

**HEART'S  
KINDRED**

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Heart's kindred by Zona Gale

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For a moment he let himself watch her, and catching his look, she smiled, as she had smiled when his eyes had met hers as he woke.

# HEART'S KINDRED

BY

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"FRIENDSHIP VILLAGE," "NEIGHBORHOOD STORIES"

"THE LOVES OF PELLEAS AND ETARRE"

"CHRISTMAS," ETC.

*WITH FRONTISPIECE*

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TO  
THOSE WHO OBEY  
THE  
SIXTH COMMANDMENT

M18061



## HEART'S KINDRED

### I

A HUT of bark, thatched with palm-leaves; a gigantic rock at whose base lay old ashes; an open grassy space bordering a narrow mountain stream, and a little garden — these made the home of the Inger, where a man might live and die as a man was meant, neither planning like a maniac nor yet idling like an idiot, but well content with what the day brought forth.

Toward a June sunset, the Inger sat outside his doorway, fashioning a bowl from half a turtle shell. Before him the ground sloped down to the edge of the garden, and beyond dropped to the clearing's edge. When he lifted his eyes, he could look for miles along thick tops of live oaks and larches, and

beyond to a white line of western sea. At his back rose the foothills, cleft by cañons still quite freshly green. Above them, the monstrous mountains swept the sky, and here their flanks were shaggy with great pines. The whole lay now in that glory of clear yellow by which the West gives to the evenings some hint of a desert ancestry.

The Inger worked in silence. He was not a man to sing or whistle — those who live alone are seldom whistling men. Perhaps the silence becomes something definite, and not lightly to be shattered. A man camping alone will work away quietly day-long — and his dog understands. The Inger had no dog any more. He had owned a wolf hound whom, in a fit of passion, he had kicked so that the dog had died. And such was his remorse that he would own no other, and the sight of another man's dog pulled at him as at an old wound.

It was so still that, presently, in that clear air the sound of a bell in the valley came up

to him with distinctness. He looked to the south, and in a deep place in the trees, already lights twinkled out as if they, like the bells, would announce something. The Inger remembered and understood.

"Hell," he said aloud. "The wedding."

He went on scraping at his turtle shell, his mind on the man who would be married that night — early, so that there would be ample time for much merrymaking and drunkenness before the east bound train at midnight. Bunchy Haight was the man, the owner of the run-down inn in the village of Inch. The woman was the Moor girl, whose father, abetted by the Inger himself, had killed a sheriff or two for interfering with his gambling place and had gone free, because no one was sure whether it was he or the Inger who did the shooting. Moor's promissory notes had been accumulating in the hands of Bunchy Haight for a dozen years, and it was no secret that the wedding settled the long score.