

**Always a Lady!**



**Cynthia Leigh**

A "Spectrum TV" Novel



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# ALWAYS A LADY!

By Cynthia Leigh

Gary Dawn stood in his saddle and peered through the rocks at the Indian Camp hidden far below in the lush greenness of Fire Box Canyon. Cooking fires burned low in the cool, pre-dawn haze of the Northern Arizona Mogollon Mountains and he saw no one moving about. Yet, he knew that Howling Wolf would have sentries watching. Gary shook his head in utter disgust. *Now why in blazes did I let her talk me into this mess?*

*Her* was Harriet Dorothy Dawn Simmons his younger sister and half owner of the “Stolen Nugget,” one of the richest gold strikes in the mountains west of Denver. She was also the sister-in-law of Jean Gary Simmons of, “Edwyth, Jean and Hariette, Thespians Non Pariel.” And, because of Edwyth, Jean and Hariette, he was here now, risking his hair.

His fingers touched his breast pocket feeling for the well-worn article that Harriet had shown him six nights previously when she begged him to help, by rescuing poor little Edwyth. “You’ve got to save her from those savages, Gary,” Harriet had urged. “You’re the only one who knows the Apaches well enough to do it.”

“She’s probably dead long since, Sis,” he had explained gently. “You know, Howling Wolf doesn’t take hostages, and besides, it’s been three weeks since the raid and there’s been no word.”

“Please?” she had begged. “For me?”

Helplessly, he nodded. “Dang me for a fool, but I’ll try,” he agreed. Without taking it from his pocket, he reread the screaming headline from The Denver Times in his mind:

### **DARING DAYLIGHT RAID AND MASSACRE**

Switchback, Colorado—Apaches of the Sachewach tribe led by the renegade Chief Howling Wolf, attacked the way station at Switchback, Colorado, in a daring daylight raid on April 2, 1874. The defenders put up a gallant fight, but were hopelessly out-numbered.

According to Sagebrush Nolan, a survivor, the raiders waited until after the morning stage had changed teams and gotten underway again. The helpless defenders watched in horror as the Indians surrounded the coach, dragged the adult passengers from within and killed each instantly. Nolan swears that a girl child, seventeen-year-old Edwyth “Edie” Hariette Simmons of the well-known entertainment troupe, *Edwyth, Jean and Hariette*, was carried off, kicking and fighting vigorously. The Simmones had recently completed a triumphant engagement at Denver’s Cow Palace Theater on Colorado Boulevard, and were en route to an appearance at the Tudweilliter’s Emporium Theater in Virginia City.

The Simmonses were well-known thespians, respected by one and all. Edie was noted for her portrayals of Eva in “Uncle Tom,” Missy in “Down Home” and as Elizabeth in “The Young Queen.” Edwyth’s spirited performances and sweet soprano will be sorely missed by all.

And, here he was, six days later, deep in the mountains, at the back door of Howling Wolf’s hidden camp.

Even if the girl were still alive, how in blazes could he get her out alive? When Indians took captives,

they didn't intend to release them. They were either used as slaves, or were adopted into the families to replace dead sons, daughters, husbands or wives. In any case, he could expect resistance.

He dismounted and squatted behind a large boulder, watching the encampment come alive. Squaws stirred new life into the dying fires as children began to scamper happily about. If Howling Wolf feared discovery, it didn't show!

It was only Gary's instinct, long association with and experience with Apache ways that had led him to this hideaway in the Mogollon Heights. His horse moved restlessly in the clearing behind him.

"Easy, Boy," he whispered soothingly, glancing at the huge animal. His eyes swung back to the Indian camp just as Howling Wolf emerged from the largest tepee of all. He was young for a chief, barely thirty, but no one dared question his strength, courage nor ability to lead the tribe.

There was some movement behind Howling Wolf and Gary caught his breath as a blonde girl ducked through the flap to stand beside the Indian Chief.

*'So, she's alive after all!'* he thought.

Edwyth, in person, was much prettier than the old tintype on the flyer that Harriet had shown him. She was dressed Indian style in a soft, supple, cream doe-skin dress that did mute justice to her lissome figure. The dress was adorned with much bead work and a beaded headpiece had been woven into her golden hair, the beaded strands hanging loosely down her back. She wore armlets of woven beads about her upper arms with a matching bracelet around each wrist. Her legs were covered with matching doe-skin leggings and she wore beaded moccasins on her smallish feet. For all her five feet no inches of height, Edie stood tall, proudly, beside the man.

"Damn it!" Gary swore aloud. "He's atoken her's his Princess! That sure do complicate things!"

He watched for some time, thinking things through. Finally he mounted and rode his horse straight for the village.

Indians were funny people. All strangers were enemies. But an Indian stood in awe of courage and admired it above all. Riding straight in was the only way to get their attention and save his hair.

Surprise them and keep right on doing the unexpected. It was his only chance to save the girl!

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“Hallo, the camp!” he yelled and rode straight in.

The surprised Indians grabbed bows and lances, but he paid them no mind. He stopped in front of Howling Wolf and gazed around calmly.

“Howdy, Howling Wolf.” His voice was controlled, unafraid. He reached into his pocket, pulled out the makings and rolled a smoke. He swung down from the saddle, knelt, took a flaming stick from the fire and stroked his cigarette, drawing deeply.

The two squatted by the fire and shared the cigarette.

The other warriors ignored them.

“Why you come, Gary?” Howling Wolf demanded.

Gary laughed softly. “Eddie.”

“Eedeee?” Plainly Howling Wolf was puzzled.

“The girl, your captive, the blonde, she with corn-silk hair.” Gary was very patient with the other man.

“Can’t have Golden Braids. Mine now.” Howling Wolf was adamant. “Apache Princess now. Not want, go you.”

“Feared not, Howling Wolf,” Gary shook his head sadly. “That there li’l gal has relatives and other people’ amongst the Round Eyes who set a great store by her. They want her back and sent me to fetch her.”

Howling Wolf shook his head again. “No!”

Gary rolled another cigarette, lit it and shared it with Howling Wolf. Finally, he spoke. "We got no choice, Amigo. The Long Knives are searching for you and this camp right now. If I take her back, they won't find you. I'll lead them away."

"Howling Wolf not afraid Long Knives!"

"I know that," Gary admitted. "I don't care about you, but I don't want them coming in here and killing all your squaws and papooses. And make no mistake, if the long Knives find you, they will kill all."

Howling Wolf thought a long while. Then, "Today, we hunt. Tonight we dance and sing to Great Spirit. We watch Golden Braids do Maiden offering and then we wrestle, you and me. You win, get girl, ride away to land of Round Eyes. I win, you die. I keep girl. Long Knives search forever."

He paused, watching Gary closely. "Deal, Gary?"

Gary stood up and held out his hand. "Deal!"

Howling Wolf grabbed his hand, rose to his feet, and kept right on going, right over Gary's shoulder to land in the dust.

He bounced to his feet and laughed heartily. "You always tricky."

"I'll win too," Gary spoke softly.

"We see, Gary!" Howling Wolf chuckled. "We see tonight!"

"That we shall," Gary murmured.

Gary watched as the village's maidens danced around the fire. They ranged in age from nine or ten to fifteen or sixteen, or so, and were all dressed a like, or rather, undressed a like with feathered armlets, bracelets and anklets with furry cache-sexes fastened between their legs with rawhide thongs. Their lithe young bodies, gleaming with sweat, moved smoothly to the rhythm of the throbbing drums.

His mouth was dry at the sight of so much nubile girl-flesh jiggling and swinging and displayed for his enjoyment.



*'Savages!' he thought. 'But damn beautiful ones for all that!'*

The girls danced in a large circle around the camp fire, stamping their feet in time with the throbbing drums and twirling and bowing from time to time. Even the youngest of the dancers had a sexual sinuousness that was blatantly arousing.

Soon the warriors began to join them in a courtship dance.

Soon, all were paired and the dance began in earnest. The men's hands moved over the girls' glistening bodies as the girls writhed in their grasps, rubbing bellies and breasts against the men's chests.

One by one, the men picked up their partners and carried them to the sidelines where they thrust at their partners openly. All were expected to engage in intercourse, from the youngest to the oldest, and all did!

The drums continued to throb and pulse as the men sat, smoking and watching the dancers' gyrations. It never failed to amaze him that Indian girls were used to sexual intercourse at an age that round-eyed females were still learning about dolls and clothes!

Gary passed the peace pipe to Howling Wolf, who took a puff, lay it down, and clapped once.

Instantly, the drums stopped and it became very quiet. Then, the night sounds started; crickets, droning mosquitoes, the sound of the wind and the rustle of small animals in the brush.

A movement in front of the Chief's open tepee brought Gary instantly alert, although his outward appearance changed not at all!

It was Edie, ready to dance the "Marriage of the Maiden Princess," but clad in a costume such as never seen on any white man's stage!

Her long blonde hair was entwined in an eagle headdress and lightning flashes were painted on her cheeks. She wore kohl to emphasize her eyes and her lips shone with bright, red paint. Dangling earrings

hung from her pierced lobes to almost touch her bare shoulders.

Her wristlets, armlets and anklets were made of white sable fur, and she was barefoot. Around her hips she wore a miniature piece of white sable fur to cover her sex — barely! When she turned around, her pink bottom was completely naked except for the cord that came between her cheeks to fasten to her waist belt.

Her little breasts were bare and Gary could see that her chest was quite well developed for being fourteen, with long full nipples that were stiff in the crisp coolish mountain air. Edie was obviously embarrassed by her brief covering, but only because Gary could see her! With the Indians, she was use to almost total nudity after the three weeks she had spent as their captive.

Until Gary's daring appearance that morning, she had given up all hope of ever returning to the white man's world!

Shyly, hesitantly, hands at her sides, small breasts jiggling slightly, Edie advanced until she stood, tall and proud, before the two men. Her cheeks blazed with shame as she fell to her knees to pay obeisance to her captor.

“Your Maiden Princess awaits your bidding, Oh, Mighty Chief!”

Her low words were directed to Howling Wolf, but her eyes sought Gary's. She sat back atop her spread heels, her back straight, her chest thrust forward proudly, and her small breasts trembled with embarrassment and excitement.

“Dance for me, Maiden!”

Effortlessly, Edie rose to her feet and began. As her feet shuffled in place some few minutes, Gary wondered about Howling Wolf's use of the term “Maiden”.

Only a virgin could be a maiden and among the Apaches, there were damn few “maidens” over the age of ten... if any!

Edie began to stomp her feet and move in a slow shuffle around the fire. Her feet beat faster and faster and she quickened her pace until she was moving in a huge circle. She began to wave her hands sinuously in the air as she seemed to invite warrior after warrior to dance with her.

Her hands snaked over her slight body, caressing the soft skin intimately, her breath coming in great gasps. Her breasts heaved and swung prettily as she danced about the circle. Finally, after rejecting each and every warrior except Howling Wolf and Gary, she stopped before Gary and reached for his hand, drawing him to his feet.

There were horrified gasps from the others gathered around the circle because she was supposed to have chosen Howling Wolf to dance with her!

But the man made no outward indication that anything was amiss, and he gazed impassively into the fire. Only Gary saw the slight tightening of the man's jaw.

Gary retreated, unwilling to join her and rouse the Chief's ire.

"Please?" she whispered. "I must dance with you!"

Gary joined her reluctantly and danced with her around the fire circle. Gary had danced this self same ritual numerous times in the past. He knew that it could culminate in only one thing — sexual intercourse with the girl!

They shuffled around while the girl offered, herself to Gary, teasing, insinuating, promising everything to him. Gary found himself responding in spite of himself.

Suddenly, Howling Wolf joined them! And he had a knife that he slashed at Gary's unprotected back.

Had Gary's attention been elsewhere, he would have been laid wide open! As it was, he barely avoided the blade, shoving Edie aside and falling to the ground.

With a glad cry, Howling Wolf leaped for Gary, sure the battle was won.

Gary lifted his feet and kicked Howling Wolf in the chest, knocking the air from the warrior's lungs. He landed in the fire, scattering fiery brands every which way as he rot led to escape burning.

Gary waited until Howling Wolf had regained his feet. The man jumped at him, grasping him in a wrestling hold, bearing him to the ground.

The two men rolled around on the ground for many minutes, neither able to best the other. Finally, Howling Wolf brought his knee up hard into Gary's crotch, viciously crushing his sex. Gary grabbed for his groin just as Howling Wolf leaped. In a flash,

Gary's clasped fists caught the warrior in the stomach and when he bent forward in pain, Gary's rising knee caught him flush in the face, knocking him out cold.

Gary stood there, knees sagging, breath catching heavily in his throat. He saw Edie standing at the edge of the circle, her fingers spread before her mouth, masking her horror. Gary strode to her and grasped her wrist, holding it high in victory.

"I claim this woman, Princess Golden Braids, to marriage, by right of combat!" he yelled. "Does anyone here challenge my right to her?"

No one spoke, nor stepped forward.

Gary turned to the frightened girl.

"Go to your tepee and dress. Pack what you have. We're skedaddling as soon as possible!"

Without a word, the almost naked girl disappeared inside the tepee.

"I claim the woman!" Gary announced again. "Do you challenge?"

This last was directed at a groggy Howling Wolf.

"No! You won! I not know how! But you won! Take woman! Be gone by first sun! If you still here one minute past sunrise, I kill you both. Go!"

Fortunately, Edie did not have much in the way of possessions to take.

Gary watched as she slipped into her doe-skin dress and matching leggings, then rolled her other possessions into a pack. Gary took his lasso and roped an Indian pony for her to ride.

“We’re going to have to trust an Indian’s instinct,” Gary told her. “What he most admires is courage and audacity. If I just try to sneak away with you, they will kill us in a minute. But, if I act like another Indian, they may let us go. So, no matter what I say or do, just go along with it. Understand?”

She looked up at him, her round, blue eyes trusting, unafraid.

“I will obey, Mr. Gary.”

“You know who I am?” he asked in surprise.

“I only heard Howling Wolf call you ‘Ga-ry,’ and I took it for granted that that was your name,” she replied.

“Good girl. It’s actually Gary Dawn, but... ? ?.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Dawn,” she whispered with deep embarrassment. “I wouldn’t have been so intimate with you had I known...?”

He laughed. “Intimate? With you naked in front of me?”

“I wasn’t naked!” she flared. “I was wearing my cache sexe...?”

“Oh, ho, you do know what it is, eh?” he teased.

“Yes, Mr. Dawn,” she admitted. “I was told by Maiden Laughing.”

“OK, now look, Miss Simmons, I’m going to be very rough with you. Indians are never very gentle with their own women and you’ve had a taste of what captives go through. I’m going to tie your wrists and elbows behind you when I take you out of here. The dress and the leggings have to go. You have to be stripped — at least to your cache sexe. We’ll take the dress and leggings in your bundle and you can dress when we’re away from camp. Understand?”

He watched her closely.

There was no fear in her clear, calm, controlled soprano voice. "I do trust you, Mr. Dawn. I already told you that."

"OK, let me bind you. Did Howling Wolf bind you?" he asked.

"Yes. He was very rough with me. He kept me tied up for over a week. And, several times he tied me to a tree and switched me horribly. And other times he kept me in a wooden cage with my legs pulled through the bars and my ankles bound outside! The children used to delight in throwing mud and small stones at me and by switching my legs constantly!" she told in a rush.

She slipped her dress and leggings off, dropping them to the floor.

Gary crossed her wrists behind her back, lashed them tightly, and then bound her elbows tightly together.

Eddie gasped with pain, but did not try to avoid the humiliation of being bound.

Gary rolled her dress and leggings up inside his bed roll, tied a leather leash around her neck, tied her roll to her waist, and only then led her from the tepee. The Indians watched stoically as Gary straddled the unprotesting Eddie atop her pony and tied her securely. He took the pony's halter lead and mounted his own horse.

"Golden Braids came to your people as captive of Chief Howling Wolf. It is only right that she return to her people as captive to me. I claim Golden Braids to my blankets. Do you wish to challenge?"

His words rang among the tepees. No one objected.

"Good! I take my blanket prize up into the mountains where I will bed her and teach her the sweet dance of the marriage blanket. When she is with child I shall return her to her people!"

"Gary not know of Golden Braids!" Howling Wolf snarled. "Gary claim Golden Braids for blankets and Golden Braids can keep Gary warm on cold nights. Golden Braids keep tepee good for Gary."

Golden Braids spread legs for Ga-ry and Ga-ry enjoy Golden Braids in blankets.”

“But I say to you, Ga-ry, Golden Braids no bear sons for warrior! Now, go! Go to mountains with blanket prize! I have spoken! No man of this tribe will harm you or Golden Braids! Go! Go up into mountains. We, my people and I, we watch you take Golden Braids to blankets!”

Howling Wolf folded his arms and turned away, dismissing them completely.

“Hear me, great Chief Howling Wolf,” Gary roared. “Golden Braids bear many sons for warrior. Wait! You see!”

With that, he spurred his mount and, leading the smaller pony with its precious cargo, riding out of the Indian encampment, headed for the uplands. He knew that as long as the Indians thought he had taken the girl to the mountain tops, they would leave them alone! The trick was to get down again and still keep their hair!

They had covered about ten miles before the sun rose. They were in very wild country.

Still, Gary knew where he was and he was confident he'd make it back. He pulled the hapless girl from the pony and let her lie on a blanket for a short rest.

“I don't dare untie you,” he explained. “If I do, they'd take it as a sign of bad faith and try to kill us.”

“But they're still back at the camp!” the girl exclaimed in surprise. “Those Indians are all over! There's one watching us right now. Bet on it!”

As if in great anger, Gary suddenly kicked at Edie, stopping the blow from doing any real harm. He did it again and again.

She yelped and screeched in fright, writhing in pain.

“Lay on your back, Miss Simmons,” he ordered softly.

“That’s a proper position for captive maiden princess!” he yelled in outrage. “And you will assume it whenever I put you on blankets!”

He stomped off only to return in a few minutes with some water in a bark basin. He built a fire, heated the water and made tea for the girl. He held Edie’s shoulders while she gulped greedily.

“We’ll rest here for awhile and then push on. I have to lay down with you and I’ll have to hold you in my arms and kiss you. They expect it.” he added apologetically. “If I don’t make love to you, they will kill us both.”

“Mr. Dawn.” There were tears in Edie’s eyes. “I’m not what you think! I’m sorry!” she sobbed.

“It’s OK, Edie,” he soothed. “I won’t touch you more’n what has to be done to keep them off our backs.”

“You don’t understand!” she cried brokenly.

“I do know that if we don’t, they’ll kill us. We have to outsmart them. I’m sorry, but it’s the only way out of this mess. Trust me, please.”

“I still trust you, Mr. Dawn,” Edie whispered and blushed under Gary’s steady gaze.

He shook out another blanket, took off his boots, shirt and pants, and lay down beside the shaking girl, pulling the second blanket around them. Gary took Edie into his arms, cradling her blonde head gently against his shoulder, and he tipped her chin up, kissing her soft lips gently.

Tears formed in her eyes.

“I’m not going to hurt you, Edie,” Gary told her softly.

“I know,” she whispered in return. “It’s just that I’m not what you think I am. And I’m so ashamed!”

Hot tears spilled from Edie’s eyes in a torrent.

Gary brushed them away gently, feeling a tenderness for this poor, frightened slip of a girl. Gary kissed her again and again as Edie moaned, avidly



pressing her lips to his, her mouth wide open in invitation. His tongue ever exploring.

Gary felt a great rush of emotion. Was he falling in love with this girl?

He slid his hand up her back, thrilling to the softness of her smooth skin. Without realizing what he was doing, his hand slipped down her back until he was caressing her rounded rump, squeezing its resiliency, revelling in her passionate response!

He touched her clenching hands and instantly felt remorse for keeping her bound so tightly. His fingers tested the bonds on her wrists, then moved up to her elbows, checking to make sure they were still in place.

Eddie moaned and writhed wantonly against him.

“Oh, Mr. Dawn, please don’t be disappointed in me! Please! It’s not my fault!”

He felt a momentary perplexity at her soft pleadings. Then he forgot it as she kissed him passionately and his palm cupped her soft breast gently, teasing the tender bud into instant erection.

She moaned in pleasure as he bent to kiss the hard little nubbins peeping through his fingers.

“Oh! Yes! My God! Yes!” she moaned. “It feels so good! So good!”

He kissed down her rib cage and across the smallish waist to dip his tongue teasingly into her belly button.

She shivered with pleasure as he stabbed his tongue into her again. And again. And again!

“Oh! You wonderful man! I always knew it would be so good with a real man!” she gasped as he nibbled at her tight belt, then moved down to her softly rounded belly, kissing gently, his wet tongue trailing liquid fire across her flesh.

He moved and her legs fell apart automatically. His fingers caressed down her milky thighs and he savored the sweet tang of her exposed, inner thigh, the muskiness of her female sex filling his senses.

He recognized the unmistakable scent that an Indian Maiden used to make herself a more attractive bride to her new husband and knew, too, that Edie had been properly prepared as a bride for the winner of the combat.

He knew that her pubic hair had been plucked in keeping with the Apache tradition that an unmarried female was not a real woman but a child, and as such, to be treated as a child until after her marriage.

He felt an erection of mammoth proportions spring from his loins as his mouth caressed gently into her crotch, kissing her sweetly, tenderly, inhaling her soft maiden scent deeply. He kissed his way back up her body and claimed her panting, trembling lips in a lover's kiss.

She writhed her taut nipples across his chest, driving him wild with desire.

His erection projected up between her legs and she gasped at its great size.

Her thighs parted and he slipped between them, rising into her crotch and pressing urgently against the soft leather covering her sex.

"Oh, please, Mr. Dawn," she moaned. "Don't be disappointed in me!"

"Shh! I'm going to fake this because they're watching!" He began moving his hips back and forth, his erection sliding back and forth between her legs, slowly at first, then faster and faster. He began breathing hard and they both gasped loudly for breath.

Suddenly, Gary stiffened and Edie felt something warm and wet sticking to her bottom cheeks as his organ pulsed strongly in her fleshy tunnel. After a bit, he lay beside her and embraced her, kissing her softly.

"I bragged to Howling Wolf that I was going to take you as my captive, taking you high up into the mountains and putting you to my blankets until you were with child. They are watching all the time. That's why I did that and why I dare not untie you. Please understand, Edie!" he begged.

“Dear, sweet, Mr. Dawn, ” she cooed softly. “I do understand and I admire you greatly. I’ve never known anyone as considerate and kind as you.”

He blushed deeply, snuggling her close.

“I’m sorry I can’t untie you.”

She kissed at his lips softly.

“It’s quite all right, Mr. Dawn. Besides, it IS sort of exciting to be so totally dependent on you for everything. I sort of like belonging to you. You’re ever so much nicer than Howling Wolf! I’m so glad that you won me in combat!” she teased.

He blushed again.

“Better rest while you can. As soon as the sun hits its zenith, we’ve got to be moving. It’s Indian custom to be on high ground at high noon,” he explained.

They snuggled under the blanket and soon fell asleep.

The watcher slipped away to report that Ga-Ry had taken Golden Braids to his blankets, keeping his promise to get her with child.

Another took his place.

Gary could feel unaccustomed weight on his belly, but it was a very pleasant weight, not threatening in any way.

He writhed in pleasure as soft lips nibbled at his renewed erection and ovalled around his crown, to slip wetly, snugly over him, engulfing him in warmth and moistness. A tongue lapped around his sensitive head and then he was plunged deeply into the tightness of a feminine mouth.

It had to be Edie, and Gary felt momentary repugnance that Edie would know what few “decent” whites knew. But, Edie had been held captive for weeks. Of course she would know and be trained accordingly. He relaxed as the girl sucked and tongued his turgid shaft until he could hold back no longer, exploding into her sucking mouth. She squealed and took his full length down her spasming throat, suck-

ing him dry, swallowing quickly, repeatedly, as he jetted into her!

Finally, Gary calmed and she gave his softened length one last sweet kiss, then wriggled until she was cradled in his arms again.

He kissed her cum-stained lips softly as she strained against his hard body.

“That was a reward for saving me from the Indians,” she smiled shyly.

“You owe me nothing,” he replied, “but I thank you very much.”

“I owe you everything,” she objected, “my body, my soul, my life, everything I have is yours!” Edie responded earnestly. “But for you, I’d be Howling Wolf’s wife today, forever doomed to be an Apache,” she shuddered prettily.

Her mouth touched his and they kissed tenderly.

Finally, Gary sat up and stretched. He smacked Edie on one rounded hip and the girl giggled happily.

“Some food, a quick dip in the river and we’ll be long gone. But, I can’t let you loose now let you wear clothes yet,” he apologized.

“It’s all right, Mr. Dawn,” Edie whispered. “Like I said, I like belonging to you so completely!”

He stirred the fire to life, heated water and made tea for them. He heated some meat and fed the girl. She ate daintily, gratefully, contentedly.

“Oh, I wish we could be this happy forever,” she sighed.

“Maybe when we get out of this I could come calling on you?” Gary joked, half in earnest.

Her ardent answer took his breath away.

“I’d love to have YOU call on me!”

He blushed and they finished eating. He picked her up, waded into the nearby creek and washed her in the icy cold water while she stood patiently, her teeth chattering. He laughed and washed himself, standing proudly, nakedly before her.

“You are magnificent!” she whispered as she appraised his body expertly.

“You are rather nice yourself,” he retorted.

A few minutes later, the still bound, almost naked girl was bound tightly to the back of her pony and they were on the trail once again.

Gary headed deeper and deeper into the mountains, angling to the northeast, where he knew Buck’s Run Settlement was. If they got close enough, they could make a run for it!

It was late afternoon when they at last came to a small clearing high on a mountainside and Gary called a halt.

The girl dropped to the ground in weariness as Gary looked around. He found a shallow cave that offered protection from the elements, big enough for them and the horses. He watered the horses first, then staked them out so they could get their fill of grass. He got a fire going, then went for the girl, carrying her into the shelter and laying her on the blankets.

While she slept, he scouted the area thoroughly.

Gary found the unmistakable sign of watchers and he knew they weren’t out of danger by any stretch of the imagination. He caught two rabbits and made his way back to the cave to find Edie sound asleep, snoring softly. He gathered wood and when the fire was going good, fixed some stones to reflect the heat back into the cave, making no attempt to hide the blaze.

The Apaches knew where they were in any case.

He roasted the rabbits and heated water for tea. He awakened Edie to eat. She went willingly into his arms, her face tipped back for his kiss. His lips touched her’s and she sighed happily.

“I’m glad it was you who rescued me!”

She snuggled into his arms as he fed her pieces of roasted meat and sips of the delicious tea.

“Mmmm,” she murmured. “I just love having you do for me! It makes me feel so.. . S O.. . oh, I don’t

know.. .dependent? No! As though I belong? Yes, that's part of it. It's hard to describe," she giggled softly and wriggled against him. "May I go into the bushes? I have to go."

He blushed. "Of course. Let me loosen that strap for you."

He unbuckled it in back and let it fall between her legs.

She stood immediately and turned away from him shyly.

"Mr. Dawn? Would you put my dress over me and unfasten my arms? I promise you can tie me right back up when I finish. I have to attend to something."

She was very embarrassed.

"I'm sorry. Of course I will." He unfastened her arms and she gasped as circulation coursed through her numb limbs. He slipped the dress over her head. She turned, rose to tiptoe and kissed him gently.

"Thank you so much, my Master. I won't be long," she whispered.

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When Edie had disappeared into the thick bushes, Gary stood.

"Y'all better come on in, Howling Wolf. We're still amigos," he called softly.

Howling Wolf seemed to materialize from nowhere. He strode up to Gary and they clasped wrists in friendship.

"We smoke?" the Indian asked.

"Sure."

The two men squatted by the fire and shared the tobacco, smoking and contemplating silently. Neither spoke until the pipe had gone out. Gary reached into his pocket and pulled out the makings.

"Another?"

Howling Wolf shook his head.

“Talk first. Then smoke peace.” The warrior gazed steadily at Gary.

“Sure. You Chief. You guest at my fire. You speak first.”

Howling Wolf grunted in pleasure to be afforded this courtesy.

“You take my Princess Golden Braids into blankets this morning. She squeal much while you use her. Later Golden Braids take lance into mouth and give you more pleasure. You gave Golden Braids same pleasure. Then you ride here. Why?”

Gary looked at him steadily.

“This magic place. WanKenTonKa live here. I need WanKenTonKa’s help to get Golden Braids with child. I have no sons. I have had four wives. I need help,” he explained simply.

Howling Wolf nodded sagely.

“You are right to seek help WanKenTonKa. Golden Braids pleases you?”

Gary nodded. “Yes. Find much pleasure between Golden Braids’ thighs.”

Again Howling Wolf nodded.

“We see. We hear.” He sat silently for a while.

Then, “You keep Golden Braids bound as captive. Why? Golden Braids not escape you. Not dare try. Good squaw. Now you mix blood with Apache Maiden, husband of Golden Braids, blood of blood. No need to bind Golden Braids, Ga-ry.”

“I keep Golden Braids bound to remind her she captive woman. Keep her bound so she know she belong me — not belong Apache,” Gary explained.

Howling Wolf nodded with satisfaction.

“You smart warrior, Ga-ry! And when Golden Braids learn, what then? Will you return Golden Braids to Round Eyes? Or keep Golden Braids as squaw?”