I Hear the Mountains Calling

Oh, I hear the mountains calling through the grime and glare and heat,
Through the lifeless stone and asphalt of the high-walled city street;
Through the sky-light in the top-flat, bits of far-alluring blue
Speak of heights and breadths and distance stretching into endless view
Of still higher, wider, further regions of free, breathful space,
Leading into dim, cool canyons where the joy-mad waters race;
Tumbling, roaring, plunging, crashing, leaping, laughing on they go
From their childhood in the mountains to the calm, old stream below.
Oh, I hear the mountains calling and the voices comes from the deeps
Of the little glens and gullies where the timid wild flower peeps,
From the moss-banks and the rock-shelves where the soft, green ferns unfold,
From the quaking aspen thickets dank with loam of leafy mould.
And my heart grows sick with longing, for the call is borne along
On the breath of pines and balsam like a sweet forgotten song,
Bringing messages of healing for the open wounds of sound,
Whisp'ring peace distilled from sunshine, peace sprung from the natural ground.
Oh, I hear the mountains calling in the far-resounding boom
Of the fall of mighty waters, where the deep primeval gloom
Echoes to their voice of thunder and the very cliffs awake
To the conscious joy of living; and the smiling crystal lake
At the bottom of the chasm, safelocked in its granite wall,
Ripples o’er its silver surface at the far-flung parent call.
Oh, I hear the mountains calling from the voiceless solitudes
Of the pathless, tree-tracked acres where a holy stillness broods,
So profound that e’en the breezes lift the incense of the pine,
Silently, before the altars strangely wrought by hand divine
In the scar’d cliffs erected when the mountains were up-hurled.
That all nature might revere Him from the making of the world.
Oh, I hear the mountains calling from the savage wilderness,
Where the awful god of nature bids no human foot transgress;
Where first forces know no mercy
And the wild things cry and creep.
Where the earth’s fierce, Titan offspring grimly their last vigil keep.
And the wail of all the wild things in the canyons deep and lone.
Somehow grips about my vitals like a longing for my own;
And the voices of the silence ring like trumpets in my ear,
And the breath of endless freedom speaks so loud I needs must hear.
Every wind that blows from westward is full laden with the strain,
Till my heart cries out with anguish to be with my own again.
Let me rise and travel toward them,
let me rise and go today;
For I hear the mountains calling and my heart it must obey.

—M. S
HAT'S THESE CHARGES against me on the tenth?" demanded Gage Darrow, tearing into the taxi office.

The proprietor, Mr. Martin, slipped down from a wobbly chair. "Let's take a look at them," he said quietly, "maybe it's a mistake."

Gage pulled the statement from his pocket and threw it on the desk. "I should say it is a mistake. You've charged me up with six fares on January 10th and I was sick abed from the eighth to the twelfth of last month."

Mr. Martin scanned the bill for a minute and then turned to a long book filled with blank forms. "Are you sure you had nothing to do with this?"

"Sure? Well, I guess I am sure. I can prove by my personal diary and by a bunch of friends that I was sick."

The proprietor opened the book. "I have here," he explained, "a record of all trips made from this office. After every call a driver reports back to the office and fills out one of these blank forms telling where he got his passengers, where he took them to, and who they were if they had it charged." He rustled through the leaves a moment. "January 8th—January 9th—10th. "Tisn't on the day shift. Here it is. Read it yourself."

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRIVER</th>
<th>Red</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAKEN FROM</td>
<td>Woman's Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELIVERED TO</td>
<td>Royal Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHARGED TO</td>
<td>Gage Darrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>8:30; taken back 11:30; charged to same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. OF PASSENGERS</td>
<td>Three women both ways</td>
</tr>
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"Three ladies!" cried Gage. "Why, I never sent three ladies out to the dorm in my life. When I'm flush enough to get a taxi for anyone I usually go myself."
“Well, there it is, all down in black and white. That’s all I can tell you about it—but wait a moment.” Mr. Martin called a number over the phone. “Hello! Garage? Is Red there? Send him over to the office at once.”

When the uniformed chauffeur stepped into the room, Martin pointed out the stub. “Do you remember this call?”

Red studied his own writing for a short time. “Sure I do. The women were at the dormitory, out at the university, and went to the Royal. I took them back at 11:30.”

“How did you come to charge it to Mr. Darrow, then?”

“Why,” explained the driver, plausibly enough, “Some one made the call on the phone and said to make the whole charge to Gage Darrow.”

“Was it a woman’s voice?”

“We had so many calls that I can hardly remember. I think it was, though.”

All the time Gage stood in silent astonishment. Then he laughed angrily.

“Me giving a party at the Royal, I suppose. I only wish I had the price.” He turned to the driver. “What did they look like? I might be able to figure out who they were.”

Red studied a moment. “I don’t recollect much, but I think they were all university girls. One was a good deal shorter than the rest and had on heavy furs.”

Martin motioned that he was through. “Find out the names of the passengers themselves the next time they charge,” he called as the driver left the room. Then he turned to Gage. “Some of those girls over there have pulled off a trick on us. You needn’t pay for it, but I’ll make it warm for someone, I’ll bet.

Gage thanked him and walked out into the street. “Who in the devil could it be,” he pondered. A terrific crack on the back brought his thoughts to a sudden check and a happy voice cried, “Cheer up! Didn’t you get your last check or has she turned you down again?”

Gage turned angrily. McCloud, his roommate, beamed at him.

“Why, hello, Mac. I’ve just been down scrapping with old Martin over a taxi bill. Some smart bunch of girls over at the “U” have been riding all around town and charging it to me.”

Mac looked amazed. “The devil you say! What did Martin do about it?”

“Oh, he let me off all right, but he’s going after those girls. I guess probably it isn’t the first time it’s happened.”
Mac stared thoughtfully at Gage. Then he burst forth. "Say, Gage, I've got a plan. You hike back and pay Martin. Tell him you want to find out yourself who the girls were."

"You go plum to —. What do you think I am, anyway? Maybe you —."

Mac interrupted. "Now, look'a here, Gage. If Martin goes stirring around, the girls will get into trouble, but if we do the 'shadow' stunt, there'll be a lot of fun in it and no one'll be hurt."

"Say, it would be kinda' fun." Gage was getting into the situation.

"But I hate to pay their bills."

"Ah, 'tain't much, and you'll get your money's worth before you're done with it. You go down and pay it. I'll wait at Keller's."

Mac's detective spirit won. Gage hurried back to the taxi office, paid the bill in full, and in fifteen minutes found Mac in Keller's nervously sipping a cream shake.

"Ann," Mac ordered, as Gage came in, "stir up another one of these awful concoctions and charge it to my account." Then he turned to Gage. "Sit down and we'll map out a plan to grab 'em right way. Tell me all you found out from the driver. He must have known something about them."

Gage told the whole story, and when he had finished, Mac pounded on the table, laughing gleefully.

"This is fine, Gage. It's the best thing that's happened around here for a long time. We'll put old Sherlock himself in the shade."

"Does sound pretty good, all right," admitted Gage, "but how're we going to start?"

Mac was prepared. "While I was waiting, I thought of a little plan to start things going. Of course, we could go right to the dean and ask her what three girls went out that night, but there, again, we'd get the girls in wrong. The dean'd want to know all the circumstances and she'd try her best to find who did it. That's her business. And she'd raise Cain if she found out. Girls aren't allowed at the Royal without chaperones, anyway."

Gage nodded his approval and Mac added, "You don't want to cause any trouble anyhow, all you want's the fun."

"Sure, what's your plan?"

"Well, first we've got to get an idea who they might be. I've got a list here of every girl in the dorm. Just made it out yesterday to a little subscription work on the daily. Run it through and see who looks suspicious."

With many suggestions from the head detective, Gage finally cut the whole list to five girls who might be good prospects for investigation.

"Well, we've got them named. What are we going to do with them?"
Mac's eyes sparkled. "That's just where the fun comes in. You're staggering it to the ball this evening, aren't you?"
"You bet."
"So'm I. We'll number these girls from one to five and eliminate them, one by one. They'll all be there tonight. Get a dance with each one and talk taxi all the time and I'll bet we'll see blusters and blushes and blinks if we get the right one."

Gage jumped up. "I'm getting excited as the devil about this. Say, but won't it be rich to see some of them turn red and stutter out some bum excuse? Let's beat it to the frat house and get ready." And out went the self-made detectives.

During the grand march, Gage and Mac from their corner surveyed the long line of fussy frills stepping proudly to the music by the side of their conscious "white fronts."

"I can imagine some of them are laughing at you now," the grinning Mac whispered joyfully.

Gage nodded grimly. "We'll show them."

When the march stopped, Mac pulled Gage out into the chatter.

"Come on," he directed. "They're filling their programs now. Here's where something starts."

Both sided up to No. 1 of the prospects and after the usual "May I's" and "You may's," Mac remarked casually to Gage, "Did you order that taxi for this evening?"
"Yes; but I haven't got the price to pay for it."

Mac laughed carelessly, winking broadly at his confederate. "Oh, that's all right. Charge it to some of your friends. Lots of people do it."

All the time Gage held penetrating eyes of suspicion upon the unsuspecting victim, but without a quiver she remarked calmly, "That's not a bad idea," and turned to another student for the next dance.

The music started and Gage looked at Mac. "She's either a mighty good actor or else she's as innocent as you are. When will we try No. 2?"

"Right after this dance," Mac answered, jigging away with a co-ed.

Gage was already talking with No. 2 when Mac joined into the conversation. "It's a fright to go to these formal dances," he was saying, "why the taxi fare alone about breaks a man."

Mac made a suggestion. "Gage, you should do like me. Pick out some one who has an account at the taxi office and charge your fares to him. We all look alike to these drivers."

Gage looked up quickly from his program, but No. 2 laughed merrily.
"You always were such a joshier, Mr. McCloud. I know you wouldn't do anything like that."

"Not a flash, not a flush, not a flicker!" Mac grandly orated to Gage when they had gone into a committee of the whole in the corner again.

"Yes, and that's two of our prospects gone, without any appearance of your so-called fun," growled Gage.

But Mac cheered him on. "The best are yet to come. You'll be interested before the evening's over, I know. When do you dance with No. 3?"

"Tenth, I guess."

"Fine! I've got No. 4. We'll kill two birds at once. Remember, taxi on the corners and taxi on the whirls," and Mac pinched through a group of dancers to his partner for the next.

The tenth dance had hardly started when Gage blurted out, "Do you like to ride in taxis?"

"Why, such a funny question!" giggled No. 3. "I think all girls like to, but we seldom get a chance."

"It's much nicer when you have some one else to pay for them, don't you think?" Gage blundered on determinedly.

No. 3 blushed and stuttered with embarrassment.

"I've got her at last," Gage gloated to himself, and then out loud he asked cuttingly, "What was that last remark? I didn't understand you."

No. 3 blushed still redder. "It's just grand of you to ask me. I was wondering who could take me and my mother home tonight. We walked, but it's raining now."

It was so sudden that Gage couldn't say a word for a moment.

"It's really too much to ask you to take mother also," she continued, "but we never thought we'd have to ride home, and so didn't bring the fares."

"Not at all; not at all. Glad to help you," Gage stammered out roughly and finished out the dance in a silent rage.

The very next was with No. 4, and as he stumbled off on the two-step, Mac whispered knowingly, "She's warm, pump her!"

Gage glided away with little heart for Mac's game, but ready to do his duty.

"Do you ride in a taxi often?" he fired at No. 4 immediately.

"Not very often, thank you," she piped forth. "You see, when one is living at the dorm the fellows don't need a cab to take us. Why, I've only ridden in one this year and that was when my mother died."

Gage was all sympathy at once. "That's right; I'm sorry I brought up such a sad topic. A—a—are you expecting any more deaths soon?"
The music died with her smile and she bowed coldly as Gage thanked her for the dance. "The rude thing!" he heard her say as he raved across the hall for Mac.

"This is a fine fix you’ve got me into with all your detective work!"

Mac’s eyes danced. "What’s the trouble, now?"

"Oh, nothing at all, except I’m taking No. 3 home in a taxi with her mother and I’ve asked No. 4 if she’s expecting any more deaths. Oh, Lord, what a mess!"

"Are you expecting any more deaths!" Mac roared. "I should think she would be sore. And taking No. 3 and her mother home in a taxi. So nice to have the mother along. It’s only one more fare, and you’ve got lots of money."

"Yes, stand there and laugh," groaned Gage. "I’m through with your whole scheme. These girls have made a goat out of me all evening."

Mac viewed him with disgust. "Why, you old crab! Here we’re having a swell time, probably scaring some girls half to death and you want to quit. There’s No. 5 now. See, over there, talking with the dean. I’ll bet she knows something about those taxi fares."

"I’ll call you on that," cried the angry Gage. "I’ll bet you a dollar she doesn’t know a thing about them. This idea of yours is all a farce."

Mac’s face beamed in amazement. "You’re on for a dollar. We’ll let her hold the stakes herself."

Both men hurried up to No. 5. "We’ve just made a bet," Mac explained, "and we want you to hold the stakes until it’s settled." Each pushed a dollar into her hand and hurried away.

"You’ve got to find out," pleaded Gage. "I’m sick of the whole business."

Mac shook his head. "Nothing doing. You made the bet and you’ve got to prove your statement. Besides the next dance is the ‘Home, Sweet Home’ and that’s where I’m going."

"But how’ll I find out?"

"Why, the best way’d be to ask her point blank if she knows anything about a taxi ride on January 10th."

Gage wearily resigned himself to the task. "All right; I’ll make this one more try," he answered and started toward No. 5.

"It’ll be a good one," Mac threw back, making for the cloak room. At the door he yelled, "Have a nice ride, Gage."

An hour later Mac, sound asleep and dreaming of taxis full of beautiful girls, was jerked into an upright position by a rough hand. Gage stood at the bedside, his face white and his eyes gleaming.
"You are a fine roommate, you are," he grated out.
"What's the matter now?" Mac drawled sleepily.
Gage swelled in rage. "Matter! you ask? No. 5 told me to ask you. Said that you'd know all about it. I never thought a pal'd treat me as dirty as that. "What do you know about the affair anyway? Speak up. Don't sit there like a grinning ape."
Mac yawned and blinked at the light. "I don't know much except that you owed me a three-dollar election bet you refused to pay, and we're even now. I gave the party for No. 5." He dropped wearily to his pillow and the dazed Gage sunk into a chair.
"You're pretty smart, all right," he groaned. "You won the two dollars, too. I'm stung for sure." Then a thought struck him. "All I want to know, Mac, who was the short lady in heavy furs?"
Mac sighed dreamily.
"Oh, that was only the dean. She chaperoned for us."
THE SUN had struggled bleakly across the narrow defile between the mountains, and had disappeared again; on the southern slope the white hills glistened long after the northern exposure had been locked again in the long winter day.

Antone, the only breathing thing in a world of snow, still stood on the darkening slope, resting his bundle of fagots against the trunk of the lone tree. His bent figure crouched against the trunk; one long hand lifted the shaggy white hair out of his tired eyes, as he gazed across the valley.

"So — " he murmured, "the light lays to the Ruby mine today. Yesterday did it fall only to the Lady Love. Unt tomorrow unt tomorrow will it be yet a little longer — see?"

He laid a trembling hand on a bough of the tree, and raised his eyes to its sturdy height.

"Tomorrow unt tomorrow will it fall on the others till it shall come to us — then will the little tree be again in the light — no, my poy?"

He drew his hands lovingly over the sharp needles. The wind, sweeping down the bare hill-side, caught the branches, and tossed them lightly against his bent form. He laughed delightedly.

"So, you wouldt knock your oldt fader down?" he chided. "Such a liddle poy you was once, unt now to look! You can knock him down — unt how you talk to him — my, my!"
The tree swayed and moaned in a soft cadence that answered caressingly the old man's childish prattle. The long shadows deepened, merging into the dusky patches on the snow, where half buried cabins sent up their thin spirals of smoke. Antone watched dreamingly, protected from the wind by a curiously artificial wall of rock, blasted out of the solid mountain side to the height of a seedling. The gusts of snow that whirled down from the hill passed on over his head. He saw them fall in soft clouds at his feet, and laughed again.

"So did they blow ower you when you was liddle, my poy," he murmured, "when I didn't make the wall to keep the snow-slides off. Now you don't care. They fall in your pranches, but hurt you not."

The tree whispered sibilantly, its low branches brushing the coarse white hair and ragged sleeve of the old miner.

Into the peaceful silence the shrill voice of a woman throbbed like a wound.

"Antone! Antone!" she shrieked.

"Yes, yes!" he cried in the eager haste of long subjection.

The peaceful smile was wiped out with the suddenness of a gust of wind. He picked up his fagots, and lifting his sodden snowshoes with painful effort moved slowly down the hill.

At the top of the ravine that sheltered his cabin, he stopped and looked back at the tree. It stood alone amid the mass of boulders piled about its base. Its dark branches were outlined against the snow, "like a baby," Antone said, "when he holdts out his handts unt tries to w a lk to y o u ." No other trees grew on the slope, but the little snow-buried shrubs dotted the hillside with mounds like babies' graves.

The door of the cabin opened with a jerk.

"Antone, I shall freeze! Why not you come in? Bah! He knows nothing! He will stand in the snow like one crazy. Come in!"

She stamped her foot angrily. The wind caught her straying hair and whipped it across her lined and haggard cheeks. Clutching the remnant of a ragged blanket, about her spare figure, she stood erect and tall before the door of the cabin.

Antone hurried down into the ravine. He left his snowshoes standing upright in the snow, and carried his brushwood into the cabin.

"It is coldt, my Katrine," he apologized. "I will make it warm for you — wait — see, the fire will burn."

"Shut up," she snapped, "you know nothing, Antone. Do not talk to me. It will not burn. It is not enough. More wood must we haf."
"All day haf I looked for woodt, Katrine," he sighed patiently, "but when there is none, what then? Even didt I break a branch from the tree. See, I haf brought it."

"Bah, a branch! What is a branch? A tree is not enough. But it will keep us warm till the snow is gone a little. It is no good where it grows, Antone, and I freeze. We will cut it down. We will bring it in tonight."

"The tree?" repeated Antone, stupidly.

"Yes, fool; the tree," snarled his wife. "The tree shall not stand while I freeze."

"Burn the tree?" reiterated Antone. "But Katrine, it is my liddle poy to me; I made his liddle grave there unt his spirit goes into the tree. He talks to me by day, unt cries for me by night, like when he was not deadt. I cannot burn the tree. It is my liddle poy to me."

"Antone, be still!" screamed Katrine. "It is not the poy. He is dead and we have him not. He cannot come back to us in the tree. It is of a foolishness. Get out!"

She pushed him through the door, and slammed it after him.

Antone moved mechanically toward the top of the ravine, his eyes on the tree.

"But if it is for Katrine — " he repeated, "if it is for Katrine — "

The low sweep of wind laughed at him through the branches of the tree. He shook his head sadly, and reopened the door of the cabin. Katrine crouched over the tiny fire struggling in the heap of broken stones that formed the fireplace, her thin arms wound about her knees, her whole figure shaking with cold. Antone approached timidly, his eyes full of helpless grief. He picked up the pine bough, and would have laid it on the coals, but she snatched it from him angrily.

"Let it alone," she snapped. "It cannot make a fire; it is not enough. Get out. We cannot freeze. I will cut down the tree myself."

"Katrine," he implored, "you will not cut it down! You haf promised I shall lie there with my poy when I am deadt. You haf promised, Katrine."

"Antone," she cried savagely, "thirty years have I lived here in this place. I have waited and looked for the gold, and you haf found it not. For the diamonds and the silk dresses and the plumes haf I waited, thirty years, Antone — but for wood I will not wait. I will not freeze."

"Might we could go to camp," ventured Antone. "Unt time is it for the letter from Bohemia."

"Do I not know? Haf I not sent to them the ore from the mine? And did I not wash to get the money to pay the assayer, because you haf none. The letter will come. And it will tell me true. In America do they lie to
me always, but in Bohemia will they be honest. They will tell me my gold is good. Get my skis. We will go."

"Might it would be better to use the webs," suggested Antone, timidly. "The snow is soft."

But she slammed the door on him.

So they used the skis. In the early afternoon twilight they skimmed over the snow like missapen wraiths, the gaunt woman and the gnarled, twisted old man. She disdained the support of his pole and slid along before him in silence.

Early as it was, there were lights in the camp, twinkling feebly from the patched and broken windows of long-used cabins. Solitary travelers on skis called a greeting to Antone as they passed. They were old men, too, but most of them walked upright, and their eyes gleamed clearly from their white brows. A lift of cheering noises floated over the frosty air to Antone and Katrine, and a sudden flash of lantern light announced the arrival of the mail-carrier. He was swinging up to the post-office door, closely followed by his dog team. His cheerful, loud voice called a vociferous greeting, and then, to make his presence more widely known, he took out his six-shooter, and fired twice. The cabins on the hill-sides opened at once, and one after another little figures on snow-shoes flew down the slope, bringing up at the post-office door with dextrous circular flourishes.

"Look out, there, you dirty white men," shouted the young stage-driver, genially, "or I'll sic the dogs on you." He stopped to pat one of the dogs, and grinned at its affectionate response. "You see? They're man-biting animals, every one of them."

"The mail is in," said Antone, timidly.

"Fool, can I not see?" retorted Katrine. "Quick, let us get the wood and go home. Find the toboggan. I will see if the letter has come."

She added her skis to the collection before the door, and entered the store, followed by the abject Antone. The half dozen women, clinging to the stove, greeted Katrine effusively. She nodded and smiled with an uncustomed graciousness, but did not stop. The store-keeper came forward leisurely, peering at Antone over his glasses.

"Gif Antone your toboggan. Wood must we haf now," dictated Katrine, brushing past him.

"All right, Mrs. Hloka. You got a letter. Liz'bet', give Mrs. Hloka her letter. I'll help Antone get the wood."

Antone glanced wistfully at his implacable wife, but said nothing as he followed the store-keeper. Katrine went on to the post-office window.

"Good afternoon, 'Liz'bet'. Did I get a letter?"
"Letter?" repeated Elizabeth. "Yes, from Bohemia. From an assayer. He don't say much, but it don't take much paper to say whether gold is good or not."

Katrine opened the thin sheet, and then passionately tore it to shreds.

"What do they know, those assayers?" she cried. "They say I haf no gold in my mine. Always they lie to me. Everybody lies. They want I should abandon my claim. Then will they jump it and be rich instead of me."

"Rich," echoed Elizabeth. "I don't think so, Katrine. They'd tell you if your gold was good. And everybody says it ain't."

"It is," insisted Katrine. "Gold there is, if they would tell us true. Why should everybody find gold and not Antone? And the ore is good — but everybody lies to me. Nobody on earth will tell me true."

"Then ask somebody off the earth," giggled the school-teacher.

"Off the earth?" repeated Katrine.

"Yes, spirits, you know. We ask 'em lots of things."

"Spirits?" repeated Katrine, awed. "You talk to spirits? You can?"

"Come on," interposed Elizabeth, eagerly, "let's do. We haven't had a sitting since the Christmas. Let's go over to your house, Annie. There are more chairs there."

"What is a sitting?" asked Katrine, hesitating.

"Oh, you talk to spirits," giggled the teacher, "people you know — that are dead — their spirits — and they tell you things you want to know. A man showed us how to do it last summer. Come on. You can ask 'em anything."

Katrine's eyes dilated. "And they know?" she breathed. "They could tell me where my gold is?"

The teacher giggled.

Antone held out his hand as if to speak.

"Antone, be still. The letter from Bohemia has come. It says the mine has no gold."

Antone's patient head drooped yet lower.

"I will dig another shaft, Katrine. Goldt will there be some place, maybe."

Katrine stamped her foot.

"Gold there is in it," she cried, passionately. "I will ask the spirits where it is. But I am afraid. If it should be my father who comes to talk to me, I would cry. He would look at me from his other world and talk to me like when he was not dead, and the tears would come to my eye. Yet I want to ask him where is the gold."

"Yes, yes," soothed Antone, "maybe you will not cry. When he was
not deadt he fought upon you, unt the tears come not for those we do not lof."

"Be still, Antone!" She turned upon him fiercely. "What do you know? It is true that I haf hated him, but is he not dead? Death changes all. I lof him now because he is gone from me. And I will talk to him, even if I cry. Come!"

The teacher, still chattering aimlessly, ran on ahead, and led the party over the compactly frozen trail to Annie's cabin.

Antone followed apologetically, and took up his unostrusive position in a corner.

"Now, course you don't really see him," explained the teacher. "you put your hands on the table, you know —"

"Let me tell her, Phyllis," interrupted Annie, "you pull down the curtains, and open the stove door. It's awfully hot."

She glared dramatically at the company, as they slid into chairs around the table, fixing her eye on one after the other with what she fondly believed to be a close imitation of the hypnotic gaze of the spiritualist of the summer before.

"When people meet together to commune with the heavens," she began impressively, "an aura covers them up, and the rarefied air around them opens up to the influence of the heavenly spirits. The people we loved on earth are always with us. They flutter around trying to talk to us. We hear them when we are alone in the hills, but we can't see them or understand what they say. We think it is the brook running over the rocks, or the wind in the trees —."

Antone stirred suddenly.

"Be still, Antone!" hissed Katrine, her nerves tineling.

"But they can understand us when we talk, and if we ask them questions, they try to answer us. Now, when we're all together, we can find ways to understand them. Course you won't see the spirit, Katrine, but it's here, and it can answer your questions. If it raps once, that means 'no'; if it raps twice, that means 'yes.' Now, ask a question."

The six women leaned forward and placed their fingers together. Katrine's streaked and faded eyes gleamed with excitement.

"I want to know," she whispered hoarsely, "will we find the gold? Now? This spring?"

The teacher stopped giggling, and leaned over Annie's chair. The women fixed their eyes on their hands and waited. The half green wood in the fire snapped and sputtered, and the yellow flames chased queer elfin figures round and round the cabin, lighting up one after another of the comfortable chairs, the spring bed, and the cheerfulness of hunting trophies, guns, and min-
ers’ tools. Tense faces flashed into the light and out again. Antone watched, fascinated.

The hands on the table quivered in the flitting light. Then there was a sharp rap. Katrine gasped. Then another.

“Where? Where is the gold? How shall we dig? Is it straight ahead in the tunnel, or does it lie in a cross lead? Ask the spirit. Where shall we dig?”

“Is the lead straight on in the tunnel?” asked Annie.

They put their hands together again. Antone waited, his anxious eyes on his wife. She sat opposite the open stove door, her face haggard in its excitement. Her eyes blazed and flamed like those of a crouching cat. Her wild white hair, escaped from the confining hair-pins, streaked her face in glistening white scars.

The table rapped sharply, and was silent.

“Where, then?” she gasped, “a cross lead?”

The raps came quickly, two in succession.

Antone started to his feet, and took a quick step forward.

“Ask, ask, that we may know,” pleaded Katrine. “Where is the lead, and the gold that will make us rich?”

The women looked uncertainly at her wild eyes, and at each other.

“Why, you can’t ask like that,” explained Annie, “the spirits say yes and no. It’s all we can understand.”

Katrine pushed back her chair with a crash.

“I must know!” she cried. “Make him to come. Make me to see him and ask him myself. There! There! He has come! He looks at me from his other world! Father! Speak to me! Tell me where lies the lead? Where is the gold?”

Her eyes glared at the crooked figure of Antone, wavering in the dim light. He trembled at her frenzied approach, and put forward a feeble hand of resistance.

“No, no, Katrine —” he began.

“You must tell me!” shrieked Katrine. “The gold, father, it is in the cross-lead — you have said it — tell me now, where is the cross-lead.”

Antone, terrified, shrank back into the shadow.

Annie took Katrine’s hand reassuringly.

“He ain’t here, Katherine,” she soothed, “nobody ain’t here but us.”

Katrine turned slowly.

“But he was,” she moaned, “and you have let him go again. The gold is there — he has said it — but we shall die before we haf found it. How can he tell us now when he is gone?”
“Oh, lots of ways,” Annie assured her, contritely. “Maybe you’ll find a mark on the place, or hear it in the trees, or dream it. You’ll find out someway.”

“And I shall be rich — ” she repeated dreamily. “Come Antone, let us go home. He will tell us in a dream, and I shall be rich. I shall be in society, and all over the world I shall go. I shall bow to the queen in Vienna, and laugh at the great ladies who laughed at me when I plowed the fields in Bohemia. They will not be rich, like me. They will not have so many diamonds and plumes.”

Antone shook his head sadly.

“The queen is very high, unt the ladies are very great, Katrine,” he murmured.

She strode past him through the door. The short lengths of wood from the company store were already piled on the sled, and Antone took the ropes.

“I guess you can’t manage it with skis,” suggested the storekeeper. “Maybe you better have webs. I got some I ain’t usin’. You can bring ’em back some other time.”

Antone looked at Katrine, but as she made no comment, he exchanged the long skis for the webs, and left them standing in the snow.

It was very dark. Antone plodded slowly on, dragging the heavy sled, while his wife strode before him, the swish of her skis trailing almost imperceptibly over his consciousness. When they came to the top of the ravine, he spoke timidly.

“Unt will you not come back, Katrine? Not to me — unt the tree?”

“Bah, what are you? You know nothing. But me — I shall be a great lady. I shall not come back. You can stay by your tree.”

“With my poy,” sighed Antone, patiently. “But you will be happy, Katrine. That is goot.”

He unloaded and piled the wood before the door of the cabin. But he stopped a moment beside the door, to pass his hands caressingly over her skis, as he had caressed the tree.

Every day, then, the light on the opposite hill grew longer. The sun level sank slowly, bringing the tops of the shrubs above the surface, and the snowslides came. Antone was happy. Katrine watched with him for the first signs of spring, her impatience tempered, for the first time, with certainty. Sometimes she spoke to him almost gently, and even when she was silent there was a breath of cheer in her hopefulness. Every day she went down into the valley to borrow late fashion books, and to plan her new clothes with the other women. She put in hours arranging her wild hair like that of the ladies in the magazines. She sent to railroad and steamship companies for guide-
books, and sometimes let Antone help her map out her extensive journeys. Then Antone would become fearful lest her happiness be snatched from her.

"Unt if we find not the goldt, my Katrine, what then?" he asked, in one of her moments of condescension.

"We will find it," she insisted. "Has not the spirit said it?"

"But where?" asked Antone. "I haf listened in the tree unt he says not'ing; unt the brooks run high, yet they tell me not."

"Be still, Antone," she cried, exasperated. "To me the dream will come. What do you know? The spirits will not talk to you."

"But my poy does," murmured Antone, dreamily.

He wandered out of doors, picking his way carefully up the hill to where the tree stood, secure and sturdy. Already fresh needles of lighter green tipped its dark branches, and Antone pressed the soft new twigs in his hands lovingly. Then he passed on to his mine. A week before, the roof had hung low with icicles, and glazed pools covered the track. Now the ice for a hundred yards had thawed and tiny streams of water trickled from a thousand minute crevices. Antone lighted a candle. The light flickered over the frost work of the tunnel, glinting against the rough-hewn rocks. The tunnel was very low, but it was very long. Antone had sacrificed himself to make it so. If he had used his time and his dynamite to blast it six feet high, he could not have made it six hundred feet long in thirty years. He did not need now to crawl on his hands and knees to penetrate its depths. Age and long usage had bent him to conform to the tunnel, since he would not make the tunnel conform to himself. He turned off into several cross-cuts, stopping to break off the icicles, and to brush away the deep frost, with a loving touch.

"There is no goldt," he sighed, "unt Katrine will cry. But I can work tomorrow."

He returned to the entrance of the tunnel, and closed the door. Katrine was there.

"Where haf you been?" she demanded.

"I look at the tree," he murmured, "unt it is green. Unt I say, 'When the needles are green with spring, time it is to work in the mine,' unt I go to look."

"The tree," she grumbled, "always the tree. No work would you do on the mine till you had planted it. No dynamite could you use for th- tunnel till you had blasted the rock to keep the snowslides off. Bah, you lof nothing else."

"No, no, Katrine. I lof the tree because he is my liddle poy to me, but I lof my poy because he is of you."

"Fool," she snorted, and strode away, angry.
But falling asleep that night, she had the tree before her mind, and the
dream came.
She woke with a start, and ran to the window.
"Antone, Antone!" she called. "Look at the tree! The spirit has spoken!
The gold is there!"
Antone gave a short, wounded cry.
A shaft of white light glowed in the northern sky in great fan-like folds,
and in its brightness the lone tree stood, its shadowy branches pointing down-
ward, promisingly.
"No," cried Antone. "It is not the cross-lead, Katrine. It is the grave
of my hoy unt me. Have you not promised I shall lie there? If I dig, the
roots will be broken; the tree will die. Unt it will not laugh in the windt
any more."
"Antone what is a tree? And what is a grave? You can find other
trees, and other graves. But I, Antone, where else will I find the gold?
Where else will come the diamonds and the plumes? Thirty years have I
waited, Antone — here! Look at it! Here!"
She flung out her hands tragically over the wretchedness of the kennel in
which they lived. A heap of broken stones for a fireplace, a disordered bunk
of pine boughs, the decaying stumps of old trees in the earth floor, for tables
and stools. Antone covered his eyes with his trembling hands. Katrine threw
herself on the bunk, and wept stormily.
Morning found the old man still sitting on the floor by the window. At
Katrine's first move, he rose unsteadily, and tottered from the room.
Ten minutes later a loud report shattered against the opposite slope, and
for five seconds rolled back and forth, echoing and re-echoing through the
hills. There was another report, and another. Katrine lifted her head exult-
antly, and hurried from the cabin. At the door of the tunnel she met Antone
coming out with a load of rock.
"I dig in the cut, Katrine," he said.
She followed him into the tunnel, creeping with difficulty under the jag-
ged overhanging rocks of the low roof. All day she clung to him, watchng
feverishly, the deepening of the cut, and urging him to greater haste. All day
Antone pushed the heavy cart over the waterlogged wooden tracks with feeble
but persistent effort.
By the seventh day Antone had dug five feet, crawling in and out of
the cut, and removing the ore by basketfuls. On that day a fiber of the tree
brushed his face. He called Kathrine.
"It is the tree!" she cried, joyously. "Now will we find the gold.
Quick, Antone."
She snatched the drill from his hands and held it in place. Antone struck it feebly, but certainly, till the holes were made. Then he placed his charges of dynamite, and withdrew to the mouth of the tunnel. He waited, his anxious eyes unconsciously seeking the tree.

"It will not hurt —" began Katrine, her eyes following his, half-sympathetically.

They waited breathlessly. Then the long, hollow report came, and Antone quivered as the little tree swayed and shook with the force of the explosion. The other three reports came in quick succession, and Antone drew a deep breath.

"It did not fall," he murmured; then he sighed. "It was not enough."

Katrine had hurried back into the tunnel, and was on her knees examining the ore.

"It was not enough," she said, when he knelt down beside her. "Look, Antone, the rock under the tree—the gold is there, maybe."

"It is too high for goldt, Katrine," he said, but he attacked it with his pick.

"Put in dynamite, Antone," pleaded Katrine. "The gold will be there. We will be rich, Antone — rich!"

She held her candle high for him, clutching it with a grasp that left finger prints in the tallow. The hot grease dropped unheeded on her face as she leaned forward, her eyes fixed on the slowly moving rock.

"Now will we see — now will we see —" she murmured, over and over. Antone tugged and strained, but the rock gave slowly. He caught his pick in a crevice, and stopped to brush away the gravel that fell.

"Antone, go on!" cried Katrine, sharply.

He attacked the rock again, and brought a projection into view, to which he was able to attach his pick. The rock fell between him and his wife.

"Run, Katrine," he shrieked. "The earth comes, too! Run! Run!"

He struggled feebly forward and fell. Katrine, in frantic terror, dropped her candle, and fled from the tunnel, the dull echo of the falling rocks pursuing her. But when she reached the entrance, she remembered Antone. She turned back. The cut was filled up with boulders and earth.

"Antone! Antone" she wailed. "He is dead! My Antone, he is dead!"

Dry-eyed, she returned to the entrance.

"We came to see how you was gettin' along," a chirping voice greeted her. "Where's Antone?"

Katrine's eyes wavered, and rested on the tree. All the earth about it had fallen, and half the roots lay exposed. But it still clung tenaciously
to the rocks, supported against the lower slope by its supple branches. Her
eyes softened.

"Antone is dead," she said quietly. He is there — under the tree."

"Under the tree?" echoed Phyllis, awed.

"Where he wanted — he is buried there. So shall he stay — with
the boy."

"But your gold, Katrine, didn't the spirits say — "

She stamped her foot, angrily.

"What do you know?" she demanded. "Did he not wish to lie there?
Go away. For the gold I care not. I will gif it up to him. Bah, how
could you know that I will? You haf not known lof. Not like I love my
Antone."

The women looked at each other questioningly.

Katrine shook back her hair with a fierce gesture.

"What if I did say we lived without lof?" she reiterated. "Is he not
dead? I shall not go to Bohemia. I shall not bow to the queen. The gold
shall stay with Antone. But so shall I. Do I not lof him?"

She watched them as they drifted away, and smiled.

"And lof is greater than gold," she repeated, softly. "It's greater than
gold, Antone."