more than three feet in width. The door by the foot of the berth

opened inwards, and thus prevented anyone entering the cabin from seeing the occupant of the berth until the door was closed again. Winslow moved so that he would be behind the door when it opened, and held the wooden sliver between his thumb and the first two fingers of his right hand.

"Please don't argue," he said. "All you have to do is what I tell you. When I knock, I want you to call. Call as loud as you can. Are you ready?"

"What do you mean?" Henrietta asked. "What shall I call?"

"To Herr Bauer, of course," Winslow answered her patiently. "Go ahead—call out to Mr. Bauer." And Winslow knocked on the panel of the door. The noise made her start, but she called. She sounded convincingly frightened when she called to Mr. Bauer.

Winslow did not need to pound on the door a second time. There was a quick footfall in the passage-way. The key turned in the lock, and the door opened, shutting out Winslow and the berth.

"Well," he heard Herr Bauer say, "so, what is it?"

Winslow had calculated perfectly. In order to see, Herr Bauer had to close the stateroom door, and he closed it at once, very quickly. Herr Bauer's left hand was just leaving the door knob, his right was still at his side. It was one of those instants when everything seemed to move very slowly, but in vivid detail. Winslow never forgot the sight of Herr Bauer's hands, the long muscular fingers, the roughness of the skin. He never forgot that first moment of surprise in Herr Bauer's eyes when Herr Bauer

saw him standing not two feet away.

"So," Herr Bauer began, "what?"

But Winslow interrupted him. He had planned exactly what to say. "You didn't take them all," he said. "Curare, Mr. Bauer."

He moved as he was speaking. It was all done so quickly that it never appeared difficult, and, in fact, it was ridiculously easy. With a swing of his right arm he plunged the wooden sliver diagonally into the back of Mr. Bauer's left hand.

It was only a matter of a split second, but Herr Bauer's expression—the open mouth, the slightly protruding eyes—was printed indelibly upon his memory. Herr Bauer was afraid, and fear as much as surprise must have shaken Herr Bauer's judgement. His breath whistled through his teeth. The wooden splinter was lodged at a rakish angle in the back of his left hand, and his right hand moved with an instinctive jerk to pull it out.

That instant of distraction was all Winslow had wanted, all that he could hope for. He threw his whole weight against Herr Bauer and snatched for the holster beneath his coat. A second later he backed away with Herr Bauer's pistol in his hand. Just before Herr Bauer sprang at him Winslow fired, and when Herr Bauer's arms were around him he fired again. When he pulled himself free, Herr Bauer lay sprawling across the bunk, his body thrown backwards, his legs dangling on the floor. Winslow held the pistol ready, but he lowered the muzzle when he saw there would not be any further trouble with Herr Bauer.

The cabin door opened again. It was Captain Garcias of the company's river boat in a soiled undershirt with bare arms

smeared with oil. Winslow's acquaintance with Captain Garcias had been too casual for him to appreciate, until then, the broad tolerance which Captain Garcias had developed during years of drinking and bickering along the river.

"Ah," said Captain Garcias, "trouble?" His dark eyes moved incuriously from the figure on the bed to Henrietta Simpson and back again. Captain Garcias stretched out a grimy paw and felt Mr. Bauer.

"In the heart," he said. "Excuse me, Señor. There was something odd about the man. He said that you were ill."

"Yes," Winslow answered, "but I'm feeling better now."

Captain Garcias still gazed thoughtfully at the body of Herr Bauer.

"I do not understand," he said. "The gentleman told me he was your great friend, and the lady here, too, was so careful of you. It all seemed unusual, but then, there is always sickness. It was fever, the gentleman said, and he was so concerned with your health that he carried you aboard himself. We were all concerned for you, Señor Greene. He told us we must take you at once to Santa Rosa, and then, a few minutes ago, he said something very strange. He said another boat would meet us and take him away. Perhaps I have been a great fool, Señor Greene, and my wits are slow. Then I heard the shot, and you were not sick that way. You have no fever. Had he harmed you?"

Winslow pulled himself together. He had been standing stupidly, half-stunned by everything that had happened. He had experienced a temporary, fierce exhilaration, but now it was

wearing off. All that was left was a sort of dull wonder that he should be standing there at all, or that he should have any conceivable part in such a scene.

"Captain," he said, "put something over him, or—or whatever you ought to do." Then he saw that he was still holding Herr Bauer's pistol, and he tossed it on the bed.

Captain Garcias still frowned at the body of Herr Bauer.

"That fellow," he said—"Señor Greene, did he wish to steal the gold?"

"Yes, that's it," Winslow said. "He and his party held us up five miles away from the landing. They killed Pedro and two soldiers."

"Caramba!" Captain Garcias said. "I do not know what to do."

"Cover him up with something," Winslow said. "That's all you have to do."

But Captain Garcias was shaking his head violently.

"He does not matter, but the boat that was coming to meet him, Señor. There is a large gray launch headed for us now. She's only a mile off the bow. This man sighted her and signalled before he heard you call."

For a second Winslow's mind was blank. It would be the cutter from the *Sieglinde* of which Herr Bauer had spoken. Winslow pushed past Captain Garcias to the passage-way.

"All right," he said; "we'll have to put the helm over and run for it. We've got to get the gold ashore."

Winslow was already approaching the pilot house when he heard Captain Garcias' voice behind him.

"But, Señor," Captain Garcias said, "they will be alongside before we get to shore. There are the mud flats and the sandbars. We are entering the bay."

Winslow stood close by the pilot at the wheel, staring out of the open window, while the moist, muddy-smelling breeze struck his face. They were entering the bracking waters of the bay, as Garcias had said. A raft loaded with bananas was floating on the current. The banks of the river had dropped away on either side into a dim distance that seemed greater because it was already growing dusk. The sky was overcast and it was time for the running lights. Off the bow, coming toward them, was the large gray motor-boat. If it had been half an hour later, they might have lost her in the dark, but it was out of the question to run for it—they did not have the speed.

"There's their boat, isn't it?" he heard Henrietta say.

He had not noticed, in his preoccupation, that she was behind him, looking out of the window of the pilot house. Of course it was their boat. He did not care to think what would happen if the men on the launch found out about Herr Bauer.

All of a sudden, as he stared over the bow, a possible course of action occurred to him. He did not even have the time to be amazed or appalled by it. He turned and looked straight at Henrietta, but he never really saw her. There was no time to

hesitate.

"You speak German," he said to Henrietta. "You speak it very well. I heard you speak to Bauer."

She nodded, and Winslow nodded back.

"All right; we're going to let them come alongside. You'll have to meet them, and you'll have to do the talking."

"You're going to let them——?" she repeated. "Are you crazy?"

It was the same question he had been asking himself, and yet he could see no other way.

"Listen," he said. "You'd believe almost anything, wouldn't you? if someone were to give you four boxes of gold bars. Well, listen." He raised his voice above hers as she started to interrupt. "Do you remember what he said? The *Sieglinde's* out there waiting for a load of oil. There may be a way of sending a tanker out to her, and a British destroyer on the heels of the tanker. That's what I'm thinking."

He saw her forehead wrinkle.

"Winslow," she said, "that doesn't make sense."

"It might," he answered. "It's all I can see to do, but you've got to help." And he spoke in Spanish to Captain Garcias.

"But, Señor." Captain Garcias stood gazing at him stupidly, but there was no time to argue. Winslow hardly recognized the

sound of his own voice.

"You'll have to do what I tell you. Do as I tell you, or we'll all be killed."

There was no time to talk, and there was no time for further consideration. Somehow they must have realized it, for he saw the Captain move away. Winslow put his hand on Henrietta's shoulder. He was thinking that he must have been made to be a gambler without his ever having known it. He was aware of all the risks, but he did not have the slightest doubt as to the outcome. At any rate it was the only thing to do.

"Now listen to me," he said to her; "don't be frightened, but just listen. You have to do this all yourself. I'm simply telling you what to do, and I want you to do it as calmly, just as quietly, as you can. They'll believe you. They'll have to if you're not afraid."

He was thinking of her quite impersonally, but with a growing sort of respect. He was thinking how little you could tell about any person. He was thinking that Henrietta Simpson was quite a girl in spite of all her bags and dresses. There was no need to idealize her or to explain her any longer. Henrietta Simpson was perfectly all right.

"Go ahead," she said. "I can't tell whether I'll be afraid or not."

"All right," he said. "The best way is to think of it as all natural. Think about the present. Don't think about what has happened or what may happen—just about the present. I've always found that's best when you get in a jam like this."

"Have you ever been in a jam like this?" she asked.

"No," he answered, "not exactly, but never mind it now. When that boat comes alongside, you go down to the forward deck to meet it. The first thing you do is to speak to the men and give them the gold bars."

"The gold?" she repeated.

"Remember, you mustn't be surprised. They ought to believe you when they see that gold." He laughed shortly. "I'd believe you, if you gave it to me. Garcias and the crew will help you. You are going to open the boxes in front of them. You are going to be business-like. Demand a receipt to give to Mr. Bauer, so that Mr. Bauer will know that you gave them his instructions."

"But he's dead." Her voice broke discordantly.

Winslow's grasp tightened on her shoulder.

"But they don't know he's dead. That's your secret and mine. Listen. You are going to say that Mr. Bauer has been hurt—not seriously—that he has been brought back to Pinas. He has sent you to give them instructions. He has made arrangements for a cargo of oil. He has given you the agent's name whom they must call on—a man who can give them what they want. Listen; this is the agent's name, and this is his address. You had better repeat it after me."

Winslow drew his breath. He was playing the only card he knew, relying on the intelligence of a man he had barely met.

"The name is Eduardo Lopez. His address is North Plaza

number 28, the rear apartment on the third floor. Three knocks and then a pause, and then two. If he is not there, tell whoever is in the apartment to find him. Tell them to wait until he returns. Now you had better repeat that to see that you remember."

She repeated it slowly without a mistake.

"Mr. Lopez is the agent who will charter a tanker and a cargo of oil. As soon as they get the gold they are going to Santa Rosa at once. They will know where to land without being seen. They are to order Señor Lopez at once to get that cargo, and they are to deliver the gold to him. Señor Lopez will handle the affair, and he has been instructed. Now, remember everything I have said. Are you sure you understand?"

"But who," she asked, "is Señor Lopez?"

"Someone who I hope will know what to do with them," Winslow answered. "You mustn't worry; that's the main thing. Just keep thinking there's no reason for them to suspect you in the least. You're giving them two hundred thousand dollars in gold."

"But suppose they do," she repeated, "suppose——"

Winslow smiled at her through the dusk.

"If that happens we'll be sunk," he said.

"But of us?" she asked.

She must have been a gambler too. She must have caught a little of the strange excitement he was feeling. It was not every

day that you could throw two hundred pounds of gold into the scales of chance.

"But of us," he answered.

"Señor Greene"—it was Captain Garcias' voice—"the boat ahead is blinking its lights."

"Answer it," Winslow ordered. The river boat was moving very slowly. The darkness closing over them made the lights from the launch look farther off than they actually were.

"Come on, Garcias; we want the gold in the forward deck."

"But, Señor!" The Captain's voice, vibrant with amazement, reminded Winslow that Captain Garcias, with his ignorance of English, had not understood a word that he had said—and now there was no time for further explanation.

"You'll have to do what I say," Winslow told him. "You'll have to trust me, Captain."

He was glad that he had always got on well with the workmen at the mine and with the crews of the river boats, for Captain Garcias did not ask further questions. They were in the stateroom a moment later, and though Winslow was conscious of the shadowy bulk of Herr Bauer, he seemed to feel no contrition, not even when he reached for the pistol where he had thrown it on the berth. In a very little while they had the boxes out on the forward deck.

The last minutes were the worst, while they waited for the launch to come alongside. The launch had also slackened speed

so that it moved toward them slowly, a dark shape with a vague halo of light around it. Winslow stood with Henrietta watching through the open window of the pilot house, and he asked her if everything was clear. He told her again that the main thing was to be natural, to feel that everything she said was true.

"I'd do better if you were with me," she said.

"No," he said; "my German's bad. I'll stay out of the way unless there's trouble."

It was hard to see her in the growing darkness.

"Winslow, did you ever—— It was all so expert, what you did. I mean—when Herr Bauer came in. Did you ever do anything like that before?"

"Not exactly," he said. "No; but if you've been around—away from everything—perhaps you get used to doing things that seem impossible. You'd better go down on the deck now. Here they come."

But she clung to his hand.

"In case anything happens——" she began.

But he did not let her finish.

"Go ahead," he told her. "Don't think too much about it."

He stepped back into the shadow of the pilot house and held Herr Bauer's pistol ready. There had been no time to think of what might happen, and now a bell was jangling across the

water. The cutter from the *Sieglinde* was coming alongside. A sailor in white stood in the bow with a boathook, and two men in white with officers' caps stood amidships. Now that it was too late to do anything about it, he wondered how he could have brought himself to send her down there alone.

There was a churning of water as the propeller reversed, and the tinkle of a bell, and a voice speaking German sounded through the dark. And then Henrietta was answering.

Two men jumped from the launch to the forward deck. The light was dim, and their voices were low as they spoke to her. He saw them lean over to watch as Captain Garcias prized back a board on one of the boxes. He could hear one of them chuckle at what they saw. They drew close to her, listening to everything she told them.

He was not aware of time, but only of the rise and fall of that low-voiced conversation. It was only when the Germans stepped aboard their launch, when the engine quickened and the propeller thrashed at the water as she backed away, that Winslow felt the strain of waiting.

"Winslow," Henrietta called to him, but she did not call until the launch was out of earshot; she did not turn back to the pilot house for a long while. Even when she crossed the deck she did not hurry.

"Lord," Winslow said. "Lord, I was afraid."

"Winslow," she said, "it worked. They're heading for Santa Rosa now, as quick as they can. They believed every word. Why, what's the matter?"

"Nothing," he answered.

For the first time he felt the deadening letdown of reaction. He was giddy again and his head was aching.

He had time to recall sickeningly everything that had happened—he no longer felt like the man who had killed Herr Bauer. Now his recent audacity seemed incredible, but it had to be either himself or Herr Bauer. Herr Bauer had lied when he had said he would let him go to Santa Rosa. He would never have told him all he had if he had planned to let him go. Winslow's head was still aching, and he heard Henrietta Simpson laugh.

"What's the joke?" he asked her. "I don't see anything very funny."

"Because you said you don't know anything about people. Why, you understand everything about people—everything."

He wanted to tell her that he didn't even know anything about himself, but his mind was moving wearily again. All he wanted now was to see what happened. All he wanted was to get to Santa Rosa.

"Captain," he asked, "how much longer have we to go?"

"The tide is against us," Captain Garcias said. Somehow, whenever you travelled on a company boat, the tide was always against you. "It will take at least four hours."

Captain Garcias, Winslow remembered, was always optimistic. It would take more than four hours, and the German

cutter, from what he had seen of her, was-good for twenty miles an hour. They would land two hours ahead, and in those two hours anything might happen.

"You must be pretty tired," he said to Henrietta Simpson; "you'd better get some rest."

"What about you?" she asked.

"Oh, I'm all right," he said.

It was nearly midnight before they tied up at the dock at Santa Rosa. The street lights were shining along the waterfront, but most of the buildings were shadowy and dark, for Santa Rosa was not a gay town at midnight. The pilings of the wharf loomed in front of them, and he helped her up the ladder to the deck.

"Winslow," she asked, "where are we going now? What more is there to do?"

He had been asking himself the same question during the last four hours. Should he try to find Señor Lopez, or should he try to find Jim Walters, or should he notify the regular police? He could not leave the crew there long with a dead man on the boat. Everything he had done would have to be explained in a very little while, and somehow it did not seem very brilliant any longer. He would have to tell Jim Walters that night about the gold, and he had been telling himself already what Jim Walters would say. The kindest thing that could be said was that he had managed very badly right from start to finish.

"Winslow," she said, "you look so tired. What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to take you to the hotel first, and then I'm going to see some people."

"What people?" she asked, but he did not answer.

They were walking quickly over the rough planking of the dock, past the shadowy wall of a wooden warehouse.

"Oh, just some people," Winslow said, and then her hand tightened convulsively on his arm.

An electric light was burning at a corner of the warehouse, just before they reached the street. They were just passing from beneath the light when two men moved out from the shadows. He came to a dead stop when he saw them, and his heart jumped into his throat. It was Mr. Gruber and Mr. Martinez, walking silently side by side.

"Wait," Mr. Martinez said, and he coughed. "Please do not move, Mr. Greene." And Winslow did not move.

Beneath the electric light Mr. Gruber's round face was shiny with perspiration.

"We saw your boat coming," Mr. Gruber said. "We do not understand."

It was unpleasant there beneath the light with those two men staring at him. Winslow tried to see where Mr. Gruber fitted in. He did not know how much Mr. Gruber had heard, but

obviously Mr. Gruber had heard something.

"Perhaps," Mr. Gruber said slowly, "we had better have a little talk. There was news you had perhaps—some difficulty up the river, and I do not understand."

"Yes," said Mr. Martinez, "a little trouble up the river." Then Mr. Gruber spoke again.

"Will you tell us, please, where is Mr. Bauer?"

"Yes," Winslow said, "I'll tell you," and all he could think to tell them was the truth. "We did have a little trouble. Mr. Bauer is dead." He heard Mr. Martinez cough again, and he saw Mr. Gruber's heavy mouth fall open. Then there was a moment's indecisive silence.

"Dead?" Mr. Gruber repeated. "I do not understand. We shall have to talk about this, I think——"

Then there was an exclamation from Mr. Martinez, and Mr. Gruber whirled around. Another figure had detached itself from the shadows of the warehouse, a white figure in a Panama hat.

"Good evening, gentlemen." It was Señor Lopez. Señor Lopez's teeth were flashing in the night. He was holding an automatic pistol. "I have been searching for you for the last hour everywhere. Don't move. I have men here with me. I have been searching for you everywhere, my friends. I thought you might arrive here."

"What do you mean?" Mr. Gruber asked. "We are doing nothing."

"Exactly." Señor Lopez sounded very merry. "None of us are going anywhere, are we? Simply meeting friends. And you and Señor Martinez are good citizens, Mr. Gruber. I am only taking care of you, that is all. You and Señor Martinez are only going some place where it's quiet for a day or two—to a hacienda of a friend of mine in the country simply for protection. Just for a day or two. These gentlemen will take you now."

There was another group of men behind Señor Lopez, all in civilian clothes. In an instant they were grasping the arms of Mr. Gruber and Señor Martinez.

"You cannot"—Mr. Gruber's voice rose to a shout—"you have no right——" And then a hand was clapped across his mouth.

"Exactly." Señor Lopez dropped his pistol into his side pocket. "No legal right at all. It happens so often in an international affair. You can complain about it afterwards to your minister." And then he laughed. "I am making all arrangements for you, gentlemen. Two officers from the *Sieglinde* dropped in to see me tonight. Odd of them, wasn't it? not to see you first. They wished to purchase oil. Don't worry. I am helping them purchase oil. They have the means to buy it—more than two hundred pounds of gold bars. And next time, Martinez, my friend, don't shoot, I beg you, until you see what is beneath the hat."

Señor Lopez began laughing again. For a moment he was quite convulsed by his little joke.

"My dear friends, do not be so unhappy. There are no

criminal charges against you, but we have all been playing hide-and-seek so long under the cover of diplomatic immunity. You fascists think that you've invented diplomatic immunity, but the Axis influence here is wearing very thin, so I think you will be asked to leave us in a very few days. You can take them away now, gentlemen."

Winslow raised his hand gingerly to the back of his head, and then pushed his glasses more firmly on his nose. Mr. Gruber and Mr. Martinez were disappearing toward the street in the center of a group of men. They were disappearing in a quick, quiet, efficient and almost sinister manner, which obviously delighted Señor Lopez, because he was beaming and holding out his hand. South Americans were always shaking hands.

"Do not think of them again," Señor Lopez said. "It was necessary to pick them up, as you Americans say, and they were not at home, and I thought they might be here. Do not think of them again." He was gay and cordial. He was making a gesture as though he were brushing off a mosquito. "My dear Winslow, you have the spirit of greatness. Will you permit me to call you by your first name? Yes, Señorita, this man is very formidable. What a bull-fighter he would make, even with his glasses."

Winslow frowned. The levity of Señor Lopez under the circumstances seemed to him entirely out of place.

"So they got there, did they?" Winslow asked. "They called on you, those Germans."

Señor Lopez beamed and rubbed his hands.

"Tomorrow, dear friend, you must tell me all," he said, "all

that my own wits have not been able to tell. Oh yes, they called upon me, and fortunately I was at home and I understood at once. They are being very well taken care of now, very well indeed."

"I hope you understand." Señor Lopez's nonchalance worried Winslow and made him wonder whether Señor Lopez grasped the whole situation. "If you can get them on a tanker with some oil, they'll take you right out to the *Sieglinde*. I hope you're going to tell the British. There ought to be some way to follow the tanker and find that raider. That's what I was thinking when I sent them."

Señor Lopez waved his hand and moved his shoulders elaborately.

"Dear friend, please give me credit for a little sense," he cried. "I am arranging everything—unofficially, of course. We know where the *Sieglinde* is already."

"What?" Winslow asked sharply. "How do you know already?"

"Why, those German gentlemen." Señor Lopez's brown eyes opened in wide surprise at Winslow's slowness. "Naturally they told. It was the first thing that was done, of course. There are so many ways of making people talk. One was placed in one room, and the other in another. Each was made to give the latitude and longitude of that ship of theirs. There was a little difficulty—various methods of inducement were necessary. Yes, they were reluctant, but finally they each gave a location that agreed with the other. The British know it now. The British destroyer was

reached by radio. She's already on her way, and the *Sieglinde* cannot move."

"You mean"—Winslow stammered and cleared his throat —"you mean you forced them? Tortured them?"

Señor Lopez laughed softly.

"You North Americans are so tender-hearted," he said. "You and the British have so many rules. It was the shortest, easiest way—a method that the Nazis would surely use on you. Believe me, dear friend, those fellows understood."

Winslow drew a deep breath. He did not wish to think about it, and there seemed nothing more to say.

"I guess there's going to be an awful row," he said. "There's a dead man on the boat—a German named Herr Bauer."

"My dear friend"—Señor Lopez rubbed his hands—"you must not be so worried by simple little details. That will be nothing to bother about. If you will just go to the hotel, I shall attend to that little matter, and, believe me, it will never be public, because our government will be discreet. Your friend Mr. Walters is waiting for you at the hotel, and will be very glad to see you. And tomorrow I think we shall have a gay party and some music. We shall all dance the rhumba and you shall tell me everything. But now, just leave me here to attend to the small detail. You must be tired. Good night, my dear Winslow, and good night and pleasant dreams, Señorita."

Winslow Greene looked at his wrist-watch. It was ten minutes to four, and Jim Walters had told him before lunch that he would be at the Hotel Continental at four o'clock. If he walked slowly he could reach the hotel at the proper hour. It was necessary to walk slowly, for any undue exercise when the sun was up was difficult in Santa Rosa. The air was humid and sticky and the day had been hot even for that time of year. As he crossed the plaza in front of the yellowing façade of the Cathedral, the old lady in the black shawl who sold peeled oranges on the Cathedral steps appeared to be sound asleep, and so did the vendor of sliced papaya and sugar-cane who had his stand beside her. Beneath the awnings of the Café Bolivar a few citizens languidly sipped their sweetish drinks at the café tables, while two boys selling tickets for the latest lottery chanted plaintively.

On the Avenue of the Nineteenth of August, or whatever the date of the Avenue might be, the citizens of Santa Rosa moved languidly under the arcades or paused to examine the goods displayed in the shop windows. A row of donkeys laden with sugar-cane was moving to the waterfront, and two motor-buses and two shiny automobiles cut past with their horns blowing in a steady crescendo. No one in the arcades appeared to notice the noise; all the motorists in Santa Rosa blew their horns constantly, seemingly in a public-spirited effort to create a civic atmosphere of bustle and of traffic.

Winslow paused at a druggist's window which contained a chart of the human body with realistically painted organs. From the lungs and liver depicted on the chart came bits of colored ribbons leading to various powders and bottles. Next door was an establishment of general merchandise with a display of

flashlights, enamelware and china. The proprietor was discussing the purchase of a teapot with a customer. Winslow moved on more hastily. Something in the merchant's profile, something in the paleness of his eyes, was unpleasantly reminiscent of Herr Bauer.

At the end of the Avenue, near the waterfront, a merchant was drying a load of cocoa beans. The dry beans were spread thin on the asphalt, all the way across the street, and a country man with his trousers rolled to his knees shuffled back and forth, scuffing his bare feet through the beans. Once a long time ago the sight had amused Winslow Greene, but he had been surprised when Henrietta Simpson had laughed at it an hour or so before.

"It shows you're new here," he had told her. "The tourists off the cruise boats laugh at it."

"Well," she said, "why shouldn't they?"

"The cocoa would mould if it were not dried," he had answered. "There's an art to it. See the furrows that the man makes with his toes?"

He was surprised that she had laughed again, but she had said that she was not laughing at him at all. She had said that she liked to have him tell her things, that he had an eye for detail which made everything significant.

The Hotel Continental in its modernity stood out like a sore thumb from the Baroque architecture of the main Santa Rosa business street. There were the chairs in the lobby with their chromium arms and antimacassars on their backs. There was a

plaster pot beside each one full of sand for cigarette butts. A boy in white was pursuing flies with a metal atomizer. As Winslow entered the lobby, he was unpleasantly aware of a titter of excitement. Although every effort had been made to keep it quiet, there had been a great deal too much talk since he had arrived at Santa Rosa. The eyes of the cashier and the clerk behind the desk were slightly protruding. The boy in the elevator gave a quick, officious gasp.

"Señor Walters' room," Winslow said.

"Oh yes," the boy answered, "at once, Señor."

No one had ever answered him before with such cheerful alacrity.

Jim Walters' room was on the fourth floor. First there was a vestibule with a writing desk and two more modernistic chairs. Inside was a bedroom with a bed and bureau, a pierglass and a cuspidor. The two steel shutters protecting the windows were raised so that all the street noises filled the room—the honking of horns, the shouts of the newsboys and the sweetmeat and lottery vendors. The balconies and the tiled roofs of Santa Rosa stretched beneath the window down to the river and the bay. Out in mid-stream an American ship was anchored, with a high black hull and white superstructure. She would sail for New York at eleven o'clock the next morning.

Jim Walters was in his dressing gown, smoking his pipe and reading a pile of letters.

"Well," Winslow said, "I've been down to see the British."

"Well, it was about time you went," Jim said. "After all those invitations, it was beginning to look queer. Ring the bell and we'll have a drink, unless you have had too much to drink for lunch. It was just the staff, wasn't it?" Winslow rang the bell. "Was the lad from the destroyer there? He was particularly anxious to see you."

"Yes," Winslow answered, "he was there."

"I don't understand," Jim Walters said, "why you don't take any interest in what happened. You don't seem to care about how they sank the *Sieglinde*. Did I tell you I have a cable? I'd like to be going with you. I could tell about the whole thing better than you. The company's asking you to come up to New York. Everybody wants to see you."

Winslow started to speak, but Jim Walters stopped him.

"The day you get in, the company is giving you a little dinner. The British Ambassador will be there unofficially. They're going to make you a presentation."

"A what?" said Winslow.

"A presentation," Jim Walters answered, "a medal or a silver bowl or something."

Winslow put his hands in his pockets and leaned against the wall.

"You mean," he said, "they give me something and I've got to make a speech?"

There was a tap on the door. A boy in white came in carrying a bottle and glasses. His appearance reminded Winslow of that evening in the garden of the Villa Schwarz, but that evening might have been a thousand years away.

"A lot of cashiers have gone to jail," Jim Walters said, "for betting on the races with the company's money. Nobody's ever used the company's money the way you did, Winslow. There were a lot of cracks about it in the cable."

Winslow still leaned against the wall with his hands in his pockets. He did not look happy and his voice grew sharp.

"Jim," he said, "if it's just the same to you, I don't want to go to New York. Of course, I had to do something about Herr Bauer, but I don't know what made me do the rest of it. And I'm certainly not going to make any sort of speech."

Jim Walters set his glass down quickly.

"When have you talked to Henrietta last?" he asked.

Winslow cleared his throat.

"Jim," he said, "if you think I like any of this, you're wrong. Just because I have had a very unpleasant experience is no reason for everybody to make it so conspicuous."

"What would Henrietta Simpson say if you told her that?" Jim Walters asked.

"I'm not talking about her," Winslow said. "If I have to go to New York and make a speech in front of the British Ambassador

—it's too much, Jim."

"Not too much for you," Jim Walters said. "Why, son, you can do anything."

Winslow drew a deep breath. "Jim," he said, "I'm getting a little tired of hearing you say I can do anything. You say it about six times a day, particularly when there are groups of people around. If you think I'm going up there and make a speech, you're mistaken."

"If you're not," Jim Walters asked him, "what are you going to do?"

Winslow stood up straight.

"That's what I wanted to talk to you about, Jim, right now," he said. "I'm not going to sail back to America and get mixed up with anything like that. I'm asking Henrietta if we can't get married tomorrow morning."

Jim Walters raised his eyebrows.

"What," he asked, "tomorrow morning?"

Winslow pushed himself away from the wall and removed his hands from his pockets.

"Yes," he answered, "tomorrow morning. We're going to start for the Rio Negro tomorrow, and perhaps when we get back everyone will have forgotten about us."

Jim Walters raised his head.

"Now, wait a minute," he said. "Have you told Henrietta?"

Winslow frowned.

"Well, not yet," he said, "but I'm going to."

"Not even about getting married?"

"Jim," Winslow said, "just give me time."

Jim Walters sighed.

"You've been making more darned trouble for Henrietta and me," he said, "but you can talk it over with her. I told her she'd better drop in."

A knock on the door brought both of them to their feet, and there she was. She nodded to them, and took off her hat, and fanned herself with the brim, although she did not look hot. Seeing her appear there unexpectedly, looking more beautiful than he had ever remembered her, started Winslow wondering all over again what there was in him that had ever attracted her. What he was saying to Jim Walters no longer seemed important.

"Hello," she said. "Is he making trouble again?"

Jim Walters grinned and walked over to the rack and took down his hat.

"It's about New York—that dinner—he doesn't want to go," he said. "Go on and tell her your plans, son," and he closed the door behind him.

Winslow winced and shifted his weight from one foot to the other.

"I just thought," he began—"once you said you wanted to take a trip somewhere—I thought, the head waters of the Amazon ——"

His voice trailed into an indecisive silence and his eyes met Henrietta's, and he sighed.

"All right," he said, "all right; it was just a suggestion."

"You mean," Henrietta asked, "you don't think I'd be in the way at the head waters of the Amazon?"

"You might," Winslow answered, "but it would be worth it."

* * * * * *

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THANK YOU, MR. MOTO
THINK FAST, MR. MOTO
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MR. MOTO TAKES A HAND
DON'T ASK QUESTIONS
LAST LAUGH, MR. MOTO
IT'S LOADED, MR. BAUER
REPENT IN HASTE

[The end of *It's Loaded, Mr. Bauer* by John P. Marquand]