

the day before. She watched the west, into which he had gone and out of which she hoped he might return to her. Another round of dusk and dawn and there came another day, with its hours that hung like ages. When she sighed her mother scolded and Jaquis swore. When at last night came to curtain the hills, she stole out under the stars and walked and walked until the next day dawned. A lone wolf howled to his kith, but they were not hungry and refused to answer his call. Often, in the dark, she fancied she heard faint, feline footsteps behind her. Once a big black bear blocked her trail, staring at her with lifted muzzle wet with dew and stained with berry juice. She did not faint nor scream nor stay her steps, but strode on. Now nearer and nearer came the muffled footsteps behind her. The black bear backed from the trail and kept backing, pivoting slowly, like a locomotive on a turntable, and as she passed on, stood staring after her, his small eyes blinking in babylike bewilderment. And so through the dusk and dark and dawn this love-mad maiden walked the wilderness, innocent of arms, and with no one near to protect her save the