

# ОТРАЖАНИ

ПРИНЦИПИАЛЪТ НА ПРАВЕ ПРАВИТЕ



STORY BY  
AILEEN LORBERG



DRAWINGS  
EVA JANE LESEM

NPS  
#213

P R E F A C E

This is a fictional account of a beautiful young Cherokee Princess, daughter of an important chieftain and granddaughter of a Cherokee missionary converted to Christianity, whose family were driven out of their native Georgia and sent westward to live in what is now the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma. The Bushyheads, well educated and extremely wealthy, were among the third group sent west, going under the leadership of Princess Otahki's father, Chief Jesse Bushyhead. The Princess died of pneumonia (as foretold in her fictitious dream) December, 1838, and was buried in what is now Trail of Tears State Park near Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

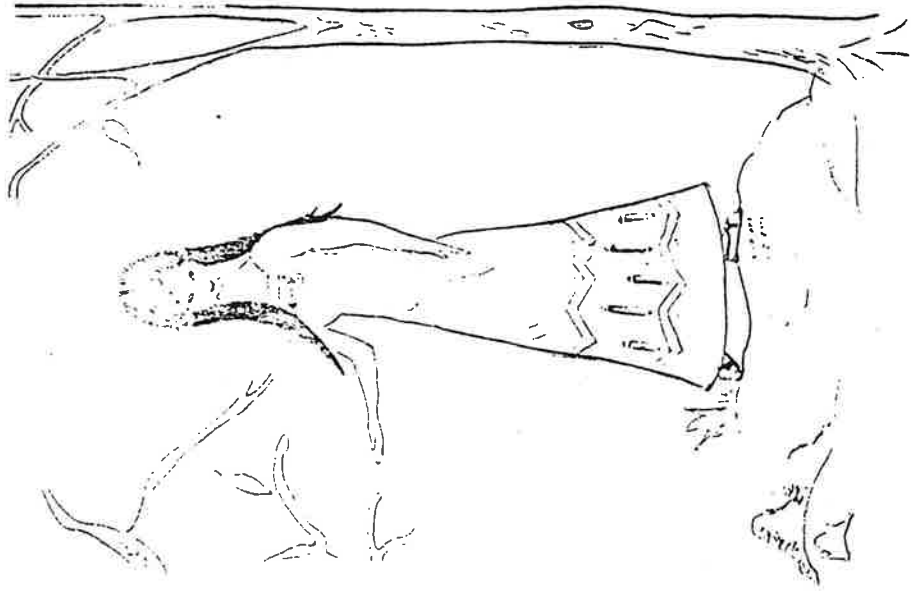
Chief Jesse continued the trek to Oklahoma and retained his status as Chieftain in the new Nation, but young Sam Hildebrand, to whom the Princess was married, remained in the Cape Girardeau area. He re-married, and the author of this story knew a descendant of his bearing the same name when she was a small child. Her characterization of young Sam as a lover of animals, in fact, is drawn from her knowledge that every stray dog in town landed at Sam Hildebrand's door.

The artist who illustrated our story, Mrs. Eva Jane Leşem, lives near the Trail of Tears Park and sat within yards of Princess Otahki's Memorial Tomb in order to reproduce it faithfully for our readers. The monument was dedicated in May of 1962, with several members of the Bushyhead family, most of them residents of St. Louis, attending the ceremony. The memorial was erected by the Cape Girardeau Rotary Club, and the local Girl Scouts are called the Otahki Council in memory of the Trail of Tears Princess.

A L

FOR MARY KEMPE --

without whose gentle prodding and able assistance  
this story would never have been written



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## Part I

### OTAHKI'S DREAM

The sky above Deer Pass Lake was smoky blue today, with the haze that comes with early autumn. Princess Otahki was out in the woods beyond the clearing gathering persimmons for a special pudding to celebrate her father's return from Council.

"Take only the small basket," Shining Star had said as her daughter left the house. "And do not shake the tree if enough are on the ground."

"None will be wasted, my mother." The young girl did not trouble to point out that the forest creatures had to eat too. Shining Star was city bred, and had not the feeling for animals which the rest of the family felt. This, Otahki had not understood till her beloved nurse, Maggie, explained it to her, the day Laughing Doe was sent back to the woods to live.

This week Maggie was back in her cabin with her daughter, Violet, doing some sewing in preparation for the girl's marriage to Hunter Buck, and her absence made this a convenient time for Shining Star to teach Otahki something about cooking. Gone were the days when an Indian maiden had to prove herself a woman by making a suitable wedding garment of hides which she herself had tanned. But a certain skill in cooking was still a near-requirement in the year 1837, and already many young braves had tried to bargain with Chief Jesse for his beautiful fifteen-year-old daughter.

One of the braves, having failed to satisfy the Chief,

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## OTAHKI

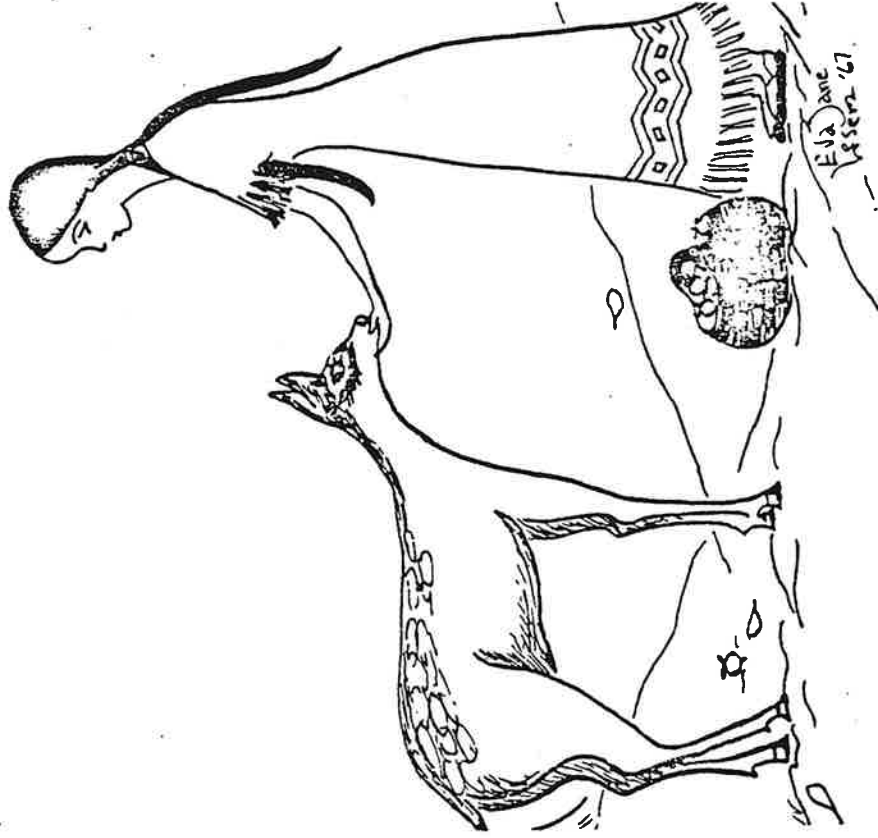
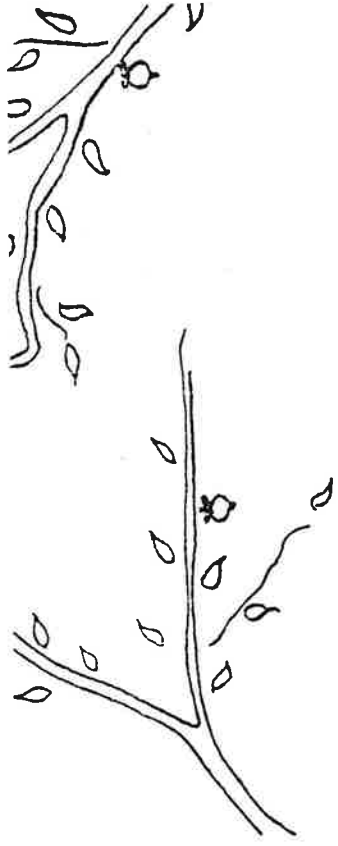
had settled for Otahki's lifelong companion, Violet, the lovely daughter of the Bushyhead's family retainer. Violet had gone to mission school with the Princess and had been treated as an equal despite the color of her skin and the Princess' station in life, and Otahki was looking forward to the girl's wedding almost as eagerly as if it were her own. Perhaps in some ways even more, since a terrifying dream in connection with her own marriage had begun visiting the Princess with increasing frequency.

Maggie and Violet had hardly left the manor house when Chief Jesse was summoned to John Ross's cabin at Red Clay on business vital to the Cherokee Nation. To keep his journey a secret from both Creeks and whites, he had left in the dead of night, with orders for his son, Ameek (meaning Beaver), to ride up to Tsalagi Hill for some of his planters to guard the big brick house and homestead until his return. But Ameek, recently turned thirteen and feeling very much a man because a little fuzz had appeared on his upper lip a few moons ago, had ignored the command to show he was man enough to defend the household without help.

If Shining Star harbored any fear in her heart, it was for her husband. "Risk no more than you must, my husband," she had pleaded on the eve of his departure. "And God go with you."

"And bring us word of Little Jesse," put in Otahki, who missed her younger brother more than anyone knew. For among her people it was an unpardonable weakness to show emotion.

And so Chief Jesse had ridden off with a promise to visit Little Jesse at the mission school on his way home. The suddenness of his summons had left his household with little meat, it being the custom of the



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Cherokees to kill only enough for current needs until the autumn curing. Just this morning Ameek had gone to the woods early for game for his father's homecoming meal.

"Whatever you do," begged Otahki as he left the house, "watch out for my deer, Anikawi. And make haste so that I can go for the persimmons."

So far no stranger had crossed the clearing since the Chief's leave-taking, but both Otahki and Ameek feared to leave Shining Star alone in the house in these perilous times. And Ameek had returned within an hour with a wild turkey and three squirrels.

Now, at mid-morning, Otahki was gathering fruit from the big persimmon tree, her ears attuned to the rustling sound that would herald the approach of Anikawi. The dappled fawn was the offspring of Laughing Doe, the deer Otahki and Ameek had kept as a pet until Shining Star had made them give her up. The fawn seemed to sense a sort of kinship between itself and Otahki, and after a wary testing period, it had formed a habit of joining her whenever she came into the woods for roots for dyeing cloth, herbs for medicine, or fruits and nuts for table use.

The Princess was about to relinquish her hope of a visit with the young deer this morning--had Ameek frightened it earlier with his shooting noises? Then she felt a familiar dampish touch at the nape of her neck.

"Good morrow, Anikawi!" she cried happily, turning to face the fawn. "Have you broken fast this day?" She chose a large, luscious persimmon from her basket and put it in the creature's mouth. Since the fawn seemed to relish it, the Princess followed it with half a dozen more.

"There, that ought to give us an even start!" she

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declared. She put down her basket and clapped her hands to signal that the game was on.

At first the girl chased the fawn, allowing it to circle the tree trunk five or six times. Then she tried to trick it by turning back to catch it coming from the opposite direction. But Anikawi was familiar with this strategy, and turned to trick the Princess instead. Very soon Otahki stopped and allowed herself to be caught.

"Shining Star will worry if I tarry longer," she explained, and Anikawi seemed to understand. Instead of trying to tempt the Princess into further play, the young deer remained at attention for its farewell hug, and did not follow her into the clearing as usual. Some noise had surely put the fawn on guard.

Near the edge of the wood Otahki became aware of horses' hooves beating the ground beyond the bend of Tsalagi Trail. She stopped to count the vibrations. It was only one horse, thank the Almighty God. Raiders rode in bands. But who could it be, this time of morning? Please, not the Chief, her father. Not before she had the pudding ready!

Horse and rider rounded the bend before Otahki could speculate further. The high, blue-black mount and the rider's funny pillbox hat with a single feather in it told her it was Brother Attuk, the mission teacher who still rode circuit to teach the Great Sequoyah's Syllabary to the hill people.

"Good day, Princess!" Brother Attuk said warmly, lifting his hat. "We are headed your way. Will you ride with us?"

It was only a few paces and Otahki much preferred to walk, to breathe more deeply of the smoky autumn smells. But Brother Attuk and her grandfather Bushyhead were lifelong adversaries, and the Princess had

no wish to widen the breach in times like these. She handed him her basket while she climbed up, and settled sideways on the horse because her long straight dress was too narrow for riding astride.

"What brings you to Deer Pass this day, Brother Attuk?" Otahki knew this was the mission teacher's day to ride in the opposite direction from the mission compound headed by the Reverend Jesse Bushyhead. 'Is there news of my father, the Chief?"

"Yonder comes Shining Star. What news I have will keep for her."

They reached the gate together, the two on horseback and the girl's mother.

"My husband?" inquired Shining Star anxiously. "You bring word of Jesse, Brother Attuk?"

"The Chief is well," Attuk hastened to assure her. "'Tis only that his horse has been shot, and he must bargain for another. He cannot return home this night, and desires no worry on his account."

"Poor Chestnut!" cried Otahki as she jumped from the horse, scattering her fine persimmons all over the ground. "He was the Chief's favorite mount!"

"But the Chief lives, Princess. Rejoice that this is so!"

From Old Jesse, with whom Attuk was fitfully conversational, the mission brother had learned of Otahki's growing melancholy because of a dream that kept re- turning to her like a bad omen.

"Look on the bright side," he urged while Otahki gathered the fallen fruit into her basket once more. "Count it for good that only the horse is lost."

"We are truly grateful, Brother Attuk," put in Shining Star with some embarrassment for her own display of feeling. "Where did this--accident--take place?"

"'Twas within a stone's throw of Red Clay. As Chestnut went down the Chief flattened himself and crawled into a ditch back of the Ross Place, and reached the cabin on the far side.

This was enough to tell Shining Star that her husband's horse was shot from under him, and that Jesse himself was the intended target."

"But what of his return home?" she pressed. "Will he not be in even greater danger?"

"A young brave will ride his horse beyond the danger zone, while Jesse follows a trail of his own making. They will leave after dark and meet before daybreak, at the Pass. The young brave--" Brother Attuk paused to give the Princess a meaningful look--"the youth is that same Thundercloud who wins all the contests at Festival times. Dost recollect this one, Princess?"

Both Shining Star and the mission teacher caught the quick involuntary start that preceded Otahki's snod. There followed another brief silence, broken by Shining Star's inviting the Brother to dine or sup with them.

"I have much ground to cover before sundown," he replied regretfully. "And Rosebud expects me home by then. If I am late, she will worry."

"'Tis only natural," agreed Shining Star. "But have you not a minute more, to tell us what the meeting at Red Clay was about?"

"I am not a member of the Council, Shining Star. 'Tis only you good people who deem me worthy of such confidences. We missionaries are less and less admired, even by our own tribes, since so much of our teaching escapes the very ones who brought it to us."

"May the Father of us all forgive them!" prayed Shining Star as Brother Attuk turned toward the gate to

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go.

"And may He keep all evil from this house," the missionary finished. He did not mention the burning of the Hildebrand lands only last night, the woodsy smells of which Otahki had laid to mere autumnal burnings in the vicinity. But he made a surreptitious motion to Ameeek as he said, "Will you ride a piece with me, lad?" "Tis fine weather for riding."

His meaning was not lost on Shining Star, who turned tactfully toward the house to allow the man-talk to continue. To Otahki she said, "Let us make the pudding even so. You have brought enough fruit for another tomorrow."

Inside the kitchen Shining Star reached down a small kettle from the shelf above the stove, and bade Otahki mash persimmon-pulp into it with the wooden masher. Otahki made no move to do her mother's bidding, and Shining Star opened her mouth to reprimand her. But at the sight of the radiant look on the girl's small, delicately-boned face the mother closed her mouth again without speaking. So it was Thundercloud after all—the strong young brave she and Jesse favored most! A youth as handsome as he was brave, and surely worthy of a Princess, since he was risking his very life for this one's father.

Shining Star took up the masher and began to do the task herself. Leave the girl to her thoughts while they were happy thoughts. Her melancholy would return soon enough, if the Treaty of New Echota, whereby all Cherokees were to be removed to Oklahoma by a certain date, was to be carried out in the time given them.

The noises made by Shining Star's mashing brought Otahki back to reality.

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"Are we to have pudding this day?" the girl asked, in surprise. "Then give me the masher, my mother. I must do the task myself if I am to learn properly."

Shining Star relinquished both fruit and masher to her daughter, repeating, as if speaking for the first time, that there were persimmons enough for a second pudding for her father's homecoming.

"With so little pulp?" asked Otahki, astonished. "How is this possible?"

"We add eggs and flour and cream, my daughter. 'Tis well that Maggie is away, else your domestic education would never be forwarded."

At this point Ameeek came back inside, his bronze cheeks ashen. A single glance at him, and Shining Star said, "What news did Brother Attuk have for your ears alone, my son? Is the Chief, your father, in greater peril than we know?"

"No more than any of us," replied Ameeek equivocally.

"There is more. But if your lips are sealed, then make better use of your legs. Gather six hen eggs from the yard, and fetch yesterday's milk and cream from the spring."

Ameeek flinched, for he was still young enough to be tribal-minded and he felt that fetching tasks were women's work, beneath the dignity of the man of the house. Still, it was some relief to be let off without further catechizing, and he hurried off to the yard to do as he was told.

When Otahki had broken and beaten the eggs and combined all the ingredients for the pudding, she asked her mother to let her stir it while it cooked.

"It requires no more stirring, my daughter. It cooks of itself, in the oven. If you wish to continue your les-

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sons, let Ameek show you how to skin a squirrel."

Otahki shuddered, hoping Ameek would refuse. Using her smallest voice since babyhood, she asked him if he would like to teach her.

"'Tis for a woman to teach women's work," Ameek protested. "Men have not the proper training."

"Nonsense!" snapped Shining Star. "Did not your Grandmother Bushyhead show you, when Little Jesse was born, and Maggie back at her cabin nursing the girls through the pox? Some day you will learn that it takes more than chin-whiskers to make a man of you."

Shining Star's firm tone put both Ameek and Otahki in a more co-operative frame of mind, and they went about their assignment obediently if with immense reluctance. Ameek was full of wounded pride; Otahki was fraught with horror at the whole procedure.

Somehow, the severing of skin from an animal was linked with the Princess' terrifying dream, now beginning to haunt her waking hours as well as her slumber. She would wake up screaming in the dead of night, and be too frightened to let herself go back to sleep. Then, the whole next day she would go about trembling with the impact of it, completely unnerved by the fear of icy rivers and strange and lonely shores; of bitter cold and hunger, of exhaustion, illness, and then total oblivion. It was only when she reflected on the princely warrior who shared the dream with her, a strong but gentle youth who was sometimes Thundercloud and sometimes Sam Hildebrand, often both at the same time, that she could find peace.

That peace returned to her now as she recollected Brother Atuk's news, and Otahki reconciled herself to the need of animal meat for health and strength to meet whatever the future held in store for her.

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## Part II

### THE WEDDING GOWN

Chief Jesse could smell the charred animal flesh, the burnt hides and timber and the still-smouldering iron, long before he reached the Hildebrand Place. It was true, then, what he had heard back at Red Clay. And Sam Hildebrand had proved a man of his word. Two years ago, when the Great White Bird's\* estate was seized, Sam had sworn he'd burn every last sweet-potato vine of his before he'd see it in the hands of the enemy. Two days ago he had been put to the test and his courage had not failed him. If young Sam turned out to be half the man his father was . . .

There was no evidence of the elder Hildebrand's spirit in Sam the younger as Chief Jesse rode up to the gate at dusk and found the tall rangy lad rising, inch by inch, from a pile of rubble.

"Is that you, Sammy?" the Chief called, dismounting. "What are you doing here at this time of evening,

\*John Ross, dubbed Great White Bird by the Cherokees. Ross was Chief of the whole Cherokee Nation, a position he retained after their removal to Oklahoma.

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all alone this way?"

"I'm tryin' to think, Chief."

"Where are your folks?"

"Back at Jed's cabin, if it's still there. I can't see much future hidin' out in the hills, can you?"

"No call to hide any more till spring. Removal's been postponed till then." Jesse's eyes circled the ruins all about them. "It's a crying shame, all this waste. Did you manage to save anything?"

"Coupla horses, and some baby chicks Ma couldn't let go of."

Sammy took care not to mention the livestock he'd allowed to run free because he hadn't the heart to see the poor critters suffer. "I can't figure it, Chief," he went on presently. "Nobody wanted this place till we made somethin' of it. Besides, we're half white."

"John Ross is seven-eighths white, and his land was the first to be seized. 'Tis the side you're on, Sammy--and how tempting your property is. Who wanted any part of Georgia till gold was discovered at Dahlonega?"

"But your place is bigger than ours."

"Our turn will come, you can depend. Somebody tried to shoot me outside Red Clay a few nights back."

Young Sam's great dark eyes widened in awesome wonder. "Good Lord, Chief, ain't you scared? Ridin' alone this way when night is so nigh?"

"'Twould be a noble act, mayhap," the Chief suggested tactfully, "for you to ride along home with me. This is no place for you to spend the night." Noting how quickly the despair changed to hope in the lad's quick eyes, he added, turning his horse again, "Come daylight, we'll ride up into the hills and try talkin' some sense into your pa. Folks can't survive a winter cut

there, and there's work and to spare on my grounds."

It all happened so fast, Sammy could hardly believe it was real. Only minutes ago he and his family were homeless refugees determined to escape Removal or else die in the attempt. Now, they could stay right here in their Georgia homeland throughout the winter months--provided Pa could be reasoned with. He could be mighty cantankerous, where his pride was concerned. But if anyone could make him see daylight, it was Chief Jesse. He'd done so time and again, when blights and droughts threatened--and when it came to sending Sammy and his sister Queenah off to mission school.

The Bushyheads were all out at the stables awaiting Chief Jesse as he and Sammy rode in, Ameek with his rifle, Otahki and Shining Star bearing lanterns. Shining Star, the first to sight the second rider with Jesse, said, "Welcome, Thundercloud. 'Twas mortally brave of you to risk your life for the Chief."

"'Tis young Sam Hildebrand who is with me," corrected Jesse. "But 'twas equally brave of him."

The mistake was only a natural one, but Sammy couldn't help wondering how Shining Star could have made it even in the dark. Was Thundercloud so familiar a figure to the Bushyheads that no other suitor was ever expected? If so, the lad pondered dejectedly, he might as well concede the race right now; backward as he was and with nothing to offer the Chief in exchange for his daughter.

Inside the house, the first words spoken were of Little Jesse. The Chief reported that the boy was growing like Jimson weed and was just about as full of tricks, but doing very well at his books even so.

"Just like his grandfather," Jesse added. "In fact, Headmistress Barnett predicts a missionary career for

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please me to be godfather to her first-born if she will only honor him with my name."

Otahki cast an amused look at her mother. What made her father so sure it would be a boy?

"Jesse is a fine name for a boy or girl," she said aloud.

The knowing looks exchanged between mother and daughter did not escape the Chief. Truly, the Princess was ready for marriage, and not only because of the excellence of her pudding!

"What business takes you so far, my husband?" inquired Shining Star, fraught with anxiety despite the mild comic relief provided by their perceptive daughter.

"A new treaty for the Seminoles--and Osceola's freedom. He is wasting away in the prison at Charleston."

"Impossible assignments, both of them. Surely 'tis only another trick to get your scalp."

"The government guarantees our party safe conduct."

"Like they guaranteed poor Tsali when he offered his life to save the rest of the tribe?"

"Have no fear, my good wife. Tom Woodward and Hair Conrad are of the party, and Major Polecat goes along as interpreter. Between us, we should be well able to protect each other."

"With the help of God," sighed Shining Star, resigned though little comforted.

Next morning, the Chief and young Hildebrand rode up into the hills to the cabin once occupied by Jed, a deceased planter of the Hildebrands. Sam was by no means ready to forgive his son for his spineless release of all their livestock, now doubtless in the hands of their persecutors. But after two incredibly rugged days

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him."

"Who can tell what the future may bring?" mused Shining Star aloud, her voice still a little unsteady after her blunder out at the stables. She turned toward the stove, Otahki following dutifully behind her. "Let us eat while the food is hot," she continued, "and leave the future to another time." She flashed Sammy a winsome smile, partly in apology; perhaps, too, to suggest that he wasn't necessarily barred from the future of the household. For he was an extremely well-favored lad, and gentle-mannered as well.

It was only after the meal was over that Chief Jesse explained the reason for Sammy's presence. (Ameek had guessed, but he was pledged not to divulge what Brother Attuk had told him only yesterday) Otahki was sorely relieved by the news—for all its tragic implications—that she found it hard to commiserate with Sammy as the rest of the household did. All this while she still feared that Thundercloud had had to give his life for his Chief, and Sammy had been brought home as a sort of consolation prize for her. Guilt-ridden for her ill-conceived thoughts, she said, "'Twill be a great comfort to have you in the house in the dark winter days."

"And Ameek will have help in protecting you while I am away," the Chief found this a convenient time to announce. "I must be off to Florida in three days."

"Florida!" exclaimed everyone together.

"Three days!" added Otahki, "But Violet's wedding is only a week away. And you have promised to stand with Shining Star as sponsors."

"I shall have to cede that privilege to Sammy's father, Sam and the Lord willing. You must convey my regrets to Violet when she returns, and tell her it would

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and nights unrelieved by the chidings of his wife, Dawn, and their daughter, Queenah, Queenah, he offered only mild resistance to the Chief's invitation, and they were soon on their way to the Bushyhead lands.

Before the week was out Maggie and Violet also returned, and the manor house took on a festive air despite the Chief's departure. While the menfolk constructed a temporary altar for the wedding, the women and girls made hundreds of artificial orange blossoms with which to decorate it, orange blossoms being from time immemorial the symbol of everlasting love.

At the height of the preparations the fifteen-year-old bride-to-be developed a severe case of bridal tremors and tried to seek deliverance.

"Please, mama-girl," the beautiful one begged, "let's wait until Chief Jesse git back."

Maggie laid down the pick she was using for the walnuts that were to go into the pudding for the marriage feast.

"Whut yo' talkin' 'bout, honey-lamb?" she scolded gently. "Evathing done ready fo' de weddin' now."

"But I so scared, mama-girl," sobbed Violet. "I jes' don' think I ready to marry."

Maggie drew her panic-stricken daughter into the warm circle of her massive brown arms.

"Fit nothin' but nerves, Vi-honey. All new brides feels de same."

Otahki knew that Violet's fears were caused partly by her own unspoken fears about marriage. She and Violet had been so much a part of each other since early childhood, her qualms about her own marriage were bound to have rubbed off on the girl no matter how much Otahki had always left unsaid. Sensing this, she made a real effort to conceal her own melancholy, though

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everyone, even Violet, must have realized it was only an act. But wasn't most of life play-acting for the Cherokee these days? Weren't they all putting on an act when they kept on planting and harvesting, canning and preserving, spinning and weaving, even though they knew Removal was at hand? Otahki, seemingly alone in feeling the tragedy of it, deplored the optimism of her people; yet, for Violet's sake, she made a great show of cheer until the ceremony and feasting were well over.

And so, in an archway of orange blossoms, the Reverend Jesse Bushyhead performed the marriage rites, with Shining Star and Sam Hildebrand, the Princess and young Sam, the young couple's only attendants. There was dancing and feasting most of the night, and then, amidst showers of ripe corn put by months earlier, Hunter Buck wrapped his lovely young bride in a scarlet tribal veil and carried her off to his family's homestead far beyond Deer Pass Lake. Otahki allowed Queenah to catch the bridal bouquet of snowy white chrysanthemums. But when her dream returned to her that night, more vivid than ever before, it was Otahki who was wearing the long, fashionably narrow bridal gown.

Violet's dress kept intruding into the Princess' thoughts by day and her dreams by night until one morning, with Maggie safely out in the woods gathering checkerberries, Otahki stole into her old nurse's sleeping quarters at the far end of the house and found, neatly laid away within the folds of the soft winter blanket Maggie had promised her as a wedding gift, Violet's whole bridal attire, including the orange blossoms, a soft doeskin wrapper covering all.

For days after this discovery, the Princess made

two months after Chief Jesse's fruitless mission to Florida, the whole household was out in the front yard enjoying the unseasonably warm weather and the glorious winter sunset, when a horse and rider galloped swiftly up to the gate.

"The great Osceola has departed this life!" shouted Thundercloud, not even dismounting. "Chief Ross expects Chief Jesse at Red Clay at once, and has ordered me to conduct him there. We must be off at once, Chief Jesse, before anyone learns we are on the road."

This was Thundercloud's first appearance on the Bushyhead grounds since the advent of the Hildebrands months earlier, but it had a painful effect on the sensitive young Sam even though the business upon which the warrior came was purely official. Sammy's hopes for winning the Princess had grown stronger since the day their hands touched over Miakun's wounds. But now it was plain that, as a true and fitting warrior, his chances were as dust compared to those of the powerful youth whom even the Great White Bird considered the best protector of the well-known tribal Chief.

As Chief and warrior rode off together, a leaden silence fell on those left behind. Sammy stood staring after them with heart-breaking envy, his father and young Ameek hardly less affected. The womenfolk, momentarily overcome with sad forebodings of spring Removal--for what else could the meeting at Red Clay be about?--repaired to the manor house to brood, Otahki and Queenah going to an upstairs window to watch the departure of the two brave men. They stayed there long after the riders had rounded the bend of Tsalagi Trail and were no longer in view.

Suddenly, Otahki heard an unmistakable sob from the girl at her side. An oblique glance in her direction

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every effort to appear deaf to the name of Thundercloud, and blind to the pleadings of Sammy's eyes every night at table. But there was one thing she could not remain blind to, and that was Sammy's tenderness with animals, especially with the wounded. Despite his father's constant tauntings, Sammy was forever tending a bird or chicken with a broken wing, a dog or cat with a maimed leg; or a wild hare half mangled by some wilder creature of the wood. Queenah, like her father, hated weak ones of any kind and could never bring herself to look at anything wounded or bleeding. But Otahki, though the sight of a bloody gash made her tremble all over, was always at Sammy's side to lend a hand when needed.

One day their favorite watchdog Miakun (meaning wolf) returned home bleeding cruelly from an attack by some forest creature. Due to their personal feeling about the dog, perhaps, their hands touched accidentally while attending the dog's wounds. For a brief moment they held them so, the warmth of their touch a new experience for them both. From that day on, Otahki remained discreetly oblivious to Sammy's outdoor ventures, concentrating, instead, on the more womanly arts directed by the older women of the house. From Shining Star she learned, along with Queenah, how to make cakes from Indian-turnip meal and the festive hominy-walnut pudding served at Violet's wedding. From Dawn, the intricate bead embroidery and linen cutwork now beginning to catch on all over eastern America; and from ever-practical Maggie, how to dye cloth with butternut husks, bloodroot, and poke-berries, and how to press fresh meat into pemmican for winter use.

One springlike evening in early February, some

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revealed a great wet tear rolling down Queenah's fair smooth cheek.

"Who can hold the tears back?" the Princess said gently, slipping an arm around the younger girl. "With Removal so near, and this part of the world so beautiful in the spring."

"'Tis not Removal nor spring that brings tears to my eyes," confessed Queenah. "'Tis the way my heart always pounds at sight of Thundercloud. And he did not once look my way."

Otahki was totally, astonishingly unprepared for such openness in a maiden not yet thirteen.

"I would have been unseemly, perhaps, in view of the intent of his mission. If that is all that ails you, little one, take heart. Thundercloud had eyes for no one save the Chief. He looked not at me, either."

"But Sammy looks at you all the time, when you are not looking at him."

Otahki was freshly astonished at the young girl's forthright speech. 'Twas surely a tendency given to maidens having white blood in them. For not even her lifelong confidante, Violet, had even spoken to her so freely, certainly not of affairs of the heart. To spare the unhappy girl additional woe, the Princess refrained from confiding in her that Thundercloud had already, more than once, tried to bargain with the Chief for her; and that the strong young warrior was far above Sammy in the things that mattered most to a Princess's family.

Instead of examining her own feelings in the matter, however, Otahki prayed all the harder to have her own wedding day put off. An owl hooted in the distance and as the girls left the window, a turtledove flew up to the ledge and began cooing mournfully, a sure sign that bad luck was in store for the household.

Part III

THE NEW CORN FEAST

Spring came early to the Georgia hills that fateful year of 1838. Pink and purple covered the slopes by early March, and the Cherokees, still unable to believe their plight, planted and preserved and kept the old festival days as always. May apples and early berries were turned into jam, herbs were gathered for food and medicine, and the young people, free from the mission schools for the summer, stayed out of doors from dawn till dark, practicing for the spring games and contests. On the Bushyhead grounds at Deer Pass Lake, village boys and girls matched skills daily, while their elders rehearsed the Green Corn Dance, made feather wands and gourd rattlers to be used in the dance, leg-rattles for the women dancers, and other festival paraphernalia.

Festival times brought the Reverend Jesse Bushyhead to the manor house. Devout though his faith in the Christian God, his zeal for the colorful festivals of his ancestors had been little diminished by his life's work, and to his colleague's perpetual consternation--and to Brother Atuk's everlasting condemnation--Old Jesse always acted the part of conjuror at the Deer Pass celebrations.

This year, the crops being far ahead of the season, the Old One arrived days in advance of the New Corn Feast, galloping up to the gate one afternoon just in time to hear the young people reciting the famous river-

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god prayer long used in connection with the tribal games:

O Long Man, I come to the edge of your body,  
You are mighty and most powerful.

You bear great logs and toss them about,  
Nothing can resist you.

Grant that I may be able to toss my enemy into  
the air

And dash him to the earth.

"What manner of foolishness is this?" Old Jesse demanded harshly. "Making gods of rivers and praying for each other's destruction! Have you not been taught to pray rather for your enemies' salvation?"

"But we are not enemies, Grandpapa!" countered Otahki, with a touch of Old Jesse's spirit. "We are friends." The Princess was perhaps the only one who realized that her grandfather's severity was largely a foil, that his faith was so strong he could scoff at the solemnities even while being deeply moved by them. "'Tis surely not amiss for us to pray for our own victory?" she parried.

"Princesses do not compete with their subjects," Old Jesse reminded her. "'Twere far better for one of your station to be praying for a husband. Fifteen and a Princess, and not yet wed! 'Tis a blot on the history of the tribe!"

Otahki felt her cheeks grow hot despite the jocular tone of her grandfather's words, and her only prayer at this moment was that Sammy might not see the blush through her deep bronze coloring. Sammy, in turn, wished he were a full-blooded Cherokee, with enough color to hide what he was feeling. As for the Reverend Jesse Bushyhead, Old Jesse was so devoid of suspicion

THE NEW CORN FEAST  
that he sensed no undercurrent whatsoever, and proceeded at a jovial canter down to the green beyond the stables where the Green Corn Dance was in rehearsal.

The New Corn Feast, held some forty or fifty days before the Green Corn Festival, took place in the early summer when the corn was in the milk and barely fit to be eaten, and there was always a feast of roasted young corn for all who attended. The ceremony required a conjuror to take the kernels from seven ears of corn and burn them with sacred fire before the feasting began, and the arrival of Old Jesse was Maggie's cue to go out into the fields and examine the condition of the corn.

"Hit be a mite dry," she reported this time in tactful understatement. "Might be a rain-makin' powwow mo' needful as a feast."

"Hooray, a rain-making dance!" shouted Little Jesse, impatient for excitement after all the dull months at mission school. "Grandpa can make it rain, can't you, Old Conjuror? Can we start right away?"

All eyes fell on the Reverend Jesse Bushyhead, who was understood to believe, as were all avowed Christians, that only the Heavenly Father could cause rain to come down. Moreover, the Indian ceremony required the conjuror and seven other members of the tribe to fast until the rain should fall. Old Jesse, breathing deeply of the mouth-watering odors emanating from the cookstove, said, "Let us first unite in prayer to the one true God above, and resort to the ancestral dance only to celebrate after the rain comes."

"Shucks, Grandpa," grumbled little Jesse, who had been snitching food from the stove and cupboards all afternoon and wouldn't, in any case, be expected to fast. "That's all we did at school all year, pray. We

didn't have a single festival dance."

Actually, the mission schools always closed for Christian festival days, but this was disregarded now as Shining Star looked with maternal sympathy and indulgence upon her youngest child.

Chief Jesse, noting the look, said, "'Tis late in the day to begin a rain-making, son. Let us join in prayer with Grandpapa, and then, whether it be God's will to send the rain or withhold it, we shall have the dance on the morrow."

"Meanwhile," finished Old Jesse practically, "we cannot disappoint the good cooks with which this household has been blessed. 'Tis our Christian duty to enjoy what they have prepared for us."

The Reverend One then led the household in a fervent prayer for rain, following which Little Jesse, being no grudge-bearer, was easily persuaded to ask the blessing at table, and managed to eat as heartily as those who had not touched food since morning.

No rain fell that night, and the following day, the skies looking every bit as unpromising as they had for weeks, the rain-making ceremony went forth as planned. But what with all the loud drumming and rattling incantations, it proved an extremely noisy affair and by the day's end villagers were streaming in from all the nearby settlements, supposing the noise to be a summons to the New Corn Feast.

Among the first to arrive was the renowned Thundercloud, bearing with him, or rather behind him, an oxcart loaded with newly roasted corn for the feast. In view of the Bushyheads' poor showing of corn since the drought, the youth's timely gift impressed Chief Jesse and Shining Star no end. What a provider he would be for their daughter! But when Otahki caught sight of him

kicking poor Miakun in the ribs in exchange for what was only a playful greeting, she could only compare him with the gentle-natured Sammy, who would have stopped to play with the dog even at the risk of being bitten.

At this time of year the women of Deer Pass were accustomed to take their spinning and sewing out of doors to enjoy the sweetness of the summer sounds and smells. Likewise Otahki and Queenah, when they were not indulging in games practice, took their linen and beadwork out to a bench beneath a great walnut tree close by a pond. And it was there that Thundercloud came upon them some time after his arrival that day. Queenah was quick to bid him welcome, but the Princess kept her eyes lowered on her work and said not a word. Thundercloud misconstrued her attitude for one of shyness if not sheer feminine disguise.

He said, "So this is how young maidens employ their leisure hours. 'Tis uncommon industrious of them. Would they take it amiss if an Indian brave stayed by to watch them at their artistry?"

"We would be deeply honored," replied Queenah, quivering with excitement at the nearness of him.

Otahki gathered up her beadwork in clumsy haste, and, rising without a word, headed for the manor house. "The Princess is not herself these days," the younger girl explained dutifully to Thundercloud. "A bad dream gives her much anxiety, and this causes her to shy away from people."

"I have heard of this dream of hers," acknowledged Thundercloud. "Still, 'tis passing strange that she should put the blame on others."

"Perhaps she wished to make it appear you had no right to intrude."

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The young warrior's hopes revived at this. "In that case," he said with renewed enthusiasm, "'tis perhaps my duty to apologize."

"'Twere more proper for you to ignore the incident." By now, Sammy had informed his sister of Thundercloud's suit for the Princess, and Queenah could only pray to be forgiven for her sinful cunning now in trying to keep them apart. She loved Otahki, but she loved Thundercloud more, and was it not generally believed that all was fair in love and war?

Thundercloud had hardly settled on the bench beside Queenah when a drop of moisture fell down on his bare brown arm.

"Can it be raining?" he asked in wonder.

Queenah turned her small round face upward. A trickle of water landed on the tip of her upturned nose.

"'Tis true!" she cried happily. "'Tis raining already! The Old Conjuror has magic in him still."

At this, a little splash fell down on them both.

"Go!" Queenah urged the youth, however loathe she was to send him away from her side so soon. "Go to the woods and slay the deer whose tongue must be sacrificed to the rain-making god. Go at once, before the rest of the braves discover it is raining."

As Thundercloud headed for the woods, cries of rain rent the air, and the other braves on the place took off directly after him. Only young Sam lingered, and Queenah, encountering him as he crossed the yard to join Otahki, chided her brother for his indolence.

"A fine warrior you will ever make!" she railed, unwittingly repeating what her father had said to Sammy only minutes earlier. "Will you not even try to live up to the name of Hildebrand?"

"Leave him be!" demanded Otahki in a voice Queen-





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ah had never heard before. "'Tis for Sammy himself to choose, not his sister!"

The Princess's quick defense of Sammy completely confounded Queenah. Why would any girl, much less a Princess, want to make a milk-sop of the youth she loved? Or was it Thundercloud she meant to have after all, and avoidance of his company only a ruse to trick him into heavier pursuit? Queenah wished, now, that she hadn't been so hasty in ordering him off to the woods. This only gave him an extra chance to score with the Princess's parents, who had already provided him with every opportunity they could reasonably devise. It was plain the Chief and Shining Star favored Thundercloud above Sammy.

But what of Otahki herself? If she really favored Thundercloud, why all the looks and non-looks she was forever casting at Sammy at table? But would she be allowed to choose for herself in any case?

It was no surprise to anyone when Thundercloud was the first to return from the hunt, bearing with him the bleeding tongue of the deer he had shot. And because all the fasters were by now faint with hunger, Old Jesse lost no time in completing the rainmaking ceremony, muttering the incomprehensible words of the conjuror while the tongue sizzled on the spit, and the eager fasters licked their parched lips at the smell of its cooking.

No one spoke of the brief rainfall that had not extended beyond the lower reaches of the walnut tree. But years later, in far-off Oklahoma, Chief Jesse was still entertaining descendants and conferees with the tale of how he had caught sight of Little Jesse climbing up the great trunk of the walnut tree, and of Old Jesse handing him the earthen jug filled with water from the pond as the lad reached the first fork of the tree.

## Part IV

### THE TONGUE OF THE DEER

The Green Corn Dance was long and involved, but the spirit with which it was performed--for the last time, it so happened, on the Bushyhead's spacious grounds--was not lessened by the knowledge that there would be no corn to harvest at summer's end. Rather, it was all the more spirited for promising to be the only corn dance of the summer. To the hopeful Cherokees, as to Saint Matthew, sufficient unto the day was the evil thereof, and Princess Otahki was alone in her certainty that the evil day was at hand.

"'Tis an omen," she had confided to Queenah when Maggie had announced that the remaining corn could not survive the drought.

"You and your omens!" Queenah chided, more and more forgetful, as their acquaintance ripened, of the respect due Otahki as tribal Princess. "It grieves me to think what will become of Sammy if 'tis to you he is wed. Already he has lost all incentive for manly action."

Regally, as became her station, Otahki continued to overlook the younger girl's rudeness.

"You misunderstand your brother, Queenah," she explained in a gentle tone. "It takes great courage for him to forego the pursuits of the other young men of

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the tribe."

"'Tis more cowardly than courageous," insisted the girl. "The proper shedding of blood is a test of manhood, and Sammy winces at the sight of it."

"Yet 'tis Sammy who dresses the bleeding wounds of all the injured animals. And 'twas he who brought in the bleeding deer for Maggie." At recollection of the deer whose tongue Thundercloud had so cruelly severed from its throat, Otahki trembled in the depths of her being, as she had done on being denied entrance to the tanning shed, and much of the time since.

"That, too, was improper," maintained Queenah. "The bringing in of the kill is woman's work."

"'Tis now an outmoded custom, more or less. At times I think you half-castes are more Indian than any of us. You might do better to cultivate some of the chivalry of the white men."

"To what end?" Queenah had never been able to forget it was the white men who had put the Hildebrands in the Bushyheads' debt, a condition even less acceptable to her than to her proud and independent father. "To kill for sport, and to rob for self-gair?"

"Not all the whites are so depraved," Otahki said. "'Twas a white schoolmistress, was it not, who taught us to cherish the woodland creatures? And 'tis only Sammy's deep regard for the poor defenseless things that makes him so shy of killing them."

With these words Otahki parted company with Queenah, head proudly up despite the tears beginning to stream down her cheeks. Queenah, suspecting the reason, longed to follow and comfort the Princess, whom she loved as deeply as she envied. But the proud Cherokee blood in her veins prevented her showing the sympathy she felt.

The young people's contests were held the second

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day of the New Corn Feast, the day after the Green Corn Dance. For the boys, there were footraces, jumping, trail-finding, and games of war; for the girls, fishing, plant-identification, and the dyeing of cloth; and for both boys and girls, Indian ball, hide-the-ball, canoeing, and swimming matches. Participants always came from miles around, and almost no one able to travel, of any age or condition, ever missed the festival games. And although Princess Otahki's part in the finals was limited to watching and applauding, she was always the most ardent spectator present.

Today, however, there was no sign of her on the grounds.

"Where is Otahki?" Little Jesse asked his father when the footraces were about to begin. The bonds between Little Jesse and the Princess were mutually strong, and the young boy could not think of entering a race without his sister to cheer for him.

No one, it developed, had seen the Princess since the break of day.

"Run up to the house, someone!" cried Shining Star. "Find out what is keeping her!" Seldom did Shining Star permit herself to speak with such urgency, and never in the presence of guests. But her daughter's preoccupation since the beginning of the festival had filled Shining Star with new and fearful forebodings.

It was Maggie who, having felt for the key in her apron pocket and found it missing, offered to go look for the Princess.

"You youngsters save yo' laigs fo de games," she told Ameek and Little Jesse, both of whom had started toward the house. "Hit mah place to look after de Princess."

She found the girl precisely where she had expect-

ed to, and in much the same position: prostrate on the floor of the tanning shed, before the stretched-out coat of the dappled fawn slain by Thundercloud, her whole body racked with sobbing. Maggie laid a gentle hand on the anguished girl's head.

"He on'y done his duty, Princess. Mos' likely, he nevah even knowed about Anikawi."

"Everyone knew about Anikawi, Maggie. Besides, Ameek was right behind him, to warn him not to shoot."

"Likely de gun went off belo' he understood, he so impulsy-like." Maggie took hold of Otahki's arm and tried to pull her to her feet. "Come on, now, honey-lamb, git abolt o' yo'self. Ack lak de Princess you is. Dis de bigges' day anybody gonna see on dis lana twell nex' festival time."

"'Tis the biggest day any busnyhead will ever see on these grounds, Maggie."

For the first time in her life, Maggie lost the struggle with her beloved charge, and had to go back to the festival grounds without her. Otahki remained in the tanning shed with what was left of Anikawi until she was cried out. This took most of the day.

Finally, realizing that nothing could be gained by staying on, she left the shed and went on to the manor house to make herself presentable to the festival guests. When she was sure the red no longer showed in her eyes, she started out to the yard by the side door. The contests were over, she saw with relief. But as she stepped down from the side porch, she became aware of Thundercloud's powerful voice, loudly trying to bargain with the Chief for what was considered to be the Grand Prize of the day.

"I have earned her, have I not?" he demanded, speaking not only to the Chief but to everyone else on

the grounds as well.

A great silence prevailed over the grounds. Everyone was too stunned by the proud warrior's bold presumption, and by the manner of his proposal, to utter a sound. Nothing like this had ever happened in the history of the tribe--a passionate young warrior discussing the most private of matters in so public a fashion. In the quiet hysteria that followed, Chief Jesse caught sight of the Princess standing in woeful shock at the bottom of the steps.

"'Tis my guess," he broke the silence by declaring, "that the Princess puts gentleness of heart before pride of victory."

"Gentleness!" roared Thundercloud. "In a husband?"

"Let the Princess speak for herself."

All eyes turned now in the direction in which young Sam Hildebrand had now begun to move, striding with joyous if uncharacteristic vigor. Otahki stretched out both arms to welcome him. Thundercloud could only stand with mouth agape.

"'Twas the deer," the Chief felt it his duty to explain to the incredulous brave. "The fawn whose tongue had to be sacrificed to the rain god was the Princess's woodland pet--Anikawi. From this, she will never recover."

Thundercloud, still unable to believe his ears even though he had been warned of the deer by Ameek, took some time to find his voice.

"Well, then," he finally managed hoarsely, "if a dead deer means more to your Princess than a live husband. let her go marry one."

Furious to have been made such a spectacle of--for, of course, he overlooked who had initiated the

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scene--Thundercloud retreated to the spot where he had left his oxcart two days earlier, took up the two handles fashioned for a beast of burden, and headed for the gate in high dudgeon. In dudgeon as high as was possible, at any rate, for a youth of such wide acclaim and fresh victory suddenly reduced to playing the role of dupe and dray. No one appeared now to regret his leave-taking. Even Queenah was so disillusioned by the manner in which he had taken his defeat, that she had no further wish to share his future.

As Thundercloud made his historically famous exit, a newcomer created a new sensation among the stupefied audience. Riding through the front gate on his glossy high mount came Brother Attuk, making his first appearance at a tribal festival since early youth. His disapproval of the ancestral feasts was widely known, and at festival times he had always remained within the walls of the mission compound, sulking like Achilles in his tent.

Shouts of welcome greeted him now, all the more fervent because of the excitement still running high. Chief Jesse, however, could tell by the look on Brother Attuk's drawn face that his mission had nothing to do with the celebration, and he knew, even as Otahki knew, what business brought him here.

"Speak, Brother Attuk," he implored. "Whatever your business, let us hear of it. We are prepared for whatever is to come."

"My tidings are most grievous, Chief," the mission brother announced gravely, his voice fraught with the misery he felt at having to be the bearer of such news. "The sands of the hourglass have run their course, and Removal of the Deer Pass settlement is at hand. You'd all best put an end to your merrymaking at once, and

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seek out what treasures you wish to preserve while there is yet time."

Chief Jesse's eyes traveled toward his most valued and valuable possessions: his wife, his sons, his daughter, his father--and of course, young Hildebrand and old Maggie. The eyes of the crowd followed their Chief-tain's, coming to rest, as did Chief Jesse's, on the Princess and the tall young brave at her side. For some seconds, total silence reigned again.

Finally, old Maggie broke the spell, marching staunchly up to the porch steps where the Princess and young Sam stood watching. She reached for the young girl's hand, astonished to find it trembling no longer. For Otahki, the suspense was over. She was ready for what must be.

"Come, Princess," said Maggie, leading her up the steps. "Dem orange blossoms bin mighty lonesome waitin' for de next bride. We'll make us a crown foreverlastin' love, an' leave de rest up to de Lawd."

Obediently, as if the summons were from on high, Princess Otahki proceeded almost trance-like with her lifelong old nurse, toward the room at the far end of the house where the bridal attire was waiting for her. Young Hildebrand started toward his family's cottage to make himself presentable, while out in the yard, the Reverend Jesse Bushyhead opened the small black book he always carried with him, and made ready to perform the last wedding ceremony that would ever be held on Bushyhead lands.

T H E E N D

HERE IS BURIED

# PRINCESS OTAHKI

DAUGHTER OF

CHIEF JESSE BUSBYHEAD

WIFE OF

SAM HILDEBRAND

ONE OF THE SEVERAL HUNDRED  
 CHEROKEE INDIANS WHO DIED HERE  
 IN THE DELAYED (BY ICE) CROSSINGS  
 OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IN THE  
 UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FORCED  
 EXODUS FROM TENNESSEE, NORTH  
 CAROLINA AND GEORGIA TO THE INDIAN  
 TERRITORY (NOW OKLAHOMA) IN THE  
 SEVERE WINTER OF 1838-39.

THIS MEMORIAL ERECTED BY THE  
 ROTARY CLUB OF CAPE GIRARDEAU

1961

EXAMINE  
1961