

416      Diane of the Green Van

Augustine if he'd been well enough to make the trip. It bothers me that you're not along. It's my first time without you, and you're a better shot than Grant and more dependable in mood. I can't make out what's come over him of late. He's so moody and reckless that the Indians think he's a devil. He's more prone to wild whims than ever. We've shot wild turkey and bear but I like the 'gator sport the best.

There's a curious white man here who's lived a good part of his life with the tribe. He's a Spaniard, a dark-skinned, bitter, morose sort of chap — really a Minorcan — whose Indian wife is dead. He has a daughter, a girl of twenty or so whom the Seminoles call Nan-ces-o-wee. He calls her simply Nanca. She speaks Spanish fluently. The morose old Spaniard has taught her a fund of curious things. Her heavy hair, black as a storm-cloud, falls to her knees. Grant says her wonderful eyes remind him somehow of midnight water. Her eyebrows have the expressive arch of the Seminole. Her color is dark and very rich, but it's more the coloring of the Spanish father than the Seminole mother. Altogether, she's more Spanish than Indian, I take it, though she's a tantalizing combination of each in instinct. Her grace is wild and Indian — and she walks lightly and softly like a doe. Ann, her face haunts me.

Young as she is, this Nanca of whom I have written so much to you, has, they tell me, had a most romantic history. With her beauty it was of course inevitable. Men are fools. At eighteen, urged into proud revolt against her Seminole suitors by her father, who