

## NEUTRIA

"Neutria," was all he said, but let his hand rest for a long minute on my withers.

We were following the Gap trail on a day in late autumn when, in rounding a bend, we almost collided with a rider.

"Hel-lo," came in surprised accents. It was Sloan, on his sorrel.

"Howdy," Chappo said. "Nice and cool, ain't it?"

"Whose hoss is that?"

"He's my horse. Finest cowhorse in these here mountains." Chappo would often boast thus. It was unwise, but it made me very proud nevertheless.

"Huh-huh. And who might you be?"

"The Emp'ror of Rooshia."

"Sure. You might be, but you ain't. You got papers for this here hoss?"

"No, I ain't got no papers for him. Don't you see the Box C on him? That's papers enough." Chappo was careless and bold, but I knew he was anxious.