

32 Trails to Two Moons

The day wore to a purple and carnelian close. Hilma sat in the doorway and watched the riot of the sunset play all along the saw edge of the Broken Horns—the thin blue rim was like the lip of a volcano confining fires of creation. Billows of cathedral light streamed down the flanks of the mountains and out over the great range. The crystal air was a lens focusing into sharp relief dots of pines on the higher ridges, clumps of squatting sage fringing the nearer divides. Heavens paled from rose to lemon yellow and to green.

Against this eerie light the figure of a horseman, at a great distance, appeared black as charcoal.

Just this figure of a horseman visible for a minute against the sky line, then disappearing. Hilma saw it; she watched it with intentness until it was swallowed by the black shadow of a butte. Long she sat, waiting for the tiny silhouette to reappear. The dark came, but the specter of the afterglow did not show itself again. The girl found herself idly wondering about it. That would be on the road to Two Moons where the horseman appeared,—on the road over which her father would be traveling homeward. No ranches lay over there; no