

Then he shouldered the old rifle and disappeared. The path wound in and out, a sinuous way, over declivities, across rocky shoulders, through heavy timber and dense thickets, which were like tunnels of verdure, following as near as possible an easy grade, but trending skyward ultimately. He had no thought of danger, carrying the firearm merely from force of habit, and because, on several occasions, he had shot deer by the way.

In one of the densest thickets, close set with underbrush and small young trees, a bear suddenly charged on him like a black thunderbolt.

He had no time to shoot. The beast had closed upon him suddenly. It wrenched the gun away, and seized him with its great paws, flung him to the ground so violently that for a little time he was dazed and unconscious. When he rallied the huge animal had straddled him lengthwise, and was poking his cheeks with its nose, as a pig roots in the soil.

Huley had been told by native hunters that if one could be perfectly still and counterfeit death a bear would go away. His nerve did not desert him in this awful emergency. He lay still while the animal continued its investigations. Finally the hot, fetid breath exhaled from the cruel mouth so close to his became unbearable. He kicked him with one foot, being careful to keep the other portions of his body immovable. The bear jumped away, and looked and listened intently for a time; then it returned, and began the same rooting process about Huley's jowls with its nose.