

explaining and advising. Estenega and Chonita, having much to say, said nothing.

A cold volume of air, the muffled roar of a mountain torrent, rushed out of the forest, startling with the suddenness of its impact. Once a panther uttered its human cry.

They entered the forest. It was so dark here that the horses wandered from the trail and into the brush again and again. Conversation ceased; save for the muffled footfalls of the horses and the speech of the waters there was no sound. Chonita had never known a stillness so profound; the giant trees crowding together seemed to resent intrusion, to menace an eternal silence. She moved her horse close to Estenega's and he took her hand. Occasionally there was an opening, a well of blackness, for the moon had not yet come to the forest.

They reached the summit, and descended. Halfway down the mountain they rode into a farm in a valley formed by one of the many basins.

The Indians were waiting, and killed a bullock at once, placing the carcass in a conspicuous place. Then all retired to the shade of the trees. In less than half an hour a bear came prowling out of the forest and began upon the meal so considerately provided for him. When his attention was fully engaged, Rotschev and the officers, mounted, dashed down upon him, swinging their lassos. The bear showed fight and stood his ground, but this was an occasion when the bear always got the worst of it. One lasso caught his neck, another his hind foot, and he was speedily strained and strangled to death. No sooner was he dispatched than another appeared, then another, and the sport grew very exciting, absorbing the attention of the women as well as the energies of the men.

Estenega lifted Chonita from her horse. "Let us walk," he said. "They will not miss us. A few yards farther, and you will be on my territory. I want you there."

She made no protest, and they entered the forest. The