

instructed to bring back the fugitives alive or dead, and he was bringing them back, not one missing.

The bitterness and shock of the catastrophe were still too close and sudden not to weigh heavily on the spirits of Hope and Pavlof. For the present they could only mourn their loss, without a thought for the distressing complication which Serge's death would remove from their path. He had made a gallant attempt at their rescue, he had given his life for them, and their hearts were very sore for him.

The Cossacks, whole and wounded alike, bore themselves stolidly. If, now and again, at the bumping of the tarantas over the rocky way, one or another growled a curse, and feathered it at Hope with a white side-glance, it missed its mark, for she took no notice. She was thinking of Serge and of Pavlof, and wondering dully what the end of it all would be.

At the best, she supposed, it would mean Kara for life for Paul. She did not see how he could possibly have acted otherwise than he had done. But he had broken bounds and he must suffer the consequences. Well, they had been very happy at Kara. They would still be together. Her heart chilled at thought of what might have been, and glowed again at thought of what was.