

Bill had sent John Randall to investigate the Yankee Star Mine near the Village of Stump Bridge. Stump Bridge was where Bill was born and it was at the Yankee Star that he got his first job at the age of fifteen.

Bill had left Stump Bridge when he was twenty, under painful circumstances, and he never went back. He even avoided travelling through the Kootenays, but now, for some reason, he could not explain he decided to go and see the old mine. He phoned John Randall to tell him that he was coming and then went back to recalling dreamily the years of his youth.

Bill's father and mother came from Scandinavia and took a homestead in the Valley when everybody in the Country was chasing for gold. They were young, hard working people with high moral standards and they went courageously through the hardship of the first years. Bill, the oldest son, went to work at the mine to help the family with his pay. He had a younger brother and two sisters and the family needed his help.

Bill was nineteen when he fell in love for the first time. His sweetheart was lovely, but what they call a 'bad woman'. She chose him and devoted herself to his happiness, then disappeared one day without warning and left him in distress. He had never forgiven her for that betrayal.

Bill had a successful life. He started at the bottom in his mining career and rose to his present position by studying and working hard. He had inherited some puritanism from his parents; he would not do anything he thought was wrong, even if his most vital interests would depend on this. He would not argue, but he did not trust anyone who had been insincere to him, even once. Otherwise, he was easy going and sincere and he had many friends. He had a loving wife who had died four years ago and his three fine children were all married now.

Bill's life in later years had been peaceful and happy but, in his inner-self he knew that all this happiness could not be compared with the glorious days of his youth. He seldom thought about his first sweetheart but he could not really forget her, and now the remembrance of these early years overwhelmed him.

