

He hoped to overhear them. The slow dry chuckle of Mort, the clarinetist, created a cosy ambience. D'Arcy reached the door handle on the other side before Mort noticed him. The pudgy good looks strained with curiosity when D'Arcy opened the door. Nodding curtly, D'Arcy sat in. He leaned over, took Kate in his arms, and kissed her. As he pulled away, he glanced up at Mort. The musician looked incredulous.

'Let's go,' D'Arcy said. 'Hi ya, Mort.'

Dazed, Kate pushed the ignition.

'You will be coming to our party, Mrs. Carr?' Mort blurted.

She reddened. 'We will be delighted, Mort. Sounds delightful.' She inched the wheels into a slow roll. 'Nice chatting to you.' She drove by the garage over which the musicians had rooms. 'Why did you do that?' She tossed her head angrily

'I didn't want him to get wrong ideas about you.'

'You don't think he has the right ideas now!'

'He asked you to a party, didn't he?'

'He asked us to a party.'

'Like bull!'

She glared at him. 'Anyway, if you hadn't taken so long, he wouldn't have stayed talking.'

D'Arcy sucked in his lips and nodded thoughtfully. They were driving out of the lodge grounds. He glimpsed the shiny wooden shack where the patrolmen kept count of the hotel cars leaving and entering in the day.

'Where are we going?'

'Where would you like to go?' she asked banteringly.

'Stop here.'

'Why?'

'Stop here,' he barked.

Kate brought the car up sharply

'Park at the side of the road,' he said patiently. 'We are getting out'

With a snort she drove to the side. He stepped out and going round to her door, held it open.

'Where are we going?' she demanded.

He leaned inside, slipped his arms under her and lifted her out and onto her feet. He slammed the door and took her hand. They crossed the road and looked down on a river that looked black in the starlight. The rushing water sighed from its bed. A high lamp by the patrolman's shack gave them enough light to make their way down to the next level and to a wide trail on the lip of the bank. Leading Kate to the brink, D'Arcy sat and dangled his legs over the side.

Kate stared at the swirling black. She felt her life changing from one of complication to one of simplicity. D'Arcy gently pulled her down beside him.

His tough leanness provided her with more of a mental support than a physical luxury. She thought that man belonged to this over-size nature where the mind discovered its image. Woman

was a phantom; she might haunt the valleys and ledges but not realise herself. She put her arms about D'Arcy and hugged him. She needed him to make her feel real.

'Why did you bring me here?' she asked.

D'Arcy pried her arms away and taking her hands folded them upon her lap. 'Just listen,' he said.

Behind them evergreens like dark giants moved in the breeze. The noise of the rushing river receded. A colossal stillness of sound replaced it in her consciousness. She sensed that D'Arcy was fascinated by it and somehow involved with it. Rocking against him, she made him look down.

D'Arcy cleansed of the pettiness of argument wanted to enjoy Kate's body in the fineness of the open air. He pushed her back on the grass and stroked her hair and cheek. Slipping his hand under her blouse, he caressed her breasts.

'What are we going to do tonight?' he mocked.

'Oh D'Arcy!' She threw her arms about his neck and held him fast.

He kissed her shoulder. 'Love should be made in the open air with the birds and the bees.'
He unbuttoned her

blouse.

'Don't people might come.' She sat up, and he slipped the >ll her arms.

'So what? Let them make love too,' he said. 'Why should we hide away in stuffy rooms when we have this majesty to frolic in?'

She laughed.. 'You'd do well in a nudist colony ' He frowned. 'If we all spent weeks in the nude every year, we'd be healthier, and I don't mean because of the sun tan.'

'Ha, ha,' she said, 'well, my mental health is all right. It's yours that worries me.'

He kissed her breasts. 'No brassiere,' he said. 'I like that about you.' He admired them for their refinement of line.