

Then I added, "How came Calvario here? I thought he was in the army."

"No. Lately he was off on furlough. He heard of my homecoming, and came back to see me, as he said, for the last time, perhaps. He was returning to the army yesterday when he was taken prisoner."

"One more question," I said. "How did you know where I was imprisoned?"

"Calvario told me. He eecaped as soon as he saw he could not help you, and came home at once to organize a rescuing party. There, now, I suppose you are satisfied."

"Not quite, yet. Where is your home?"

"Just this side of Las Lajas. You must have passed it on your way to Managua."

"How far from it are we now?" I asked.

Instead of replying, she stopped and clutched my arm, at the same time pointing into the gloom on our left. I strained my eyes in that direction, and could just make out a dark form moving toward us. Reaching into my pocket, I drew out my Smith and Wesson. Carmen noticed the action.

"No, don't," she said. "Wait."

Reluctantly I obeyed. Slowly the figure advanced. We crouched low on the ground, our hearts beating wildly.

"Wait until he comes close," whispered Carmen. "Then knock him over."

The unknown was now only a few feet away. Suddenly he turned his head and saw us. At the same instant I sprang forward and struck him a stunning blow on the head. The cry he was about to utter died in a gurgle, and he fell like one dead.

"Come," said Carmen, "we must hasten. He will soon recover. Besides, there are more to follow."

Fortunately, we came now upon a piece of woods, into which we plunged, hoping thereby to effect our escape more easily. But we had not gone far when there came a cry from our left, answered immediately by another on our right. We looked at each other with blanching faces. Were we, after all, to be retaken? Suddenly, as we ran forward, a small clearing opened up before us, in the middle of which stood a small adobe hut. I paused irresolute, fearing to venture into the open. Carmen seemed to read my thoughts.