

With sudden resolution Druse turned. Leaving the veranda, he walked slowly behind the house into the woods and stood still under the branches of a great cedar. Raising his head, a strange, solemn note came from his lips; but the voice died away in a sharp broken sound which was more human than birdlike, which had the shrill insistence of authority. The call to him had been almost ventriloquial in its nature. His lips had not moved at all.

There was silence for a moment after he had called into the void, as it were, and then there appeared suddenly from behind a clump of juniper, a young man of dark face and upright bearing. He made a slow obeisance with a gesture suggestive of the Oriental world, yet not like the usual gesture of the East Indian, the Turk or the Persian; it was composite of all.

He could not have been more than twenty-five years of age. He was so sparely made, and his face being clean-shaven, he looked even younger. His clothes were the clothes of the Western man; and yet there was a manner of wearing them, there were touches which were evidence to the watchful observer that he was of other spheres. His wide, felt, Western hat had a droop on one side and a broken treatment of the crown, which of itself was enough to show him a stranger to the prairie, while his brown velveteen jacket, held by its two lowest buttons, was reminiscent of an un-English life. His eyes alone would have announced him as of some foreign race, though he was like none of the foreigners who had been the pioneers of Manitou. Unlike as he and Gabriel Druse were in height, build, and movement, still there was something akin in them both.

After a short silence evidently disconcerting to him, "Blessing and hail, my Ry," he said in a low tone. He spoke in a strange language and with a voice rougher than his looks would have suggested.