

10 Trails to Two Moons

ness. "Those yearlin' calves, now, they 've still got the lather on 'em from hard runnin'."

This roused her. What knowledge was this stranger advertising by veiled hints? The prick of danger loosed her tongue:

"I don't know what you 're talking about — Zang Whistler — calves. If you have any questions to ask I can answer them as well as my father."

Just a flicker of triumph about Original's mouth. He plumped his challenge at her before she could recover the vantage of silence:

"Zang Whistler rode up here not more 'n an hour ago, driving a bunch of four yearlin' calves. The calves are wearing a skillet-of-snakes brand over their rightful S O Bar, which is so new you can smell the burnt hide. After Zang penned those burnt calves in that tidy little corral you have down in the draw — you directing him from the back of a smallish horse with one skelped hoof — you and him rode up to the house, and Zang sat his horse right here," Original pointed to three tiny damp spots on the dooryard's hardened 'dobe, "while you gave him a goord of water. Then he rode off yonder to Teapot Spout to join his merry companions."