

SUN DANCE SUITE

II

As night wears on, the bustle diminishes, though not much, since regular hours are unknown among the Indians of the Plains. Far off, out on the hills, a young man slowly circles the great encampment, pausing from time to time to play a favorite melody upon his cedar flute. The young men and women smile to hear the music, the boys mock, the old folks smile and joke fondly, recalling the days when they, too, went courting warily, alone on the hills, or outwitted their parents and held secret meetings in the shadow of the same buffalo robe. For as the night passes, the circling musician draws ever nearer to the camp, and his melody with him. At last, just before dawn, he is heard close by, outside the tepee where his beloved, with beating heart, lies in sham sleep, listening, watching her opportunity to steal out without awaking her parents and the watchful grandmother whose special charge she is. At last she can wait no longer, and slipping out of the tent, is quickly clasped in the arms of her lover, sharing with him the intimacy of the folds of his enveloping robe, as the two stand face to face on the prairie, his flute forgotten, while the moon pales and the east grows gray before the coming dawn.