

from window to hearth, looking and listening, all day. A drift was blown in under the door and hardly melted for all the blazing fire. That night she could n't go to bed. She wrapped herself in blankets and curled herself up in the chair, nodding and starting in the circle of the firelight.

For three terrible days the world was lost in snow. Before the end of that time Sheila was talking to herself and glad of the sound of her own hurried little voice. Then, like God, came a beautiful stillness and the sun. She opened the door on the fourth morning and saw, above the fresh, soft, ascending dazzle of the drift, a sky that laughed in azure, the green, snow-laden firs, a white and purple peak. She spread out her hands to feel the sun and found it warm. She held it like a friendly hand. She forced herself that day to shovel, to sweep, even to eat. Perhaps Cosme would be back before night. He and the parson would have waited for the storm to be over before they made their start. She believed in her own excuses for five uneasy days, and then she believed in the worst of all her fears. She had a hundred to choose from — Cosme's desertion, Cosme's death . . . One day she spent walking to and fro with her nails driven into her palms.

Late that night the white world dipped into the still influence of a full white moon. Before Hilliard's cabin the great firs caught the light with a deepening