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WITCH DOCTOR'S SON

Books by Evelyn Sibley Lampman

THE BOUNCES OF CYNTHIANN'

CAPTAIN APPLE'S GHOST

CRAZY CREEK

ELDER BROTHER

TREASURE MOUNTAIN

TREE WAGON

WITCH DOCTOR'S SON

WITCH DOCTOR'S SON

By EVELYN SIBLEY LAMPMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD BENNETT

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For Jack and Dorothy Eakin

Contents

WITCH DOCTOR'S SON

CHAPTER I

The Snake Hunt

Tom sat cross-legged in the small shade of a boulder pretending to look straight ahead, but really watching the women anger a rattlesnake. It was very hot, the season when snakes shed their old skins for new, which was as it should be, for the venom had more strength at that time than at any other. The rattler had crawled into a crevice between two rocks and the women had awakened it by poking and jabbing with sticks. Now it had inched out into the open and coiled itself into a flat ring with the head rising from the middle. Even from this distance, Tom could hear the incessant brittle warning of the rattles and could see the unwink-

ing beady eyes glowing like two coals, the frequent opening of the mouth, and the flicker of a black, forked tongue. Although the white, glistening fangs in the upper jaw were not visible from where he sat, he knew the women had glimpsed them. He could tell by their excited squeals that the fangs were large and full, that they would give forth much deadly poison to be doled out on arrowheads.

Tom wondered idly if he himself would ever shoot a poisoned arrow from a bow. It was possible that he might grow to manhood and then to old age without doing so. He would be a warrior, of course, under Chief Jo, and a skilled hunter, but poisoned arrows were for emergencies only. They were never used for game or in ordinary warfare. That was one of the rules every Rogue River boy learned first of all. Poison arrows were only for the greatest extreme, and employed so rarely that he doubted if it were really worth the trouble of the squaws to make this yearly expedition for a fresh supply of venom.

"Ai-ee!" The triumphant shout went up from the sunny ledge and he knew the rattler had struck at the fresh liver. For a moment he forgot his wounded dignity and looked at them directly.

Mal-tee-ny, his mother, was holding the long stick with the hunk of deer liver fastened to the end. As medicine woman it was her place to do so, for only she knew the special words which must be said at the time. The other squaws were crowded close about her, the older women nearest, the young girls on the edge of the circle. Small children who had been brought by their mothers on the expedition had stopped their play, and now stood wide-eyed and open-mouthed in a group of their own. There were no men

on this party. Only Tom, who was so close to being a man that even Chief Jo had looked disapproving when Mal-tee-ny announced her determination to bring her son, was with this women's party.

"We are at war," Jo had reminded Mal-tee-ny sternly before they left. "Soldiers with guns have come to help the white men who try to take our land. They drive away our game. They dig in the ground for yellow metal, and destroy our roots and food. Whenever they find one or two of our people alone and unprotected, they hang them from trees. We must unite to drive the white men from our valley. Every man is needed."

"My son is not yet a man. He is a boy," answered Mal-tee-ny calmly. "He has seen but fourteen summers. He has had no vision. He has no Ta-mah'na-wus power."

"When winter comes, he will go in search of one. Only a few moons stand between him and his first quest. And already he gives much promise. He has been with the hunters. Although he has not been permitted to shoot for elk or deer, his arrow at the practice target finds its mark every time. He has observed when those who work in wood and stone are at their tasks. He has even helped with the simpler carving, and those who are skilled in these things say that his fingers are clever and quick."

"I am grateful that you give my fatherless boy these opportunities to learn," said Mal-tee-ny, but her tone was proud, not grateful. "Perhaps the spirit of his father, who was one of your braves, or of my father, who had many skills and is still remembered for his wisdom, may have taken a place in his body. As we both know, a boy may have more

than one Ta-mah'na-wus, and it is good to have as many as he can."

"Then he should go with the men," frowned Jo, staring down at her fiercely. "He should observe them as they follow the warpath against the whites."

"Another useful power is the making of medicine," observed Mal-tee-ny as though she had not heard him. "Power was given to me for this when I was a young girl, although I was warned not to use it before the age when I could no longer bear children. I did as the Ta-mah'na-wus told me. I did not practice any of the secret things which were taught me by my mother. But because she was also a medicine woman, I learned from her. I awaited the time. Perhaps my son will receive this power also."

Chief Jo shifted uneasily. He had riches, most of which were counted in horses, and his own vision as a young man to help him. Neither of these, he knew, was as strong as the guiding spirit which stood behind the medicine men or women.

"A Ta-mah'na-wus may come to anyone," declared Mal-tee-ny, "but it comes more easily to someone in whom desire has been awakened. Desire comes with knowledge. On this last trip for poison before he becomes a man, my son will accompany me and observe."

But he wouldn't observe, Tom told himself stubbornly. She was his mother and a medicine woman, but she couldn't make him stand with the squaws and listen while she said the words which would make the deadly venom carry to its mark when shot on an arrowhead. He had been forced to come with them. Chief Jo had ordered him to do so. Now

that he was here, he intended to sit sulking at a distance in the only shade he could find.

"Kow-ha-ma!" called Mal-tee-ny sharply, and the women fell back so that she might see her son. "Come here."

"My name is Tom," he muttered resentfully, wishing that she would not call him by the nickname, which meant Long Hair. But he dared not say the words aloud, nor even move his lips. He had to get to his feet and walk over to the ledge.

The women made a path for him in their midst, and without glancing at either side he came to stand by his mother. He had to look down on her a little, for the women of the Rogue Rivers were short and their men were tall. Although he was only fourteen, Tom gave promise of being among the tallest. Perhaps in time he would be as tall as his grandfather, and might eventually even be given his grandfather's name, since the old man had been so long dead there was little danger now in offending his spirit.

"The snake has struck once," Mal-tee-ny told him happily. "A great, ferocious strike."

"Then why don't you put it in the pot and boil it?" he demanded. Realizing at once that his words sounded rude, he tried to soften the impression with additional speech. "Surely such a large rattler, and so angry as this one, would empty the venom sac at the first strike."

"We must be sure," Mal-tee-ny told him. "It is true that this is a large snake, and also true that he struck hard and deep, but the rule is two strikes at the meat."

She reached forward with the long stick and again prodded the recoiled snake. Instantly the head was up, the forked tongue flickering angrily as the rattles recommenced their dry challenge. Once the snake was stirred, Mal-tee-ny with-

drew the stick slightly, swinging the meat back and forth just out of reach. The head followed every motion, the unwinking eyes baleful and red in the bright sunlight. Back and forth, back and forth.

There was no warning before the rattler struck, and it happened so fast that Tom's eyes could hardly follow. One moment the head was following the motions of the stick. The next, a length of the long body had uncoiled itself and the open mouth had fastened itself on the dark meat. Mal-tee-ny's hand was still as she held the stick steady, and while the others fell back involuntarily, she stood her ground. After the strike, the head clung to the meat for a long moment before it let go and resumed its coil slowly, deliberately.

"Now!" cried Mal-tee-ny in triumph, at last stepping back. "We have enough poison for every need, no matter how great or how many."

The squaws and young girls retreated discreetly, and Tom would have gone too, but his mother stopped him.

"Wait," she ordered. "And listen. But never say these words or tell them to anyone unless the power comes to you first."

She stood for a moment, quiet and unspeaking, and slowly a strange expression stole into her eyes. Tom watched it come with something of fear, something akin to embarrassment. He had seen it before, and it always left him uneasy, insecure. She was not his mother then. Her face, with the three tribal markings of tattoo running from her lower lip to her chin, her straight nose and soft brown eyes, became a stranger's.

"Spirit of the snake," she said in a voice which made him

chill despite the beating sun overhead. "You know that we have taken of your deadly poison. But we have taken only a little, and the body of the snake who made it will be left unharmed to make more. Know, too, that we will use it with caution and only after the greatest deliberation. When, in our best wisdom, it comes time to call upon it, speed it to the mark and make it act rapidly. The people of the Rogue River thank you."

As though it had heard the promise of immunity, the coiled snake on the ledge began to unwind slowly. In another moment it was crawling back into the shadowy darkness of the crevice. Mal-tee-ny watched until it disappeared, then she turned to her son.

"Never take what the spirits have to give without explaining why you take and asking their protection," she ordered sternly. "And whether it be venom from a snake, healing bark from a tree, or looski roots for poultices, remember to say your thanks."

A moment more and she was smiling at him fondly, his mother once again. Tom breathed a sigh of relief, and the feeling was so great that he accompanied her to the fire without protest.

The fire in the stump of an old tree had been kept smoldering since their midmorning meal. From time to time, Tom had noticed Harriet or Tyee Mary, two of the girls his own age, carrying fresh twigs to throw on the coals. A pile of small round rocks had been placed in the fire, and at one side was a large, tightly woven basket, half filled with water. Tom recognized the basket. It hung in their wickiup at home, and his mother used it only once a year at this time.

As they arrived a polite hush fell on the laughing chatter.

Everyone but Tom was in the best of spirits today. The women enjoyed an outing away from the men, where they could occupy the best seats by the fire and eat first without waiting for their husbands to finish. Often they went alone berry picking or root gathering for a single night, but this was the first time for many years that they had been allowed to take such a long trip as that of gathering rattlesnake poison by themselves. The most deadly venom, everyone agreed, was to be procured from snakes found in Chief John's land. Chief John was a Rogue River, and friendly to his cousin Jo's people, but his land lay to the east and south and adjoined that of their enemies, the Klamaths. Of late years the Klamaths had discovered there was a nice profit to be made from capturing and selling slaves. Only the prospect of a war against the whites had convinced Jo that a party of unprotected women must venture such a hazardous expedition.

"They are ready, Mal-tee-ny," called one of the older women, jabbing at the rocks with a callused, experienced finger. "They are not too hot to break in the water, yet hot enough so they will make a quick boil."

"It is well," approved Mal-tee-ny. "Put them in."

The woman flicked half a dozen of the small stones into the basket. There was a sharp hissing sound, and steam rose in a white cloud. Mal-tee-ny crouched on the ground and delicately unfastened the dark liver on the end of the stick. She worked carefully and her fingers hardly seemed to touch the meat which the snake had struck. With the stick, she expertly flipped it into the boiling water, then settled back with the others to wait.

"You caught a rabbit on which to try the poison?" she

asked, and because her eyes at that moment happened to be on the face of her son, Tom answered.

"Someone did. I saw it tied out there in the sun, which is a foolish thing to do. Everyone knows a rabbit, even if you're using it to test the strength of poison, shouldn't be tied in the hot sun. It might die first."

"We have snared a rabbit, Mal-tee-ny," spoke up Harriet quickly, ignoring Tom. Her cheeks were suddenly flushed with red. "We have done everything you told us."

"He is very lively, and mean besides. He bit me when I took him from the snare," said Tyee Mary loudly. "It will take more than sun to kill that one. It will take the strongest snake poison."

Neither of the girls looked at Tom, and their voices were superior and condescending. Mal-tee-ny nodded. Her brown eyes seemed filled with hidden amusement, although her lips were unsmiling.

Tom felt himself grow angry all over again. This couldn't have happened if he had gone with the men. Those girls! That Harriet! That Tyee Mary, who gave herself airs because she was Chief Jo's daughter! A year ago they were his friends. He had played with them all his life, but now they were fourteen and regarded as grown women. Any day now they would be eligible for marriage, while he could not be considered much of a man until he had made his first quest for Ta-mah'na-wus guidance and had succeeded in the hunt or shown himself expert at some skill. It was not likely that he would take a wife before he was seventeen, but Harriet and Mary or other girls their age could no longer speak to him directly, or he to them.

"The boil is growing more slow," decided Mal-tee-ny

finally. "I will taste it first, then we will change the rocks if it needs more time."

She dipped a wooden paddle into the hot liquid, then touched it with the tip of her tongue. Tom remembered when, as a little boy, he had first seen her do this, and the old dread returned. At that time he had run away from camp to hide his tears, for he was certain his mother would die. Even after she found him, late in the day, for she could not leave before the poison was completed, she had trouble quieting his sobs.

"I will not die," she said over and over. "Taken only a few drops in the mouth, the rattlesnake poison will not harm me. It is only when it enters the blood that it will kill. It has to be tasted to make sure it is strong enough."

"Let someone else taste it then. Not you. You are my mother. It might hurt you."

"Nothing can hurt me if I am not afraid," she assured him. "Nothing can hurt you, either, if you do not know fear. Someday you will be given power by the Ta-mah'na-wus, but the beginning of that power must come from you. The Ta-mah'na-wus who looks after you will only do so if you help yourself. If you do not, he will grow discouraged and leave you. He will go to some other person. Sometimes other spirits will take pleasure in bringing you misfortune. They may turn your arrows away from game if you are a hunter. Or they may make your bows to snap or your canoes to leak if you are a worker in wood. Or they may lead your people to defeat if you are a chief. This may go on for a long time, and then is when it is easiest to lose the protection of your own Ta-mah'na-wus. If you give up, if you show fear, he will go away in disgust. If you keep on and are never dis-

couraged, he will fight against the bad spirits who are against you and help you to overcome them."

"I am not afraid for myself. I am afraid for you."

"I am not afraid," she said severely. "And because I am not, my Ta-mah'na-wus will not let the poison harm me. While you, crying worse than a girl child, are afraid, and if you so much as smelled it, it would probably give you a stomach-ache."

He had never forgotten what she said, and had tried never to show fear even when he felt it most. Perhaps the Ta-mah'na-wus who might decide to come to him later would look only at his face and not into his heart.

Mal-tee-ny looked up from her spoon and caught his eye. She, too, might have been remembering that incident from so long ago, for she smiled.

"Kow-ha-ma," she said, "you are the man of our party. If we are to eat other game than small rabbits or squirrels which come to our snares, it will be up to you to provide them. The time to shoot an elk or deer is in the early morning when they come down the trail to their favorite water hole. The time to find that trail is in the daylight."

Tom's black eyes snapped with anticipation. This was something he hadn't dared imagine. To be allowed to go out alone, in strange country, to scout for an animal trail through the woods was an opportunity which seldom came to an untried boy. Perhaps he might kill his first elk, since there would be no experienced hunter who must be allowed the courtesy of the first shot. He saw himself returning to camp with the offhand announcement of, "There is meat on the trail to be brought in." Then the women, including Harriet and Tyee Mary, would retrace his footsteps. They would

carry it back, and, with many exclamations of wonder at its size, for of course it would be a big one although young and tender, they would skin it out and everyone would agree they had never tasted such excellent meat.

"We are close to the land of the Klamaths," mumbled one of the older women in a warning tone. "Chief John has lost many young women and some boys to them already."

"Kow-ha-ma is not afraid," said Mal-tee-ny, and her eyes regarded him steadily. "When the cold moons are on us, he will go on his first quest. A walk in strange woods alone will aid him even more when that time comes."

Behind him he heard Tyee Mary's laugh, which she stifled quickly. Whether she doubted his ability to shoot an elk or to receive spirit guidance, he did not know, but he felt his skin grow hot with fresh anger. He turned on his heel and went to fetch the bow and quiver of arrows that Old Tipso, the Hairy One, had helped him make.

Farther south and east, the land of the Klamaths was not so mountainous or timbered as that of Chief John. There were flat plains and many lakes, and even great stretches of nothing but lava rock thrown down in ages past by volcanoes. Tom might have found his way more easily on the open Klamath land than here where it seemed to be all dense forest, rocky ledges, and white racing mountain streams which appeared as narrow threads when glimpsed down the side of a steep cliff.

He had to walk a long way from the semi-open place in which the women had made their camp, and when he finally reached the trees it was like coming into another world. It was cool under their high-growing branches, and pine needles filled the air with fragrance. It was not so dark as it

had appeared from below, for there was little undergrowth, and he knew he might have to look a long while before finding an animal trail. The best way of doing it was to go back down the bank to the stream and follow its course. Sooner or later he would find tracks and a trail leading from above.

He had climbed up the mountain a long way before his ear caught the sound of the water below. Now he had to scramble back down, but not the way he had come, for the stream cut through at an angle between two slopes. He was breathless when he reached the bottom and pleased with himself for having figured things out so well on strange terrain. He had a drink of the icy water, cupping his hands to bring it to his lips, meanwhile glancing all around as he had watched older men behave in the woods. Then he started upstream, following the rocky bed of the river.

Although he kept his eyes and his ears alert, he could not keep his thoughts from the wonderful future which lay ahead of him. First there was the elk. He did not doubt for a moment that he would find and kill one today. Then there was the matter of spiritual power. There were boys who went out on their five-day vigil again and again, but never received it. Occasionally it came to them years later when they were sleeping unsuspectingly at home, but this did not often happen. Tom was sure that he would have a vision the first time. He had done everything that was expected of him beforehand. He had watched and learned from the experts in several skills. He had managed to subdue fear, at least on the surface. He had been sent on many short testing missions in the dark, to leave sticks at appointed spots, to pick up a certain rock left on a lonely hill where ghostly voices had been reported by passers-by. He had done all

these things cheerfully, and now he was venturing alone in Chief John's hazardous mountains. There was no question but that some Ta-mah'na-wus would decide to give him special protection and help. On that spirit would depend his name.

Tom had never had a real name, only nicknames. His mother was hoping that someday he might earn the name of his grandfather. Tom did not know what the name was, since it was still too soon after the old man's death to mention it aloud, but he knew it would have something to do with a special skill.

He had been called Kow-ha-ma, Long Hair, ever since he could remember, but that name would go as soon as he reached manhood. He had chosen Tom for himself a year ago when the Indians began adopting white men's names, but he doubted if Mal-tee-ny would let him keep it. She might, though. Ap-sa-ka-ha had become Chief Jo, after Jo Lane, the white man the Rogue Rivers most respected, and Ko-ko-ha-was became Chief Sam after no one at all, just because he fancied the name. Harriet and Mary and most of the younger Indians had chosen names of whites, although Mary insisted on using the word "Tyee," which meant chief, with hers, so no one would forget she was Jo's daughter.

He stumbled over a pebble and caught himself up sharply. What kind of a scout was he? That noise, small as it had been, would announce his presence for yards around. There was little wind down here in the canyon, but an animal would not need to catch his scent after hearing such a warning. He walked more carefully, and the only sound was the splashing current of the stream.

He went quite a way farther before he saw what he was

hoping to find. There was a widening of the rocky bank, and the beginning of a narrow trail which climbed up the mountain. Elk and deer had both been here, as well as smaller animals, and tangled in a bush which grew down the side of the bank he found strands of brown hair. A bear had used this trail not too long before.

A bear would be very fine to take back to camp, he thought gleefully. It was a little harder to kill, and he would have to make a trap of logs, but the flesh would be fat with berries at this season, and the skin would be a fine present for his mother. He could imagine her displaying it proudly to her friends, and hear her boasting of her son's first kill.

Once again caution was driven from his mind, and he started up the steep trail without paying much attention to what lay on either side. Before he had climbed a hundred feet he was seized from behind. Rough hands pinned his arms to his back, almost jerking him from his feet. A moment later he was surrounded by grinning brown faces, and his ears were filled with voices speaking a language he did not understand.

There were about a dozen in the party, powerfully built but stocky men, perhaps half a head shorter than the average warrior of the Rogue Rivers. Their noses were uniformly straight, their beardless faces fierce, even in the moment's mirth, and they wore breechclouts of deerskin with leggings of woven tules. He did not need to be told that they were Klamaths.

After a moment one of them spoke in the Athabascan tongue used by the Rogue Rivers.

"Where is your party?"

"I have no party," said Tom quickly. He made his voice

strong, hoping by its loudness that the Klamaths would believe him. If they discovered the group of unprotected women on the lower meadow, they would take many captives. "I am alone."

"What tribe are you?" demanded the Klamath curtly.

"Chief John's. I am a Rogue River."

Chief John's people would naturally be found on these mountains. If he admitted to being of Chief Jo's tribe, they would suspect there were others near at hand. A fourteen-year-old boy would not be sent alone so far from home.

"We know you are a dog of a Rogue River," snarled the Klamath. "The smell is all about you."

"It is a clean smell that seems so strange to you Klamaths who never wash," retorted Tom angrily. "Our people bathe in the river every day."

The Indian growled and struck at his face, while the man who was holding Tom's arms gripped them even tighter.

"We have heard that Chief John grows old and in his dotage," taunted the Klamath. "And to find you here alone is proof. Already we have taken many of his people. He should have known better than to send a boy out alone. A chief with any wisdom would not do so."

Tom held his head high and stared into the scornful black eyes. Old John was not his chief, nor had he seen him more than a dozen times in his life. But he was a Rogue River, and as such he must be defended.

"I am on a quest for power," he said. "Boys of the Rogue Rivers seek the Ta-mah'na-wus alone. Perhaps the Klamaths are afraid, and go out in twos or threes at such a time."

To his amazement, the interpreter made no immediate answer. Instead he turned and spoke to his friends in their

own tongue. Tom could not understand the words, but the whole party seemed to find them most amusing, for their laughter rang out under the pines, and one of them even rolled on the ground with merriment. Finally the interpreter managed to control himself long enough to speak again.

"A pity," he said between chuckles, "that you did not come seeking power five days ago, for then you might have found some Ta-mah'na-wus to help you. Now it is too late. You are our slave, and, as everyone knows, a slave can never attain power, except of the very poorest kind."

CHAPTER II

The First Pair of Shoes

It was a mighty river, the biggest Tom had ever seen, and in his first amazement and the wonder of Wishram on its bank he forgot, for brief intervals, the hopeless future which lay before him.

The Klamaths had wasted little time in hurrying their captive to market. They had started traveling north almost immediately. They rode horses, inferior beasts as short-legged and ugly as their owners, Tom had thought at first, but he soon changed his mind. Before many hours had passed, he was regarding those horses with longing and a kind of delirious awe, for he was expected to keep up with their pace on his own two feet. Only when they could see that he was ready to drop by the wayside did his captors allow him to ride for a few miles before resuming the journey on foot. He was not tied, nor was he starved, but he knew it was useless to attempt escape, so he followed doggedly.

It was close to two hundred miles to their destination, and each day was so much like the one before that Tom lost track of time. Finally, they came out of the flat, dry country into

new forests, and then they reached the river. They followed the stream downward until they arrived at this place where they were now camped, and Tom knew that before long he would have seen the last of the Klamaths. He would have new masters, for they were at Wishram.

As far away as the Rogue River valley, Tom had heard tales of Wishram, but he had never expected to see it for himself. It was the great trading post for most of the tribes, those inland, those who lived in the fertile valleys nearby, and those who dwelt by the sea. Rogue Rivers seldom made a trip so far north. There was no need for them to do so. Game they had in their own forests. Fish were to be taken from their own river. Roots and berries were plentiful on their own land. But if the Rogue Rivers did not come to Wishram, other tribes of Oregon did.

From the northeast came the Snakes, the Nez Percés, and the Cayuses with their horses, buckskin, and fur robes to barter; from the coast the members of the Chinook family, the Clatsops, the Cathlamets, the Nehalems, paddled upstream in canoes loaded with shells and sea-otter skins; from the Willamette Valley came the Kalapooias, the Clackamas, the Yamhallas, the Chemeketas. They gathered at Wishram at the time when the salmon ran thickest up the Columbia River, and here lived the year around the Celilo Indians, who neither hunted nor fished for a living, but made their fortunes as master traders and go-betweens.

The Celilos were fat and sleek, and they lived in wooden houses, the like of which Tom had never seen. They were gabled, with long, sloping roofs, but without windows or chimneys, and with but a single narrow door, partly sunk

into the ground so that anyone going in or coming out had to crawl on his hands and knees.

Tom had been inside one of these houses on the night of his arrival. The interpreter of the Klamaths had taken him there, and the owner of the house had turned him around and around, feeling his muscles, scowling, and shaking his head. They spoke Jargon, the trade language used between tribes, and Tom was able to follow some of the conversation.

"He is a very poor specimen," objected the Celilo. "Thin and undoubtedly weak. Hard work would soon kill him. You cannot expect to get too much for him in trade."

"He is a fine slave," howled the Klamath. "A young and growing boy. He will be strong as the north wind, and is a chief's son besides. I want three horses, ten bales of dried salmon, two bundles of pemmican——"

The Celilo drowned out his words in a roar of protest, and Tom stopped listening. He knew that now they would bargain, the Klamath gradually reducing his demands, the Celilo cautiously raising his price, until they reached a decision. The thought that they were discussing him was of little importance. His life was ruined anyway. Even if his tribe discovered his whereabouts, there was small likelihood that Mal-tee-ny could persuade them to buy him back. Even if she were successful, the stigma would follow him always.

He looked around the smoky room curiously, wondering if the merchant trader would buy him for himself or sell him to someone else. The house had appeared large and commodious from the outside, but within it was crowded and, to a Rogue River who lived almost in the open and bathed daily, evil-smelling. On this end, nearest the door, sleeping places, like wooden shelves with pallets of matting,

were built against the wall. There were many of these, and Tom concluded that either the trader had a large family, or several different families occupied one house. At the far end were stored bales of dried salmon, strings of shell beads, piles of wapato and roots, baskets, hides and skins, bows, stone hatchets, bundles of pemmican, which was strips of dried, lean venison, and a few white man's blankets. In the center of the room was a cooking fire, over which several women hovered, while others were busy at various tasks such as pounding meal or shaking baskets. Some of these were very young and seemed under constant surveillance. Tom guessed, by their hopeless expressions, that they were slaves like himself, kept busy at work while they awaited a prospective buyer.

He was called from his thoughts by a rough kick from the moccasined foot of his captor.

"Come, slave," the Klamath ordered angrily. "We will not do business with this dog. He thinks to make too great a profit for himself. We will sell you ourselves."

The insults of the angry Celilo followed them as they crawled out the door, but Tom was just as glad no agreement had been reached. He preferred camping under the stars with the detested Klamaths to remaining longer in the shut-up log house of the trader.

The next day the Klamaths exhibited him for everyone to see. He was not tied, nor so far as he knew was there any announcement made that he was for sale, but no one who glanced in his direction could mistake the fact. He was clearly under guard, and from time to time he was made to do foolish little tasks which had no purpose but to show off his young strength.

On command, he lifted huge stones and set them down somewhere else. He chopped a fallen log into firewood, although he had never before done so, since that was work for squaws. He ran fleetly from a given line to a distant point and back again. Occasionally the Indians who had come to trade would glance in his direction, but their eyes were blank. Anyone who tried to bargain for himself at Wishram clearly asked too high a price. There were no bidders, and at nightfall Tom again returned with the disappointed Klamaths to their small camp.

His captors had finished the evening meal and Tom had barely begun on their leftovers when visitors arrived. There were four of them, and when they announced themselves as Yamhallas Tom looked at them curiously. He had never seen Indians from the valley of the Willamette before, although he knew that the Yamhallas, called by the white men "Yamhills" for the surrounding slopes they dwelt upon, were one of the thirty bands which made up the larger Tualati family.

They were small Indians, lacking both the height of the Rogue Rivers and the muscular stockiness of the Klamaths, but they were wiry and three of them appeared to be strong. The fourth was their chief, and once he might have had as much strength as any of the others, but age was robbing him of his endurance. His name, he said, was Shel-ke-ak, but he liked better to be called Dave, which was the name he had been given by the friendly whites who lived nearby. Obviously, the same friendly whites had made other presents besides, for Dave wore a pair of torn blue trousers, and about his head was tied a red and white cotton handkerchief.

The Klamaths made their visitors welcome, and the pipe

was hastily brought out and passed around. At the first puff, Dave spat out the smoke with an exclamation of disgust.

"Weed!" he exclaimed. "My brothers, the Klamaths, smoke Siwash weed! Throw it away. I have brought white man's tobacco."

Far from being insulted at this slur on their hospitality, the Klamaths hurried to dump the smoldering embers from their pipe into the campfire. From a pocket of the blue trousers, Dave solemnly extracted a pinch of tobacco, and his old, shaking fingers tapped it in place in the bowl. Once again a burning brand was applied, and he handed it to the leader of the Klamaths with a grave nod of his head.

"Ah!" exhaled the Klamath. "White man's tobacco good. You have much of it?"

"That is nothing," said Dave modestly. "My brother, Chāak, who is called Jesse, carries their greatest gift to me of all."

As though on a signal one of the younger Indians reached forward and placed two bulky objects in his brother's lap. Dave held them up in the firelight for all to admire.

"Shoes," he explained proudly. "White man's shoes!"

This was so unexpected that it left the Klamaths without speech, and Tom crept closer from the shadows for a better view. The shoes were scuffed and badly worn, but no one noticed that. They were black, of heavy leather, with thick soles, and laced with buckskin thongs. It was the first time Tom or any of the Klamaths had seen white man's footwear so close at hand. Dave let them dangle for a moment in the firelight, then he passed them around the circle for closer inspection.

"I do not wear them," he admitted. "My feet are too old

to be confined in anything but a soft moccasin. But it is very fine to have a pair of white man's shoes. Everyone looks up to me because I am their owner."

The shoes and pipe passed from hand to hand, and the Yamhills sat quietly, absorbing the admiration. They did not speak at first of their errand, nor did the others ask. It was not until the Klamath leader, with an envious sigh, returned the shoes to their owner that Dave brought up the subject.

"You have a slave for trade," he said, and instantly the Klamaths were tense. "You ask too high a price for him, and could not come to terms with the trader."

"The trader is a cheat," cried the leader indignantly. "He does not pay fair prices. He thinks only of his own profit. He is a liar, too, and tells people that what they would sell is no good."

"You are right," agreed Dave calmly. Again he held the shoes up in the firelight. "There are some things in which it is better to deal direct with the buyer. Why give needless profit to a middleman? I would not trust these to a greedy, think-only-of-himself trader."

The leader's eyes fastened themselves on the battered shoes.

"You wish to trade them?" he asked in a surprised tone.

"No," cried the other Klamaths instantly, and their voices made a great protesting chorus. "We helped in the capture. We demand our share."

"They are fine shoes," said Dave dreamily. "I am the only Indian in the valley who owns such shoes. I know of no Indian on the coast who does, nor one across the mountains. I do not want to part with them, but I am getting old. I have

no son. When I take the first place on the fishing ledges of the Yamhills, my hand no longer has the strength to bring up the net. My eyes no longer see as they did, and while it is the duty of my people to give their chief a share of everything they bring in, I can no longer do my part."

"But you are wise in council, Chief Dave," cried one of the Yamhills quickly. "And just."

"My wife grows old, too," continued Dave sadly. "She is a good woman and has served me well, but she can no longer do her part in skinning game, or drying fish, or gathering wood or berries."

"A young, strong slave is what you need," agreed the Klamath leader eagerly. "One who will work hard and let you and your woman enjoy your last years in leisure."

"No," cried the Klamaths again. "It is not enough. We would have no share."

"Perhaps tobacco as well as the shoes," agreed Dave thoughtfully. "There is something in what they say. They should have a share."

They were silent, then, their faces beginning to waver. Dave watched them shrewdly. Then he sighed, and unknotted the red handkerchief around his head.

"And this," he concluded. "It can be torn in strips, a strip given to each man. That will set him apart, and he will have something to keep after he has enjoyed the last of the tobacco. It is my final offer. I will give nothing more."

"It is enough," nodded the leader, reaching eagerly for the shoes. He jerked his head into the shadows behind him and spoke to Tom. "Go with him. You belong to him now. You are his slave."

Tom stood up and waited with the Yamhills as old Dave

got awkwardly to his feet. These were to be his new masters, yet about them he felt nothing at all. Not fear, although he realized they might use him badly, and certainly would demand long hours of the meanest kind of work; not even relief, for Dave had given promise of being a just man. He felt nothing at all, only a kind of numbness. With a curt nod, Jesse signaled that he was to fall in behind the four men who walked in single file, and he did so without question.

They led him past the camps and drying sheds for salmon, past the log houses of the Celilos, until they came to the edge of the cliff above the river. Tom, who had been given no opportunity to stand and marvel at this greatest industry of the Oregon Indians, did not even attempt to hold back his gasp of amazement.

There was a full moon, and he could see almost as clearly as though in daylight. The Columbia, at this point, hurled itself over a ledge of rock twenty feet high, extending almost from shore to shore. He had glimpsed the river as the Klamaths had descended from the trail above, and had contrasted its width, almost a mile from shore to shore, with the smaller Rogue. Because the trail did not follow the bank, he had no way of knowing that the channel had narrowed sharply until it was compressed to no more than fifty or a hundred feet at Wishram. Under ordinary circumstances his ears would have alerted him to this tremendous force of water crashing against black rocks, but these were no ordinary times. He had accepted the ever-present roar and thunder as part of his misfortune. He had given it no thought.

The bank on which they stood was nothing more than a high cliff. It descended jaggedly to the seething water below, and the spray dashed high against its sides. Wherever there

was a ledge wide enough to provide a foothold, men were fishing. In some instances, a wooden trestle had been built from the rock, extending a little way above the river, and each of these contained two or three men. Their equipment consisted of a small net, distended on a hoop and attached to a long handle. They appeared unusually adept in the use of these, for, as Tom watched, several nets dipped into the crashing whiteness and emerged a moment later with a thrashing, twisting salmon, which was immediately thrown up onto the bank. Women were waiting to seize the gigantic fish the instant they thudded against the ground.

"You have fished for salmon?" demanded Jesse curtly, turning to Tom.

"Not in this manner. My people fish, but I have never used a net. We use spears."

His thoughts returned for a moment to the fishing of the Rogue Rivers. That was always done at night and from canoes. Three persons went in each canoe, and two of them were women. One woman paddled, another held a torch, while the spearman stood, with harpoon poised, in the middle of the boat. The fish came to the surface, attracted by the light, and in that instant the spear descended unerringly, holding it fast. Tom had never even been in a canoe at such a time. Because of his age, he had stood on the bank, watching the lights as they moved, sometimes in lines like a procession of fireflies, sometimes scattered across the dark water like stars in the sky.

"If you have speared fish, you can learn to use a net," said Dave confidently. "At night, when the salmon run thickest upstream, our people give the favored place on the ledge to their chief. But my arm is no longer strong enough to lift the

net with a fighting salmon which weighs as much as a half-grown boy. You, as my slave, must take my place."

"Come," ordered Jesse. His black eyes flickered over Tom briefly, and the boy had a momentary impression of resentment. Jesse, he was certain, had not wanted his brother to buy a slave. Perhaps it was because the white man's shoes had been used in trade, and he had hoped to own them himself some day. "I also stand on the fishing ledge of the Yamhills at night. I will see how you handle the net."

A long-handled pole was thrust into his hands, and Tom followed Jesse down the steep bank. Even without the additional weight of a salmon, the pole with the barreled net on the other end was heavy. He was a little doubtful of his ability to equal the skill of the fishermen he had seen, but he was determined to try.

The ledge was wet with spray and slippery under his worn moccasins. He looked at Jesse and, seeing that he was barefooted, he bent down to remove his own footwear. His toes would have to grip at the rock and keep him from falling. In that instant he looked down and saw the white water churning so close beneath him. He had a momentary glimpse of black, jagged rock before the spray rose and covered it once more. His head swam with dizziness, and only by closing his eyes was he able to keep from falling.

"The salmon are thick," gloated Jesse. "They fight each other to jump up the waterfall. We will take many of them tonight."

Tom opened his eyes and forced himself to look down into the terrifying water. The huge salmon were actually jumping upstream against the current. The full distance of the falls was too great for one jump, but they managed to reach the

top by stages, poising an instant on a concealed ledge before they continued upward. Not all of them were successful, and in that second when they hovered in mid-air and spray, a net closed about them and they were flipped on the bank as effortlessly as though they were minnows.

"Cast your net," ordered Jesse impatiently. "Prove your worth to your master."

Tom lifted the heavy pole and jabbed ineffectually at the spray below him. Only Jesse's rough hand saved him from tumbling after it.

"Stupid! Ignorant! Dog of an inlander. Watch me," cried the chief's brother.

Fascinated, Tom watched Jesse's net as it shot into the seething water and emerged with a struggling, fighting fish that gleamed darkly silver in the moonlight. A triumphant shout went up as he threw it up on the bank above him. Clearly this was a large salmon, a great prize.

"Now, you," growled Jesse, and rested on his own pole as he stopped to watch.

Fighting down dizziness, Tom forced himself to look again. He saw the darkness of fins, the flashing silver of salmon against the whiteness of spray as he raised the heavy pole. With both hands he lowered it into the water, not with the swift rush which Jesse used, but gingerly, painfully. A moment later, there was a jerk as the current took it, and the pole was wrenched from his hands. He could see it diving into the spray, and a moment later the opposite end with the net was thrust upward for a second before it was carried below the falls and into the still churning white water of the pool below.

"Clumsy, flea-bitten offspring of a wood-rat mother,"

howled Jesse. "Worse than a useless slave. Now see what you have done!" There was something of triumph in his voice as he looked up the cliff toward his watching brother, the chief. "Your fine new slave has just thrown your best net into the river. How the five tribes of salmon brothers will laugh when they take it back to the great wooden house where they live. Perhaps they will decide it is not worth the trouble to come upriver each year and provide food for our people. Perhaps they will say that if we are so ignorant that we send worthless slaves to throw fine nets into the river, they will not bother to come."

"Enough," cried Dave, his old voice cracked with anger. "Come off the fishing ledge, slave. If you are of no value to our men, we will set you to work for the women. I will give you to my old wife, Martha."

CHAPTER III

Women's Work

"You were long bringing the fish," accused Martha angrily. "The fire has burned low while you were gone. Get more wood, and be quick about it."

Tom put down his staggering load, and because the women were watching refrained from rubbing at the throbbing muscles in his arms. He had carried only three salmon from the rocks up to the drying shed on this trip, but the combined weight was over two hundred pounds. It was by no means his first trip this morning, and he was already tired and out of breath.

He stepped carefully around the great pile of salmon

bones removed by the women's cleaning knives. Each bone must be carefully saved, and, before the Yamhills left the encampment to return to their own home, they would be gathered up and cast into the river. The bones would then in some miraculous manner find their way back to that magic village under the sea where the five tribes of salmon dwelt in one huge, wooden house. On arrival, they would again take form of one of the salmon people, and if a single bone was missing, the young man—for he would not be a fish until it was the spawning season—might be missing a finger or even a whole hand.

Tom had not known this at first, for the Rogue Rivers did not hold the salmon in such awe as did those tribes living nearer the Columbia. The first day he was in the Yamhill camp he had leaped over a pile of fish bones, and immediately every woman had dropped her cleaning knife to fall on him with clawing nail and biting tooth. Dave's wife, Martha, who was not unkind despite her sharp tongue, had finally called them off and explained to him about salmon. He did not intend to make such a mistake again.

He hurried up the slope after the wood she had ordered. Alder was the best, for it burned with just the right amount of heat and smoke. He carried it down, as much as he could manage, in his arms, for as yet he had been given no carrying sling to throw over his back, and without being told he replenished the fire.

"Now, back for more fish, slave," called one of the women loudly. "Our hands are busy with knives and with turning the salmon. Our men work with the nets. Who are you to stand idle doing nothing?"

"He is a slave," said Martha quickly, her knife motionless

in mid-air, her plump face gathering into a frown. "But my slave, not yours. And he will do as I tell him. It is not for you to give him orders."

"But he was standing useless," argued the woman sulkily. "A slave is to work."

"He will work. For me," frowned Martha. "Because I have a slave to carry my fish and wood, do not think to excuse your lazy children from their rightful share of work. Let them take your orders. My old fingers grow stiff from holding the knife. My old eyes are smarting from the smoke. Already we have taken twice as much salmon as in ordinary years, and I have done enough. For the remainder of the time that we are here, my slave shall do my work."

Tom saw some of the women look at him resentfully as he walked over to Martha, and heard others laugh derisively. He tried not to see or hear, but the shame of doing the work of a woman was great.

Martha inched over on the ground to make a place for him beside her, and sniffed at the others who were not rich enough to own slaves. She was a short woman, small-boned, but so fat that exertion had become difficult. Her face was unadorned by tattooing, but a red rag was braided in her hair, and because she was the wife of a chief she wore the dress of a white woman. It was a faded, cotton Mother Hubbard, which hung straight from her shoulders to her bare feet, and innumerable tears gave glimpses of brown skin beneath, since it was her only garment.

"Sit here," she ordered sharply, "so I can watch that you do it correctly. Because I will cut no more fish this year." Without turning her head, she seemed to speak over her shoulder. "There is such a thing as taking home too much

salmon in one season. We have more than enough for the winter, and the salmon know it. When their young men and women return to their magic village beneath the sea, they will say that the Yamhills are greedy."

As Tom sat down on the dusty ground, the relief of his aching muscles rising above his sense of new shame, a voice came from behind. It was Dave, and Tom gave an involuntary start. He had not known the chief was there, but Martha knew it. Her eyes narrowed in satisfaction.

"After today, the Yamhills will fish no longer this season," announced Dave solemnly. "We must not offend the salmon people. We will dry what fish we have, then start home."

"It is well," agreed Martha instantly. "My ears are weary of the sound of rushing waters. Besides, it is time to gather the camasses we marked last spring. Do you know how to open a salmon properly?"

"No," admitted Tom. He realized now that it was better to admit total ignorance than to claim a little knowledge. If he had told the Yamhills that he had never before fished, they might not have expected so much of him.

"I will show you," said Martha promptly. "The cuts must be made up and down, never across, for that would offend the salmon."

"Are there words to be said? Or special thanks to be given?"

She looked at him quickly. "What do you know of words or special thanks?"

"Nothing," he denied. Clearly the preparation of food was different from the gathering of herbs and snake poison.

She seemed satisfied, and took the knife from him. With two quick slashes she cut along the back bone. The skin fell

back and she pulled it loose, with the head still clinging to the larger end, opening it flat like a book.

"There will be some small bones remaining in the flesh," she cautioned him. "My eyes do not see as once they did, but they must not be missed. They must be removed and placed on the pile with the others."

He nodded and set to work with the knife. Martha watched him intently, criticizing every mistake, shrieking that he was clumsy, slow, or fumbling. Not once did she offer any praise, even when he began to catch on a little better, but, when one of the other women ventured to jeer at his efforts, Martha was quick to fly to his defense.

"He is a boy child and this is the first time his fingers have held a cleaning knife. Besides, the men who sold him said he was a chief's son before he became my slave. He would not have done such work before. Could you do better on your first attempt?"

In the drying shed, she pointed out which of the many strips of salmon belonged to the chief, and showed him how they must be turned so they would dry evenly, and how to squeeze and rub them in his fingers to break the fiber. It took about a week of drying in the arborlike rack above the fire before the salmon was ready for packing. Every day the strips must be shifted, so they would have an equal chance at the fire, for fish that dried on the outside, but not within, would rot. She warned him to watch carefully and listen well, for after this the responsibility would be his. Martha herself was tired of salmon. She wanted to go home.

The last stage of preparation, storing the dried fish in bundles, was the part in which he really excelled. More than once he had helped Mal-tee-ny as she pounded roots or herbs

for medicine. There was no shame in that, for every medicine man did the same thing. The dried salmon was pounded in the same way, between two stones, and Martha's eyes gleamed with something like approval as she watched him work.

"You have used pounding rocks before?" she asked shrewdly.

"Yes. It is easier with a mortar and a pestle, but I see how the salmon, which must be kept flat, is best done between flat stones."

"You pounded meal, perhaps, or acorns for cakes?"

"No," he answered quickly, angry that she had suggested he had worked in the preparation of food. For some reason he did not want to explain that his experience was in the making of medicine, and to his relief Martha did not continue the conversation.

For a week longer, the Yamhills camped on the banks of the Columbia, drying the largest catch they had made in many years. Tom learned that they did not come every year to Wishram for the fishing. Usually they went to a spot on the Willamette, which was closer to their home, and built a weir across the stream. But this season Dave had not received his usual vision telling him it was propitious to build a weir. They had waited anxiously for the dream, for much dried salmon was needed in the winter months. Finally, when the season grew late, they traveled the longer distance to Wishram. No one need await a vision telling him it was right to fish from the rocks.

The way to their home was long, but Tom found that it was not so exhausting as the journey he had made with the Klamaths. They traveled more slowly, for the women and

children, even some of the men, had to go on foot. The Yamhills had few horses, and these were even more inferior than those belonging to the Klamaths. But they owned something which the Klamaths, or even the Rogue Rivers, did not. They had a white man's wagon, a boxlike affair, with unmatched wheels, which bumped and jolted, threatening to fall apart at every moment. It was piled with bales of the pounded, dried salmon, and more bales were dragged along by the women at the end of a harnesslike contrivance which fitted over their shoulders. Martha, of course, did not drag one of these, for Tom was expected to transport her share. His place in the slow-moving procession was at the very end, where he swallowed the dust stirred up by all the others.

More than once he thought that this was his opportunity to escape, but the Yamhills had thought of that, too. One of the men, usually Jesse, was assigned to ride back from time to time to make sure Tom was there. Besides, this country, familiar enough to the valley Indians, was strange to him, and at first a little frightening. It was disturbing that, at the close of summer, hillsides should still be green. Many of the plants were unlike those which grew at home; the forests had thick undergrowth instead of being open; the smallest streams and creeks rushed along with fierceness, when by now they should be dried to small trickles.

He would have liked to speak of these wonders to someone, but, outside of Martha and Dave, the Yamhills left him strictly alone. Boys his age ignored him, as did the older men. Martha's sharp tongue had stopped the women from giving him orders, if it had not silenced their jeering laughter, and the children only noticed him when they looked for a target for a dirt clod or a rock. So he plodded along silently, keep-

ing his thoughts to himself, and wondering how far they must go before they reached their destination.

No one told him, but he guessed by the excited chatter when they reached the boundaries of Yamhill land. The tribe lived in a valley surrounded by low hills, not too unlike those bordering Chief Jo's domain. True, there were no rimrock ledges, but most of these hills were brown in the sun, with only a few scrubby trees which had grown up since the last time the Yamhills had burned them over in a game hunt. Encircling these smaller hills were others covered with dark fir forests, and a swift-moving stream rushed noisily a few hundred yards from their village. Tom saw the stream with pleasure. Rogue Rivers bathed daily, but there had been no moment since he had been taken captive to cleanse himself.

Nor was there time now, for Martha set him to work immediately. She kept him running this way and that, fetching firewood and water, unloading and stacking their share of the dried salmon in the back of the chief's wickiup. It was an inferior dwelling, he decided critically. Built of sticks and hides, it was placed flat on the ground, with no dug-out foundation such as the Rogue Rivers made in their permanent villages to keep out the cold winds and snow of winter.

When the women called that it was time for Martha to take her turn at the cooking fire, she sent Tom. Jealous of the chief's wife, who was enjoying the luxury of leisure, they gave him the meanest tasks. He burned his fingers on hot rocks, gathered more wood for everyone, and burrowed in the hot ground beneath the coals for the roots which had been placed there to roast.

When he asked, without thinking, what they were, for he did not recognize the bulbous tubers, the squaws shrieked

with laughter and told him that anyone but an ignorant dolt of a Rogue River slave would have known they were wapatos. After that he was silent again, doing their bidding and keeping his thoughts to himself.

All the while the Yamhills were eating, Tom kept remembering the stream. Twilight was not far away, and the western sky above the forest flamed with gold and crimson slashes which were reflected in the east with a wide band of salmon pink. He could not see the river, for it was hidden by a high bank, but he could hear its throaty voice gurgling an invitation.

The men ate first, then the women and children, while slaves finished off anything they might leave. Tom discovered then that he was not the only captive of the Yamhills. There was one other, an old woman, who belonged to Ezra, the medicine man of the Yamhills.

"And to his father before him, who could make even mightier medicine than my present master," explained the woman, gnawing with toothless gums on a rabbit bone. "I am a Santiam, and I was sold by my uncle, when my father died, to the Yamhills. At that time they were more rich and powerful than now. There were no white men living nearby then. I was not the only slave. There were many. But a sickness came and carried off many of the tribe, and all the slaves but me. Until Chief Dave bought you, I was the only one."

"What is your name?"

"I am called Ne-whah now, which means to fetch or bring. It has been so many years since I was called by my old name that I have forgotten it."

"You did not go with the tribe when it journeyed to the falls at Wishram?"

"No. For there are some of the Yamhills who are too old to make so long a journey. I was told to stay and look after them."

Her voice died away, and again the tantalizing murmur of the river filled his ears.

"Do you think my mistress would let me go to the stream and wash myself?" he asked. "My pores are clogged with dirt. They cannot breathe. My feet, and even my head, are heavy with it."

"You wish to bathe in the river?" she demanded in surprise. "But you do not go to seek your Ta-mah'na-wus. You are not on a quest. There is no need to punish yourself."

"The Rogue Rivers bathe every day," he told her proudly. "In the winter, we break ice with our bodies."

She was silent for a moment, and her dull eyes grew even more glazed as she looked into the past.

"Yes," she remembered, nodding her head slowly. "When I was a little girl, our braves went into the water, too. I had forgotten. But with these Yamhallas, it is different. To them, cold water is punishment. They go in rivers only on a quest, or when they have come from the sweat house."

"I am not like that," he pleaded. "I am dirty, and would be clean."

"Very well. I will help you," she agreed. Then she raised her old voice loudly, and began striking at his face with the end of the rabbit bone. "Slave! Good-for-nothing, worthless son of the Rogue Rivers. What kind of talk is this? Bathing in the river! Perhaps you hope some spirit will see you shivering and chilling there, and enter into your body. Do you not know that a slave like you can never hope to have a Ta-mah'-na-wus, no matter what he does? Or, if one comes to him, it

will be such a weak and frightened spirit that no one else will have it."

At her first words, the others were quiet. The men only looked in their direction curiously, but the women crowded around.

"What does he say, Ne-whah? What does the slave hope to do?"

"To bathe in the river," scoffed Ne-whah, her wrinkled face twisted even more. "He says he does not like to be dirty. But I think it is because he hopes to interest some weak spirit, the kind which might enter into the person of a slave."

The women of the Yamhills joined in her laughter. One of them picked up a handful of dust and poured it over Tom's head. Others pointed scornful fingers in his direction, or bent double in their merriment. Pushing with both elbows, Martha forced her way to the front.

"So, he would bathe in the river!" she exclaimed loudly, and as her eyes fell on each jeering woman the laughter went from that face. "And by your laughter, you say he cannot do so. But he shall. He shall go into the river every day. It will wash some of the smell of the Rogue River from his body."

"And will the chief's woman go with him to watch that he does not escape?" demanded one of the women, a little braver than the others.

"He will not attempt escape." Ne-whah spoke up quickly, and her voice was scornful of the suggestion. "If he should, the brothers of the Yamhills, the Tualatins, will find him if he goes east. The Clackamas will bring him back if he goes north. And even a Rogue River would scorn the Chinooks to the west and north. No, he will not try escape."

Martha nodded approval before she turned to Tom.

"Go," she ordered. "Wash yourself in the river."

He went as fast as he could, across the grassy meadow and down the high bank. At this point the stream spread itself more thinly to run over a rock bed. But he had observed, when he had come to fill the water containers, that a little farther up, around a sharp curve, there was a hole deep enough for swimming. He waded upstream, his toes gripping round, slippery rocks, until he reached it. Then without looking to right or left, he dived deep under the cool darkness of the water.

He stayed under as long as he could, and for the first time since Mal-tee-ny had sent him uphill to look for an animal trail, he knew peace. Finally his lungs could stand it no longer, and he came to the surface, shaking the water from his hair and eyelashes. It was then that he saw the raft and the boy on it. The boy had a white skin, covered with tiny golden spots of freckles. His hair was so blond it was almost white, and even in the twilight his eyes shone blue. Tom stared at him in amazement, and the white boy grinned.

"How's the water?" he demanded in very good Jargon. "I'm just about to try it myself."

CHAPTER IV

The Knife

It was the first time Tom had ever spoken directly to a white. As a matter of fact, this was the closest he had ever been to a member of that race. The freckles, especially, fascinated him, and he stared at them, wondering if they were painted on.

"Don't you speak Jargon?" asked the boy after a moment. "You don't speak English, do you?"

"I speak some Jargon," answered Tom hastily. "And Athabascan, which is my tongue, for I am a Rogue River. I cannot talk the white man's words."

"A Rogue River?" repeated the boy in surprise. He sat down on the edge of the raft, dangling his bare legs in the water. "You're a long way from home. Visiting?"

"I am living with the Yamhills for a while," explained Tom in embarrassment. He could not bring himself to say that he was a slave. Outside of Ne-whah, this was the first person he had met who seemed friendly. If the white boy knew he was talking to a slave, he might go away. "I came with them from Wishram when they returned from the fishing."

"Oh." The boy dismissed the information carelessly. He

clambered back on the raft and began to slide out of his single garment, a pair of blue cotton trousers. "My name's Andy Fuller. My father owns that first piece of land just over the hill. He bought it from the Yamhills, and I guess sometimes he's sorry he did, because——" He broke off in sudden embarrassment. "What's your name?"

"Tom."

Andy grinned again and nodded before he dove off the edge of the raft. A moment later, Tom felt something pinching on his toes. He trod water for a long moment before he realized it was Andy, behaving just as any Rogue River boy would do. With a whoop of delight, he went under in hot pursuit, forgetting that he was a slave and that this was one of the despised whites.

The game lasted a long while, then Andy climbed back onto the raft, and motioned Tom to follow.

"I wonder if I'm clean enough," he said thoughtfully. "Ma sent me down to the creek with some soft soap and told me to scrub, but I reckon most of the dirt has washed away by now."

"You are not yet clean," Tom told him frankly. "Those brown spots on your face and arms are still there."

"Those?" For a moment Andy stared, then he laughed. "Those are freckles. They just come on me. They won't wash off. Do I look clean outside of them?"

Tom nodded. "But I am still dirty. It has been many days since I was in a river, and while I have played this evening, I have not washed myself."

"Then here," said Andy promptly. He reached for a tin cup which had been sitting in the middle of the raft. It was filled with a thick yellowish substance. "Use this.

Use it all, and Ma will think I did a really good job this time."

"What is it?"

"Soft soap. You rub it on and wash off the lather. Ma made it herself."

Tom took the cup a little gingerly. Perhaps there was magic in the contents. Perhaps it would work some charm upon him if he rubbed it on his skin. Then remembering that he could be in no worse circumstances than he was now, and that anything which happened would have to be for the best, he plunged his fingers boldly into the cup.

The yellow soap smoothed to white lather on his arm, and it was reassuring to see. Indians made a weak lather from crushed syringa leaves, but it was a small thing compared with these more billowy suds. He covered himself with the soap, rubbing it in until his skin was whiter than Andy Fuller's. Then he jumped once more into the stream, and when he came up he felt clean at last.

"I am very thankful," he told Andy earnestly.

"So am I. Ma always looks in the cup straight off when I come home, and I've given my solemn word that I won't throw any of it out. Well, I better be going home."

"I, too," agreed Tom guiltily. He was a little surprised that none of the Yamhills had come seeking him before this.

"But I could come back tomorrow," said Andy quickly. "Ma won't make me take another bath so soon, but I could come. Soon as I finish up the chores and milking, and eat supper. Will you be here?"

"I will be here about this time," promised Tom, glad that Martha had said he could wash every day.

"Good," said Andy, poling off. "It's more fun to swim with someone else. First time I ever met one of you Indians who liked to, though."

"It is the first time you met a Rogue River," answered Tom quietly, and turned to go back to the Yamhill camp.

His days were very full now, and so different from what they would have been had he not been taken captive that sometimes he felt he was living a dream, a horrible, frightening dream from which he could not quite wake up. This couldn't be happening to him, he told himself, not to Mal-tee-ny's son, protégé of Chief Jo, soon to be a respected warrior of the Rogue Rivers. But it was.

Early each morning he went with the women, following numbly on the heels of Martha, who accompanied every expedition even though she did no work when she arrived. He used one of the sharp-pointed digging sticks to extract the bulbs of camass from the hard ground. Last May, when the plants had been in blossom, the women had come to the fields and had marked the largest and finest of them with bark. These were the ones they dug now for food, placing them immediately in a trench underground for roasting, since it was easier to dry the camass root at the place where it was taken than it was to carry it home green. Some of the plants were marked differently, and these had to be kept separate from the others, for their flowers were white, not blue, and they would be used as medicine.

Under his breath, Tom spoke to the spirit of the white camass as Mal-tee-ny had taught him, and Martha, seeing the short delay before he thrust his digging stick into the soil, waddled nearer. Perhaps she overheard, but if she did she said nothing to the others. She only made certain that the

roots which Tom dug were kept in a pile apart from the rest, and that they were safely stored in her own wickiup when they returned.

Sometimes he went with the women to carry back game killed by the men in the forest, but the Yamhills were not hunters like the Rogue Rivers. They went seldom on these hunting trips, on which they used white men's guns or depended on concealed traps laid in forest trails. Tom sensed that they prized the hides and fur more highly than they did the flesh. Dried salmon, roots, and berries seemed more to their taste. At last he discovered why.

He was gathering wood for the fire one morning when one of the Yamhills rushed into the village.

"Pig! Pig! Fuller kill pig!" he shouted, and instantly everyone stopped what he had been doing.

Even Dave and the other men who had been doing nothing at all got to their feet, their eyes suddenly bright with expectation. The women left the half-made fire. Those who had been pounding meal put down their pestles hurriedly. Children ran screaming this way and that. Even the dogs caught something of the excitement and began barking and jumping.

"What is it?" Tom asked Ne-whah in amazement.

"Pig!" she answered quickly, as though that explained everything. "Even we will go. Stay by me. If we are lucky, we will get a little taste ourselves."

The clumsy horses were harnessed to the ancient wagon, and the old people too infirm to make the trip on their own feet were thrust into it. There seemed to be the greatest need for haste, and the old ones did not resent their unceremonious treatment. Eyes usually dull and uncaring were bright-

ened now, and wrinkled lips murmured happily the word, "Pig!"

The procession started at an enthusiastic gait, and Tom walking at the end beside Ne-whah was more confused than ever.

"Where do we go?" he asked. "What is this pig of which everyone speaks?"

"We go to the white man's farm. A pig is an animal which the white man keeps in a pen. He does not hunt in the forests as do the Indians. When he wants food, he kills some of his animals. At this time of year, he kills many of them to feed him through the winter. If we are there, making a great noise, begging for a share, he cannot refuse us. He will give us some."

"The Yamhills beg food?" he demanded, horrified.

"Of course. How would they get pig otherwise?"

"They could take it," he said reasonably. "Or they could go into the forests and kill their own."

"I have already told you, pig does not run wild in the forests. And if you take from the white man without asking, he will lock you up in a little house. It is worse than being a slave to be locked in that little house."

He had grown fond of Ne-whah in the weeks since he had been brought to the Yamhill village. Outside of the white boy, Andy Fuller, with whom he still swam in the hours of twilight, she was his only friend. But her explanation was no explanation at all, and it made him angry. He could not understand how anyone could humble himself to begging, nor what could be the magic of this animal called pig which had stirred the Yamhills to such unusual excitement. Since

Ne-whah could not explain to his satisfaction, he spoke of other things.

"Ezra will miss this. You tell me he must spend three days on Spirit Mountain to renew his power, and the time will not be up until tomorrow."

"Yes," grinned Ne-whah, showing her toothless gums. She had no love for her master. "And the two young men who went there for their first Ta-mah'na-wus will also miss it. That means all the more pig for us."

"Have you ever been on the mountain?" he asked idly, glancing up at the wooded slope which rose steeply from the trail they followed. It, of all the rounded hills encircling the valley, had never known the torch.

"Oh, no," Ne-whah told him hastily. "Only a little way up its slope when Ezra goes to gather more roots and bark for medicine than he can carry back. I go that far to be his bearer. Nor do the young men on a quest go farther up than that. Only the medicine man dares go to the very top."

"But if you're with him—if you carry his roots and barks——"

"The spirits of the mountain would devour me," she shuddered. "I am but a woman."

"In our tribe, the Ta-mah'na-wus comes sometimes to a woman."

"A poor one, then," she scoffed. "Or a woman's Ta-mah'na-wus to help her make baskets, or perhaps to guide her to the largest berry patches."

"No," objected Tom. "The Ta-mah'na-wus for medicine."

"You do not speak the truth," she told him angrily. "Because I have been kind to you, you think it is a joke to fill my old ears with lies."

"They are not lies," he told her earnestly. "Mal-tee-ny, my mother, has the power of medicine, and her mother before her. Perhaps, if I had not been taken captive, it would have come to me."

"Perhaps," she agreed uneasily, convinced at last by his serious tone. One dared not speak lightly of these things, for if he had been lying the Ta-mah'na-wus of medicine would have struck him down by this time. "But you will never get it now. It does not come to slaves."

"Not the strongest power," he admitted. "But you yourself know that even slaves may have a small one."

"Not here. Not in this place," she answered flatly. "For the Ta-mah'na-wus comes only to those who seek it on its mountain, and to go there you must have Ezra's permission. He would never give it to you."

"No," he agreed reluctantly. "But if he should let me go, I would not be afraid as you are."

"Not afraid to go to the mountain?"

"I am afraid of nothing," he said loudly. Long ago Mal-tee-ny had warned him that to admit fear was to drive away any guiding spirit who might have become his patron. Habit was too strong to let him admit it now.

"Hush," she said quickly. "Some Ta-mah'na-wus, an evil one, might hear you, and add to your misfortunes just to teach you a lesson."

He was silent, knowing she was right. He glanced upward once more at the wooded slope, where mystery and magic dwelt, where even now the medicine man and two of the young Yamhills were seeking guidance; then he looked away. It was not for him.

Fuller's farm was three miles by trail from the site of the

Yamhill village, although the distance was less than half when made, as Andy did, by raft. By the time the tribe arrived it was late morning, and the actual slaughtering was at an end. Six carcasses, with cut throats, hung suspended from the branch of a maple tree, dripping pools of blood to the ground below.

No human beings were in sight as the Indians crested the hill and started down the rutted road to the farmhouse, but almost immediately a door opened and four people crowded out on the small porch. Tom's eyes were keen, and even from this distance he recognized Andy Fuller. For a moment he felt delight at the sight of his friend, but when Andy and an older man moved over to place themselves before the swinging pigs, he knew humiliation. It was bitter to think that Andy should see him, a Rogue River, on a begging mission. The other two whites, a woman and a small girl, remained on the porch.

The wagon turned off the road and bumped into the yard, the Yamhills swarming after it. They were beaming with friendship as they formed into a semicircle, with the swaying carcasses in the middle. Then they sat on the ground and took up a chant which never stopped.

"Jowl! Jowl! Want jowl! Jowl! Jowl!"

"Get out of here," shouted Mr. Fuller angrily. He shook his fist at the happy Yamhills, and planted his thick body with determination. "I've given you the last hunk of pork I intend to. This is for market and my own use. Go back to your camp."

The Indians smiled harder than ever, and their cries seemed to increase in volume.

"Jowl! Jowl!"

Only Tom, standing on the distant fringe of the circle, took no part in the demand. His mouth was set in a hard line of disapproval. His head was held high, but his whole soul was filled with shame. Of all the Indians, he alone was still on his feet, the others having settled themselves to be comfortable while they wore down the settler's patience.

Tom felt Andy's eyes upon him, and in spite of the shame he made himself return the look. Andy grinned. He saw the white boy's lips move as he spoke to his father. Then his friend was moving away, stepping disdainfully around the Indians on the ground, circling to come up to Tom.

"Hello," he said. "How come you aren't yelling with the others?"

"A Rogue River does not beg," answered Tom stiffly. Andy should have known that for himself.

"Then let's go over to the barn where we can talk without shouting," decided Andy instantly. "Pa's bound and determined he won't give in this time, and they'll keep that up for hours."

None of the Yamhills noticed as their slave moved away with the white boy. Their eyes saw only the tantalizing pork swaying from the limb of the tree.

The word "barn" was strange to him, but Tom soon discovered it was the largest of several buildings clustered within a fenced enclosure. It was made of wood. Even the floor was wood, and light came through openings which had been left in the walls. It was half filled with dried grasses of some kind, and Andy invited him to climb up, by means of a ladder, and sit on the very top of the pile.

"Hay makes a comfortable seat," observed Andy companionably. "I sit up here lots of times and whittle."

From his pocket he produced a piece of wood, already beginning to take the shape of a boat, and a long metal object which opened into a sharp-edged blade. Tom could not restrain his gasp of admiration at the sight of it. Chief Jo had a white man's knife. He had taken it from the body of a man killed in ambush as he washed yellow metal from creek sand. But Chief Jo's knife, while sharp, was no keener than this smaller blade, nor did it fold into a neat space.

Andy smiled and held it out for him to examine.

"It's a jackknife. Want to try it? I'm whittling a boat for my little sister to float on the duck pond."

The blade fitted easily and comfortably in his palm, and the soft wood fell away as by magic from the sharp edge. Never had he wanted anything so badly in his life. He wanted that knife almost as much as he wanted a Ta-mah'na-wus. Then he looked at Andy, and placed it quickly in the white boy's hand.

"I got this for Christmas last year," said Andy after a moment. "But I've got another one. It's old, and not so good as this, but if you want it, you can have it."

"You would give it to me? A present?"

"Sure. If you want it."

He could hardly breathe with excitement, and Andy got to his feet.

"It's up at the house. Come on. We'll go get it."

The Indians were still chanting as they walked by.

"You'd think they'd get tired, wouldn't you?" demanded Andy.

"They won't tire. I have heard my people chant for two nights and a day without tiring," he answered absently, his mind still on the wondrous gift which was to be his.

"Over pig?" asked Andy in surprise.

"Not pig. Our people go to the forests when they want meat. I do not know what this pig is. No, we chant for war, or after a death, or when we ask for rain."

"Oh," said Andy, opening the door and motioning him to follow.

Mr. and Mrs. Fuller looked up in surprise which rapidly changed to annoyance as they entered.

"It's bad enough to have the Siwashes outside," began Mr. Fuller, but his son interrupted quickly.

"This is Tom. He's not one of them. He's a Rogue River. He's only visiting them. He's the one I've been telling you about, that I swim with. He doesn't want pork. He's never even tasted it."

"Well, then," said Mr. Fuller a little mollified. "But it's still safest to keep them outside, son."

"I'm going to give him my old knife. I never use it any more."

"It's yours. But once you start that kind of thing— You see what it got me, being nice to them!"

"Won't they ever stop?" wailed Mrs. Fuller suddenly. "John, I can't stand this. Give them some pork and tell them to go away."

"But they'll just be back for the next slaughtering. And when we harvest the apples. And—"

"I can't help it. I can't listen to any more of this."

"Tom says he's heard the Rogue Rivers chant like that for two nights and a day," said Andy helpfully. He turned and repeated the statement in Jargon. "Didn't you, Tom? Didn't you say that?"

"But not for begging," nodded Tom scornfully. "The Rogue Rivers do not beg."

"That's right," said Andy eagerly. "He didn't ask for the knife, but I could tell he wanted it. He just handed it back, and said he liked it. Tom's a good Indian."

"There might be one," admitted Mr. Fuller grudgingly. "I guess you're right, Eliza. Now we've started, we'll have to keep it up. I'll give them some pork and tell them to be on their way."

Mrs. Fuller gave a sigh of relief. Her weary eyes turned to watch her son as he fumbled in a cupboard shelf for the discarded jackknife.

"It would be more to the point, Andy, if you gave him something to cover his nakedness," she said practically.

"But he wants the knife, Ma."

"Since he's a friend of yours and had no part in that heathenish carrying-on outside, I don't see why he can't have both. You've got an old shirt that's patch over patch, but at least it will give him some cover."

She got up and went into the next room, returning in a moment with a patched blue cotton shirt. Tom, gloating over the knife in his hand, hardly noticed as she held it out.

"You'll have to tell him it's for him, Andy," she said in annoyance. "He doesn't understand. You know I never learned that heathenish talk of theirs."

"Oh, Ma! What's he want with an old shirt?" exclaimed Andy in disgust. But he obediently translated the information into Jargon. "My mother wants to give you one of my old shirts. I don't know what for."

Tom glanced up quickly. In his amazement he spoke in his

old tongue, instead of the Jargon which was coming so easily to his tongue these days.

"The mother of my friend does me much honor. I accept her gift with much joy, and pledge that in time I shall make a suitable gift of repayment."

"What does he say?" demanded Mrs. Fuller.

"I don't know," said Andy. "But I guess he likes the shirt all right. See, he's putting it on."

The chanting had ceased as they came out into the yard. One of the heads and a front quarter of pork now reposed in the wagon along with the old people. Again the Yamhills were hurrying, this time to return to their village where they would prepare the meat for a feast. Tom said good-by to Andy and went to stand by Ne-whah so they could take their places at the end of the procession.

The old woman was laughing soundlessly, her gums chattering in anticipation of the night's dinner, but as her eyes fell on him she broke off.

"Where did you get that?" she demanded in terror. "Have you forgotten what I said about the white men shutting in little houses those who steal from them?"

"I did not steal it. The white woman gave it to me. It was a gift," he cried indignantly.

"A gift! A slave received a gift!" she gasped. "Once again you would not tell me the truth."

"Perhaps they do not know he is a slave," broke in a harsh voice beside him. The chief's brother, Jesse, had come up and was staring at the blue shirt with covetous eyes. "If they had known, they would not have made him such a present. And since he was silent, he is at fault, and does not deserve it. Take it off."

Tom glared at Jesse with hatred. He could appeal to Martha, perhaps, or to Dave, but they would not let him keep the shirt either. They would take it for themselves. Slowly his hands went to the unfamiliar buttons. They slipped through their holes, and the shirt slid from his shoulders. Jesse snatched at it eagerly. Although he was not so tall as Tom, his shoulders were wider, more muscular, and the fabric strained at the seams. Before Tom's agonized eyes, a pull and then a tear spread open.

"You'll be sorry!" He forgot he was a slave, and spoke in a low voice thick with anger. "That's my shirt. They gave it to me, and you'll wish you had never seen it."

"Ai-ee!" Jesse struck at him insolently before he swaggered ahead to his place near the front of the procession.

"It is you who will be sorry," said Ne-whah warningly. "Threatening the brother of a chief! You, who are nothing but a slave, and cannot receive presents."

Tom clenched his lips tightly as he walked beside her. But his fingers rested within his belt, against the folded blade of his new jackknife.

CHAPTER V

The Mountain of the Spirits

Jesse was visited by the devils of sickness. Some of the other men who had gorged themselves on the fresh pork until they could hold no more also complained of small devils in their stomachs. But Jesse, who had managed to eat more than anyone, was sickest of all.

From his slave quarters, a small and ill-smelling hut behind Chief Dave's wickiup, Tom could hear Jesse groan and shriek as he threshed about on the ground. The loss of the blue shirt still rankled, and he was very glad to hear Jesse's suffering. He hoped the pain would last a long while.

Everyone else was observing Ezra, the medicine man, who had returned this morning from Spirit Mountain with a supply of fresh power from his personal Ta-mah'na-wus, as he attempted to drive out the devils. Tom was not watching, although he was curious as to how the methods of the medicine man of the Yamhills differed from those of the Rogue Rivers. He was working instead, but today there was a difference. He was working for himself.

Winter was sure to come, and he was readying his hut for cold weather. Ever since he had first stepped inside the door opening, he had known that he must do so. He must hollow out the earth beneath, so that no wind could seep through the cracks next to the ground. He must cut new poles and branches, carry away the old debris left from long years past when the Yamhills owned many slaves, and, if he could, he must procure some hides for side walls. This was not too impossible, especially now that he had his knife. He only needed time and opportunity. Up to today, when Martha had become so engrossed with her brother-in-law's pain, Tom had neither. Now he was making the most of them.

It would be far better if he could follow the method of his own people in preparing his new house. The Rogue Rivers always burned an old home to the ground before moving to a new. Then the squaws cut fresh poles and branches, carried clean mud for patching, and brought out newly tanned hides to line the walls against the side where the winter wind blew strongest. Tom dared not do this. The Yamhills did not burn discarded wickiups. In fact, they seemed never to discard them at all, if the age and condition of his own shelter were any indication.

He jabbed with his digging stick at the hard-packed earth, realizing for the first time that woman's work of housebuilding was not so easy as it appeared. Perhaps if Chief Jo and his braves were forced to build each new wickiup themselves, the Rogue Rivers might not move so often.

"Tom! You are to come. Ezra, my master, has sent for you!"

Old Ne-whah stood beside him, so stirred by news that she neglected to ask what foolishness he was doing now. Her wrinkles deepened with eagerness, and her toothless gums chattered with excitement.

"The medicine man?" He dropped his digging stick in surprise. "What does he want with me?"

"You will see," promised Ne-whah. "And you have me to thank for it. Do not forget that. You must thank Ne-whah, who has fetched and carried all her life."

"Thank you for what?" he demanded, getting to his feet to follow.

"For telling that your mother is a medicine woman," said Ne-whah triumphantly. "You wished yesterday to go to the mountain, didn't you? To get a small power, one that could come to a slave?"

"Yes," he agreed, and glanced over his shoulder apprehensively. He had spoken hastily on the day before, almost without thinking. Certainly he had never expected his words to go farther than to the old woman who walked beside him.

"The power, if it comes to you, will be very small," warned Ne-whah, "but it could be helpful. A woman's power, perhaps. One that will aid you to pick many berries, or to tan hides quickly, or to handle hot rocks without burning your fingers. These things would be as useful to a slave as to a woman, and I whispered so in Martha's ear. It would please

her to have her slave be quick and skillful. She will help, for she is greedy, that one. You can leave it to us. Already we have made Ezra angry."

They came around the edge of Dave's wickiup, and the assembled Yamhills looked at them with angry eyes glaring from tense, unsmiling faces. It seemed that the whole tribe was gathered to watch Ezra drive out the devils, and the ministrations were held in the open. That was wrong, Tom thought critically. In the open, how could the members of the tribe beat upon the roof with poles? The medicine man had need of this additional noise to help him fall into a trance, and so be able to diagnose the sickness.

He looked at the hideously masked and painted figure which was Ezra. No hiqua beads hung from his neck, not even a single strand. Instead he wore a chain of clam shells, and about one arm was stretched a dried fishskin, of a species unknown to Tom. But there were other things he could identify. There was the basket filled with water into which the medicine man would spit the offending object which caused the sickness, once he had sucked it through the patient's skin. There was the little drum, made of taut hide, and the handful of charms, bones, claws, a bit of devil's-club root, and a parcel of magic dust, ground to a powder in a mortar. There was the suffering patient himself, shrieking, groaning, clutching at his stomach.

"You!" called Ezra, his voice coming muffled through the mask. "Tell us that this useless one, this worn-out, lazy slave of mine lies when she says that you are the son of one who has been given power."

"She does not lie," denied Tom quickly. He could hear Ne-whah's knees shaking beside him. Her eagerness had sud-

denly vanished at the sound of her master's voice. "My mother, Mal-tee-ny, is the most powerful medicine woman of the Rogue Rivers."

The Yamhills looked at one another uneasily, but Ezra's scornful voice coming from under the painted mask was reassuring, and they gradually broke into taunting laughter.

"A woman! Who has heard of a woman being given such great power by the Ta-mah'na-wus of medicine?"

"I have, master!" Ne-whah spoke up bravely, although her old knees continued to knock together with a brittle noise. "When I was a little girl, living with my own people, we heard that the Rogue Rivers, and Klamaths, too, had medicine women."

"Do you have no men to whom this power is given?" demanded Ezra sternly.

"Yes. To Sam Patch, and to others. But the powers of Mal-tee-ny are stronger than theirs. They must defer to her on all things, for her power is greater."

"If her power is so great, why did she let you be captured and sold as a slave?" jeered Ezra.

Tom had asked himself the same question many times and found no answer. Today he must make one. He could not let Mal-tee-ny's prestige go undefended.

"At the time, she was making other medicine," he said slowly. "She was occupied with that. With preparing the poison."

The jeers of the Yamhills were smothered in a great exhalation of surprise.

"So your mother is more than a medicine woman of good," said Ezra triumphantly. "She is a devil doctor as well, and can put curses on her enemies."

"Even at a distance," screamed Ne-whah, forgetting herself in her triumph. "Yesterday, Jesse took from the slave a gift which had been given to him. His mother knows and resents the insult. That is why she has sent the devil of sickness to plague the chief's brother."

Jesse groaned louder than ever. He reached for Ezra's feet in the dust, pulling on his legs as he implored help.

"Then the son must die," pronounced Ezra calmly. "My own power is fresh and strong from my stay on the mountain, yet no spirit dance today can make me fall into a trance from which I may gain knowledge of this sickness. When the son is dead, the Ta-mah'na-wus of his mother will tell her so, and she will leave us alone."

"No," said Martha flatly, stepping forward. The others looked at her in surprise, for at a time like this no woman, not even the wife of a chief, should dare speak out. But Martha dared. She glared at Ezra's mask belligerently, and shook her head so hard that the many rows of chins wobbled. "That would make it worse. That would really anger the mother, and she will send even more sickness upon us."

"What would you do?" demanded Dave anxiously, looking at his slave with great distaste. The mistake was his own for trading his fine shoes for such a one.

"Send him to Spirit Mountain," said Martha calmly. "The Ta-mah'na-wus there shall decide. If he is worthy, and his mother's power is strong enough, he will be given a small power of his own, one that slaves are permitted to possess. That should satisfy her. If he is not worthy, and if he has lied to us, he will be instantly consumed, and the decision will not be ours. His mother cannot blame us."

Faces relaxed into expressions of admiration. Truly, the chief of the Yamhills had a clever woman for his wife. Tom held himself stiffly, his own face set as it was before. He must not show fear, no matter how he quaked inside.

"He will be consumed," snorted Ezra contemptuously. "He is not prepared for a quest."

"He has been submerging himself in cold water every night," said Martha quickly. "Why do you think I ordered him to do so? I have suspected such a thing for a long time, since before we left the falls at Wishram. He is ready enough."

"Then go," ordered Ezra. "And take your mother's spirit with you. It is the last we will see of you, for you will be ashes before nightfall. Those who go to Spirit Mountain and are unworthy never return."

Tom turned on his threadbare moccasin. He could trust himself to look at no one, even though he heard Ne-whah's little gasp wishing him good luck. That one! That meddlesome, talkative old woman whose tongue was sending him to his probable death. Despite his brave words of yesterday, he had little desire to go to Spirit Mountain. The spirits there were not his spirits. They would doubtless resent an outsider, a Rogue River, stepping foot on their sacred slopes.

He was well away from the cluster of wickiups before he realized he was being followed. Turning, he saw his mistress panting up the trail, her face anxious and a little colored from exertion. He waited, grateful that at least one person, besides the meddlesome Ne-whah, was concerned about him. Martha worked him long hours, but she had never been unkind, and it was she who had pleaded that the decision be left up to the spirits when Ezra asked for instant death.

Martha came up to him, and her round face tilted to look into his.

"If you live, ask for power to skin out game," she ordered, "since that is what I dislike doing most of all."

He turned angrily on his way. He owed Martha nothing, nothing at all.

Spirit Mountain looked closer to the Yamhill village than it really was. Perhaps it was because it was taller than its encircling hills, and still covered with a crest of timber. When the Indians burned one of the others, on their rare hunts to round up game, they were careful that no spark should carry to the sacred mountain. Game was safe there also, for no one would dare shoot an arrow toward that slope, no matter if an elk or deer walked into the open and stood still and motionless. It made a strong contrast to the rounded hill he passed first, which overlooked the valley. The first was almost bare. Only a few scattered groves of second-growth trees darkened its brown surface.

For a moment he considered going to this hill instead. It would be safer to hide there, risking a possible roving party of Yamhills, than to proceed on to the formidable mountain beyond. After a few days he could return, and pretend he had received a power. The moment the thought came to him, he put it away. True, he could fool the Yamhills, but he could never deceive the Ta-mah'na-wus. They would know how he had been in hiding. They would realize that none of them had taken him under protection. It would be the worst, the most shameful thing he could do, and would lead only to further misfortune. He continued doggedly on, his lips set in a forced smile which was meant to hide the fear within him.

Vines and bushes grew thick on the lower slope of Spirit Mountain when he reached it. There were salal berries and blackberries, the pale yellow of salmonberries, the soft pink of thimbleberries, the browning husks of hazelnuts. Long ago these had been harvested everyplace else, but here they were left drying in the sun. For a moment he brightened at the reassurance that he need not go hungry. Then he put that thought quickly away, too. Since he was on a quest, even a small one for inferior power, he must not eat. For the time he was on the mountain, he must fast.

He found a little-used path through the bushes and started the ascent. For a few minutes he was in the open, waist-high in undergrowth, with the sun beating down upon his head. Then the trees closed over him. As he went forward, climbing steadily, an awesome decision came to him. He would not halt midway, as did the youths who sought ordinary powers. His own need was greater. He would climb clear to the top. If he were to be consumed by the spirits, let it be quick, and over with at once.

It was not a dense forest, as it had seemed from below, nor was it entirely Douglas fir, as was much of the Coast Range beyond. These trees grew in patches; here they were clustered thick, beyond they were thinned to one or two, and their species varied. There were fir and maple, a few oak, and even an occasional spruce. All around him were signs of game, and the birds were as noisy here as they were other places at daybreak. He had left the trail behind him when he came out of the bushes, for among these trees men walked so seldom their feet had made no permanent marks. He needed none. He was on the mountain. He might expect any moment to be his last.

Still, to his amazement, he continued to live. A squirrel darted across his path. A buzzard soared overhead and began to circle, a bad sign but not necessarily fatal, and he climbed on. The ascent was steep, and the fear which he constantly pushed down left him short of breath. It would matter little if he stopped awhile to rest.

The tree beside which he sat was a young maple, and he examined it critically. Old Tipso, the Hairy One, would have admired such a tree. Many and many a time he had sent the young boys, Tom among them, to find one of a similar nature for a bow. Tom could imagine Old Tipso's grunt of pleasure as he saw this, just the right thickness, with a straight shaft of wood which could be cut to the length of a man's arm. The sap must be dried out, of course, but at this season, when the leaves were already beginning to change to yellow, that would be no great task. It would take hardly any time at all, and with a fine new jackknife to help him——

For the last two hours, he had completely forgotten Andy's gift. He drew it now from his belt, and snapped the blade back against his fingers. What a knife! Why, with it, instead of one made from bone or shell, he could shape the wood for a bow in only a few minutes. He leaned over and cut the tree as he had seen Old Tipso do so many times. Yes, even as he himself had done, for the Hairy One had let the boys make their own practice bows.

His eyes narrowed thoughtfully. Maple should be split in two, so that the part nearest the bark would form the back of the bow. The new jackknife sliced down the length of wood slowly, carefully. It would dry soon now. Tomorrow or the next day, the sap would be gone, and he could continue. Tomorrow or the next day? Why, he would not be

here then. And if he were, where would he ever find glue or sinews to complete the bow? Or a bowstring? He threw the wood from him angrily. What spirit had got inside of him to make him forget his mission? He had been sitting whittling for over an hour.

He climbed steadily after that, expecting every moment to be his last. When it was not, he began to feel a little irritation with the spirits of the mountain. Perhaps they were playing with him, holding back to see how long his nerves would stand the strain. Then he would show them that the nerves of a Rogue River were made of stronger stuff than those of a valley Indian. His fear was almost gone now. Only determination remained.

It was sunset when he reached the summit, and he stared about him in surprise. The very top of the mountain was bare, although no one could tell it from the ground, for the trees encircled the place, closing in like the walls of a room. On the western edge of the clearing was a huge rock, smooth on top to form a seat, and running eastward was a long, narrow trench, ending in a hollowed-out bowl, perhaps ten feet across and three feet in depth.

Tom crept forward through the tall grass and peered inside. The trench and bowl were lined with soft earth, pounded to fine dust by generations of bare feet. Perhaps if Mal-tee-ny were here she would know to what use the medicine men put this setting, but he doubted it. The hills and valley of the Rogue River were familiar to him, and he had never seen such a thing before. Clearly, however, it was here that Ezra came to get renewal of his power, and on the very brink of this greatest Yamhill mystery stood a Rogue River.

He shook himself to make sure he was still alive, and at that moment he looked up and saw the black shape of a buzzard swoop down out of a pink sky to the slope of the mountain. A moment more, and two additional dark shapes appeared from the west, soared without a flutter of wings, and settled down in the same place.

Here was something he could understand. A settling buzzard meant death. Not his death. Not yet. But something had died on Spirit Mountain, and the body remained unconsumed by its guardians. Ne-whah had told him such a thing was impossible. Anything which the spirits permitted to dwell on these hallowed slopes lived forever.

He started back down, the mystic trench and bowl forgotten in his curiosity. The buzzards had come down not too far from the top. He was determined to find them, to see what it was their sharp eyes had discovered from above. He crashed through bushes, tore his legs on thorns, dodged trees that tried to bar his way, and suddenly he found himself on a trail. It was made by animals, not men, and had been lately used. It circled the side of the mountain, and he saw that it was on a ledge, from which there was a sharp drop of fifty feet below. He had followed it only a little way when he could see where it had given way at last. Small rocks and dirt were scattered on either side, while the ledge itself had crumbled to a great gaping hole.

He went no farther. Instead he pushed aside the straggling bushes that clung to the outer edge and peered down. There they were. Three black-winged creatures, and something between them that lay still and brown. He retraced his steps until he could find a place where the drop-off was not so

steep. By clutching at clumps of grass and small bushes, he could scramble down.

Once on more level ground, he rushed forward, swinging his arms and scolding in Athabascan.

"Away! Away, you birds who prey on dead things. Begone with you before the spirit of the mountain rises to bite out your tongues."

Protesting and squawking, the buzzards took to the air, and Tom walked over to where they had been gorging themselves. It was an elk, newly killed when the ledge above had given way under its weight. His eyes brightened at the sight. Not for the fact that it would give him meat. He was still determined not to risk the displeasure of the Ta-mah'na-wus by eating on the mountain. But from the hind leg he could get sinews for his bow; from the hoof he could make glue; and the intestines would make a bowstring.

A moment later he was busy with his new jackknife.

CHAPTER VI

The Chief's Wife Looks Ahead

Every moment of the first three days that Tom spent on the mountain he expected to be his last. He was hungry, hungrier than he had ever been before, for his stomach was a great gnawing void that grew so intense he could hardly make his fingers do his bidding. Moreover, he knew he was doing wrong in working on the bow. A boy on his first quest for power should spend his time in meditation and prayer, except for those interludes when he cleansed his body with cold water or rubbed his skin to rawness with rough bark and nettles. At night he should lie down, awaiting a dream which might tell him of the special power to be his, a gift which would shape his future life.

The task he had set himself left no time for meditation. Every day he worked on shaping the bow, in bending the wood, after it had been softened in hot water, by standing it upright in the crack of a log and letting it fall by its own weight. Laboriously he had kindled a fire, for he needed hot rocks to make the center bend, and fire to extract the glue from the elk's hoof. At nightfall, he went to the summit

of the mountain and slept on the hard ground beside the trench and bowl, but he had no vision of a Ta-mah'na-wus.

Instead he dreamed always of his own people. Mal-tee-ny came to him, and Chief Jo. He played with Harriet and Tyee Mary as he had once done before they all grew so old. He sat at the feet of Old Tipso, or followed with the other boys as they observed on the heels of La-pel-la Chaco, who was the greatest hunter of all the Rogue Rivers, and seldom, if ever, returned without a command for the women to fetch in game he had killed.

They were good dreams, and he awoke from them almost happy, until he remembered where he was. But they were not spirit dreams. They did not tell him he had been accepted by a Ta-mah'na-wus, not even a very weak one.

After the fourth day, the pain seemed to leave his stomach, except for brief spasms when it returned like a flash of lightning to bend him double. And after the fifth day, the dreams which before had come to him only while he was sleeping came to him sometimes when he was at work. He seemed to hear Old Tipso's scolding voice as his fingers shredded fine strands of sinew to glue to the back of the bow, or cleaned the long intestine of the elk by pulling it through a split stick, then twisted it tight for a bowstring.

"You did not tie it as I showed you," scolded Old Tipso. "The other end, tied to a tree, will slip. How can you twist it tight enough if it is not tied properly? If you are a son of the Rogue Rivers, do as you were taught."

Sometimes Old Tipso's voice seemed to grunt reluctant praise. "You have shredded the sinew fine indeed. The white man's knife is doubtless responsible." But other times it was sharp with disapproval. "The sap was not all dried out from

the wood. It takes time to make a good bow. What kind can you expect when you hurry the process so?"

For his arrow shaft he used a length of cedar, long as his arm and thick as his little finger. He steamed and straightened it by hand, and notched one end to fit over the bowstring. He found two feathers, dropped by some bird, split and tied them along the shaft, but he had no arrowhead for the other end, and no way of making one. Although he searched diligently, none of the rocks on Spirit Mountain was the kind which could be flaked. He needed obsidian or jasper.

On the ninth day, heavy clouds moved in from the mountains, bringing a thunderstorm. The bow and arrow shaft were finished now, and while the voice of Old Tipso still criticized in his ear, he knew he had done the best he could. His hands were idle for the first time, and since he knew that the Lightning Spirit had long carried a grudge against the Spirits of the Trees and might set one aflame, he climbed up to the summit where he would be in the open and out of the way of their battle.

The first day he had climbed easily enough, but now he had grown weak from fasting. It was hard to put one foot ahead of the other. The light bow in his arms was a heavy weight, and the ends were forever getting tangled in bushes or pushing against tree trunks to hold him back. His ears buzzed and his head felt as light as his feet felt heavy, but at last he made the top.

The Thunder Gods were directly overhead, and their voices seemed to rock the ground beneath him. After each flash of lightning, they let down a burst of rain so heavy that it seemed to be pouring from a water basket. It was cold

on his burning skin. His teeth chattered, and he did not even try to stop them.

It was then that he saw Mal-tee-ny. She rose up out of a gentle mist which followed one of the sudden downpours. Her brown eyes were soft and tender, as he remembered them, and the strands of hiqua beads about her brown neck were startlingly white.

"Go back," she said softly. "Go back to the Yamhills, Kow-ha-ma, but do not do the work of a woman again."

He reached out to touch her and she was gone, vanished in a clap of thunder which reverberated against the great rock on which he sat. He waited for the end of the next downpour, hoping she would come again, but she did not return. Only the long trench and round bowl, filled now with saffron water, lay before him. Even the valley below was blotted out in clouds and rain.

He got to his feet numbly. His quest was at an end. Ne-whah had told him that the Yamhills stayed but three days on the mountain. It was enough, since there was so much power to be had on its slopes. Rogue River youths were five days on a quest. He himself had stayed nine days on the mountain, and no spiritual guide had come to him. It was time to go down.

He remembered nothing of his descent, but later he realized by the scratches and tears on his skin that he must have walked blindly, without heeding bramble or thicket. His bow and arrow he must have held tightly clutched to his body for protection, for they were intact when he arrived.

He stumbled into the Yamhill village just as the tribe had gathered for the evening meal. The storm had blown away, leaving the air fresh and sweet-smelling. The grasses of the

meadow had taken new life from their welcome drink, and the voice of the near-by stream was louder and chuckling with delighted laughter.

Tom was conscious of none of these things. He staggered in on feet which could have carried him no farther, his skin burning with fever, and his eyes glazed. He had a momentary vision of startled brown faces looking at him, and of words which seemed to come in Ne-whah's quavering voice from a great distance. "A vision! A vision! The slave had a vision!" Then his legs bent beneath him, and he knew nothing more.

When he came to, he was in the half-dismantled slave hut, which he had been forced to tear down before he could rebuild. It was night, for the dark sky into which he looked was studded with stars. Someone was bending over him, bathing him gently with a liquid which felt cooling to his skin.

"Ah," grunted Ne-whah in satisfaction. "You come to be yourself, and without the special dance of awakening which my master refused you. I knew you would. I knew it would be so."

"What dance?"

"The dance which he makes when our young men arrive from a quest and fall down as you did, from the greatness of the power which has come to them," explained Ne-whah patiently. "When he saw you, Ezra was very angry. He thought you would be consumed, and perhaps eaten by the spirits of the mountain. When he saw that the Ta-mah'na-wus had even given you a bow as a sign of favor, he was very angry. Let the Ta-mah'na-wus refresh and awaken you,

he said. Ezra will never dance or make medicine for someone who has only the poor power of a slave."

"But I haven't the poor power of a slave," denied Tom weakly.

"Hush," ordered Ne-whah. "You must never tell what Ta-mah'na-wus has taken you under protection. You can only signify by your deeds what has been given to you. You will do this when you are stronger. Then everyone will know."

Tom looked at her helplessly. Ne-whah seemed to have grown younger since he had gone. Her eyes were brighter in the starlight than he had ever seen them. Her hands had lost some of their fumbling, and were sure and quick as she smoothed the yellow liquid on his skin. When she finished, she pushed the half-filled container against his lips.

"Drink," she ordered. "It is the wild grape root, fresh boiled. The chief's wife herself ordered me to prepare it. I have been bathing you with it for the two days you have lain here in a stupor, and it has given strength to your body. Drink the rest, for it will purify your blood."

Tom swallowed the bitter yellow liquid, trying not to gag. It was a medicine unknown to the Rogue Rivers. Ne-whah got to her feet happily, throwing a light covering across his chest.

"I will bring food," she promised. "And this time it will not be so hard to feed you, since you will know enough to open your mouth and swallow. Also I must tell the chief's wife that her slave has awakened from his spirit trance."

Tom's eyes followed her as she disappeared into the shadows around the next hut. Then he looked down at the cloth she had thrown over him. It was a ragged blue shirt. Someone had persuaded Jesse to return what he had taken.

When Ne-whah came with a bowl of dried salmon and root stew, both Martha and Dave were with her. The chief's face was a little troubled, and he looked at Tom uneasily. It was rare indeed that a slave should be allowed to survive a stay on Spirit Mountain. In all the days behind him, when his people had many slaves, there had been no stories of such a happening. Martha, however, was openly triumphant. She poked at him with a greasy finger to see whether the fever had departed, and leaned down to peer into his face as though she hoped to read there what she wanted to know.

"You live," said Dave solemnly.

"I live," agreed Tom.

There followed several minutes of silence, while Dave's eyes stared into the darkness beyond.

"The spirits of the mountain gave you a bow such as the old ones among us used, and an arrow without a point," he said finally.

"They did not give it to me. I made it," said Tom. "I could not make an arrowhead, because there was no stone of the right kind on the mountain."

Martha and Ne-whah exchanged amazed glances, but Dave continued to look into the shadows.

"You made it upon the mountain," he decided finally. "It is the same as though they had given it to you. You may keep it."

"Let me find out about his Ta-mah'na-wus," cried Martha greedily.

"You cannot do it without asking," said Ne-whah. "If you ask what it is, and he tells you, the Ta-mah'na-wus will leave him. Then your slave will be no more clever than he was before."

"Do you take me for a fool?" demanded Martha angrily. "I will not ask that. I will ask only what certain tasks he feels that he can best perform tomorrow. He will want to show his skill, and when I name the one for which he has been given special power, he will speak preference for that."

Ne-whah nodded reluctant agreement.

"If the men should hunt tomorrow and bring down a deer, would you carry home the carcass and skin it out more swiftly than anyone?" asked Martha cunningly.

"No." Tom spoke loudly for all his weakness. "For that is woman's work. I would be slow and clumsy. I have no Ta-mah'na-wus for skinning game."

"Ah," sighed Martha in disappointment. "Do you look forward to the next gathering of salmon, when you may carry up the fish, clean and dry them as you did at the falls?"

"No." He ran his finger around the edge of the bowl, licking it off to get the end of the broth. "I will carry and clean no more fish. That is for the women."

"Do you hope for the next berry season? The root gathering? The making of fires? The tanning of hides?" A little more impatiently each time, she enumerated the tasks which she had been turning over to Tom, and each time the answer was no.

"Worthless one," she cried in anger. "I do not believe the power came to you at all."

"You are correct. No vision came to me," he admitted. It had been fun teasing her as he had, but he must not admit a power he did not possess; it was the worst crime of all, and he must not be guilty of such a thing. But they would not believe him.

"For some reason unknown to us, he lies," said Dave

soberly. "There are the signs for all to read. His faint, his sickness. It is always thus when young men return from their quests and have received a vision."

Martha and Ne-whah nodded seriously.

"We must not also forget the bow," continued Dave in the same troubled voice. "He could not have stolen it, for it is freshly made. Our people have stopped making bows. The oldest among us scarcely remembers how it was done. Whether it was given to him by some Ta-mah'na-wus, or whether he was allowed to make it on the sacred mountain, it is a sign of favor."

"And do not forget that when he awakened from his trance, it was without help from the medicine man. His own Ta-mah'na-wus roused him," reminded Ne-whah. "He is not a Yamhill. His Ta-mah'na-wus may be one unknown in these parts."

It was Martha's turn to look uneasy. True, he was not going to be the use to her that she had hoped, and whatever power he had received must be, because of his status, very small. Still, it was a power of some kind, and she herself had never been gifted by any. Such honors were not for the women of the Yamhills.

"He is still weak," decided Dave, and Tom, wanting only to go back to sleep now that his stomach was filled with warm food, agreed. "Tomorrow he will not be strong enough to do the full work of a slave. We must give him easy tasks at first."

"If I had the stones," mumbled Tom, speaking more to himself than to them, for already he was half asleep, "I would start the arrowheads. For what good is an arrow without a point?"

He did not see them glance at one another, nor did he hear their startled gasps at the effrontery of such a demand.

Ne-whah could not come to him during the daylight hours when her master filled her time with his own demands. Tom awakened early, stirred by the sounds of the tribe, and at first he considered getting to his feet. But he was still weak, and if he showed his face there was danger that he might be put to heavy work. He decided it was better to stay where he was, hidden from the others by the backs of the row of huts.

He worried at first that they were so convinced that he had been given special power, but before long he was inclined to regard it as a great joke. He had spoken the denial aloud. The Ta-mah'na-wus had heard, even though the Yamhills would not listen. Tom himself could not be blamed for their stupidity.

Much to his surprise, Martha arrived in the middle of the morning, carrying food. It was the same as last night's stew and almost cold, since everyone else had eaten first. She sat on the ground, a little distance away, watching him eat, and her eyes were thoughtful. When he had finished, she reached into the pocket of her dress and held something out to him.

"Take this," she ordered. "Let me see if you can make good your words."

She had given him a few pieces of jasper. Someone had already started to flake one into the shape of a point, and now she produced from her pocket a hard chipping tool with a bit of buckskin wrapped around it for a fingerhold. He turned it over, almost disbelieving his own eyes and the feel of the cold stone between his fingers.

"Well," said Martha impatiently, "can you use them now

that you have them? Or were those only boasting words last night?"

"I can use them," he told her eagerly. "Or, I think I can. These are not just like those I knew at home, but they are enough the same so I can learn."

"They were my father's," explained Martha. "No one has used them since he went to the Happy Hunting Ground so many years ago. When the white men came to this valley and saw that our people were peaceful, they gave guns to our men. I do not like guns. They miss often. But now our men will not return to the bows and arrows, and we eat more dried salmon than meat."

"It is not so with our people. We have some of the white man's guns, too, but we use them against the white man himself. When we hunt for game, we use the bow and arrow of our fathers before us."

"I will have fresh skins. Many skins for winter. Deer and elk and lynx," declared Martha, smacking her lips greedily. "When you finish the arrowhead, I will send you out to shoot for me."

"Not till the bow and shaft are fully dry," objected Tom firmly. "They are still green, and must hang until they are quite dry."

"I will take them to my house," promised Martha. "I have a roof, and they will stay dry if it rains. You have no roof, so they would get wet here."

Every day after that he worked on the arrowheads, for Martha would hear of him doing nothing else. From time to time, when the other women complained that the chief's wife was not doing her share, she took a brief turn at the cooking fire, but most of the time she sat beside Tom, count-

ing in her mind the many animal skins she hoped to have before long.

One day Tom threw down his work and got to his feet.

"What do you do now?" demanded Martha suspiciously.

"I rest myself," he told her boldly. "My fingers grow numb from flaking. I will do other, more strenuous work for a time. Then I will return to this task."

"The women will be glad to have wood carried," she admitted carelessly. "But I had thought to save you from such tasks, ungrateful one."

"I am not ungrateful." He looked down on her teasingly. "But wood carrying is not for one who hunts skins and meat for his mistress."

"What would you do?"

"Before I went to the mountain, I had started to rebuild this hut, which is not fit for one of the white man's pigs to live in. I will continue with that."

"Why should a slave have a newly built house?" she demanded crossly. "If the old one was good enough for the others, is it not good enough for you?"

"Were the others as good as I?" he demanded. When she remained silent, he became bolder. "I shall need a few of those skins I bring you for side walls. You shall have the best, but if your slave grows too cold in the winter months, the sickness may come to him and he will be unable to work for you."

She stared at him for a moment.

"That must not happen," she agreed without emotion. "Ezra would not drive the devils of sickness from you. He hates you, our medicine man, and so does Jesse. No, you must stay well so you can work. I have a better digging stick

than that in my house. Get it, that the work may go faster."

But even Martha knew that the process of flaking arrowheads was slow and could not be hurried. In the old days, she remembered, it was a task reserved for winter, when there was little else to do. She watched patiently as the green jasper slowly took form under the flaking tool, and with a scorn which gradually gave way to reluctant interest as a new wickiup arose in the place of the old one. The other Yamhills were openly critical, but their taunts only seemed to increase Martha's stubbornness.

"He is my slave," she told them. "If I bid him make arrowheads and a new shelter to cover him in winter, that is what he will do."

His strength had returned now, and each evening he went to the stream as before, but Andy Fuller had not joined him there. Then one day Andy walked into camp.

"We've been so busy, Pa wouldn't spare me before," he told Tom. "Crops to get in. Grain to take to the mill to be ground. Fall's a busy time on a farm. But Pa says I've earned a day to myself. What's that you're whittling on?"

Tom showed him the arrowhead, nearly finished now, and Andy was warm in his praise.

"I got some of these myself. Found them here and there, some of them dug up with the plow. But the one you made looks better than any of mine. I'm glad you didn't use the knife. You'd have ruined the blade sure, against that hard rock."

"No, but I will show you what I did make with it."

With only a brief glance at Martha, who was sitting silently, glancing occasionally at their visitor with sullen, suspicious eyes, he went to get the bow and arrow. She had

too much respect for the goods the white man might trade or be wheedled out of to ask this one to go away, but she was resentful of his presence. Under Andy's loud admiration of the bow and arrow, however, she thawed a little, and cocked her head to follow their conversation.

"This is a dandy!" cried Andy. "You mean you actually made it yourself? No one helped you?"

"I made it myself."

"Will you help me make one like it? I think it would be fun to hunt with one of these. I'll do something for you if you will."

"You have already done much for me," said Tom, ignoring the look which appeared in Martha's eyes at the promise of future presents. "I will be glad to help you make a bow like mine."

"Good. But I will do something just the same. I'll teach you English. There's talk of putting in a reservation here. Of bringing a lot of tribes to live here, and if they do there'll be white men in charge. Soldiers, too, probably. If you know English, you'll be able to talk to them. Get what you want quicker."

Martha's grunt of disdain, which had started at the beginning of his speech, died in her throat. Her face grew blank as she considered the possibilities.

"Why don't we take this bow of yours out in the woods?" continued Andy eagerly. "We don't need a point for practice shooting."

"It's still a little green," objected Tom reluctantly. The prospects of a day in the woods, a free day with nothing to occupy his attention, were very alluring. He looked over at Martha's brown, immobile face with its many cushions of

fat. "I do not know these woods around here. I have followed them only so far as it was necessary to go to bring in game which had been killed. If I were at home, I would not stay on the same marked trail. I would explore this way and that, find new animal trails and follow them. Before winter comes, and the deer come down from the hills, I would have discovered where to find them. I would know where they expect to find feed, and where they go down to water. The Rogue Rivers, who still hunt as did their fathers, do these things in advance. They do not wait for the moment of the hunt, when the wind might be against them."

Martha did not look in his direction. She sat silent, filled with her own thoughts. Andy would have spoken, but Tom motioned him to be quiet, and they both waited. At last she spoke.

"Go," she ordered. "Seek new trails, for I doubt not that the only one now used bears the scent of man. And while your eyes are open for feeding grounds and new trails, open your ears that you may learn the white man's tongue. I will not talk with them myself, and it is well that you learn to be my voice."

CHAPTER VII

The Trap

"Let's go across to the other side," suggested Andy eagerly. "We've got the raft. If we practice here, out in the open, we might hit somebody."

Tom nodded agreement. He was quite willing to get as far away from the Yamhill village as possible, if only for a day. The tribe hunted the sloping hills on the north, and so far he himself had never explored the wooded country across the stream.

"Oh, I forgot," remembered Andy suddenly. "I'm going to teach you English on the way." He pointed with a freckled finger. "Tree. Tr-ee! Grass! Jump! See, like this—jump."

Tom grinned and repeated the words dutifully. The letters *R* and *J* came hard, for they were not sounds included in his ordinary tongue. *F* and *Q* were strange also, and his *X*s and *Z*s were all *S*. But Andy was so pleased at teaching him, and so anxious for him to learn, that he did his best.

The raft was tied up at the edge of the stream, and so familiar had it become during those many evenings on the river that seeing it again was like meeting an old friend.

"You've been fishing!" he exclaimed, catching sight of silver scales against the weathered boards.

"On the way down. But it's nothing but scrap fish," answered Andy carelessly. "I'll take it home and feed it to the hogs. Or the barn cats would be mighty thankful if I gave it to them. Get in, and I'll pole off."

On the raft was another surprise.

"It's an ax," explained Andy, seeing the bewilderment in Tom's eyes. "Haven't you ever seen an ax before?"

"Yes. The Yamhills have one. But theirs is covered with brown rust, and the blade is dull and cuts little better than one made of stone."

"The rust comes from leaving it out in the rain. I don't know why they don't sharpen it. Probably wasn't much account to start with, or nobody would have traded it in the first place. A good ax is mighty valuable. I've got to be careful of this one. I was going to split fence rails, and it was in my hand, you see, when Pa got softhearted and told me to take the day off. I was so excited I started right out. What I should have done was take it back to the shed when I remembered I had it with me."

Tom put it down respectfully in the very center of the raft.

"With such an ax, it would not be necessary to burn part

of the tree before felling it. Not even the largest tree," he marveled.

"Course not," agreed Andy cheerfully. "And since you like it so much, you'd better learn the English word for it. Ax. A-x!"

Bushes grew to the very edge of the opposite shore, for here it was on a level with the stream itself and not protected by a high bank. Under the thin blue sky, a sun fast losing its warmth to the brisk chill of autumn shone down on a riot of scarlet vine maple and yellowing hazel bushes.

"I don't know much about this stretch along here," admitted Andy, poling into shore. "But the heavy growth of timber doesn't start for a quarter of a mile, and if we can just find a clearing, we'll set up a target."

"Once the big trees grew thick down to the river," announced Tom. "A long, long time ago perhaps. It was burned." He kicked at the remains of a charred log, half buried in soil and leaves.

"Guess so. I think I'll take the ax. We can cut our way through this mess if we have to."

Tom did not protest. It would not be hard to get through the thicket, but if the white boy wanted to cut a path, he had no objection. As Andy turned, however, he reached out and grasped his arm, motioning for silence.

The wind blew from the south. Before morning it would pile up clouds to bring rain, but now it had brought him a familiar sound. Crack, rattle, smack, smack, and another rattle. It had been months since he had heard such a noise, but he had not forgotten. A bear in a berry thicket sounded the same, whether it was in the valley of the Rogue River or here among the Yamhills.

"What is it?" whispered Andy.

"Bear."

"A bear!" Andy's eyes grew wide with anticipation. "Oh, if you'd only brought that arrowhead. It was almost done."

"Not for Grandmother Bear," objected Tom tolerantly. "It would lose itself in her thick coat. The way to catch a bear is with a trap."

"Can we make one?"

Tom nodded. "But first we must drive her away from that berry patch. She will return after a time, for she is very greedy, and before she goes into her long sleep for the winter she will gobble everything in sight. We must work fast, but with your ax, and the fallen logs we can find, I think we can do it."

"Then what are we waiting for?" demanded Andy in a normal tone. A moment later, he was shouting, and his flaying arms beat against the bushes as he rushed forward. "Shoo! Get out of here, you black varmint! Take to your heels. There's men coming. Men! Smell 'em?"

There was no need for Tom to add to the uproar. He could hear the crackling and smashing of bushes as the surprised bear fled in the opposite direction. He himself stood where he was, and laughed at Andy.

"How'd I do?" demanded the white boy, returning a moment later. His beaming face bore a long scratch from some trailing vine, and his shirt was torn, but obviously he was pleased with himself.

"Fine," said Tom gravely. "Whenever I want to frighten a bear from a berry patch, I will call on you."

"What do we do first?"

"First we look at the bush. If luck is with us, Grandmother

Bear only started. If it is against us, she had almost finished and there may not be enough berries left to make her return. Do not use your ax yet, for we want the bushes to spring back."

"Why do you insist on calling the bear 'she'?" asked Andy, falling in behind.

"Because a bear can turn into a woman when she wants to. And many a woman who makes the mistake of picking berries alone is turned into a bear."

"Oh," said Andy, and politely let the matter drop.

The bear had only just discovered the bush, a coast huckleberry, and not too common in these eastern foothills, Andy explained. There were many of them in the wooded slopes to the west, and many more of a slightly different kind in the Cascades. He popped one of the diminutive blue balls into his mouth.

"I'd rather have them baked in one of Ma's pies," he said. "But these have ripened pretty slow in the shade, and they've been on the bush long enough to get some sugar. How can you be so sure the bear barely found them?"

"She has only stripped the easy branches," explained Tom. "After a bear is finished with a berry bush, it is torn and trampled, and there is little left. Now, help me find logs. We have little time."

What he proposd to do, he explained to Andy as they worked, was to balance one log so that it would fall in a certain way at a light touch. Other logs would be piled against it, and when the first one went, the remainder would come tumbling after. They would fall on the bear.

"But how do you know she will come this way? We're behind the bush," worried Andy in a loud tone. They were

making as much noise as they could so that the bear would stay away until they were ready.

"She will not," denied Tom. "She will come from the other, from the way she left. Even now she is not too far away, for she would not want to lose the berry bush, an easy thing to do in this unmarked tangle."

"Yes, but how can you be sure she'll keep on coming? Maybe she'll just finish the berries, then turn around and trot away."

"We'll make sure she comes on by setting out bait."

"And what do we use for bait?"

"Your fish," said Tom triumphantly. "The fish that is in your raft. It will be on the ground, here. And tied to it will be a long string that will go through loops and around sticks, and will fasten on our main log. When the bear snaps at the fish, it will pull the string, and the log will tumble."

"And that will be the end of the bear," said Andy admiringly. "Pa will thank you for this. One of them's been getting into our barnyard lately, and what it's been doing there isn't funny. We've lost chickens and pigs and even a half-grown sheep."

It took several hours of hard work, pulling, pushing, and straining at the heavy logs to get them into a position which Tom declared was right. It took more time to get the trap set, for they had no string and had to use tough lengths of vine knotted together. But at last everything was in place, and they went back to the raft where no shifting wind could carry their scent.

"It's hours past noon," said Andy. "And I'm hollow to my toes. Lucky Ma gave me some biscuits and cold meat. There's plenty for you, too."

It was the first white man's food Tom had ever eaten, and it tasted strange. The biscuit felt light in his hand, and filled his mouth unnaturally full.

"Don't put it all in at once," advised Andy. "Just bite off a hunk. You'll choke, eating it that way."

The meat, too, was unlike anything he had ever eaten. It was beef, Andy said, roasted in an oven, but most of the blood had been cooked from it, and it had a faint salty taste which Tom did not associate with meat. Nevertheless, he ate his share of everything, and while he privately thought the white man's food was bland and probably designed for old people with poor teeth, he did not say so.

"How long do you reckon we'll have to wait?" demanded Andy, finishing his meal and leaning over to cup his hand in the water to bring up a drink.

"Who can tell?" shrugged Tom. "Perhaps a little while. Perhaps a long time."

"Think of the time we're wasting," worried Andy.

Tom was glad of the opportunity to sit quietly with idle hands. It was the first time he had been able to do so since that afternoon so long ago when he had leaned against a rock, watching the women anger the rattlesnake. How long ago that seemed. Back in the valley of the Rogue, the boys his age were setting out now on their quests, hoping to return as men. He had already undertaken his quest, and while he had received no vision, he felt many years older because of it.

Suddenly there was a loud crash from the thicket beyond. The tops of some of the bushes seemed to sway a little, as though in a wind.

"He's taken it!" screamed Andy, confident that the need for silence was at an end. "Come on."

"Careful," warned Tom quickly. "Sometimes the Bear Gods watch, and the animal goes free."

The Bear God, however, was not on the lookout this afternoon. Their victim lay under the disarranged pile of logs, his head crushed from the blow. To Tom's chagrin and Andy's delight, it was a male. He was about five feet in length, his thick, warm coat a glossy black. Tom's eyes sparkled as they pulled off the logs and turned the bear over on one side. How pleased Martha would be. Here was fur and hide to protect against the bitterest cold of winter. The heavy curved claws on each paw would make a necklace, as would the teeth. There were pounds of fresh meat for eating, grease for a hundred uses, sinew for thread, bones to be sharpened into tools. By this one afternoon's work, he could more than repay Martha for her kindnesses to him, and repay he would, even though everything she had done was with a thought of personal gain.

It was his first kill, for he could not count small game such as rabbit and squirrel, which even a woman could take easily enough. All his life he had been looking forward to the moment when he would saunter into camp with the announcement that there was game on the trail. Then his joy fled in a sense of shame. No slave could say those words. A slave would have to bring in his own game, and, worst of all, he would have to admit this degrading secret to his white friend.

Andy, however, was much too busy to notice these changes of expression. He was chopping at a young tree trunk.

"What are you doing?" asked Tom dully.

"We've got to have a pole to carry in the bear," said Andy

practically. "And I just realized, it's getting late. I've got to get home for the milking."

The sapling fell, smashing bushes on either side.

"You can cut the small ones at the top with your knife. I'll tackle these big branches at the bottom," called Andy.

"You mean—you are going to help me carry the bear back to the village?" stammered Tom.

"You want it, don't you? It can't get up and walk back by itself. We have to tote it. Only, you'll have to get to work, because, like I told you, I haven't got very long."

Once the pole was cut, there remained the problem of something with which to tie the bear's legs, so it would hang upside down as they carried it between them.

"What do you generally use?" demanded Andy.

"The women know there is game to be brought in, so they take buckskin cords," Tom admitted reluctantly. Andy could very easily pick up the remark and suggest that they send for the women. But Andy didn't.

"That's out, then," he decided thoughtfully. "This is our bear, and we get it home ourselves. I can see you haven't got anything to make a rope, but I've got my winter underdrawers. Ma made me put them on this week when the weather turned nippy. They've been itching me ever since."

Tom watched in amazement as Andy pulled off first his blue trousers, then a long, tight-fitting garment which came down to his ankles. He tossed it to Tom as he prepared to step back into his outer pants.

"Tie it around the critter's paws, then sling the loop over the pole," he advised. "And keep praying it holds."

The bear was heavy, even when its weight was divided between them. They had to set it down often on their way to

the raft, and for a time Tom wondered if they would be able to get it up the steep bank on the opposite side. Eventually they made it, and walked out into the clearing toward the village.

Fires had just been lighted to start the evening meal, and those women who were appointed to cook were gathered nearby. The men were sitting in their customary circle before Dave's house, and the children were playing a noisy game with a block of wood which they kicked from one to another with a fine disregard for bruised shins.

"I reckon they're going to be proud of you today," grunted Andy.

Tom said nothing, but his heart was light. Today he would show them that he was fit for more than women's tasks, that Martha's confidence was fully justified.

The Yamhills saw them coming, and activity seemed to cease. Even the children left off kicking their wooden block and stood openmouthed. A plump figure in a flowing Mother Hubbard detached herself from the group and came a few steps in their direction. Her eyes were on their swaying burden, and there was horror in them, and disbelief.

"Fool! Fool! What have you done?" she shrieked.

"I have killed a bear for you. There is much meat and thick fur."

"Not for me," cried Martha, stepping backward in alarm. "It is not for me, nor for anyone else in the tribe that you have done this. Say that you killed it for yourself, or I shall pull your tongue from your mouth."

"For myself then, if you wish it so," he mumbled, unable to understand her meaning, but doing his best to placate her anger.

"You hear?" She turned to shout at her own people. "He did not kill Grandfather Bear, who was the ancestor of all the Indians and whom we must never molest but treat with every veneration, for me. He killed him for himself. As for him, I will have no part of him from this day on. I give him back to you." Her eyes sought and found her husband. "He is yours, not mine."

Dave looked troubled. As the original owner, he could not refuse the return of his gift.

"It was a bad day when I gave up my shoes," he muttered. "Such fine shoes. So demanding of respect."

"You will not have this one on your hands long," promised Ezra, his little eyes glittering wickedly in Tom's direction. "Grandfather Bear demands that we avenge this crime against one of his people. The Rogue River must die."

CHAPTER VIII

The Outcast

Tom stood in the door opening of his house and breathed in the fragrance of spring. He felt very pleased with himself, confident of his own ability. He could do anything, he had decided. Success seemed to reward everything to which he turned his hand. He was fifteen now, and during the winter months which lay behind him, he had proved to his own satisfaction that he was a man.

It had been a mild winter. True, there had been more rain than he was accustomed to, but there had been little snow, and that which fell lingered on the ground for only a short time. There had been few stinging winds, for the rounded hills about them acted as a barrier. He could understand at last why the Yamhills were so careless about their houses. They needed little protection. He himself had been warm and comfortable in his rebuilt hut, with his bearskin as a coverlet.

All his good fortune had sprung from that bearskin. His thoughts went back to that late afternoon when he and Andy Fuller had brought it into camp, and Ezra had declared that Tom must die. He could still remember the sinking feeling

which had come over him at the words. The Rogue Rivers had always counted bear as fair game, and the hunter who snared one was much admired. How was he to know that the Yamhills held the bear in sacred esteem? He had set the trap as innocently as he had leaped over the pile of salmon bones at Wishram.

"The Rogue River must die!" Ezra had cried, and all the pent-up hatred he had felt since Tom's return from Spirit Mountain was in his voice.

If the announcement left Tom numb, it had an opposite effect on Andy. He dropped his end of the carrying pole, and advanced belligerently.

"Fiddlesticks!" he snorted in disgust. "Now, you listen to me, all of you. There's nothing wrong with killing a bear. Good riddance, I say. Pa's done for plenty of them in his time and nothing's ever happened to him. But killing a human being's a different matter. You know what the white man does to murderers. He hangs them by the neck from a tree. And that's what's going to happen to you if I come over here some day and find that anything's happened to Tom."

Ezra's small eyes glittered with hatred, but he had too much respect and fear of the white race to stand against this representative of it.

"The spirit of Grandfather Bear will avenge the crime," he muttered balefully.

"Is that so?" scoffed Andy. "Well, the Rogue Rivers have never had any trouble with his spirit, and neither have the white settlers. All I can say is, you keep your hands off Tom. And if there's an accident, that will be investigated, too."

At the time Tom had been a little fearful, despite Andy's brave words. Perhaps the spirit of the bear, which was a man

and not a woman to the Yamhills, was stronger in this place. But he knew it would be fatal to show such fear outwardly, or some Ta-mah'na-wus might see him. With steady fingers, his face set in brave, proud lines, he tanned the skin. He cooked the flesh over a fire that he built, and ate it by himself. He saved the grease, and made a claw and tooth necklace. Gradually the fear vanished, for nothing but good happened.

The Yamhills, under orders from their chief, stayed as far away from him as possible. He was contaminated; at any moment vengeance might descend upon him.

"Cast him out," urged Martha. "Send him away."

"No," said Dave soberly. "For then the white men will think I am to blame, and they will come and take me to their town and hang me from a tree. He must stay here, so that they can see he lives."

"Then make him work," howled Jesse. "You traded those fine shoes for a worthless bargain. Get something in exchange. If he were my slave, I would work him till he dropped."

"He brings in game," said Dave uneasily. "Every day he goes into the forest with his bow and arrow, and nearly every time he brings back something. Rabbits, partridge, often a deer. Perhaps the Ta-mah'na-wus that came to him on the mountain was that of the hunter, for it has been years since the people of the Yamhills ate so well. It is best to leave him alone."

Tom chuckled to himself as he remembered. It was true that his luck as a hunter had been good, but it was due to his early lessons at the heels of La-pel-la Chaco rather than the good will of a Ta-mah'na-wus. Someday he hoped that one

would come to him. In the meantime, he would remember and practice those things he had learned from La-pel-la Chaco's lips. He scouted out the traveled paths to water, the places where grew the favorite vegetation of his prey. He stayed upwind of the animal he was stalking, saving his arrow till he was so close he could not miss. And he was careful not to aim for the young of any creature, and to take only what he needed, and that of the best.

Sometimes Andy went with him, and Tom taught the white boy the things that he had learned from La-pel-la Chaco. Andy was his only friend now, for even Ne-whah avoided him, but he did not care. It was good to have a white boy for a friend, to flaunt that friendship in the faces of the Yamhills, and he lost no opportunity to do so.

When he and Andy carried in their kill, they would drop what they did not want themselves in the clearing by the tribe's cooking fire. Then, speaking English loudly, they would circle the huts to Tom's snug quarters, where they would prepare their own meal and eat it from two tin plates Mrs. Fuller had sent over as a present. The eyes of the Yamhills would follow them warily as they went, pretending to ignore the game which had been left. They both knew it was snatched up the moment they were out of sight, for soon the odors of cooking meat would waft around the sides of Dave's hut. Then Tom and Andy would shriek with laughter, for the best portions had been kept for themselves.

Yes, he was very clever, Tom told himself, and with Andy's help he had become a man of some importance. In a way, he was sorry to see it end, but it was going to end. When the snow was out of the Cascades, he was going home. He had no doubts about his own ability to make his way there. The

boy that he had been last year could not have done it; the man he had now become could do it easily.

There might be a little strangeness at first when he rejoined his people. He had served almost a year as a slave. But that disgrace would be erased when he told of his success as a hunter, of his vigil on Spirit Mountain, his friendship with a white boy, and certainly when he received a vision. Of the women's work he had done, he would say nothing. He had escaped and made his way home with honor.

The softness of the spring air about him was broken by a shrill scream which seemed to hang there before it dropped to a low shuddering note. Tom started with the suddenness of the sound. It was a woman crying the alarm of sickness. He waited for a moment, and heard her wail joined by others.

"Yo, yo, yo!" They chanted the same thing over and over. It was not a word. It had no significance as one, but it was uttered at no other time.

A little curious to see upon whom this devil of sickness had descended, he stalked disdainfully between the straggling line of huts and came out on the cleared square in the middle. The Yamhills were gathering rapidly. They came from every direction, and as soon as one arrived he dropped to a crouching position on the ground and took up the chant which was growing in such volume it was no longer possible to tell where one "Yo" left off and another began. Even with his new sense of importance, Tom did not dare come too close, especially at a time when the tribe was working itself to a state of excitement. He peered over the black heads at the figure in the center of the group.

It was contracted awkwardly, as though a fall had drained

the last bit of energy from it. From here, Tom could not see the face, but he did not need to. The man on the ground wore the blue trousers of a white man, and there was only one who could boast such wealth. The sickness had come upon Chief Dave.

From his own hut, the medicine man came running. It had taken him a few moments to put on the regalia of his profession, but his face was now concealed by the mask, and rattles and charms filled his hands. The Indians moved aside to let him through, and the chanting grew louder as he began his spirit dance.

It would go on a long time. Ezra must first dance himself into exhaustion, then fall down into a trance. While he was in this state, his own Ta-mah'na-wus would come to him, giving him knowledge of what was wrong with the sick man. Once he knew that, Ezra would awaken and know how to treat the ailment, whether the devil must be pounded forth by his hands, sucked out with his mouth, or driven away with further noise and the proper dance.

Tom hesitated. Dave was still his master, and perhaps it was proper at a time like this that he should remain. But the Yamhills did not want him there. They resented his presence. Several had given him ugly glances as they passed. It would be just as well if he spent the day in the woods.

He went back for his bow and arrow, unable to account for the strange feeling of misgiving which had come over him. After all, the troubles of the Yamhills meant nothing to him. He had already proved himself self-sufficient. He tried to regain the early morning feeling of exuberance, but there was something lacking.

Today he went west, for it had been over a week since he

had hunted in that direction. When there was only one hunter in a tribe, there was so much land that he could go as he pleased. The river ran in this direction, and also a well-marked trail which was used not only by men but also by horses and on occasional wagon.

As he came out upon it, he saw a wagon approaching, drawn by two yokes of heavy horses. Tom stopped where he was and stared. Two yokes! Four horses! The wagon must be heavily loaded. He squinted against the morning sun and saw that it was piled high with lumber.

It advanced slowly to the sound of the creaking and complaining wagon bed, the jangle of harness, and the heavy, deliberate hoofbeats of the team. Two white men occupied the seat, and as they drove up the one with the reins looked down at him and grinned.

"Hello, bub."

"Hello," said Tom, staring with awe at the great load of shining white boards in the wagon. Surely it must have been a very long and sharp knife which cut them so smoothly and whittled so evenly.

"Whoa!" The driver pulled up his horses, then turned to the man beside him. "Hear that, Hank? This Siwash speaks English."

"Not likely more'n a couple of words," scoffed Hank, spitting a long stream of tobacco juice over the side. "What's all that rumpus going on back there? Sounds like all creation's broke loose."

"I'll ask him," said the driver. "And if he understands, I reckon it'll prove he knows more'n a word or two. Look, bub. What's all that yelling and screaming back at the Indian camp?"

"The chief is sick," answered Tom slowly. Now he was glad he had listened and practiced the white man's tongue with Andy. It had been gratifying to flaunt this accomplishment before the Yamhills, but it was even more so to put it to use with a strange white. He could not think the words rapidly, nor could he understand everything if someone else spoke too fast, but Andy said he was doing well. He practiced much, even when he was alone, for the sound of his own voice was company. "The medicine man dances. The tribe makes noise to drive out the spirits."

"See!" cried the driver triumphantly. "What'd I tell you, Hank?"

"They'll raise the dead, not make a sick man well with that screeching," prophesied Hank darkly. "Get going, Bill. The turn of the river, they said. We've still got a piece to go."

"And leave this extra help behind?" protested Bill. "This is a contract job, ain't it? This young buck looks strong as an ox, and while I admit he don't know nothing about carpentry, still we can likely hire him for two bits a day."

"Say. You got something," said Hank slowly, admiration coming to his eyes. "Put it up to him."

"How'd you like a job, bub?" began Bill promptly.

"Job?"

"Sure. Work. It'll pay good money—chic-a-min. You can take it to the store, and they'll give you whatever you want for it."

"Ah," cried Tom in understanding. Andy had explained about money one day, for the Rogue Rivers knew nothing about such things. It was when he had told his friend about the whites at home panning in the rivers and digging in the ground for yellow metal. It went to make white man's money,

Andy had told him, and was very valuable. It was what white men used for trade. "You give me money?"

"You have to work first. Help us," explained Bill quickly. "When we're done, we'll pay you in money."

"Good," smiled Tom eagerly. "What do we do?"

"Just follow along the wagon. We're almost there. Then we'll show you," beamed the driver, bobbing his head triumphantly at his companion.

Tom had no trouble keeping up with the wagon. Rather he had to slow his own eager steps for its jolting and bumping progress. When they came to the place where the stream made a little bend, the driver pulled up the horses and he and his friend climbed down from their seat.

This spot was even flatter than the site chosen by the Yamhills for their village. Directly overlooking it was a rounded hill, and above that towered the slightly higher crest of Spirit Mountain.

"First we unload," announced Bill. "We got a couple more wagons following, but I figure we might as well get started with what we got here."

Tom fell to work cheerfully, the day's hunting forgotten in the novelty of this new adventure. The wood had been cut by giant saws in a place called a mill, Bill told Tom good-naturedly. And it was to be used to make a building.

"A house for a white man?" asked Tom politely.

"I reckon the agent will live in the back of it, all right. In front there'll be a trading post, where they keep things like flour and calico and nails. And on the side there'll be a shed where supplies can be hauled in out of the rain."

"Ah!" cried Tom in amazement. "And who will come for these things, the flour, the calico, the nails?"

"You Indians," Bill told him. "Joel Palmer's decided this is the best spot for the reservation. They're going to bring up the tribes from the coast and the others from upvalley. You're all going to live here together like one happy family."

"Don't forget the soldiers," put in Hank under his breath. "They'll be here, too, to see things stay happy."

"Hush your mouth," said Bill severely. "No call to stir things up."

Tom said nothing, but he had already several doubts about the happiness promised by Bill. He knew little of the coast Indians or of the Willamette Valley tribes, but he did know that if the white man should try to bring the Rogue Rivers and their neighbors, the Klamaths, together, only trouble would result. Such a thing, of course, was impossible, for the Rogue Rivers would never consent to having other people brought into their valley, nor would they leave it themselves.

The day passed quickly, and to Tom pleasantly. He did not mind that the work was hard. It was man's work—were not these men engaged upon it?—and new. They let him use the saw a little, and when he caught on, a great deal, although they insisted on doing the measuring themselves. He hammered nails, and marveled that the white man first built a square frame, then filled it in with solid wood, so tightly fitted there was no need for mud to fill the cracks.

At noon they shared their meal with him, and best of all they talked, treating him as a person, not an outcast. They had brought supplies to pitch a camp, for they would stay here until the building was completed. Tomorrow they hoped he would return and help again, for he had proved himself a good worker.

Tom promised eagerly. Tomorrow he would be here early,

and every day as long as they needed him. He left them feeling warm, if weary, and the sense of importance had returned. It stayed with him as he went down the road toward the village of the Yamhills, and the coin they had given him in payment for his work remained in his hand where he could look at it from time to time.

As he drew nearer he could hear the sound of human voices. Ezra still dances, he thought. The devil is not yet driven out. But then his face grew serious, and he glanced about him apprehensively. That was no chant to drive out devils. That was the wail of mourners. Chief Dave was gone, and his spirit might even now be hovering along the trail, looking for a soul which he could snatch from earth and take with him on the lonely journey of the dead.

For a moment Tom considered turning and returning to the white men. They would let him camp beside them, and he would be there next morning when it was time to resume work. Then he remembered that Chief Dave had shunned his slave in life. He would not want his company in death, for the spirits of the dead do not do physical harm. They only take other souls to relieve their own loneliness.

Tom was safe enough, but the idea of returning to the white camp had merit. It was the thing to do, but first he would go to his own house and bring away certain treasures. He carried his bow, and his jackknife was always with him, but there was the shirt Mrs. Fuller had given him, the tin plates, the bearskin, and the necklace he had made from the teeth and claws. He would not want to leave these for the Yamhills.

The wailing filled his ears as he came up from the trail. The body of the chief had been stretched out on a deerskin

with his prized personal possessions heaped about him. Around the body crouched a circle of women, Martha among them, who shrieked and cried, tearing at their hair and pouring dust over their heads. Dave's brother, Jesse, stood a little apart from a group of men, and while he did not lift his voice with the women's he wore black feathers from the bird of death and daubs of white clay upon his face and breast as signs of his mourning.

From habit, Tom started across the open space, then something warned him it would be better to keep out of sight. Whatever the warning, it came too late. Ezra had seen him.

"There he goes!" he cried. "There goes the slave, whose insult to our ancestor has been avenged on the master. I said then that he must be put to death, and he who would not listen now lies dead himself. Now will you heed and let me have my way?"

The Yamhills uttered loud cries of rage. Before Tom could turn he was seized by rough hands. Blows were struck at his face. He was kicked, spit at, and his arms almost yanked from their sockets.

"Enough!" It was Jesse stalking forward with glittering eyes in a high-held head. At the sound of his voice, the Yamhills fell back.

"My brother erred, but not in the way you think," said Jesse coldly. "He used wisdom in letting the Rogue River live, for the white men would have discovered his death, and we should have paid for his life with ours. No, the Rogue River must live, but in a manner which will give satisfaction to Grandfather Bear. He must not be allowed to go unpunished, and we must make that punishment one which Grandfather Bear will see and approve. The Rogue River is

a slave, and he must live as the meanest, most despised slave of all. Since my brother's death, he belongs to me, and I myself will make certain that his punishment is carried out in a way to give pleasure to Grandfather Bear."

CHAPTER IX

Vengeance for the Bear Gods

For the first time, that night, Tom was tied. Strips of buckskin held his wrists together behind his back, and others secured his ankles. The Yamhill who tied them did a thorough job, and although Tom worked desperately he could not reach the knots. His efforts seemed only to bind the leather more tightly into his flesh.

A hundred times he blamed himself for not leaving when he had the chance. He could have stayed with the white men at the new building. He could have started home, for, although there was snow in the mountains, he was not afraid of snow. He could have confided in Andy and found tem-

porary shelter in the Fullers' barn, but this thought he put away as soon as it came to him. He had never told Andy that he was a slave. It was too shameful to confess. He had let all the opportunities for escape slip by, and now they would be far between. Jesse would see that he was watched by day and tied at night, for this was part of the punishment by which the Yamhills hoped to gain forgiveness of Grandfather Bear.

The wailing continued without a stop throughout the night, and Tom was as wide awake as the mourners. When the first streaks of light appeared in the eastern sky a figure moved out of the shadows between the huts. Ne-whah bent over, cutting his thongs with a sharp knife.

"You are to come with me," she said tonelessly. "Our new chief has given us a task."

At first he could not stand, for his legs had grown stiff from being so long in one position. His wrists burned, and his fingers dangled uselessly from weak hands. He clapped his palms together and stamped his feet on the ground, ignoring the painful prickles which ran up and down as the blood began once more to circulate.

"What are we to do?" he asked after a while.

"You will see." Ne-whah refused to meet his eyes. She had been careful that she herself had not touched him when she cut his bonds, and even now she stood at a little distance. "You are to bring the skin of Grandfather Bear which you stole from him."

"I didn't steal it," began Tom angrily. Then realizing that nothing he could say would convince the Yamhills he had not committed a crime, he fell silent. "Why should I bring my bearskin? It's mine. The rest of you are afraid of it."

"Bring it."

He shrugged, and as soon as he could walk, he stumbled over to his own hut. They had not thrown him inside last night, but had left him on the ground in the open.

The bearskin was soft and comforting in his arms, and he hugged it tightly against him as he followed Ne-whah around the huts to the open place. Everything was much as he had seen it yesterday. Chief Dave, surrounded by his possessions, still lay upon the ground circled by the wailing women. Ezra, followed by a line of braves daubed with white clay, still danced, but this was the dance of death, the pattern of which would speed Dave's progress to the Happy Hunting Ground and prevent his spirit from returning to snatch another soul from earth. Jesse stood as he had the night before, a little to one side. He glanced at them coldly, his eyes narrowing at sight of the bearskin, but he said nothing. It was Ne-whah who spoke, for she had already received her orders.

"You will pick up the dead chief in your arms. You will carry him to the river, and I will go with you. Together we must wash and prepare him for burial. The bearskin is to wrap about his body when we are finished, for then he can take it with him to the Happy Hunting Ground, and return it to Grandfather Bear."

"No!" cried Tom without thinking what he said.

No one wanted to prepare a dead body for burial, for the danger in doing so was too great. Outsiders were generally employed for this purpose, and they did their work for pay. Afterwards they had to bathe and fast to ward off effects of evil spirits, nor was it safe for them to hunt, or fish, or take part in any activity of the tribe for a month following.

"I have done it often," said Ne-whah in the same toneless voice. "I know how it is done, but I am now too old to carry such a heavy burden on my back. You must do that."

Tom stared at the lifeless body on the ground. His eyes moved to the chief's brother who had ordered him to do this thing. Jesse was not looking at him. His angry face was turned, and his eyes slanted at someone beyond, someone who had just come up to the edge of the crowd.

"Hello." It was Andy's voice, a little unsure of himself as he realized he had intruded at a time of grief. "I didn't know. I— It's Chief Dave, isn't it? That's too bad."

Tom turned eagerly. Andy was here. Andy would save him as he had done before. He began to speak in English, the words tumbling out so fast that every other one came in Jargon.

"It is the chief. Last night he died. Today his spirit starts for the Happy Hunting Ground, and Jesse, who is the new chief, says I must help prepare the body, wash and make it ready for burial."

To his amazement Andy did not become indignant and forbid this thing on penalty of the white man's wrath.

"I'd rather plow ten acres of ground myself," he said. "But I guess somebody has to do those things. Ma's sat up with the dead, neighbors and such, many a night. And while I don't suppose she likes it, it doesn't seem to bother her like it would me. Well, I won't stay, then. I'll go on back home. I just stopped by to tell you that I won't be over for a spell. Pa's starting to plow tomorrow. Ground will be dry enough then, he figures. It'll be a month or more before I have any time for myself. I'll see you then, Tom. We'll go hunting."

He turned abruptly and hurried away. Tom stared after

him. He wanted to call out that there was more than Andy seemed to understand. How could he treat this thing so calmly? He had listened, accepted, and rushed away with a brief mention of future hunting. Didn't Andy realize that, once Tom had taken part in this service, he couldn't hunt? Not for a month, until he had finished the necessary purification.

"Pick up your burden," repeated Ne-whah.

There was nothing else to do. The eyes of the Yamhills were upon him. If he refused to obey, Jesse would no longer try to hold them back. They would fall on him, tearing him to pieces. Slowly he stepped forward. He bent down, and his arms closed about the thin body. Dave was lighter than he had supposed, but perhaps the departed spirit was what had given the old chief a semblance of weight.

"Come," ordered Ne-whah, and the Yamhills fell back to make a path. Numbly he followed her down to the river.

The Rogue Rivers cremated their dead, and Tom was amazed to discover that the Yamhills did not follow the same custom.

"But it is unclean," he gasped in horror. "Do they leave them then, so that their spirits can re-enter the body at will?"

"Of what good would a lifeless body be to a spirit?" scoffed Ne-whah. She had relaxed a little after they came to the river, and now she was beginning to talk with him as she had once done. "Everyone knows that the dead must walk with their feet turned backward. They must have special bodies to do that. Their old bodies are placed in the ground, with their goods about them. That is the way the white men also do. The Yamhill becomes more like the white man every day. They are not like the Chinooks, who dwell by the sea, and

put their dead in canoes to be washed out by the tide. Nor are they like the tribes who live along the Big River, and take their dead to Memaloose Island, where they leave them as prey to all the buzzards."

"To be placed in a hole in the ground is worst of all," decided Tom. "Thieves may come and rob the grave, then what good would a man's possessions do him? It is better that he and they reach the spirit land on the same cloud of smoke."

"You talk too much," scolded Ne-whah. "Because you went to Spirit Mountain, and a very small Ta-mah'na-wus came to you, you give yourself airs. You forget you are a slave, and for that reason the small Ta-mah'na-wus has left you. Ezra has taken it away, and now you are without any power at all."

Dave's funeral cortege left the Yamhill village as soon as Tom and Ne-whah had finished with their task. Had the chief died in the morning, he would have been buried the same day. Since it was after sundown, when evil spirits might be about, it was deemed safer to wait until daybreak.

Tom dug the grave in the soft earth under a grove of oak trees at the foot of Spirit Mountain while the Yamhills watched from a discreet distance. It was heartbreaking to see the bearskin, of which he had been so proud, disappear under the dark soil. He doubted whether it, or Chief Dave, could ever reach the Happy Hunting Ground, weighed down as they were under so much dirt.

Because she was a slave and had taken part many times in burials, Ne-whah knew the forms of purification they must go through. They bathed in the river, icy from the melting snows still in the mountains, and rubbed themselves with ashes which were afterwards buried underground. At the

evening meal, they sat apart from the others, sniffing the odors of boiling dried salmon which was forbidden to them.

"Someone could throw us a handful of new fern shoots," muttered Ne-whah resentfully. "Green growing things are not denied, only the flesh of animal or fish. Tomorrow, if my master does not keep me too much on the run, I shall gather a supply and hide them against the day when the cooking pots are licked clean of gravy."

"You cannot eat the juice of meat, any more than its flesh," cried Tom in horror. "The spirits of the animal world will be angry. They would come to earth and snatch your spirit, and you would have to live hunted among them, as animals are hunted by men."

Ne-whah lowered her voice.

"I will tell you a secret," she said. "That is not so, although the knowledge is not for everyone. Many years ago, when I was first brought here a slave and had to help bury my first dead, I thought as you. I fasted for the full thirty days, and I tell you one can grow weak indeed on nothing but ferns and green shoots. The second time, I was so unhappy that I decided to put an end to myself. It could not be worse to live in the spirit world of animals, I thought, than here. So when the tribe had finished eating every day, I licked the pots."

"You ate meat?"

"No, no! Unhappy as I was, I did not want to join the animals so badly as that. I swallowed no flesh, only the gravy and juices. But it gave me strength. I think," she added cautiously, "it would be well to eat only green things for the four official days of mourning. But, after that, I am sure that if you will swallow none of the flesh you may eat the gravy."

"I would be impure," he objected indignantly. "The stain of the dead would never leave me. I will fast for thirty days, eating only green things. I will take no life. And I will wash myself with water and ashes daily."

"Do as you wish," said Ne-whah crossly. "But one washing with water and ashes is all that you will get. The Yamhills will not give you time to take more, and it seems to be all that is required by the spirits of this place. To my way of thinking, it is enough. Would you rub the skin from your bones?"

For four days Chief Jesse wore the white clay of mourning, but on the fifth day it was removed and the tribe resumed normal living. The two slaves were given the last of the stew pot to lick that evening, and Ne-whah fell on it wolfishly. Tom, however, held back. He felt unclean, and that the forms of purification he should have followed after his service to the dead were uncompleted. He was no longer allowed to go to the river to bathe as he had been when Martha was his mistress. His days were filled with the meanest, most degrading work which Jesse could find for him to do, nor was he able to rest at night, since he must sleep trussed up of hands and feet.

He was growing thin and weak from his diet of green shoots, and there were moments when he felt lightheaded, and the world swam before his eyes in a dizzy haze.

One morning after Ne-whah had cut his bonds and he was trying to get the circulation back into his aching legs, Chief Jesse swaggered around the side of the hut.

"Take your bow," he ordered harshly. "You go to the forests to bring back a deer. I hunger for the taste of fresh meat."

Tom heard him dully, as though Jesse's voice came from a great distance. Then, as the significance of the command reached him, he started in alarm.

"I cannot. A month has not yet passed since I buried the body of your brother. It still lacks three days. I cannot hunt in that time. I am impure."

"You will hunt," grunted Jesse, kicking him viciously. "And you will be successful. Otherwise it will go ill for you."

"You must do as he commands," said Ne-whah sadly when Jesse had gone. "He is your master and must be obeyed. But it will be hard to be the only slave again. When you first came, I thought you would be comfort to me. When you went to the mountain and returned with a bow and arrow and the gift of power, I was proud. Then you did wrong, and the power was taken away. You became even less than I. You will never return."

No, he would never return, Tom told himself, and hope filled him with a sudden lightheartedness. This was the opportunity he had prayed for. He would take his bow and go into the forest, but he would not shoot. Instead he would keep on going east until he reached the mountains. Then he must turn south, and eventually his wanderings would bring him to his own people. But he had to be careful. He must not let the Yamhills, not even Ne-whah, suspect his plan.

"Perhaps in this place, and with these people, it is different," he said. "You cleanse yourself only once, and you live even though you have sucked the juices from bits of meat. Perhaps it is the same with hunting."

Ne-whah shook her head vigorously.

"Everyone knows that you are still too impure to take life. When your arrow finds its mark, the soul of the animal you

have slain will be angered at the insult. Death will give it power it never had in life, and it will take you with it."

"Small animals have small powers, even in death," he said quickly, to hide the smile which had come unbidden to his face. Did she think he was ignorant not to know these things, that she must explain patiently as to a child? Besides, he had no intention of letting go the first arrow.

"That is true," she said gravely. "And the powers of your mother, the medicine woman, may be awakened even now by your misfortunes and try to help you. But if that happens, they will force you to eat of the meat you have killed. Do not think that Jesse, or any of his braves, will touch it. They know it will have been made impure by you. They will make you eat it, and then no power on earth can save you."

"I will eat whatever game I bring back," he promised, wanting to make an end of the conversation. A flood of weakness caused by his enforced diet of fern and berry sprouts came over him, and he hung onto one of the poles of the hut for support.

"You will bring back nothing. I will never see you again, for the end will come on the trail," said Ne-whah sorrowfully. "Do not think you will be allowed to go alone. Jesse and a party of his braves will go with you."

CHAPTER X

The Shoot

"Hi," called Andy. "Here I am. Didn't think Pa would let me off work, but I got Ma on my side and we wheedled him around. I've earned a day's hunting, believe me."

Tom, who had been plodding along hopelessly at the head of the line of chattering Yamhills, stopped short at the appearance of the white boy. They had forced him to lead the way, possibly because it was easier to keep an eye on him from behind. To the forest, Jesse had ordered curtly, to one of the trails which Tom had found on which game was plentiful. He was to shoot the first thing he saw, whether it was a deer, a wild cat, or even a rabbit. It made no difference what kind of an animal. The men laughed at hearing this, as though they shared a great joke, and prodded Tom with kicks and blows on his way. He was the only one armed for a hunt. They had not bothered to bring guns today, for they did not intend to shoot.

At sight of Andy's beaming, freckled face he felt an overwhelming relief. It was the first time he had seen his friend since that morning when he had stood above the body of the dead chief, his spirit cringing in horror at the task he

must do. Andy had failed him then, but he wouldn't now. His arrival here at the entrance of the trail into the forest was almost a miracle.

"Hi, Jesse." Andy greeted the chief casually. "Nice of you to ask me along."

"He asked you to come with us?" stammered Tom.

"Sent over word last night," nodded Andy. "Said you had this hunting trip planned for today, and asked me to go along. But how come the rest of you don't have guns or bows?" He glanced with surprise at the grinning Yamhills.

"Only he will hunt today," explained Jesse. "We will watch and see what happens."

As Andy fell into step beside him, the details of the plan fell into place in Tom's mind. Jesse had been clever. Any accident to Tom would be investigated by the whites. Andy had promised that. But if Andy were present when Tom brought supernatural wrath about his own shoulders, the Yamhills could not be blamed.

"We'll give the rest of you a lesson then," boasted Andy good-naturedly. "We'll show you how it's done, won't we, Tom?"

"Listen carefully," began Tom in English. "I must explain something to you—tell you——"

"Speak Jargon," thundered Jesse. He walked so close behind them that his moccasined toes were in danger from their heels. "You will not speak the white man's tongue today."

Andy's eyebrows raised in surprise, but at a glance from his companion he shrugged his shoulders in agreement.

"All right. We're all friends, I hope. Nice, friendly little hunting trip." He glanced critically at his friend. "You've got awful thin since I saw you last. Your ribs are sticking out."

"He eats little," grunted Jesse, his own good humor instantly returned. "He picks at his food. Only green shoots. We offer him good fish and meats, but he turns away."

"You can't do that," frowned Andy. "You're nothing but skin and bones. Ma would say you needed a good dose of sulphur and molasses."

The Yamhills laughed as though he had said something highly amusing.

"Be quiet," Andy said shortly, seeing that Tom did not join in their merriment. "Do you want to scare any game that might be around? It's the first hunting I've had for a month."

"Less than a month," said Tom significantly. "It lacks three days."

"That so? Pa's had my nose to that plow so steady it seems longer than that to me." Andy's hand reached out and grasped Tom's arm. A short distance ahead, a small brush rabbit sat nibbling the grass beside the trail. A step nearer, and it would dart undercover, but from this distance it felt safe enough to stay where it was, regarding them with bright, curious eyes.

"Shoot!" whispered Jesse.

"It's a good target," breathed Andy. "We won't get much this time of day. Go on."

"Too little," objected Tom feebly. His hands were clammy with perspiration.

"Then I will," decided Andy promptly. "It's meat in the pot."

He raised his bow as Tom had taught him, and the arrow flew to the mark. At the last moment the rabbit seemed to realize it had lingered overlong, but when it would have turned it was too late.

"Maybe little, but it's tender," remarked Andy, picking up his prize. "All we've got to do is get enough of them. And I don't see why we can't. We haven't shot this section of woods for quite a spell."

"The next time you will shoot," Jesse warned Tom.

"Yes, Tom. The next one is yours," agreed Andy.

The next target was a squirrel. It ran down the path ahead and darted up the trunk of a tree, where it perched on a limb, looking down at them. This time Tom knew there was no way out. Andy would not shoot first again, and Jesse would not let him out of it. For the first time in his life he admitted fear. Fear of Jesse.

"Shoot!" ordered the chief. "Bring down the squirrel, mighty hunter."

Tom raised the bow and fitted the arrow to the string. He could miss deliberately, but that would only prolong his misery. He took aim, and the arrow raced through the air, bringing the squirrel tumbling to the ground.

"Good shot!" cried Andy triumphantly, but Tom did not hear him. The world swam before his eyes. His head went round and round with dizziness, and his weakened knees collapsed beneath him.

When he came to he was lying on the moss of a little clearing and Andy was bending over him anxiously. He could smell smoke, and hear the crackle of fire as flames licked hungrily into pitch.

"Am I alive?" he asked in bewilderment.

"Of course, you're alive," said Andy cheerfully. "You just toppled over, that's all. It's what Ma would call a faint. And do you know what I think made you do it?"

"It was too soon," he answered weakly. "Three days too soon."

"You were plain hungry," continued Andy. "Jesse told me all about it. How you've been turning up your nose at good food and wouldn't eat. But you're going to now. We've got a fire made, and we're cooking my rabbit and your squirrel. Once you got them inside of you, you'll feel a lot better."

The Indians had gathered closely about. He looked up at the circle of faces. The black eyes which looked back at him were filled with triumph at their own cleverness, the mouths were grinning hideously. At last they had him where his death could cause them no harm. The white boy had fallen in with the idea as though it were his own.

"I cannot," cried Tom, disregarding Jesse's warning and breaking into English. "If I eat meat for one month after I have touched the dead, I myself will die. And any meat I kill in that time is impure."

"What did he say?" demanded Jesse furiously. "I warned you to speak Jargon. Here in the forest we are twenty to your two. You will do well to remember what I tell you, and obey."

Andy looked up slowly.

"Don't you give me orders, you Siwash," he said contemptuously. "Or threaten me, either. My father knows where I am, and that I came with you. If I don't come back, he'll come looking for me. Him and plenty of others."

"You will come back," agreed Jesse sulkily. "And the story you tell will make it plain that whatever happens to this one on the ground was not the Yamhills' doings. That is why I invited you to come with us."

"Nothing's going to happen," said Andy coolly, "except that he's going to get something to eat for a change. That's what you want, isn't it?"

The Yamhills smiled their approval. For a moment they feared their chief had gone too far in reminding the two they were outnumbered. Jesse had been careless when he gave voice to his true feelings. Much as they admired the white man's possessions, they had small liking for Andy Fuller. Had he not taken up with one of their slaves, even to the extent of making him presents, when worthier ones among them stood by with empty hands? But Andy still had the ear of other whites. He could do the Yamhills harm if he chose. Fortunately, it seemed that he was very stupid. Whatever words had passed between him and Tom could have had little significance. He still insisted that the contaminated squirrel be eaten by its hunter.

They hurried with the preparation of the meal, braves who had seldom before turned their hands to such tasks. They skinned the two small animals and split them open, propping the sides wide with sticks so they could broil above the coals.

"It's all right, Tom," said Andy under his breath. "Just trust me."

But as his nose brought him the fragrance of roasting meat, Tom could trust no one. He had shot the squirrel and lived. But that was because it was such a small, weak animal. With the first bite he swallowed, the squirrel spirit would be joined by the spirits of other animals, and Tom would not be able to withstand them.

Andy seemed to forget him after that. Instead he made himself agreeable to the Yamhills. He told Jesse that he was

a fine chief, and, without promising anything, spoke of a pair of white man's trousers, such as Dave had worn, which Mrs. Fuller had mentioned as being ready for the discard. He told them the number of baby pigs his father hoped to raise this year, and of certain young apple trees they had recently set out. The eyes of the Yamhills narrowed with anticipation, and they almost forgot Tom, lying stiff with fear upon the ground. But Andy did not forget.

"The meat is cooked," he announced finally in satisfaction. "It's too bad there isn't more. There's hardly a bite all around."

Jesse backed away.

"It is not for us," he said firmly. "For him."

"He does need it worse than you," agreed Andy at once. "And I'm hungry, too. Come on, Tom. Sit up. It will be just like old times, you and I sharing a meal together. Tell you what. You eat my rabbit and I'll eat your squirrel."

The new terror brought Tom upright. Andy had not understood him. There had not been time to explain. The squirrel was contaminated, killed by unclean hands. Andy couldn't eat the squirrel, or he also would die.

"No. You must eat your own rabbit. I will eat the squirrel."

The Yamhills smiled and nodded at each other. Things were going to their satisfaction. No matter which animal Tom ate, his death was certain. And with Andy's fresh reminders of pigs and apples and trousers for their chief, it was just as well that he should live. They had intended him as a witness only in the first place.

"I like squirrel better than rabbit," said Andy ruefully. "But since you shot it, it's really yours. You wouldn't go halves, I suppose?"

Tom shook his head quickly. Andy had been good to him, the only true friend he had. He must not be allowed to suffer through ignorance.

"All right." Andy gave in reluctantly. "Sit where you are. I'll bring it to you. You're still weak. You're going to feel better when you've got some hot meat in your stomach."

Tom watched as the white boy went over to the fire and lifted one of the brown, sizzling portions from its supporting sticks. He passed it rapidly from one hand to the other for a moment, grinning at the almost breathless Yamhills.

"Hot," he complained, and licked his fingers. The next moment his teeth dug into the brown skin, tearing out a great portion of white meat. "I can't help it, Tom," he said ruefully. "The smell was just too much for me. I was hungrier than I thought. You'll just have to eat the rabbit after all. I'll get it for you in a minute."

Silent, emotionless, the Yamhills stood watching him. Tom sat as one frozen, but as his friend cleaned off each small bone and flung it carelessly on the coals, the fear which had lived with him since Jesse had become his master faded away. Andy was doomed. At any moment, the spirits from the animal world would descend and snatch his soul away, but he would not go alone. He would have Tom's soul for company.

"Give me the rabbit," he ordered.

"Sure," agreed Andy instantly. "This was so good I almost forgot about you."

The rabbit was delicate and sweet in his mouth. The first bite stuck in his throat, but after that the delicious sensation of hot food following his long weeks of green sprouts lulled him to forgetfulness.

"Take your time. Don't eat too fast," advised Andy, but Tom scarcely heard. He finished off the whole animal.

"The animal spirits are collecting," announced Ezra grimly. "They are taking council. Soon they will come. I have never seen this thing happen, but it is certain. We have only to wait."

"I move we go home," suggested Andy. "It's the wrong time of day to hunt. And you want me to speak to Ma about those old pants right away, don't you?"

"Yes," agreed Jesse quickly. "Speak of them at once. We will return while there is time."

Tom found, on getting to his feet, that he felt more refreshed than he had for some days. True, his stomach, filled with forbidden meat, felt heavy and churning, but there were no spots dancing before his eyes. Perhaps that was the way with the animal spirits. Perhaps, before they came, a certain revival was given to the one they plotted to take with them.

They started, single file, down the trail through the woods, but when it widened Andy lengthened his steps to walk beside Tom. It had been hard to accustom himself to the white man's fashion of walking side by side, but today he was grateful to have company, to be able to glance over and read the expression in another's face. Before long they would be together always in the spirit world of animals.

"Things seem a little different for you now that Jesse is chief, don't they?" said Andy thoughtfully.

"They are not as they were," agreed Tom.

"My brother was a soft master," said Jesse scornfully, turning his head. "He was old, and because he did not punish his slave for wrongdoing, he himself was punished."

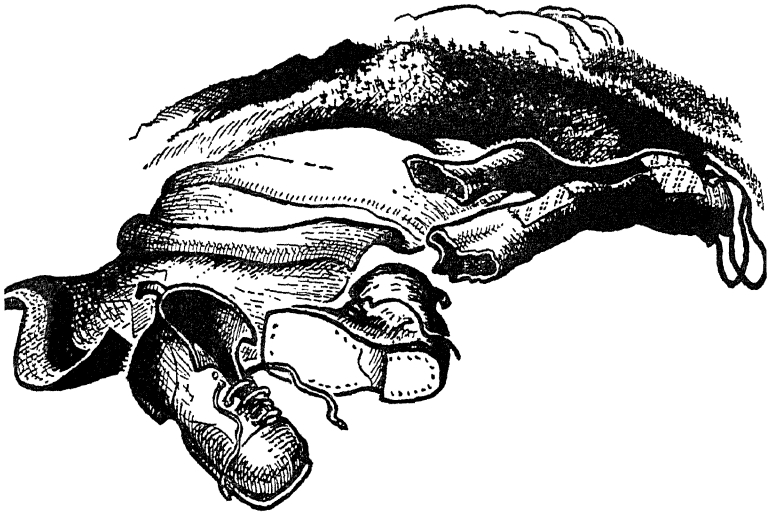
"Slave?" Andy repeated in surprise. "What do you mean, slave?"

"The Rogue River who walks beside the white man as an equal is a slave," taunted Jesse.

"Are you?" demanded Andy, his mouth dropping in surprise. "You didn't tell me."

"I was ashamed," admitted Tom. It did not matter now, for in the spirit world of animals they would both be scorned and hunted as intruders. "I should have told you, but I couldn't."

"Yes," agreed Andy after a moment. His face was serious and unsmiling. "You should have told me a long time ago."



CHAPTER XI

The Second Pair of Shoes

Tom lay on the ground awaiting death. He was not tied, for there was no need for that. There was no place he could hide and be safe from the spirits who were collecting to come for him. To hasten their arrival and make sure they would do no harm to any Yamhill who might chance to fall under their gaze, Ezra was making certain medicine. It was powerful medicine in the form of a ritual dance, and during it he changed his masks and headdresses many times. Sometimes he flourished the skin of a rabbit, or raised a necklace made from the claws of many wildcats. Other times his face was covered with a long-nosed mask painted to resemble a wolf,

or he held deer antlers to his head. The dance had been going on for a long time, ever since their return to the village at noon, and it would continue until the spirits of all the animals had come for the Rogue River who had first insulted Grandfather Bear, then in turn the squirrel and the rabbit.

Ezra's voice rose and fell. His bare feet slapped hard against the pounded ground. Tom was conscious of them without feeling emotion. They were of no importance now, for he had resigned himself to what might happen. Then he heard Andy's voice calling above the monotonous chant, and that did not matter either. Andy had left them earlier at the turn of the trail, but now he had arrived unexpectedly at the Yamhill village. Perhaps the spirit of the squirrel which the white boy had eaten had brought him here, so that the two offenders would die together.

"Hello, Jesse," called Andy cheerfully. "I brought those old pants I was talking about. And I brought somebody else, too. This is John Miller. He's the agent for the new reservation."

"Uh," grunted Jesse, while Ezra's medicine continued without missing a beat.

"I told him you were holding a slave," continued Andy loudly. "And he says you can't do it. Not an Indian slave. Not in Oregon Territory. You got to let him go, Jesse."

"Well, now," protested a new voice uncertainly. "That's not quite right. You can't get the cart before the horse that way, Andy. Question's never come up before. Not about Indians. Fact is, I didn't even know they had slaves. Doubt if anybody did. It'll have to be taken up with the new superintendent of Indian Affairs, and what Joel Palmer will say I don't know."

"Well, I know," said Andy positively. "He'll say Jesse has to let Tom go free. He can't keep him. He's an Indian and Tom's an Indian. They're the same color. You can't make a slave of somebody that's the same color as you."

Ezra's voice rose higher, taunting. What fools the white men were to argue about whether the slave should go free. Now that this one had broken the taboos, he could never go free. Already he belonged to the spirits of the animal world. Jesse remained silent, his eyes on the trousers which dangled over Andy's arm.

"I don't know about that, neither," said the agent wearily. "Like I say, we'll have to send for Palmer. Oregon's straddled the fence. She don't prohibit slavery, but she don't establish it neither. Up to now everybody's taken it for granted a slave was black. But one thing I do know. Andy here says you're mistreating this boy, and long as I'm agent on this reservation I won't stand for that. There's one rule laid down, and I aim to live by it. All Indians are to be treated the same."

"Then that proves you can't keep him," shouted Andy. "Get up, Tom. You're coming with us. You don't have to take orders from Jesse any more. You don't belong to him. You never did."

"My brother bought him at the fishing place on the Big River," said Jesse stubbornly. "He paid a high price. A pair of white man's shoes, the shoes of a chief."

"You wouldn't have got them anyway," objected Andy scornfully. "They would have been buried with him, and you know it. You let Tom go, and I'll give you Pa's old pants. You have to anyway, so you might as well give in."

Jesse hesitated, looking uneasily at the medicine man. He

had been on the verge of nodding agreement, but Ezra's song had changed abruptly. It seemed to take on a note of warning. This slave belonged to the spirit world of animals. It was not for the chief to bargain with their property. Andy frowned and spoke under his breath to the agent.

"Tell you what," said Miller, a little uneasily. His responsibilities weighed heavily upon him, for there was no precedent for him to follow. Indian reservations were new. He had been employed to distribute supplies sent out by the government to her red children, to teach the Indians to plow the ground and raise crops. Policing and the enforcement of laws were to be left to the army when it arrived and were outside his own jurisdiction. "Until we hear from Palmer, we can't make you do anything. But we can buy the boy ourselves. I'll give you a blanket for him."

Ezra laughed derisively and shook the necklace of wildcat claws high in the air.

"And I'll give Pa's old pants to Ezra," called Andy. "That's so he can make things right with your Great Spirit."

The steps of the dance faltered, and it was Jesse's turn to scowl.

"I do not want a blanket," he objected. "I am not a blanket Indian. I am a chief."

"Couldn't you make it shoes instead?" Andy asked the agent anxiously.

"The government don't send shoes in the supplies. Blankets and calico for squaw dresses, pants and shirts, and vittles. I guess they don't figure Indians need shoes. Only clothes to cover their nakedness."

"But shoes would do it," argued Andy. "And you can see

for yourself that we've got to do something quick. Look at him, lying there."

"He does look mighty peaked," agreed Miller, squinting thoughtfully at Tom. "Course, if we can prove that they've done anything to him——"

"We can't. We can't prove anything. But we've got to get him away, or he's going to die. And then we'll be the murderers because we left him here."

"We don't want that. But even if I wrote to Washington for shoes, and they was to send them, which I doubt, it would take months."

"That would be too late. Even tomorrow will be too late. He's made up his mind to die. He's all set for it. We've got to get him away now. Maybe I could run home and sneak my shoes out of the house——" Andy broke off to glare resentfully at his bare feet, as though it were their fault that he had already left off covering them for the summer.

Ezra had abruptly halted his medicine and gone over to Jesse. They spoke together in low tones, and then seemed to reach an agreement. They walked together toward the whites, and Ezra was the spokesman.

"You give me the pants," he said greedily, "and Jesse the shoes. But you must do it now. You must not bargain or take a long time. You must make the trade quickly. And whatever happens to the slave after you have paid for him is not our fault and we cannot be blamed."

"Hold on now," objected Miller. "If you've given him poison or something like that——"

"They don't poison," interrupted Andy. "Not these Indians. We accept the bargain, and here's the pants. But you'll have to wait for the shoes until we get them."

"No. Not wait," cried Jesse in alarm. "Trade now. Everything must be done before."

"But I tell you we don't have them yet."

"There!" Jesse's finger pointed to the agent's feet encased in square-toed, leather-laced work boots. "Take off. Hurry. Or we do not trade. The slave for the shoes."

John Miller's mouth fell open. For an instant he stood speechless with astonishment. In that moment Tom gave an involuntary sigh, and the Yamhills were alert, looking about with black eyes filled with fright. In the tense atmosphere John Miller's own sigh of resignation was plainly audible. He bent over and began unlacing his boots.

"All right," he agreed. "You can have them. I've got another pair, anyway, and I'm short on blankets. Reckon I can make a swap with the government."

The Yamhills watched apprehensively as Andy and the agent got Tom to his feet. The Rogue River seemed dazed, which was easy enough to understand. They doubted if the white men would be able to keep his spirit with them during the walk to the place where wooden buildings were rising beside the river. Jesse and Ezra were lucky to have concluded the bargain in time.

Once on the road, Tom walked a little easier. Perhaps it was because they were away from the sound of Ezra's medicine. Or it could have been because of the assurance of the whites, one on either side of him.

"You'll be all right now," Andy insisted. "Those dirty buzzards. Someday I'll get even with them."

"Now, now, Andy," protested Miller feebly. "Don't be making threats. Joel Palmer won't stand for anybody laying a hand to one of his Indians."

"There's other ways of getting even," insisted Andy darkly. "The thing is, Tom, you should have told me about this slave business a long time ago. No matter what the Territorial Government decided to do, most folks don't take kindly to it in these parts. Why, I heard about a fellow who sailed into Portland last year bringing a colored slave with him. People took it out on the white man so bad, he ended up by sending the slave back home without him."

"The Yamhills got any more slaves?" worried Miller. "Joel Palmer'll want to know."

"One," answered Tom dully. "An old woman who belongs to Ezra."

"We'll take care of her, too," promised Andy. "But first we've got to decide what to do with you."

"Feed him first," said Miller promptly. "From the looks of him, I'd say he could eat a whole cow. He needs bread and meat. Lots of it."

At the mention of food, Tom's spirits rose for a moment. The rabbit had by no means satisfied his hunger; besides, that meal was hours behind him. Then he realized the animal spirits would hardly let him live long enough to enjoy more food. He half opened his mouth to remind Andy of this, then closed it with the words unspoken. Andy was clearly so delighted with everything, so sure he had rescued his friend from harm, that it would be a pity to take the enjoyment from him.

Tom had walked with them blindly, hardly noticing where they were going, and the sight of nearly completed buildings by the river was another surprise. Jesse had kept him so closely confined in the past month, and his misery had been so great, he had almost forgotten the day when he had

helped saw lumber and pound nails. Memories came flooding back to him now.

"There she is," said Miller proudly. "Our new headquarters. Boys sure haven't been letting any grass grow under their feet."

Although only part of the roof was in place, the agent had moved in, and the unloading shed on one side was already filled with barrels and crates. On the river bank a second building site was laid out, which Andy said was soon to be a sawmill, and in the hollow behind the agency store a third structure was begun. This held the most interest for Tom, since the workers were all Indians.

"Chinooks," explained Miller, "from down on the coast. They're putting that up for themselves to live in. I tried to talk them out of building one of their longhouses, since they won't stay here but a short spell. This is a temporary camp. We're going to apportion out farmland to everybody quick as we can. But the Chinooks claim they couldn't stay even a few days without a longhouse to live in, so it seems easiest to let them go ahead."

"Maybe after they've gone you can take over their building," said Andy sensibly.

"Well, maybe." The agent looked doubtful. "At least we can use the logs. But we'd have to tear it down and start from scratch. They don't build windows, and the whole tribe lives in one house. I never been in one, but I reckon it would get pretty ripe inside."

A man climbed down a ladder from the roof of the agency as they approached.

"We run out of nails, John," he called.

"Right away, Hank," said the agent. "This is Fuller's boy, Andy, from down the road apiece. And this is Tom."

Hank grinned at Andy, but his look on seeing Tom was one of surprised recognition.

"Well, what do you know!" he said in delight. "Me and Bill's been wondering what happened to you. You said you'd be back."

"I couldn't," explained Tom eagerly. The fear of the animal spirits slipped to the back of his mind, and except for weakness he was almost himself. "I wanted to come, but they would not let me."

"Too bad," said Hank shrewdly. "Looks like you been sick. But you're here now, so you must be better, and if you still want that job we'll take you on. Good workers don't grow on bushes in these parts."

"You know him?" demanded Miller in surprise.

"Sure," grinned Hank carelessly. "He helped me and Bill the first day we come here. Like I say, he's a good worker. Two bits a day is fine with him, too."

"Why then," exclaimed Andy in delight, "it's all settled. What you're going to do, I mean. You can stay here and have a job with the carpenters."

"If it's all right with my master," agreed Tom. He looked at the barefooted agent humbly. "If that is what he wishes me to do."

"Your master!" Andy and the agent spoke together, but Miller continued. "I ain't your master, son. Nobody is. You're a free man."

"But you bought me. You paid for me with your shoes."

"Oh, them!" Miller laughed, a little embarrassed. "It's a swap. Just like I told you, I offered a blanket in trade, be-

cause that's what the government sent me. Only the chief wouldn't take it. So I'll take the blanket myself in trade for my shoes."

"But whatever you traded, it still belonged to you."

"No, it don't," argued Miller. "It belonged to you. You bought your own freedom."

"How could it have belonged to me? I own nothing. Even my bow I have left behind."

"Sure it did. You're a Rogue River, ain't you?"

Tom nodded, his mind whirling with bewilderment.

"Well, the Rogue Rivers have already got their franchise. A share of them blankets belongs to them when they get here. You just got yours early."

"The Rogue Rivers are coming here?" He could hardly speak from excitement.

"Sure they are, son. They signed the peace treaty and agreed to move on the reservation. Chief Jo and Sam and John, the whole kit and kaboodle of them will be here any day now."

CHAPTER XII

Reservation

"That's a good job, Tom," approved Hank critically. His big hand bore down on each newly completed shelf in turn to test the strength. "It don't give an inch. Now John can start unloading some of that stuff he's got stacked in the shed, and pretty quick he'll be open for business."

"Not a minute too soon, neither," fussed John Miller. "We can keep on doling out beef and flour from barrels in the shed, but that's not what they got on their minds. They want calico and beads and blankets, and they're going to set around underfoot till they get them." He gave a disgruntled look over his shoulder at a line of blanket-wrapped men and women crouched patiently against the wall. "Get outside, all of you. Set on the step if you've got to set somewheres."

Under his scowl the Indians got slowly to their feet and one by one filed out the door, where they promptly settled themselves on the floor of the porch. Tom looked after them a little scornfully, seeing them through the eyes of John Miller, Andy, and Hank. These were valley Indians, the Clackamas, the Molalas, the Tualatins, the Yamhills, peace-

ful, unenterprising, only too willing to become the white man's charge and accept a dole.

One or two had flattened heads, a deformity caused in infancy by fastening boards against their skulls so that the soft bones were molded in a straight line from the bridge of their noses to their center crowns. This they considered a mark of beauty, and it distinguished them as being Chinooks, the coastal tribes who occupied the longhouses built of logs behind the agency. They had arrived with great stocks of shellfish, clams, and mussels, which together with dried salmon comprised their diet. Empty shells now lay in a great ill-smelling pile before the doors of their longhouses, and they made no move to journey to the coast to replenish the supply. The Chinooks now clamored for the white man's beef as eagerly as did their inland brothers.

These were inferior Indians, unworthy to be considered in the same class with the Rogue Rivers, Tom often assured Andy.

"You will see," he claimed proudly. "When my people arrive, you will understand what I mean."

"I know I will," agreed Andy. "You're sure different. You stood out in that bunch of Yamhills like a bandaged thumb at a pie social. Of course, Chief Dave wasn't a bad fellow."

"You must not mention his name aloud," cried Tom quickly. "It is too soon after his death."

Andy always scowled at this point. It led to their only difference of opinion, a subject on which he lost no opportunity to press his views.

"I tell you, you've got to get over being so superstitious. Oh, I grant you I turn around and go back when a black cat crosses my path, and you wouldn't catch me walking under

a ladder. But that's different. Some of the things you believe are plain crazy. Like not mentioning the name of somebody who died until so many years have past. And thinking that ghosts will get you just because you killed a squirrel. And going without meat for a month after you helped bury a dead man. They're not true. There's nothing in them."

This generally ended the discussion, for Tom would shut his lips tightly. He would not argue these things, no matter how often Andy brought them up. It was useless to try to make the white boy understand. In fact, there were some things he could not understand himself, chief among which was the fact that he was still alive when he should be among the spirit world of animals. He did not worry about it so much these days, but sometimes the thought would come to him, and he could feel the little hairs on his body rise like the quills on a porcupine. When his mother arrived, he would ask her about these matters, for there was nothing Mal-tee-ny could not explain.

He brought himself back to the moment with a start, realizing that Hank had been speaking to him.

"Take it," urged Hank in a puzzled voice. "You earned it. Don't you want it?"

White man's money was being pressed into his hand. Three big silver wheels.

"It's your pay," said Hank. "Twelve days. Two weeks, with Sunday off, of course. Three dollars. The job's finished, and me and Bill are starting in to town right away. Ought to make Dallas before it gets too dark."

"You're going away?"

"Nothing to hang around here for. The agency's built. Got to look for another job now. Reckon you will, too."

"No call for Tom to look for work yet unless he wants to," reassured Miller. "The Rogue Rivers'll be pulling in any day. They're overdue now. They're the last tribe to show up, and when they come we'll start in passing out land. Tom will get his share, then he can start in farming."

Tom forced himself to smile because the agent expected it, but the idea was not one which appealed to him. He had heard Andy Fuller complain too often of the monotony of plowing and harvesting crops. He himself was fortunate in having been selected to saw and hammer boards and help build a fine, weatherproof house.

He walked out into the warm sunshine, stepping high to avoid the patient Indians on the porch. One of them spoke to him.

"Soon the agent will put trade goods on the wood you have fastened to the side of the house?"

"Soon he will do so. But he will not give anything out until all tribes are here. He says he waits so the division may be equal."

"For whom do we wait? Already the valley is crowded with people. There are as many here as gather at the fishing place of the Big River."

"There will be even more. The Rogue Rivers are coming," Tom answered proudly. "Any day now you will see their horses, many hundreds of them, come galloping down the road from the east. That will be something to see. Something worth waiting for."

"Rogue Rivers!" Martha was sitting farther down the line, her face still streaked with white clay of mourning which she must continue to wear for a year. "Why should we wait for them?"

"We have all signed the paper from the White Father in Washington," answered one of the men. His name was John Smith. The deformity of his head marked him as a Chinook, and the deference paid him by the others showed that he was a tyee, or chief, among his own people. "They told us the White Father is fair, and it is fair that he should wait until all are gathered to distribute his presents equally."

"Yamhill squaws talk too much," said John Wacheno, chief of the Clackamas, and in the face of so much disapproval Martha lapsed into sulky silence.

Tom walked on down the road, his face angry. The Yamhills were nothing to him anymore, or he to them. Generally, whenever they met, their eyes looked through each other blankly. Only Ezra continued to glare in Tom's direction, perhaps because he resented the fact the animal spirits had not yet claimed their prize, but more probably because Tom had told about Ne-whah. John Miller had returned to the village and offered to buy her, too, pending word from Joel Palmer about his decision on Indian slaves, but Ne-whah had refused to be bartered. She had lived most of her life with the Yamhills, she said, and would stay with them. Even when Ezra kicked her and told her to go away, she would not leave. Ezra had wanted the bright blanket more than he wanted a worn-out slave, and finally he got them both, for John Miller left it and went away. But whenever Ezra came into the agency, Miller's eyes were cold and disapproving and Tom knew that the medicine man feared his slave might be held against him.

The appearance of the valley had changed much. The longhouses of the Chinooks were completed, three of them, and at dawn, when their inhabitants poured out the narrow

doorways in a seemingly endless procession, it was hard to believe so many persons could be contained within four walls. Next to the longhouses clustered the tepees of the Molalla, flimsy dwellings of skins stretched over sticks; next to them the Clackamas; beyond the Tualatins, and curving to form a circle, the Haulpums, the Cow Creeks, the Santiams. There was a gap in the circle at that point, for John Miller had insisted an open space be left for the wickiups of the Rogue Rivers. But it was not big enough, Tom reflected, nor did he believe his people would settle down in such close proximity with these strangers, already totaling close to a thousand. Counting all the subtribes, the Rogue Rivers numbered close to five hundred in themselves, and they would move back to the forest, but close by the river, in a place which would offer grazing land for their horses.

Moccasined feet had already pounded a trail through the grass from the agency to the wagon road into the wider valley beyond. At the turn-off he paused, standing there a long time while his eyes strained for a swirl of dust which would announce the coming of his people.

Ah, but it would be a glorious sight when they rode in, he thought. Chief John and his warriors would lead, for John had the seniority of years. But close behind him would come Jo and Sam with their braves, then George and Applegate John and all the subchiefs followed by their own men. Behind them would come the women, also on horseback, for the Rogue Rivers were a rich nation, with wealth measured in horses. Mal-tee-ny would be in the women's group, and perhaps she would be leading Tom's own favorite horse, loaded with the paraphernalia of her profession. No ordinary pack horse could be trusted with the secret masks, the herbs

and charms and potions of a medicine woman. Harriet and Tyee Mary would be there, too, and he smiled a little, thinking how they would marvel at his increase in stature and at his friendship with the white men. Outside of Jo Lane, who had fought them so bravely that he had won their admiration, no Rogue River would trust a white man with friendship, and Tom might have some difficulty convincing his people that Andy and John Miller were worthy. Bringing up the rear would come the extra horses and pack animals. They would be laden with guns, stolen from the whites or taken as prizes in battle, with baskets and beads, with stone knives and treasured bows and arrows, and many skins. How the Yamhills would tremble to see the bearskins of the Rogue Rivers.

He stood there for a long time before he gave up in disappointment. They were not coming today after all.

The afternoon stretched long before him, but he had already made up his mind how to spend his first leisure hours. He would go to the first hill, where the newly arrived company of soldiers was building a fort, and ask to see their horses. A horse was the thing he had missed most since coming here, although he had not realized it until the Dragoons rode into the agency a few days before. He walked on up the trail, his eyes bright with anticipation.

The soldiers wrestling with freshly cut logs looked up warily as he approached.

"Somebody better go for McKay," said one of them. "Find out what this Siwash wants."

Already Tom had discovered that Siwash was a word used by white men which signified little respect for the red. He made himself put down his anger.

"Could I look at your horses?" he asked humbly. "Touch them? Perhaps feed them a little grass? I would not ask to ride one."

The men looked at each other in amazement.

"He speaks English!"

"But what does he want to go fooling around our horses for? I don't figure he's up to much good."

"Get out," ordered one of them, stepping forward a little. In his hand he held a heavy mallet for driving pegs, and he flourished it threateningly. "We want no truck with you. Who are you, anyway? A spy?"

"It's the lieutenant's orders, no redskins allowed on Fort Yamhill," called another. "Before or after we get it built."

Tom stared at them blankly for a moment. The white men he had met since coming to this valley had been friendly. These were suspicious, hostile, and if he advanced a step nearer they would do him bodily harm. He could not know that they were fresh from the bloody Yakima campaign to the north, where they had come upon the scalped body of Captain Hembree staked out on the ground. Remembrance was still in their eyes.

"Get going," repeated the leader. "And don't come back unless you're sent for."

Without a word Tom turned to retrace his steps. Resentment burned fiercely within him, and he remembered these were soldiers and soldiers had always been the enemies of the Rogue Rivers. He was glad he had found out in time before his tribe arrived. Otherwise he might have been too loud in his praises of the white man.

As he neared the agency he saw that the trail ahead was blocked. A horse stood in the center of it, with its owner,

one of the blue-coated soldiers from the fort, on the ground beside it. As he came closer, the animal reared, pawing at the air with a front foot, and the soldier pulled back out of the way. Tom had no eyes for the man, but he could not ignore the horse, a young stallion, only newly broken to the saddle. He appraised the long, slender legs, the arched neck, the coat that gleamed and rippled in the sunlight.

"Hello," called the man, then his face drew up in a scowl of concentration. "What is it now? Klah-how-yu. That's it. Klah-how-yu tilicum."

Tom stopped short, and for the first time regarded the stranger carefully. There was no hostility in this man's eyes, only chagrin. He was a short man, with a round head covered by thick brown hair. His face was tanned by the weather and slightly reddened now with irritation. Although he wore his tunic buttoned up to the chin, two of the buttons had been missed, and there was a gaping section across a chest which already gave signs of developing into barrel proportions.

"What's the matter with your horse?" asked Tom coolly.

The man gave a start of surprise, then a whoop of delight.

"You speak English!" he cried. "It's the luck of the Irish. Why, he's half lost a shoe. That blatherskite of a blacksmith —when I get my hands on him! You see, it's neither on nor off. There's one nail still holding, and he won't hold quiet while I pull it out. Skitterish, that's what he is. You'd think he was a mare."

Tom stared at the stallion hungrily. The animal was worth so much in trade he doubted whether even Chief Jo could afford to buy him.

"Well," demanded the soldier sharply in the tone of one who expects his orders to be carried out instantly. "Can you hold him while I pull it out? He keeps turning circles."

"I'll hold him." He would not show his eagerness. He refused to give one of the despised soldiers that much satisfaction. But there was no hiding the involuntary caress of his hand on the horse's neck, nor the firm assurance with which he took hold of the bridle. The horse quivered as the soldier bent to take up the forefoot, but was still as Tom began to speak. His words were in Athabascan, for at the moment the tongue came naturally to his lips, and the animal seemed to listen and understand what he said. He hardly seemed to notice as the soldier gave a grunt of satisfaction and straightened up, the iron shoe in his hand.

"You know horses," he approved. "Strange. The only ones I've seen around here have been nags."

"I am not from here. My people have always had horses. Good horses. I am a Rogue River."

The soldier gave a start of surprise.

"When did they come?" he demanded angrily. "Why wasn't I notified? I told that farmer at the agency to send word the minute the Rogue Rivers showed up. They're not like these other tribes. There may be trouble."

Tom felt a glow of satisfaction, almost a sense of gratitude to this stranger who knew without being told the Rogue Rivers were different.

"My people have not yet come," he explained. "But they will be here any day. John Miller says so. I—I came before them."

"Oh." The soldier relaxed visibly, and the dark eyes he turned on Tom were speculative. "You're the advance guard,

eh? That's fine, if surprising. You can probably be of some help to us, especially since you speak English. Where'd you learn that?"

"From my friends. From Andy Fuller, and the carpenters when I helped them build the agency, and from John Miller."

There was no denying the interest in the soldier's eyes now.

"Never heard of an Indian working before. You mean you held down a regular job?"

"I was paid. The white man's money. They said I did well."

"Do you know who I am?" The soldier ran his fingers through his untidy hair. When Tom shook his head, he continued. "I'm Lieutenant Sheridan. Lieutenant Philip H. Sheridan. Until they send along somebody to outrank me, I'm in command of Fort Yamhill and the Grand Ronde Reservation. I'm commandant, quartermaster, commissary, and policeman. If you're looking for a job, I can use a good man."

"I can build you a house," said Tom eagerly. Next to the feel of a horse under his hands, he had decided he liked the feel of freshly cut lumber from the big saws which left it smooth and straight and sweet-smelling.

For a moment Sheridan looked startled.

"A house?" he repeated. "That wasn't exactly what I had in mind. I use scouts, natives who know the terrain and the people. I've got McKay, our interpreter, but this part of the country is as strange to him as it is to me. I thought, you being a Rogue River, and since they have the greatest number—a house!"

"I helped build the agency. You can ask John Miller. I have never built a white man's house all myself, and I should have to have lumber and nails——"

"That's easy." Sheridan waved materials away irritabl He seemed to be thinking aloud. "In Texas I had a hous Didn't want to spend the winter in a tent. Wasn't much a house, just poles with a thatched roof. Only so big. But was home." He made up his mind abruptly. "Sure, a hous is a good idea. Build me one."

"The lumber? The nails and hammer and saws?"

"I'll see to them," promised Sheridan. "And when I nee you for other things, settling things straight with your ow people, you'll be right where I can find you."

"I will tell them whatever you wish them to understand, promised Tom. "They will listen to me. I am son to Ma tee-ny, medicine woman of the Rogue Rivers. My fathe was one of Chief Jo's warriors. I know Chief Sam——"

"Good," agreed Sheridan warmly. "You're just the lad need. What's the matter?"

Tom had broken off, his eyes squinting into the valley Although it was early in the year, mud had already dried i the roadbed, and a cloud of dust was rising.

"Your people?" cried Sheridan in excitement. "The Rogu Rivers at last?"

"These are wagons," Tom denied. "Many wagons. A strin of them. My people will arrive on horseback."

"Let's go back to the agency." Sheridan's foot was alread in the stirrup. "You may start to work for me sooner tha you think."

The wagons lumbered slowly down the road, the dust ris ing in a saffron veil to hide their occupants. Sheridan tied hi horse to the hitching rail before the agency and stood besid it, waiting. Tom stood next to him, conscious of many eye on his back. The white officer had singled out no other In

dian for conversation, and already Tom's prestige was mounting in the estimation of the valley and coastal Indians on the agency porch. John Miller came outside and joined them, fussing nervously with his belt.

"You reckon it's the Rogue Rivers, Lieutenant?" he asked. "I been waiting for them, anxious to get things over with, but half dreading it, too. You hear stories about them. Although Tom here ain't one to be any trouble. He's a good boy."

Sheridan shrugged without answering.

"It is not——" began Tom, then closed his mouth in horror. The wagons were close enough now so that he could pick out faces, recognize features, and they were familiar to him.

There was Chief Jo in the first wagon, with a few of his warriors beside him. But there were other faces, too, which Tom did not know, although he recognized them as belonging to Rogue Rivers from sub-tribes. Jo was not even allowed the comfort of riding surrounded entirely by his own men. They must be mixed up, scattered here and there throughout the train which creaked and complained behind. It could only have been worse had they piled women in the same wagon with the warriors. Where were the horses? Where were the dogs, the household possessions, the weapons of the Rogue Rivers? Why were they huddled together in the bed of a white man's wagon, with dust settling a thick layer over their bodies, their eyes blank, expressionless?

"Do you know them, Tom?" Sheridan's brusque voice was softened for once, and there was something like sympathy in his eyes.

"I know them. They are my people. But why——?"

"It was probably safest to do it this way." Sheridan forced his voice to a matter-of-fact tone. He stepped out into the

roadway and motioned to the drivers to head toward the clearing left for the Rogue Rivers in the circle.

Tom's feet felt weighed down with heaviness as he followed the first wagon. He did not understand what was happening, but there must be an explanation. They would give it to him in due time.

There were many wagons in the train, each heavily loaded down with brown-skinned occupants, who climbed down stiffly as though they had been riding a great while. Tom took a deep breath before he went forward.

"Chief Jo," he called in a choked voice. "Chief Jo. It is I. Tom. Mal-tee-ny's son."

Chief Jo turned slowly, the circle of braves about him turning also. They had aged many years and shrunk in size during the time he had been away. He remembered them as younger men, taller, more formidable.

"Mal-tee-ny's son! Tom!" cried Jo in surprise. "He is here. He waits for us in this unhappy place of our destination."

They were surrounding him by this time, their tired faces lightened with smiles of welcome. Everyone spoke at once. They asked questions, so many that he could not tell where to begin answering, but could only stand there beaming foolishly. Then the crowd was pushed back, as a sudden wind pushes against a field of wild grass, and Mal-tee-ny was there.

"Kow-ha-ma! Kow-ha-ma!" she cried. "It is you. You are here. Alive and well. A grown man waiting to greet us. Surely things cannot be so bad since you are here."

Except for a few new lines on her face and the fact that she was soiled with travel, she was exactly as he remembered her. Again he could not speak, but could only stand looking

at her mutely, hoping that her magic would help her read the things that were in his heart.

"What fortune has befallen you?" she demanded, for like the men she seemed filled with questions. "How did you get here? How did you know we were coming, that you awaited our arrival here? Surely your Ta-mah'na-wus must be one of great power that it could let you see these things."

A shrill laugh from the edge of the crowd interrupted her flood of words, and there was something in the sound which made Mal-tee-ny fall silent.

"Ta-mah'na-wus!" shrieked the voice, and Tom recognized it as Martha's. Curiosity had moved the line of Indians from their vigil on the agency porch, and now they stood in a little group of their own on one side of the wagons. "He has no Ta-mah'na-wus. How could he? He has been the slave of the Yamhills, who bought him from the Klamaths and now have sold him to the white man. He is still a slave, for Jesse has the shoes which was the price he brought."

Slowly the Rogue Rivers fell back. Their eyes were upon him, and he could read his own disgrace in their blackness. Only Mal-tee-ny stayed as she was.

"He is still my son," she said clearly.

Lieutenant Sheridan stalked forward, his prominent chin jutting forward belligerently as he took his stand at Tom's side.

"And he's still my carpenter," he announced, scowling. "I don't know what all this nonsense is about, but he promised to build me a house. And he's going to do it."

Sheridan's arm linked itself through Tom's, and he let himself be led away.

CHAPTER XIII

Spokesman for the Whites

"I guess this is the best spot," decided Lieutenant Sheridan, his weathered face puckered with the weight of decision. "There's water close, from that little creek, and protection from the wind. There's a clearing to start with, so we won't have to make one. It's far enough from the fort and the agency so I can get away from them if I want to, but close enough so I can get back in a hurry if they need me."

Tom nodded his agreement. He was glad that he would be working a distance from the Indian encampment, so that he

need not come under the scornful eyes of the Rogue Rivers. He had been foolish in allowing Andy and John Miller to persuade him there was no stigma to having been a slave. In his eagerness to see his old friends, he had forgotten that they would have no reason to change their views on the subject. Had he managed to escape and return home, things might have been different. But he had been here, waiting at the place of his servitude. It would do no good for John Miller to deny ownership of a slave. In Indian eyes, Tom was no longer free and worthy of man's respect, since the Tamah'na-wus would have none of him.

He was glad that Lieutenant Sheridan was a man of prompt decisions, and one who believed in acting on them immediately. Having made up his mind to build a house, he left an order at the noisy little mill for lumber, turned over the day's assignments at Fort Yamhill to a sergeant, and the very morning after the arrival of the Rogue Rivers he ordered Tom to accompany him as he selected a building site. The lieutenant had ridden the chestnut stallion, and Tom had trotted along beside him. They had been out since early morning, but he did not feel physical weariness, only a great crushing weight of hopelessness.

"I'll have as much of the lumber as they have cut sent out the first thing tomorrow," promised Sheridan briskly. "And you can pick out the tools you need at the agency tonight. Borrow as many as you can from Miller, hammers and saws and rules. A lieutenant's pay doesn't stretch very far."

He got down from the saddle, raising his arms in a mighty stretch.

"How about hobbling my horse? You might take out the bit, too, so he can get at some of this grass around here. I

think we can spare a few minutes before we get back to duty."

Sheridan must have known that the act of caring for the horse would give Tom pleasure, for there was pleased understanding in his eyes, although his lips remained unsmiling. He did not mention that it seemed to take a great while as Tom lingered over the task, stretching it out as long as he could. At last, however, there was nothing more to do, and Sheridan patted on the ground beside him.

"Sit down," he ordered. "I want to hear about this slave business."

Reluctantly Tom began the story. The words came hard at first, because again he was realizing the disgrace. Andy Fuller had heard it with anger, anger against those who had brought these conditions about, and irritation against Tom himself because he accepted the beliefs. John Miller had listened with a troubled sympathy which was almost harder to bear. But Sheridan's face was matter-of-fact, his acceptance almost casual. From time to time he asked a curt question, and, before Tom knew it, the whole story was out.

"Well," observed Sheridan as Tom finished speaking. "Looks as though you're in a mess. Things have come to such a pass, you've got nothing more to lose. Nothing worse can happen to you."

"When the spirits of the animals come for me——" began Tom cautiously, and stopped. This was where he and Andy always entered into an argument. But the lieutenant did not argue.

"When that happens, you'll have nothing to say about it. Until then, you're your own master."

"John Miller—"

"Doesn't want a slave. You can't be his slave, because he won't have you. You're free."

"But people know."

"Of course they know. What difference does it make? They probably remember when they see the black face of a former slave, but they can't do anything about it. He's still free. Just as you are. Only you're better off."

"Why?" He didn't believe any of these things the officer was telling him, but he had to ask the question.

"Why? Why, because you're not only free from men, but you're free from spirits. Until the animal spirits come for you —and maybe they don't even want you, since they haven't come so far—you can do as you please. You've got nothing more to lose. You've broken so many taboos now that you might as well break a few more."

"No!" cried Tom in horror.

"How can your punishment be any greater than it already is? The white man has a saying: 'You might as well be killed for a sheep as a goat.' Think it over, Tom, and you'll see what I mean. Only thing to remember is to keep the white man's laws." Sheridan brought an end to the conversation by getting to his feet. "We'd better head back to the agency now. That beef should be about ready to eat by this time."

What the lieutenant suggested was unthinkable, but Tom thought about it anyway. All the way back to the agency, the idea kept returning to worry at his mind. There must be a worse fate than to be forever a captive of the animal spirits, though he could not at the moment think what it might be. Mal-tee-ny would know. He would ask his mother when he had the opportunity.

The sun was low in the sky as they reached the first of the Indian habitations. No cooking fires had been started before any of them, for tonight the tribes would not prepare their own food. In honor of the arrival of the last tribe, John Miller had announced a feast. Several beefs would be roasted, and white man's bread, prepared from the flour which most of the tribesmen regarded with suspicion, would be served. It would be a celebration of their last night in camp together, for early next morning, following one day of rest for the travel-weary Rogue Rivers, individual farms would be apportioned out.

Fifteen hundred Indians milled about in the open space, managing somehow to retain their tribal identity and, although their elbows brushed, to remain aloof. Even the children played in groups of their own friends, and when Cow Creek played with Tualatin it was in teams, one tribe against another.

"I'll be glad when tomorrow's over with," Sheridan shouted above the tumult. "This many Indians crowded in one spot isn't funny."

Tom did not answer. His eyes had gone toward that portion of the circle reserved for the Rogue Rivers. He had been a little surprised when they camped there last night, docilely throwing their tired bodies on the ground at the white man's bidding. They had not insisted on moving back from the others as he had thought they would do. And now it looked as though they were making ready to stay. Squaws had been working, and the familiar stakes and rush-laced walls of summer wickiups filled the place. They were crowded together, narrow as they closed the circle, but widening in a great wedge like a piece of pie in the back.

Tom wanted to go to them, but pride kept him away. They would not drive him from them, they would merely ignore him, as did the Yamhills. He went instead to the place where John Miller and some of the soldiers were cutting red, rare slices from a roasted beef, piling them on one end of long boards between two sawhorses. On the opposite end of the table were many loaves of bread, cut in great chunks.

"We've got enough ahead for them to start," decided John Miller. He spoke in English and in a conversational tone to one of his helpers, but the nearest Indians must have understood, for they waited for no further invitation. Like a swarm of bees pouring from a hive, the valley and coastal tribes were on the food. They filled their hands with meat, eating even as they stepped away from the table. The great stacks disappeared from the table in a few seconds, leaving only bare boards.

"Bring up that second cow," called Miller in agitation. "Somebody start cutting on the other end. We're out of meat already, and the Rogue Rivers haven't even shown up. Or the women or young'uns."

"They are coming now," said Tom quietly, his heart pounding at the sight of those familiar faces.

The men of the Rogue Rivers advanced in one great body, led by their chiefs. They were clean now, for they had spent the morning washing the stains of travel from their bodies. Straight and unsmiling, yet with an air about them which Tom could not place, they came steadily toward the table. Was it defeat? he asked himself. But his people had never admitted defeat. Or resignation? What was it about them that made them seem changed, unlike the tribesmen he remembered. The others fell back to let them through.

"They'll have to wait," said John Miller desperately, "till we get some more sliced."

"Oh, let them cut off their own meat," advised Sheridan irritably. "They don't wait to be served at home, do they?"

Few men argued with Philip Sheridan, and the agent put down the knife, gulped a little, and stepped back. The Rogue Rivers reached the table, surrounding the end where a fresh beef, steaming and sizzling from the fire, had been laid. The circle changed constantly as the chiefs inched their way backward and other warriors pushed to the front to take the vacant places. When the last man had left the table, the agent gave a great gasp of disbelief.

"Bring out another cow," he ordered weakly. "Lucky we roasted four. But now I wonder if even that will be enough."

Even at a feast the women and children were required to wait until the men had finished, and since the warriors came back again and again, Miller worried and fussed that the meat would not hold out.

"There's plenty of bread," pointed out Sheridan sensibly. "But the Rogue Rivers won't touch it, and even some of the others turn up their noses."

Miller had been standing with his head turned in the direction of the longhouses of the Chinooks. Now he turned to them in alarm.

"Somebody's sick out there," he cried. "I can hear them. More than one, too. You don't think one of the beef was tainted?"

"They make themselves sick," explained Tom. It was foolish of the agent to be upset. Had he forgotten this was supposed to be a feast? "They stick fingers down their throats.

When what they have eaten comes up and they are empty, they can hold more and they will return to the feast."

"They can't do that!" The agent's face grew red with indignation. "The idea! Wasting good food that way. Lieutenant, you're the one that's supposed to lay down laws around here. Tell them we'll have no more of that."

"You do it, Tom," said Sheridan quietly. "Tell them I said there was to be no more sticking their fingers down their throats, then coming back to overeat again."

"I? But they wouldn't listen to me!" objected Tom.

"Sometimes my Jargon's not too good," explained Sheridan in answer to Miller's astonished glance. "I forget the words. But Tom knows them, and I'll tell the others that he speaks for me."

He scrambled onto the boards atop the sawhorses, taking his place carefully between the stacks of bread and the greasy meat on the opposite end. His voice was powerful and bellowing, almost incongruous with his stature.

"Tribesmen!" he thundered. After a moment there was silence and he continued. "When I give orders, they must be obeyed. I have such an order for you now. Listen to the voice of my friend, Tom, as he gives you this order of mine."

Sheridan jumped to the ground more smartly than he had climbed up. He pushed Tom forward.

"Tell them," he said crisply. "They are listening."

Tom was not sure of his words. He hardly knew what he was saying as he relayed the lieutenant's command. Everyone was to eat what he wanted, but not overeat. There was to be no regurgitating of food, even though this was a feast. White men did not act thus at their feasts, and the Great

White Father would not tolerate such proceedings from his red children.

"Tell the women and young'uns to come up now." He heard John Miller's frantic whisper from behind, and automatically he translated that message also. He was conscious only of silence and his own voice speaking unfamiliar words to fill that silence, of a great circle of brown, expressionless faces looking up at him.

But they obeyed the lieutenant's orders. There were no more choking sounds from the open space before the longhouses. When he had finished speaking, the women and children crowded forward, and once again Miller himself carved to make sure everyone would get a share.

Tom rose in the estimation of the valley and coastal tribes from that moment. Their tyees spoke to the interpreter for the white officer as their equal, and even the Yamhills greeted him at last with respect. But it was small comfort to him, for his own people, the Rogue Rivers, looked at him coldly as one who had brought dishonor upon them.

Later in the evening Mal-tee-ny hunted for and found her son. To his amazement there was a look in her eyes which had not been there before.

"You are friend to the white chief who rules the soldiers," she accused. "With his own voice he called you so."

"I am going to build a house for him."

"So he said last night." Disapproval was in her voice. "That is woman's work. Better that you should build a canoe, or a bow and arrow."

"White men's houses are not built by women," he explained. "Nor are they made from sticks and mud and woven rushes. They are built by men, from pieces of great trees cut

by the saws in the mill beside the river. He will pay me white man's money for building it."

She looked doubtful. "You do this because you want to? Not because you are a slave?"

"I do it because I want to. I like the feel of wood beneath my hands."

"Perhaps one of the Ta-mah'na-wus of your grandfather has come to you," she cried hopefully. "My father was a great worker in wood. Perhaps his Ta-mah'na-wus, for some reason, overlooked your slavery."

He hated to wipe the hope from her face, but he had never deceived her. He would not do so now.

"The woman of the Yamhills was right. I have no Ta-mah'na-wus," he confessed. "I went to the mountain where the spirits of this place dwell. I stayed there for longer than the full time, but I had no vision."

"Did you do all that you were taught to do?" Mal-tee-ny peered into his face anxiously. "Did you pray by day, and fast and bathe and rub yourself with nettles?"

"I fasted. And I bathed in a spring I found there. But as for the others, there was no time. I—I made myself a bow. It is a good bow. I made it as Old Hairy One taught me."

"And you wonder why no Ta-mah'na-wus came to you," she scolded.

He hung his head, waiting for the familiar tongue-lashing which he knew would follow. He awaited it with an eagerness he had never known, for to hear his mother lecturing him, telling him what he had done wrong and what he must do to mend his ways, would be pleasant to hear after so long a time. To his surprise, she did not go on, and when he heard Sheridan's voice he understood why.

"Tom, Miller's worried about his supplies. The wagon's supposed to be in tomorrow with more beef, but sometimes there's a delay. It could be a couple of days late."

He looked up. Sheridan was smiling, with a look which also included Mal-tee-ny. She did not return the smile, but stood blankly, expressionless.

"Miller says you and Andy Fuller used to be pretty lucky at hunting," continued Sheridan. "My house can wait a day if you want to go out and see what you can bring in. They've cleaned us out of everything tonight. Bread, too, once they got going on it."

"I will hunt," agreed Tom. "But to hunt for so many—to bring back game for all these tribes——"

"Oh, not for them," explained Sheridan hastily. "They've already drawn their rations for the week. The Rogue Rivers got theirs this morning. And most of the tribes have dried salmon and roots that they brought with them. No, Miller's thinking of his own stomach this time. He's out of fresh meat for himself. You'll only be hunting for him."

"Then I will go," agreed Tom. "I will cross the river on the logs that Andy Fuller and I made into a bridge. I am almost certain to get game there."

When he was gone, Mal-tee-ny turned to her son impatiently.

"What did he say? And how is it that you can speak the tongue of the white man? No Rogue River has done so before."

"I learned it from a friend of mine, a white boy." There was no need of going into the subject of Andy Fuller now. He and his mother had many things to say to each other, but the center of a churning, belching, noisy crowd was not the

place. "He asked me to hunt for the agent tomorrow. To bring back game, for he has given all of his meat at the feast, and tomorrow he will be hungry."

"You are a hunter?" she explained in surprise. "The white man has given you one of his guns, because you are his friend?"

"I use the bow I made. And I have hunted ever since I came here. I have sought out the trails to water, and the feeding places, as La-pel-la Chaco taught us to do when we were boys. I am," he finished proudly, "a very good hunter."

"And where will you hunt tomorrow, boastful one?" she demanded, her voice showing her disapproval.

"I have made a bridge across the river." He pointed. "Tomorrow when John Miller assembles the Indians and gives each family a plot of ground to farm, I shall be in the forest hunting."

Mal-tee-ny's eyes looked into the crowd, moving here and there as though she were seeking someone. Then, without a word of farewell, she left him, pushing her way through the forest of brown bodies, toward the encampment of the Rogue Rivers.

Tom watched her go with disappointment, conscious suddenly of a hundred things he had planned to say. In the short time they had been together they had spoken only of things that did not matter, and now, even before he could put out a hand to restrain her, she had gone.

He inched his way through the crowd toward the loading shed at the side of the agency. He had been sleeping there on a pile of sacks while he awaited the arrival of his own people. Last night he had returned to the shed at bedtime, and he would sleep there again tonight. But tomorrow, he

told himself, after he returned from hunting, he would take the blanket which John Miller had given him from the agency store, and move out to the place where he would build Sheridan's new house. Like the white carpenters who built the agency, he would camp on the job. There was nothing to call him back here.

CHAPTER XIV

The Rogue Rivers Hunt

Long before daylight Tom was awake. Dawn and twilight were the best times to hunt, providing one knew the ground, and he did. In the total darkness of night, it would be foolhardy to attempt such a thing in a strange forest. In the daylight many of the animals would seek cover, and only a lucky chance would bring man on their hiding place. But in the early morning and during the twilight hours, the animals would feed and go down to the river to drink. That was the best time for the hunter.

He arose quietly, shaking out his blanket and folding it into a square, not that such tidiness seemed important to him, but John Miller would be upset if it weren't done. He took up his bow and arrow, which Andy had retrieved from the Yamhills, and stepped out of the shadows into the open. The moon, a thin slice low in the sky, shed little light, but the stars gave enough. They were the same stars that looked down on the valley of the Rogue River, but here they seemed different. He had experienced a little trouble at first getting used to the feeling of the stars over the Yamhills, but he had done so. Now they were familiar companions, a little colder

and not so vigilant as they had seemed at home, but friendly enough.

He crossed the open space in the circle, and came out between the encampments of the Santiams and the Cow Creeks. He could hear the sounds of many people sleeping, snores, loud breathing, an occasional fragment of sentence as someone muttered in his sleep. He felt a lack, a sense of something missing, and realized it was the absence of dogs. Dogs had been taken away from the Indians, along with the guns and the horses of the Rogue Rivers, since the first part of their journey to the reservation had been made by boat, and there was no room for dogs.

The footbridge Tom and Andy had made across the river was a little below the agency, close to the former site of the Yamhill village. It had taken them several days to build it, and no small effort. They had discovered a tall tree growing on one bank which, if felled so that it would crash in the proper direction, should reach across the river bed to the opposite side. Andy had been against the idea at first because of the work involved.

"Even after we get it down, and providing it does reach across to the other bank, we'd have to trim off branches. Otherwise, they'll trail down into the current and catch things that float along. They'll plug up the stream like a dam."

"We will cut them off."

"It's going to be a job. And then supposing we do get it built, and next season there comes high water and washes it away? This river's nothing compared to what it is sometimes. I've seen it to the top of the bank and over."

"When it floats away, we can make another bridge."

"All right." Andy had sighed, but given in. "I'll do it this time, but if it goes I won't promise to start all over. It would be a good thing for you to have, though. When I'm not here with the raft, you can still get across on our bridge."

Luckily the water had not risen high enough this year to wash the trunk loose. It was still there, just as he and Andy had left it. It slanted across from the high bank to the flat shore on the opposite side where the forest came almost down to meet it. He was nearly there when he became aware of a strange shadowy mass in the starlight. As he came closer it dissolved into the figures of men. There were many of them, taller than the valley Indians and without the flattened heads of the Chinooks. They were his own people, and every male of the Rogue Rivers seemed to be at the footbridge. La-pel-la Chaco stood out to meet him.

"You go to hunt," said La-pel-la Chaco, his eyes unsmiling.

"I go to hunt," answered Tom humbly. He felt young and untried before this greatest hunter of the Rogue Rivers. "I go to find meat for the agent at the reservation."

"For the white man whose slave you are," nodded La-pel-la Chaco. "Mal-tee-ny told us. She also said that you have hunted these woods before. Even as the slave of the Yamhills you hunted. And that your arrow speeds fast and true, that you are lucky in stalking game."

"I have been lucky," agreed Tom slowly. "But it is because, as a boy, I listened when you spoke, La-pel-la Chaco. I remembered what you said of seeking out trails and feeding places, and of the wind which carries the scent of man. I remembered, too, how you held your bow and put the arrow to the string, and how you spoke of the length of time to wait for the game to come in range, and how to judge the wind

which might blow the arrow slightly from its course. If I have had luck, La-pel-la Chaco, it is because of the things I learned from you as a boy."

La-pel-la Chaco grunted. If he were pleased, he gave no acknowledgment. And now it was time for Tipso, the Hairy One, the bowmaker, to step forward. Tipso's legs grew short from his body and were slightly bent like the bows he so excelled in making. Unlike the other members of his tribe, he was no longer careful to pluck out the beard which grew on his cheeks and chin, and gray strands of hair against his weathered skin gave it a curiously mottled appearance.

Tipso said no word of greeting. He held out a hand on which the skin grew loosely flapping, and Tom placed the bow he had made on Spirit Mountain in the knotted fingers. Tipso turned it critically, testing the strength of the wood, holding it high so that he could see the curve against the stars. He plucked at the string, then again held out his hand, this time for arrows.

"The wood was seasoned after the bow was finished," he accused.

"I had but nine days for the making," said Tom briefly. "I knew it was wrong, but there was no other way."

"It will do for a while," conceded Tipso grudgingly. "But unless the wood is seasoned first, a bow will not serve the lifetime of a man."

"You will show us these trails and feeding places that you have found," said La-pel-la Chaco gruffly.

"You would hunt with me?" exclaimed Tom in amazement.

La-pel-la Chaco shook his head.

"The Rogue Rivers do not hunt with slaves," he reminded Tom. "You still belong to the white man. But because you are

the son of your father, and Mal-tee-ny is your mother, we will let you show us what you have found in this strange forest. It has been almost a moon since we have tasted game. It took a great while to come to this place, first by water, then in the jolting wagons. All that time we were given white man's meat, which is very poor food and lacking in flavor. There is not one among us who does not know craving for food of the forest."

"Then I will help you," promised Tom. In spite of the fact they denied him his old place among them, they were still his own people. He felt that he himself had been lucky in that he had been forced to resort to beef only a few times during his servitude. "We will go first to the favorite feeding place of the deer. I will show you the spot from which a hunter may approach unnoticed. I have never gone there without getting meat."

La-pel-la Chaco nodded gravely, but Tom's tongue was so unloosened from the pleasure of talking with his former friends that he could not stop speaking.

"Then I will return with you to the agency and lead the women to the place so they can carry out the game. All this will take only a short time, and you will be able to divide the meat and carry it with you when John Miller takes you to your new farms."

He stopped, suddenly aware that every face was gathering in a stubborn frown.

"We will not go to farms," growled old Chief John. "They did not say that we must do such a thing when they brought us here. We did not agree to that, only to come to this strange valley, which they said had much game and roots and berries."

"Now that we are here, we will stay together," announced Chief Jo. "I am a chief, and I will have my own people close to me."

"We will not return to the place of encampment until late in the day," said John firmly. "We will stay here until it is too late for the agent to do what he thinks to do."

"There will be tomorrow," Tom reminded them uneasily, thinking of Lieutenant Sheridan. They might be able to bluff the agent, but the white officer was a different matter.

"We will hunt again tomorrow," laughed Chief Sam scornfully. "And the day after, and the day after that. Our women will not move without their men, and the men will not be there."

The day's hunting was successful for the Rogue Rivers, but Tom returned to the agency without meat. He had not been permitted to shoot with the tribesmen, but they did not exclude him entirely. When the sun was well up and they relaxed under the trees, he was allowed to sit at the outer edge of the circle, and occasionally a remark was directed to him. Tom tried not to notice that those boys of his own age who had been successful on their quests took places nearer the established warriors. He told himself it was almost like old times.

As he listened to their talk, he understood a little the reason for their change of attitude, and why they had agreed to come here. The chiefs had realized the futility of their stand against the ever-increasing whites in the Rogue River valley. They came in hordes to dig for the yellow metal in the hills or to shake it in pans from the water of the streams. Many more soldiers had arrived to protect the white men. Game had been driven back, meadows and fields in which the

Rogue Rivers had depended for certain food were plowed up, and the native plants grew there no longer. Sam's valley and Jo's, even Chief John's more rugged land, became poorer in their yields. They were worth little to the Indians now.

There had been a great battle in which the white soldiers were victorious. Peace talk was made, and the emissaries of the Great White Father offered the Rogue Rivers many presents to leave their own territory. Tom's eyes bulged as he heard the things which had been promised: 12 horses, one beef, two yokes of oxen, with yokes and chains, one wagon, 100 men's coats, 50 pairs of pantaloons, 50 hickory shirts, two blacksmith shops with tools and irons.

"Where are these things?" he demanded, forgetting that his role was that of a listener only.

"They promised they would be waiting for us here," answered Chief John gruffly. "Now that we know the taste of beef, they may keep it for themselves. But the other things were promised, and should be given."

"Horses especially," grumbled one of the braves. "Would we have agreed to twelve horses had we known that those we already owned would be taken from us?"

"They promised other things, too," said John, frowning. "Farms and hospitals, medicine and doctors, and schools. Farms we do not want. Medicines and doctors we have. I do not know what hospitals and schools are, but the white man should keep his promise."

"Perhaps they are like farms," suggested La-pel-la Chaco. "In that case, we do not want them either. However, this land seems good for hunting. Game has not been driven back as it was in our valley. In time, we may even get used to it."

The Rogue Rivers shook their heads firmly. Even before

they arrived, they had made up their minds to dislike the reservation. They agreed to come only because they were outnumbered and had no choice. They were sure that they would never get used to this valley.

"We will stay together while we are here," declared Sam. "We will not be separated."

"It will make things easier if the time comes when we decide to return home," agreed Chief John.

It was late in the day when they arrived at the agency, and Tom was surprised to find everything exactly as it had been. Cooking fires burned before all the tribal encampments. Children played at their usual games, and old men smoked as always before their doorways. No one had moved to the farms.

A little sheepishly, he presented himself to the agent. It was humiliating to confess that he had returned empty-handed. Sheridan was also there, checking a list of supplies which had been delivered, part of which were for the use of his Dragoons. With relief Tom smelled meat frying over the fire. The wagons had not been late after all, and John Miller would not have to go hungry.

"Any luck, Tom?" called Sheridan cheerfully.

"I did not shoot," he confessed. "I showed my people the trails and feeding places."

"So that's where they were," snorted Miller angrily. "I thought the squaws were lying, and that maybe the men had cleared out."

"I told you they would return," said Sheridan. "They wouldn't go far away and leave their women here."

"Just the same, they sure upset the apple cart," scolded Miller, glaring at Tom as though he were in some way to

blame. "When the other tribes found out the Rogue Rivers had cleared out for the day, they wouldn't move either. You'd think they liked it here."

"They do," agreed Sheridan briefly. "It's like a camp meeting, or a picnic that goes on and on."

"Well, it's not going on any longer," declared the agent hotly. "Tomorrow they move. Tomorrow they take up farms, every blasted one of them. They spread out. The mill is cutting lumber so they can build themselves houses. Our wagons will haul it out to their farms. It will be too late in the year to get in much in the way of crops, but by next spring they'll be ready to get going."

"Why did they hunt today, Tom?" asked Sheridan, watching him shrewdly.

"They were hungry for game. They did not like the white man's beef."

"They can hunt as much as they want to when they get on their own farms," said Miller. "You tell them that, Tom. But until we get them settled, they won't have time for it."

"Did they say anything else? Did they have any other grievance besides the beef?" demanded Sheridan.

"They were promised presents when they arrived. Horses and oxen, coats and pantaloons and shirts. They have not received them."

"I do the best I can," said the agent quickly. "The horses and oxen ain't here. Your guess is as good as mine as to when they'll come. We're stocked with coats and pants and shirts sent for the Rogue Rivers, but I don't dare give them out."

"Why not?"

"Because I've got to treat all tribes equal. And the annui-

ties for some of the others ain't come. The Lord only knows when they will."

"Why are the presents for the Rogue Rivers here first, when they were the last to arrive?" frowned Sheridan.

"Because Congress got around to ratifying their treaty first. We've had trouble with the Rogue Rivers. Congress knows it. They read enough compaints. They wanted to get things settled, so when their treaty come back to Washington, they signed it straight off. While some of these other tribes, like the Molallas and the Clackamas, signed treaties too, nobody east of the Rockies ever heard of them. Their treaties sit back in Washington in some drawer. How can I tell them that? How can I say, until Congress gets around to reading the paper you signed, nothing will be sent for you? They wouldn't understand. Up to now they've been peaceful enough, but if I give the Rogue Rivers presents and none to them, I wouldn't want to say what might happen."

"I see your point," frowned Sheridan.

"Why were their horses taken?" asked Tom slowly. "A man's wealth is measured by his horses. You have made them poor."

"So they wouldn't try to go home," explained Sheridan, refusing to meet Tom's eyes. "If they had been allowed to ride their horses overland, they would have found their way back. As it was, they came up the coast by sea, and from Portland by wagon. We want them to stay here, Tom. In time they'll be happy enough. And, someday, I hope they'll get their horses back."

"But the farmland is here now," continued the agent eagerly. "And the tools to work it. You're the law, Lieutenant. Go out and tell them they've got to move tomorrow."

"No." Sheridan shook his head stubbornly. "I won't do it."

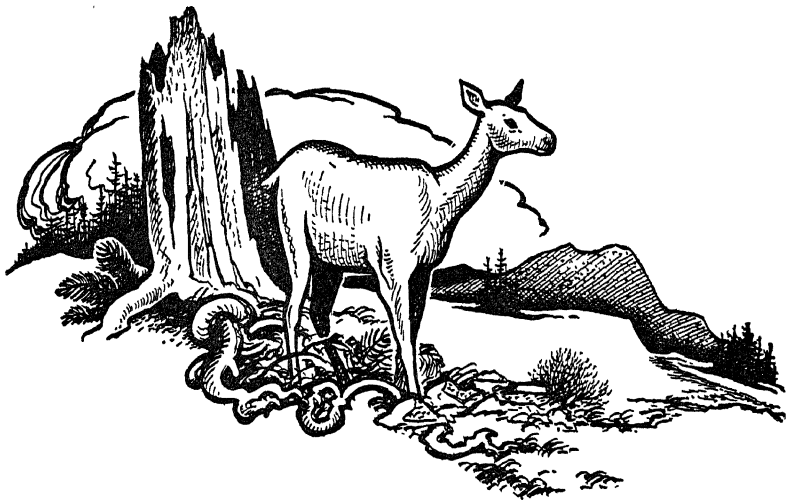
"But they won't go otherwise. Not unless you force them."

"I have fifty Dragoons," said Sheridan slowly, trying to hold his temper in check. "That might be enough to force fifteen hundred Indians to obey, particularly since we have guns and they do not. We might scatter them on their farms, which you hold in such esteem, but keeping them there would be a different matter. Besides, I'm inclined to think they have a grievance."

"Maybe they do. But there's nothing we can do about it," bristled the agent. "All right, Lieutenant, I can't make you force them at gun point to move to their farms, but will you do this? Will you tell them there's to be no more hunting until they are separated and on their own land? They won't starve, for we've got food to give them. But if they get hungry enough for the taste of game, it may bring them around."

Sheridan shrugged his shoulders and got slowly to his feet.

"You're a cleverer man than I gave you credit for, John Miller," he said. "And I suppose I can't refuse your request, or I'll be accused of not co-operating. Come along, Tom. I'll probably need an interpreter."



CHAPTER XV

Game from the Sky

"This mountain has great power?" demanded Mal-tee-ny anxiously. Her voice was hoarse from chanting over the dead and dying, and her eyes were bloodshot from lack of sleep. "You are sure of this?"

It had been over a week since the day Tom had spent in the forest with the Rogue Rivers, and in that time tragedy had overtaken them. A sickness had come upon them, spreading from wickiup to wickiup, and every day funeral trains moved up the trail to the burial ground at the foot of Spirit Mountain. From where he was working on Sheridan's new house, Tom was too far away to see them pass, but often the

wind carried the shrill chanting of the mourners to him, and he would stop to listen, his face set in a troubled frown. Now Mal-tee-ny had come to him, asking of the mountain of the spirits.

"It is where the medicine men of the Yamhills go to renew their power," nodded Tom, his own voice troubled. "I saw the place where they do whatever is necessary to call their Ta-mah'na-wus to them, a rounded bowl in the earth, and a long trench leading to it. It is on the very top of the mountain."

Mal-tee-ny looked at him quickly.

"You saw this with your own eyes?"

"I saw it. I even dared once to walk in it. Up and down I walked, hoping that the spirits of the mountain would come quickly," he explained. "It was a long wait. Every moment I thought they would come, and as the time stretched on, I hoped to bring it to an end."

"But they did not come," said Mal-tee-ny slowly.

"They did not come."

"Did you dream when you slept?" she asked after a moment. "Did any vision come to you?"

"I dreamed only of our people," admitted Tom sadly. "Of you, of Old Tipso, and Chief Jo. You were the ones who came to me in my dreams. I had no vision."

"But you lived," she frowned thoughtfully. "You were a slave, yet you went to the mountain of the spirits, and lived. You put foot in the sacred bowl, and still you lived. I do not understand it."

"There have been other things, too, which I do not understand," he began, thinking of the squirrel he had killed, the rabbit he had eaten before he was purified. He would have

told her of these things, but before he could do so Mal-tee-ny got heavily to her feet.

"Perhaps the mountain does not have the same power for the Rogue River that it has for these tribes who live here," she said doubtfully. "But I must go there anyway. I must try. My own power has grown weak. Every day more of our people die, and I can do nothing to save them."

"There have been more deaths?"

"Three more this morning," she nodded. "Yesterday, there were five all told. Those who bury the dead grow rich. They demand more and more for their services, and because almost every family has lost one by death, and sometimes two, many are already beggared. After the burial fee is paid, there often remains nothing to burn on the grave for the dead to take with him."

Tom shook his head sadly.

"What devil is causing this sickness which attacks our people?"

"The white man is poisoning us!" she declared with bitterness. "It is not enough that he has driven us from our own land. He must make us eat his food, and it is poisoned."

"But Lieutenant Sheridan took away his order that the Rogue Rivers could not hunt," he reminded her quickly. "Several days ago he sent word that our people could go to the forest after game whenever they pleased. They did not have to wait until they were settled on farms to hunt."

"And who among us will now hunt?" she demanded scornfully. "Even those who are still free from sickness have no heart to leave their stricken friends and families to go into the forest. Besides, the poison attacks our warriors and hunters as well as women and children. The best hunter

among us was one of the three visited by death this morning."

"La-pel-la Chaco?" he cried in horror. It was impossible to think of La-pel-la Chaco, who had taught him how to hold a bow, how to stalk game, and when to let fly an arrow, as no longer living.

"Do no speak his name aloud!" cried Mal-tee-ny. "Are you out of your mind? Do you want his spirit to take you with him for company?"

"I would not mind," said Tom slowly. "I would rather be in company with his spirit than in some other places."

"It would be poor company," said Mal-tee-ny sternly. "Already he has paid those who bury the dead to take care of his two sons who have gone this last week to the Happy Hunting Ground. Two sons! Think of it! The fees for burial, and the goods which had to be burned for their use! Our greatest hunter died so poor that there is nothing left for himself. Even his bow and all his arrows are gone, burned on the grave of his second son. His wife is beside herself."

"What will she do?"

Mal-tee-ny shrugged hopelessly.

"I do not know. But I must go to the mountain. I must get a renewal of my power to try to stop this poison before we are all wiped out."

After she had gone, Tom put down his tools and sat on a pile of lumber trying to decide what he must do. Sheridan's new house was already taking form, for he had been working diligently from daylight until he could no longer see to drive a nail.

After the day he had spent in the forest with his people, he had left them alone. He was an outsider now, and the

truth, while hard to accept, was not to be denied. He wished Andy were here. He needed someone to talk with, an ear on which to pour out the fears and the problem which he was now taking on his own shoulders. But Andy was busy helping on his father's farm. This was one of the seasons when work piled up, and it might be weeks before Tom could expect to see his friend. His own task could not wait. It must be done now, today.

He put aside his tools, covering them carefully with a piece of canvas, and started down the trail to the agency. His mind was troubled and filled with fear, but he made himself go. He owed much to La-pel-la Chaco.

Despite John Miller's arguments, no one had moved from the encampment. Until the Rogue Rivers consented to a separation, the others insisted on remaining where they were. A few from other tribes had also been stricken with the sickness, but not to the extent that the Rogue Rivers were suffering. As Tom walked before the villages of the Haulpums, the Clackamas, the Molallas, past the longhouses of the Chinooks, more than one hand was raised in greeting. The patronage of the commandant continued to impress the valley Indians. This was a friend of the whites who would someday bestow presents upon them, therefore he was acceptable, even sought after by them.

He came to the wickiups of his people. Before almost every one, small knots of mourners cried and beat themselves in despair. Many of the women he passed had cut their hair as a sign of grief, and had plastered the shorn heads with a mixture of mud and pitch which lay flat against their skulls like a cap. They must continue to mourn until the new hair

had lifted the cap from their heads, when it would be cut off.

In the center of the circle of wickiups, Sam Patch, who was second only to Mal-tee-ny in the matters of medicine, and some of the younger medicine men and women danced frantically in a vain attempt to stop this thing which was happening to their people. Even Old Sookie, the Devil Woman, whose evil breath was certain to bring death to anyone who fell in her bad graces, joined with the medicine men and women who worked only for good. Sookie danced today as hard as anyone.

Tom gave them only a quick glance in passing, his eyes searching from doorway to doorway for Lawal-low, the widow of La-pel-la Chaco. At last he found her. No one crouched with her in her misery. Her friends had their own grief to bear, and she had no money to pay hired mourners. She was too far gone in suffering to make an outcry, for in the space of one week she had lost two sons and a husband. Now she had nothing left with which to pay the burial fee of the last, and how could he reach the Happy Hunting Ground without proper burial? Tom stopped directly in front of her, and her eyes looked at him without seeing him.

"Lawal-low," he said gently. "Mal-tee-ny, my mother, told me what has happened. I am here to do what must be done."

She saw him then, and for a moment there was a glimmer of hope in her dull eyes, which died almost as soon as it was there.

"What can you do?" she said heavily.

"I can bury my old teacher, the great hunter of our people. I can start him on his way to the Happy Hunting Ground in the manner of a warrior."

"You are Mal-tee-ny's son," she said slowly. "And the son of your father, who was the friend of my husband. True, you are a slave, but such work is not for you. It is for those who do nothing else, and who work for pay. I have nothing with which to pay them or you."

"I do not ask for pay. I do it for old friendship."

"I cannot let you," she protested. "When she hears, Mal-tee-ny will put a curse on me."

"I have done it before," he admitted, shame rising at the disclosure. "It is not the first time, Lawal-low. Tell my mother that, and she will not blame you. Tell her I came of my free will."

She looked at him helplessly, torn between her desire to give her husband proper burial, and fear of the medicine woman.

"I even have a gift to send with him to the Happy Hunting Ground," continued Tom, his fingers fumbling at his belt. A moment later, the knife which Andy had given him lay in his open palm. "It is a white man's knife. With it, I made a bow and arrow. When our greatest hunter reaches the Happy Hunting Ground, he can use it to make himself a new bow, for Mal-tee-ny says his own went with the body of his second son."

She reached out and touched the knife, unable to believe the good fortune. Then her face fell with disappointment.

"It will not burn. How can it reach there?"

"We will place it in the hand of the hunter," he told her firmly. "He can carry it with him. It will reach there as soon as he. As you know, the whites will no longer allow us to cremate our dead as we did at home. We must bury them in the ground, as do the tribes who live here already, or

place them in canoes, as do the Chinooks. The dead must not be burned, they say. I do not know why."

"Nor do I." She spoke viciously, spitting in the dust beside her. "It is just another thing they do to make us suffer. But are you not afraid to take over the duties of those who serve the dead? Do you know the rites you must go through to purify yourself afterward?"

"I know," he said soberly. "But they do not concern me. Not any more."

She looked at him curiously, and when he did not explain his words, she nodded toward the wickiup behind her. She accepted his offer to provide burial for her husband, and there was nothing more to be said. As he came out, bearing the tall body of La-pel-la Chaco in his arms, she began to wail. She was free to do so now; her duties as a widow were beginning. Soon she would cut her hair and plaster it with mud and pitch before she joined the other women whose families had been visited by death.

It was late afternoon before Tom completed his duties and returned to the house he was building. It had been a grueling experience, washing La-pel-la Chaco's body and wrapping it and his own precious jackknife in the new trade blanket which he had managed to wangle from John Miller without telling him for what it was to be used. Miller had loaned him a spade, too, which made the work of scooping out a shallow grave much easier than if he had been forced to use a digging stick. But the burial ground itself was more eerie and frightening than when he had gone there with Ne-whah and the dead chief of the Yamhills. The Chinooks had made use of the oak trees in the groves as swings to support their burial canoes. Each one held a dead

Chinook, surrounded by his prized possessions on earth, and because they were placed in an upright position, Tom felt that their sightless eyes were on him as he worked. He was nervous and upset, glad to be away from the place, and a little relieved to find that Lieutenant Sheridan was awaiting him at the building site.

"You played hooky," accused Sheridan sternly. "I pay you to build me a house, and you just lay off when you feel like it."

"I buried an old friend," said Tom soberly. "There was no one else to do it."

The disapproval faded from the lieutenant's face.

"Who?" he demanded. "Tell me about it."

Tom told him about La-pel-la Chaco. Because talk was a relief to the pent-up emotions within him, he went on to speak of the great sickness itself and how the tribe was suffering.

"They say you are poisoning them," he finished. "Are you?"

"No!" roared Sheridan angrily. "I want to keep them alive. We all do. I don't know what this thing is, this plague, this epidemic. We've got Dr. Glisan at the fort who's ready to treat them for it. He wants to. But they won't let him near them to examine them. They want their own witch doctors. They'll have none of us. They hide their sick until they're already dead, and then it's too late to do anything but bury them."

"Why will you not let our people burn our dead as we have always done?" asked Tom. "Why must we put them in the ground like the valley Indians, or hang them in canoes like the fish eaters? Is it, as they say, because you want to add to our suffering?"

"No." Sheridan got up from the pile of lumber where he had been sitting and stalked up and down, his hands behind his back. "It's just orders, that's all. Don't ask me why. Cremation—well, there are white men who believe in cremation, and older races than we are who have always followed it. But most Americans, at least those here on the west coast, call it heathenish. Dust to dust, they say. There's nothing that I can do, Tom, except to relay the orders as they come to me. I wish you'd tell them that. For all I care personally, they could burn their dead in a funeral pyre that reached up to the sky."

Tom nodded miserably.

"But there's one thing I can do," said Sheridan fiercely. "And you can help. We're going to get some game for the Rogue Rivers."

"Game?"

"I talked it over with Doc Glisan, and we think part of this sickness could be change of diet. They're not used to beef and flour. They don't like it when they get it. A stomach full of venison or elk will do a lot to build up their spirits, too. They're too sick to hunt for themselves, so we'll do it for them."

"I cannot hunt with you," objected Tom. "I have just buried one of the dead. I am impure."

"Take a bath then," said Sheridan impatiently. "There's a whole creek of water down there to do it in. Only hurry it up. It's getting on toward evening."

"But I can't. For one moon I cannot kill, and whatever I kill will be impure."

"Sulphur and blue blazes!" thundered Sheridan. "You'll

do as I tell you." Then his voice softened a little. "You killed an animal once before, didn't you? Before you'd waited for a whole month to be up."

"Yes."

"And nothing happened."

"But it could happen. It could happen at any time."

"Then let it happen. And since they can get you only once, you might as well shoot again."

"But I cannot give my kill to my people," he protested. "It will harm them."

"Did whatever you killed hurt Andy Fuller when he ate it?"

"No, but he is white."

"Makes no difference." Sheridan shook his head vigorously. His sun-reddened face wrinkled in concentration. "Listen, Tom. The white man has a Ta-mah'na-wus, too. Greater than yours. More powerful. Comes from the Great Spirit. I'm not very good at explaining these things, but the white man's Ta-mah'na-wus is looking after you now. It makes it all right for you to kill a deer and take it to your people. It makes it all right for them to eat it, too."

"Why should a white man's Ta-mah'na-wus look after me? I am not white. I am a Rogue River."

"Because he doesn't care what you are," said Sheridan irritably. "I tell you, I'm no preacher. I'm no good at explaining these things. But someday one will come along here, and he'll know all the words to make you understand. Until that happens, don't argue. Just do as I say. I've never lied to you yet. You trust me, don't you?"

"Yes," said Tom after a moment. "I trust you." He went slowly down to the creek to wash, his mind filled with this

strange Ta-mah'na-wus of the white man which someday would be explained to him.

Hunting was good that evening. Sheridan had wanted to shoot on the slopes of Spirit Mountain, where he had observed a number of elk stand fearlessly in the open. This, however, Tom refused to do, and the lieutenant did not press his suggestion. He was quite satisfied that he had won his first point in persuading Tom to hunt at all.

They each got two deer before darkness fell and made further stalking impossible. Then arose the problem of delivering them to the Rogue Rivers.

"We can't be seen carrying them in ourselves," said Sheridan thoughtfully. "I've packed my share of game, but I can't do it now as commandant, or I'll lose face. And you can't take it in after the chore you did today, or no one will eat it."

Tom shut his lips tightly. He had let fly the first arrow, expecting that the animal spirits would certainly come for him this time. When they did not, he had forced himself to agree with the lieutenant's argument: nothing worse could happen now. He had given himself over to the pleasure of the hunt, almost forgetting for the time the reason for it. Now that the game was to be given to the unsuspecting Rogue Rivers, the old fear returned.

"I could send it in with some of my own men," continued Sheridan, thinking aloud, "but even though I told them to be quiet, they'd rouse everybody, and four deer won't go around. This game goes to the Rogue Rivers. They need it worst. We'll shoot for the others later."

"Perhaps your Ta-mah'na-wus is trying to tell us by these difficulties that we should not give this game to my people," said Tom.

"Nonsense. The white man's Ta-mah'na-wus doesn't hold with wasting good food," objected Sheridan briskly. "We'll just wait until it's dark and everyone's asleep. Then we'll carry it in ourselves."

It was a long wait until the fires died down and the camps grew quiet. Under any other circumstances, Tom would not have minded, for Sheridan was in a jovial mood. He told stories of things he had done, of places he had been, all of which were strange to the Rogue River. He made jokes and seemed in a high humor, as though he were set on some mischief or prank. Tonight Tom could only listen dully, his thoughts always returning to the four deer, their feet tied over poles for easy carrying, two of which might bring final destruction to his people. Several times he tried to argue with the white officer against delivering the meat, but each time he was overruled. At length, Sheridan got to his feet.

"It's safe now," he said, his dark eyes sparkling in the starlight. "Grab hold. Let's go."

They walked quietly, stealthily, through the agency square, and because there were no dogs to sound a warning, they passed the encampments of the coastal and valley Indians without being discovered. At the Rogue River wickiups, sounds of wailing still continued. They would carry on throughout the night, but because the same voices had been chanting for many hours, their owners mourned in a stupor, ears deadened to all but their own grief.

Sheridan motioned to Tom to thrust the poles forward, pushing on the venison so that it would slide a little way into the center clearing. Then, to Tom's surprise, he felt himself jerked sideways, behind the shelter of the first wickiup.

Sheridan was not content to leave his gift and run away. He wanted to see the reception it was given.

There was a break in the chanting. Then someone stirred. They heard a cry of surprise, then other voices answering, asking what was wrong. What had happened? Tom tried to pull away, but Sheridan's hand held his arm tightly.

"Game!" cried a voice from behind the wickiup. "Venison! Four deer!"

"Where did they come from? How did they get here?"

"From the sky." This was a woman's voice, high and hysterical. "I was weeping here for my dead, when suddenly I heard a great noise from above as though the sky had been torn open. Then something dropped with a mighty thud. It was these four deer."

"It is the greatest hunter of our people, he who left us this morning, who has sent them to us. He knows what it is to feel hunger, and this is his last gift to us."

"But is it safe to eat them? These are from the Happy Hunting Ground. Is it safe for live men to eat of game from there?"

"It is safe!" Tom recognized the voice of Sam Patch, the medicine man, taking charge now that Mal-tee-ny was absent. "I will make certain medicine that will drive out anything harmful to living men from this venison. Nothing of evil will remain in the meat once I have made this powerful medicine. Women, build up the fires. We will eat and gain strength, for that is why this game was sent to us."

Only then did Sheridan's hand tug at Tom's arm to pull him away. In the starlight they were both smiling, Sheridan with satisfaction, but Tom with relief. The venison would be made safe.

CHAPTER XVI

Death of the Devil Woman

The epidemic among the Indians ended as suddenly as it began. Everyone had an explanation. Dr. Glisan, the army physician at Grand Ronde agency, said it had probably run its course, although, since the tribesmen would not permit him to examine any of their sick, he had to admit it was only a guess. Phil Sheridan claimed the Indians were brought back to health by the quantities of fresh meat which he and Tom killed and delivered secretly each night.

"There's nothing like good red meat to build up a man's blood," he boasted. "Besides, it's fresh, which is more than you can say for the beef they've been sending us lately. If they brought it in on the hoof, it would be one thing. But they slaughter up in the valley and haul it in by wagons. The blowflies finish off half of it before it ever gets here."

"It was the fresh power which came to me on Spirit Mountain which gave me strength to overcome the devils of sickness," claimed Mal-tee-ny. "The spirits on that mountain are very great. Had I not been a medicine woman in my own right, they might have overcome me when I went there.

Since I was, they aided me by giving me fresh power to bring the sickness to an end."

"They did not overcome me when I went there," said Tom boldly, looking up from the board he was sawing.

"No," she agreed slowly. "That is true. And you went there a slave and an untried boy."

Tom shut his lips tightly to keep back an angry retort. Perhaps it was his lot to go through life having his period of servitude to the Yamhills thrown in his face, but it was beginning to rankle. It seemed to him that his own tribe took pleasure in reminding him of the fact. More than once he had been called from his work to show the women of the Rogue Rivers where grew the best fields of camass or hazel for baskets. Old Tipso had ordered him as curtly as though Tom had been a young boy to bring him lengths of wood for the new bows he was continually making. The medicine men and women had commanded him to lead the way to the forests beyond the valley so that they might replenish their doctoring baskets with sevenbark, and looski for healing gaping wounds, and tish-la-muck, which ejected small devils of pain which settled in the stomach. Had Tom always been a free man, they would not have been so lordly in their demands. They might have begged favors of an equal, but they would never have taken it for granted that he must serve patiently, without gratitude or resentment.

It was a relief the day he saw the flames leaping high from the Rogue River village of wickiups. John Miller, Lieutenant Sheridan, and Captain Russell, the new commandant who had just arrived at the agency to relieve the young lieutenant of some of his duties, had run around wildly, urging the

Dragoons to throw buckets of water on the blazing flimsy structures. They had thought it a revolt, that the Rogue Rivers had suddenly thrown off restraint, and that this was the beginning of a war.

Tom, watching somberly, had known what it really meant. The Rogue Rivers had suddenly grown tired of living in such close proximity to strangers. They had moved their own village farther back, in an open space at the forest's edge across the river, and, as was their custom when moving to new homes, they burned the old ones behind. Tom was glad to see them go. Distance, he thought, would prevent them from making such constant and irritating demands on his own time. He had been right about that. Until today, when Mal-tee-ny had finally made the long journey on foot, he had not even seen his mother.

"Perhaps," she said after a long silence, "it is time for you to go to the mountain again, to seek another vision from a Ta-mah'na-wus."

"I have no time," he said shortly. "I must finish the lieutenant's house."

"A Ta-mah'na-wus is more important than a white man's house," she told him severely. "You think too much of the white men. They have always been our enemies."

"The white men think more of me than do my own people," he said bitterly. "They do not always remind me that I was a slave."

"You were a slave," she said calmly.

"But I'm not now. And I don't like being treated as one. Do this for us. Do that for us. Bring me this. Guide me someplace else. You are my mother. I should think you would feel shame that they treat your son in such a fashion."

"I feel shame that you were a slave, and are unworthy to have a Ta-mah'na-wus. If I were not a medicine woman, and so cannot be questioned, I would not be here talking with you now."

"No one asked you to come," he said hotly.

"You have changed much in the time that you were gone from us, Kow-ha-ma," she said sadly. "The loyalty that you had in your heart for your people is gone. All you think of now is being like the white man. You have been of use to us since we came here, but you have done so with a disdainful face. Your heart is filled with pride, when it should be humble."

"Was I disdainful and proud when I buried the great hunter of the Rogue Rivers? No one else would do such a task."

"That, too, is like the white man. They say they think nothing of washing and touching their own dead, nor do they purify themselves when the task is done," she said somberly. "But you are still a Rogue River, and of the age when our young men are chosen by their Ta-mah'na-wus. None has chosen you, yet you dare be proud."

"But I'm not proud," he denied quickly. "How can you say that I am?"

"You are proud of this," she waved her hand scornfully at the lumber he was sawing. "You are proud that you can speak the white man's tongue. You swagger when you walk. You sit with the tyees of the valley Indians, and are now on good terms with those who were once your masters. You do these things when you know you have no guiding spirit to help you. And you even deny your own people when they try to help you."

"Deny them? They deny me. They want nothing to do with me."

"Only once," she said slowly, her troubled eyes on his face, "did you act as the old Kow-ha-ma who was taken from us. It was the day when you went with the men to hunt. I well remember how glad and proud I was when our greatest hunter came to me and said you had done well. You had remembered your lessons faithfully, he said. And you had been soft-spoken, remaining at the outer edge of the circle with the untried boys, listening courteously and speaking only when someone asked you a question. Old Tipso spoke well of you, too, and of the bow that you had made. That night, for a short time, our people were happy for you. You had been a slave, but men have overcome such handicaps. They have been humble and worthy, and a Ta-mah'na-wus has forgiven them, and all has been forgotten. Yes, we were happy for you for a short time."

"Only a short time?"

"Yes. Because soon you came with the white soldier and told our people we could no longer hunt. And then you went away with him, back to this strange house you are so proud of building."

"But I was only interpreting. I only told you what the lieutenant told me to say. I did not stay, because I was not welcome. I could read it in your faces. And later, I came again and told you the order had been changed."

"It was too late," she said sorrowfully. "By then our people were being poisoned, and you were friends with the poisoners. You had taken sides against us."

"But I hadn't. I hadn't. I did everything I could to help—more than you know."

"With your own hands you buried our greatest hunter," she continued, ignoring the interruption. "And Lawal-low, his woman, was grateful. It was she who asked our people to aid you. 'Help him to become humble once more,' she said. 'Think of tasks which will break down his pride, so that some Ta-mah'na-wus will claim and give him guidance. Our young boys are sent on missions to build their strength before they go on a real quest. They suffer privations. We see that they do so. Can we do less for Mal-tee-ny's son, who is one of us?'"

He stared at her in amazement. This, then, was the reason for the many demands upon him, and the coldness. They were striving to make him humble, he who had been fighting to hold his head high in the face of greater adversities than most of them had ever known. Pride had always been the tradition of the Rogue Rivers, and he had kept his. It seemed to him that it was the tribe who had lost theirs by allowing themselves to be brought to this valley.

"What would you have me do?" he asked finally.

"Humble your heart so that some Ta-mah'na-wus will find it a soft resting place, not hard. Be loyal to your own people. And when you can, go again to the mountain——" She broke off suddenly, her head raised in listening.

Down the path, now widened to the sizable dimensions of a rough road, came the sound of running feet. A moment later and the figure of a panting, breathless squaw appeared at a turn between the tall trees. She was not a young woman, but she must have been a wealthy one, for many strings of white hiqua beads hung from her neck, and her plump body was encased in some of the new turkey red calico which had recently appeared on John Miller's shelves.

"It's Old Sookie!" cried Tom in amazement.

Mal-tee-ny said nothing, but her face settled into stern lines of disapproval. Many a time in the past she and Old Sookie had tangled in their medicine, for Mal-tee-ny's was devoted to healing and good, while Old Sookie's was for evil. The Devil Woman, they called her, and hid their children when she passed, for Sookie's powers were such that she could fill her cheeks with air, and where she blew death was sure to follow. Old Sookie blew often, but when she was paid what she demanded she would retract the spell and the charm would fall harmless.

She came on toward them now, running desperately, but handicapped by her own weight. The next moment they saw her pursuers. There were sixteen of them, all braves of the Rogue Rivers, and as they rounded the turn they ran no longer. They stopped and spread out, and each man raised a bow to his shoulder and fitted an arrow to the string.

Old Sookie did not turn, but she must have known what they were about, for even before sixteen arrows snapped into the air, she gave a choking gasp of surrender. A second later, each arrow found a mark in her back, and she fell on her face, the feathered shafts protruding like the quills of some gigantic porcupine.

Tom stood where he was, staring at the twitching figure in red calico. He had little sympathy for Old Sookie. It flashed through his mind that the world would be a better place without her, but such a death, so swift and unannounced, left him without words. He took his eyes from the heap of red calico and looked again toward the turn of the path. The sixteen Rogue Rivers were gone, swallowed up by the dense growth of fir.

Mal-tee-ny got to her feet. She walked deliberately to Old Sookie and, reaching down, pulled out the arrows, one by one. Some of them were deeply imbedded, and she tugged and worked a long time. When she had finished, she carried the handful to a small fire where Tom had been burning waste, and dropped them in.

"Why did they do it?" he demanded as the feathered tips caught eagerly at the flame.

"She blew her evil breath on the second granddaughter of Chief John," said Mal-tee-ny. "The chief paid much to have the spell removed, but Old Sookie would do nothing. Perhaps she could not. Perhaps it was too far gone. But she took the payment, and the girl died. Old John is not one to let such things go unavenged."

"No," agreed Tom soberly. "He could do nothing else."

"Of course not," agreed Mal-tee-ny comfortably, as she turned to go. "Think about your Ta-mah'na-wus. It is time that you tried again."

She passed Phil Sheridan as she started down the path, but she did not give way and it was the lieutenant who pulled his horse to one side for her. Then he saw what was on the ground, and was out of the saddle in an instant.

"Tom!" he called in excitement. "What's this? How did this happen? You!" He straightened, bellowing after Mal-tee-ny's retreating back. "Woman! Come back here. I want to talk to you."

Mal-tee-ny turned obediently, without question. Her face was blankly expressionless as she retraced her steps.

"What happened?" demanded Sheridan, looking from one to another. "You know she's dead, I suppose?"

Mal-tee-ny shrugged, her eyes focused unseeingly on the bark of a fir tree opposite her.

"Do you know her?" he demanded, his own eyes flickering impatiently from face to face.

"She is Old Sookie. The Devil Woman," admitted Tom reluctantly.

"Well, go on. What happened? Who did it?"

"We looked up and saw her running," said Tom vaguely. "Then she fell on the ground as you see her now."

"With a full charge of arrows in her back?" snorted Sheridan. "I've seen arrow marks before. What happened to them?"

It was Tom's turn to shrug. Mal-tee-ny stood impassively, waiting for permission to continue her journey home.

"Tom, I want an answer," roared Sheridan. "I've been pretty good to you. You can't turn Injun on me now. From the position in which she fell and the way the arrows entered her back, they came from back there, at the turn. Did you do it? If you did, own up, and take your medicine."

Tom stood silent. In the brief moment when the sixteen braves had stood, bows poised at the turn, he had recognized every one of them. But he could not admit it. They had been his friends. They were still his people.

"He did not do it." Mal-tee-ny's voice was contemptuous. "Would Old Sookie stand still while he shot sixteen arrows, one after another?"

"Probably not," nodded Sheridan grimly. "There were sixteen of them, then. Did you see them? Who were they?"

"They were strangers," said Mal-tee-ny coldly.

"Did you know them, Tom?"

"Not a one. I had never seen them before," he lied.

"I guess it makes them Rogue Rivers all right," grunted Sheridan, "since you both deny knowing them. If they'd been Chinooks or Yamhills or Clackamas, you'd have spoken up fast enough. Find some canvas and cover the body. I'll have to ride back and inform the captain. Someone will pay for this. The murderers must be punished."

He did not look again at either of them as he mounted his horse and rode away.

"You will come home with me now," said Mal-tee-ny. Her voice was still without expression, but there was a glint in her eyes which could have been approval. "Again you have taken sides, but this time with your own people."

"If you are sure I will be welcome," agreed Tom. He gave a last look at the stacks of freshly cut lumber, the almost completed house rising against a background of trees, and followed his mother.

The Rogue Rivers had made use of the log bridge which Tom and Andy had felled across the river. Their new village was reached by a winding path through the forest which circled around until it came back to a clearing not too far distant from the river itself. On the opposite bank was the roadway leading from the reservation into the outside valley, and beyond the road were the plowed fields which marked the beginning of the Fullers' farm. Tom, stepping closely behind Mal-tee-ny, looked across at them first, even before he inspected the new home of the Rogue Rivers. The buildings were hidden by the slope of the hill, but somewhere on those acres his friend was at work. He wished Andy were with him now. Mal-tee-ny's earlier disclosures had left him feeling lost and bewildered.

No one spoke to him as he came up to the open space

within the circle of wickiups. Everyone gathered around Mal-tee-ny, who was narrating with many gestures the story of Sheridan's discovery of the body.

"He does not know who did it," she finished. "Nor will he ever know. But because Kow-ha-ma and I said we had never seen the men, the white soldier guesses them to be Rogue Rivers."

The circle fell back, and Tom felt their eyes upon him, curiously examining. He lifted his chin, then remembering that he must not show pride, he made his face expressionless.

"Then he will come here," decided Sam after a moment, and Tom relaxed as the Indians turned their attention on their chief.

"Let him come. Let him bring all his soldiers," said Chief Jo scornfully. "We will be ready for him."

"Instead of blaming us, he should give us presents for ridding the world of the Devil Woman," said Chief John. He turned, his eyes falling coldly on Cultus Jim, Old Sookie's son, who claimed to possess similar powers to those of his mother. "Nor may she be the last of her kind to go."

Cultus Jim fingered the little bag of charms hanging from his belt, but said nothing.

"How many soldiers live in the new fort behind the high wall?" demanded Chief Sam abruptly, turning to Tom.

"Around fifty."

"We have many times that number," said Sam scornfully.

"But they have guns which fire from a long way off," Tom reminded him, forgetting that he was expected to remain silent except when addressed. "You have but bows and arrows, and the fleetest arrow carries no more than sixty yards."

"We will make an ambush," decided Jo. "It is like old times to think of battle. It makes me feel young again. I wish the soldiers would come."

"Perhaps they will while you stand here talking," chided Mal-tee-ny, so secure in her position of power that she dared to speak her thoughts to a chief.

"We have put out scouts," Sam told her superiorly. "They are on both sides of the bridge, and in the trees overhanging the road on the other side. They will give us warning, but I do not think to see the whites before tomorrow. These things take time."

It did not take as much time as Sam thought. Scarcely an hour had gone by before the scouts reported soldiers riding up the road. There were only two of them, however, and as the Rogue Rivers watched, they came into view: Lieutenant Philip Sheridan, accompanied by a sergeant of his Dragoons.

The lieutenant made a cup of his hands.

"I'm coming across," he bellowed. "Make wa-wa. Talk. Council."

"How will he get across the river? Swim?" asked Tom aloud. No one answered, and a moment later he saw for himself.

Sheridan handed his reins to the sergeant, and scrambled down the brushy bank. For an instant he disappeared in the shrubbery, then he came into view expertly poling a raft. It was Andy Fuller's raft, and Tom felt a little surge of pleasure at sight of it. Andy must keep it tied there in the bushes on the opposite bank.

Chief Jo spoke sharply, and two of the younger boys ran down to the river's edge to help pull the raft to shore.

Tom stood quietly waiting. He knew he was expected to do nothing else, that this was the role which had been assigned to him, but he felt nervous and uncomfortable. Why did he have to take sides? Why must he be expected to turn against a man who had been friendly toward him just because that man happened to have a white skin?

The Rogue Rivers formed themselves into a rough circle, open at one side for a passageway. As Sheridan marched smartly through, the circle closed, and the chiefs moved to the center.

"I have come after the sixteen men who took part in the shooting of the woman," announced Sheridan crisply. He spoke in Jargon, and there was no fear in his voice, only authority.

"We know of no such men," answered Chief Jo. His own tone was short of civil. "Why do you think they are here?"

"The woman who was killed is a Rogue River," said Sheridan firmly. "It is not the first time she has come running to the fort for protection. She said her tribe wished to kill her."

"If that is true, then perhaps she deserved to die," said Sam angrily. "But you have no proof that it was our people who did this thing. Perhaps others wished her dead as well."

Those on the outer circle were growing noisy. At first they commented under their breaths, but gradually the insults grew louder so that it was hard to hear the voices of the chiefs.

On the extreme outer fringe, Tom could see nothing which was going on inside. Then he became aware that men were changing position, shifting around, pressing each other out of the way for a better view. He forgot Mal-tee-ny's warning. He pushed in close, using his elbows, and because he

had grown taller than most of the Rogue Rivers, and his shoulders and arms had grown strong with daily exercise, those in his path grunted and let him through.

He reached the inner rim, and now nothing blocked his view. Facing him were the chiefs, hostile, evasive, insulting. Sheridan was standing with his back to Tom, and he suddenly realized as he never had before that this was a small man, dwarfed by the size of those around him. As he watched, a hand crept out beside him toward the lieutenant's pistol holster. Tom acted without thinking. He reached first, pushing the hand away, then his own fingers dipped into the unbuttoned holster. Carefully he withdrew the firing piece, so cautiously that the lieutenant did not know he had been robbed.

Beside him he heard a snarl, and then a great puff of air on his cheek. Unknowing, he had forestalled Cultus Jim in the theft, and the son of the Devil Woman was blowing a curse upon him.

For a moment he was flooded by fear. The world seemed to swim before his eyes, then it righted itself, and he again saw a small belligerent back in a blue uniform. Sheridan's words came back to him: What have you got to lose now?

He looked down into Cultus Jim's hate-filled eyes and laughed as he slipped the pistol into his belt.

"Blow, little man," he said scornfully. "Blow. You won't hurt me."

A few moments later, Sheridan's own hand wandered around to his empty holster. Almost immediately the talk came to an end. He did not give way in his demands, but his tone seemed to modify a little. The matter would be decided later, he said. They would talk again. He turned, and In-

dians fell away before him. They jeered as he marched down to his raft, but no one attempted to stop him.

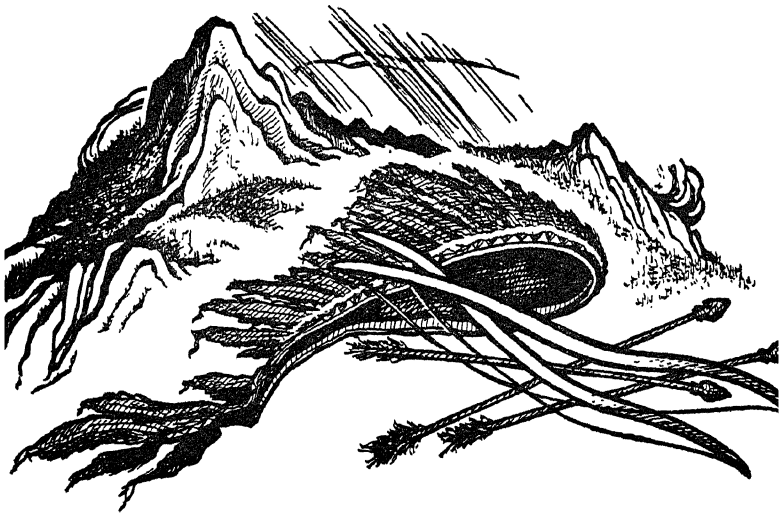
"A brave man," said Chief Jo thoughtfully, as the raft started toward the opposite bank. "To come here alone and unarmed."

"He was armed," objected Cultus Jim spitefully. "But Mal-tee-ny's son, who was the slave of the Yamhills, stole his gun, and much good it will do him."

As the Rogue Rivers stared in amazement, he again puffed out his cheeks and blew in Tom's direction until there was no more air left in his lungs.

Mal-tee-ny gasped, and hurried to the side of her son, glaring at Cultus Jim fiercely. From the opposite side of the river, Sheridan's voice floated across to them.

"The sixteen men who killed the woman are going to be delivered up, and my six-shooter, too!"



CHAPTER XVII

The Dream

Mal-tee-ny was making medicine. On top of flat rocks she was burning the claw of a wildcat and the tail feather of an owl with a handful of dried roots and berries which she had selected from her herb basket. She stirred them carefully with a long stick, from time to time adding wisps of dried grasses to feed the flames. Tom stood beside her, his mind filled with mingled emotions, love and gratitude, astonishment and tolerance, but no fear.

Mal-tee-ny knew fear, or she would not have worked so steadily to undo the harm of Cultus Jim's curse. Lawal-low,

her pitch-encrusted skull bent low beside the medicine woman, knew fear.

"Pay him! Pay him!" Lawal-low urged. "The charms of evil are often stronger than the charms of good. Pay him what he asks, Mal-tee-ny, so that he will remove the curse before it is too late."

"I would pay him. I would pay everything I owned, though it left me the poorest member of the tribe. But one part of the payment he asks is not mine to give." Mal-tee-ny lifted her eyes to her son, and Tom shook his head gently.

"The gun which he demands is not mine to give either," he reminded her. "It belongs to the white officer."

"You have it. You took it from him," cried Lawal-low quickly.

"Only to make sure it was not stolen by another. I will return it to him."

"You will never have the chance," she said bitterly. "You will die first, as did the second granddaughter of Chief John, as have died many of our people from the blowings of the Devil Woman and her evil son."

"I will not die from that. They have no power to harm me," he told them patiently.

He could not make them understand. He could not tell them that he had already broken so many taboos, some for their sake, that he no longer feared them. True, his punishment, his fate, whatever it might be, would someday overtake him, but would not a fate of some kind overcome all men?

On the opposite side of the open space, a consultation of war and strategy was in progress. It had not yet reached that stage when the braves would bedeck their bodies with

painted lines and circles, don their formal head coverings, and squatting in a circle listen to their chiefs judiciously hand down the declaration. This was the preliminary part, the excited talk, the working themselves up to the actual decision. Tom had not joined the men. His status was such that it was more fitting that he remain on the outskirts, beside his mother. Now he saw that Old Tipso was pushing his way from the noisy throng and coming toward them.

"You make medicine to take away the curse of Cultus Jim?" he said to Mal-tee-ny, his splotchy, hairy face twisted into an untidy knot.

"I make medicine."

"Is it strong medicine?"

Mal-tee-ny shrugged her shoulders helplessly.

"It would be a pity," said Old Tipso after a moment, "to let one die who shows some promise in bowmaking. I spent much time when he was a boy teaching him the art. I do not like my time to be wasted."

"It stood me in good stead when I was the slave of the Yamhills," said Tom. "The Yamhills no longer make bows. They do not use them in the hunt."

"We will not speak of that time," said Tipso shortly. "Some things can die in the memory of the old ones without being told to the young."

"If he had a Ta-mah'na-wus," said Mal-tee-ny eagerly. "If he had a powerful protector—I have begged him to return to the mountain of the spirits and seek for one."

"To dream of a tree would be a fine thing," agreed Tipso. "A tree with many young branches, sturdy, yet bending."

Tom shook his head sorrowfully, and Tipso frowned. He stalked away without another word. But the bowmaker was

not the only one who spent a few minutes beside Mal-tee-ny's medicine fire. Many of his boyhood friends, young warriors now because they had been successful on their quests, stopped by and asked Mal-tee-ny anxiously how her work progressed. They said nothing to Tom himself, nor did they look at him directly, but he realized with surprise that they were concerned about him.

Had he been wrong? he asked himself. Had it been his own fault that his people seemed against him? He tried to go back and picture in his mind's eye his past encounters with the Rogue Rivers since the night they had arrived. They had been glad to see him at first. It was not until Yamhill Martha shouted out the taunt that he had been her slave that they had drawn back. They had been startled, horrified, and ashamed at first, but was that not natural? Lieutenant Sheridan had stepped forward, leading him away, and Tom had gone, his mind filled with hurt and determination to show them that despite his former disgrace he was as good as anyone.

The chieftains, Sam and Jo, were the last to stop beside the fire. They would assume the leadership of tomorrow's battle, since Chief John was now old and of late was becoming infirm.

"That daughter of yours!" Sam scolded his brother crossly. "If she were mine, I would have her beaten. To stand in a group of warriors so, and speak a woman's thoughts."

"My daughter is smart," objected Jo, shaking his head. "It was a mistake of the gods to have Tyee Mary born a woman."

"She speaks of peace," scoffed Sam. "Peace and of living in good will with the whites. That is woman's talk, not man's."

"We have had men among us who were wise peacemakers, for they had a Ta-mah'na-wus to make them so," interrupted Mal-tee-ny, rising to the defense of her own sex. "My father, whose name I dare not speak even yet—"

"Your father had many Ta-mah'na-wus," said Jo coldly. "He was skilled in working with wood. He was a hunter and a warrior. True, soft words came from his lips at times, and when they did it was the time for peace. But men such as he come seldom to a tribe. Now that the great sickness has carried away so many of us, we are fewer than ever. Tomorrow, when we go to meet the white soldiers, your son goes with us."

"Kow-ha-ma?" cried Mal-tee-ny eagerly.

"Kow-ha-ma," grunted Jo. "Long Hair—still his baby name. But he has as yet earned no other, and perhaps it is not his fault. A Ta-mah'na-wus does not often come to a slave. But he had good teachers before that, and at last he has come to his senses."

"Will you go with us tomorrow, Kow-ha-ma?" demanded Chief Sam, his black eyes searching into Tom's. "Will you carry a bow against your friends, the whites?"

"I will go with you," said Tom slowly, his ears pounding to a sound like drumbeats, which was his heart beating.

Lawal-low began to shriek loudly.

"By tomorrow he will be dead!" she cried. "The curse of Cultus Jim will have taken effect by tomorrow."

The chiefs looked troubled.

"I will have Cultus Jim killed," decided Sam. "He shall die today, and that will end the curse."

Mal-tee-ny shook her head. "A curse will not die with the

death of one who made it. If my own charms will not work, Cultus Jim alone can remove it."

"Buy him off," said Jo impatiently. "Give him what he asks. It is our way."

"He asks as part payment the gun of the white soldier, and Kow-ha-ma will not give it up."

Tom looked into the suddenly scowling faces of the two chiefs.

"Who is the bravest white man you know?" he asked, trying to keep his voice steady.

"Jo Lane," answered Chief Jo promptly. "He is a great fighter, a brave man, and his word can be accepted by any Indian. I have gone into battle against Jo Lane many times, and he is my friend. Did he not give me his own name?"

"And would you steal from Jo Lane?" asked Tom.

The chief looked angry. "Did I not say he was my friend? I do not steal from my friends."

"The white officer, Lieutenant Sheridan, is my friend," explained Tom simply. "I will fight against him, as you fought against Jo Lane. But I will not steal from him. The gun is his. I will return it to him."

The two chiefs nodded their heads wisely.

"Make your medicine, woman," advised Sam as they walked away. "Strong medicine. Later I will deal with Cultus Jim, but now I must think of war."

Preparations for battle continued far into the night. The Rogue Rivers had been conquered, but not beaten. They had submitted to the white men because it seemed the only course open to them, but here was an opportunity to rise and show their superiority. They had no plans beyond tomorrow. No one spoke of returning to their old home or of

taking up their former life. But they had done a great deal of boasting before the coast and valley tribes of their own ability as fighters. Paramount in their minds was making good their claims.

The warriors put on their tribal paints of blue clay, round circles on either cheek, long slashes across the forehead. Only the chiefs were permitted war bonnets, but the warriors brought out their own headdresses, strips of mink or raccoon hide, and, most prized of all, the head of a woodpecker, dressed in such a fashion that the tongue protruded. They wore only their loin cloths, scorning the new garments which had been given them at the agency, and each was armed with knives and bows and arrows.

Old Tipso loaned Tom one of his own bows, but he was not allowed to paint himself nor to take part in the dance. He sat alone in the shadows watching the others. A great fire had been built and the line of dancing figures circled it, bending low, then straightening, their brown skins glistening as though they had been oiled. His ears were filled with the chant of their voices and the slap of their bare feet against the ground in time with the drumbeats, and he was reminded of other times when he had sat and watched as now.

Suddenly he was aware that somone had come to sit beside him. It was Tyee Mary, Chief Jo's daughter, and the old playmate of his childhood. She should not be here, he thought instinctively. An unmarried girl does not sit beside a young man. Then she did something even bolder, more unmaidenly. She spoke to him directly.

"Tom," she began abruptly. "Can you do something to stop this?"

"To stop what?" he asked in amazement.

"This senseless thing. This war which can lead only to more trouble. Can't they see what they're doing? They lost once. They will again, and next time it will be worse."

"Perhaps we will win tomorrow," he said slowly. "We outnumber the white soldiers."

"Suppose we do," she agreed impatiently. "Suppose our men kill all the soldiers here at the fort, and their white officers. More will come. And after them more. We cannot kill them all. There are too many."

He hardly heard the end of her remarks. He had stopped listening with her second sentence. He had not thought of such a thing, but it was true. In war men were killed. Brave men. Men such as his own father had been, men such as Lieutenant Sheridan was. Old Tipso might fall, and the boys who had once been his friends, and who would be again someday.

"We must do something," she repeated impatiently. "My father or my uncle will not listen to me, because I am a woman. You must go to the white officer. He must stop this."

"What can he do?" Tom asked dully, trying to make his brain work.

"There must be more talk. More parley," she insisted. "This must be settled peacefully."

"The lieutenant will not give in unless the sixteen men who killed Old Sookie are turned over to him."

"Then they must be turned over. What are sixteen men against the whole tribe? Besides, their punishment should be light. The Devil Woman deserved to die."

"The white man does not take a killing lightly, even one so highly deserved," he told her uncomfortably.

"We will worry about that one when the time comes," she shrugged. "But we must stop others."

"How?"

"You must go back. You must warn the white officer that our people will be lying in ambush. I would go myself, but he might not believe me. You he knows. Tell him that they will be at the second bend in the road beyond the log bridge, lying in wait among the bushes. That they will wait until his soldiers are close, then they will spring out. He must stop short of arrow range, and call for a parley. When they know he has surprised their hiding place, they will come out and make more talk."

"How do you know these things?" he demanded.

"I am a chief's daughter," she said proudly. "I have ears."

"But suppose there is a change of plans at the last minute?" He was beginning to think calmly at last. His brain worked furiously. "Suppose they change their place of ambush? Can you, a woman, even if you are the daughter of a chief, give some signal from the hiding place in time for the soldiers to stop marching?"

It was her turn to be flustered.

"No. No, I cannot."

"Then you must go to the lieutenant," he said, his hands fumbling at his belt for the pistol. "Give him this. Tell him it is from me, and that I will be with the warriors tomorrow. If there is no change in plans, he will find us at the second turn. If there is, I will try some way to let him know. He must not come closer than sixty yards, and his soldiers must not open fire."

"I will tell him," she promised, taking the gun in fingers that trembled only a little.

"Above all, tell him that," repeated Tom earnestly. "His men must not fire on our people, or I shall never nail another board in place on his new house."

She nodded that she understood and left him. He did not watch, for he knew she would have no trouble avoiding sentries and making her way to the agency. Nor would her absence from the village be noticed by others. In the darkest shadows of the wickiups, he could hear her friend Harriet chattering and calling Mary's name as though in conversation long after the chief's daughter was gone.

Shortly after midnight the dancing ceased, and one of the young warriors came for Tom. There had been a disagreement of strategy between the chiefs, and since neither brother would give in, each was determined to follow his own judgment. Jo wished to take a position tonight along the road across the river. Sam insisted that early tomorrow would give them plenty of time. Since Tom's father had been one of Jo's warriors, the son's place was with him. They would set out at once.

Tom heard the decision with a stoical face and a disturbed heart. He wished there were a way to let Tyee Mary know that the force would be temporarily divided. Still, it might make little difference. Sam stated, a little disdainfully, that his own warriors would arrive in plenty of time, by daybreak at the latest, and much refreshed after a sleep in their own beds instead of on the cold ground. White soldiers would never arrive to do battle before then.

Jo signaled his own braves to follow, and started toward the winding trail through the black forest. Tom's place was at the very end of the line, and he placed his feet as cautiously as any on the path, marveling as he had once done

that a hundred men could move so silently, without even a snapping twig to disclose their passing. They crossed the log and turned down the road to the agency, rounding one turn, then another, before Chief Jo stopped.

Tom smiled in quiet satisfaction. There was one thing to be said for a division of men. They would not change their place of ambush now, and he would not have to worry about giving Sheridan a signal.

Jo appointed guards, and told the others to find hiding places among the thick undergrowth which dotted the hillside.

"Sleep," he said gruffly. "My brother's warriors sleep at home, but after that they will have a march before they fight. You will awake refreshed in the place of combat."

The Rogue Rivers threw themselves upon the slope between the bushes, and many of them were asleep instantly, worn out from their excitement and dancing. Sleep was long coming to Tom. He lay on his back with the cold, faraway, but not unfriendly stars looking down on him, and thought about his own people, whom he had misunderstood but who still wanted him, of Lieutenant Sheridan, who was his friend, and John Miller, trying so desperately to teach the Indians to love farming, of Andy Fuller, sleeping down the road in one direction, of the valley Indians, sleeping in the other.

He closed his eyes finally, but the thoughts kept crowding through his brain. People. People. Good ones and bad. Gentle, wise John Smith of the Chinooks, Ezra, the medicine man of the Yamhills, Cultus Jim, Ne-whah and Chief Dave, and the white carpenters, Bill and Hank. In his dreams they ranged themselves in a circle, with himself in the middle, and he was trying to tell them something, something pleas-

ant, for he was smiling, and so were they. Then it seemed that the earth rocked beneath him, that trees were falling toward him, boulders moving to crush him, while hands were reaching out to pull at him.

He shrieked aloud, and the hands pulled again, but this time they held fast, and through the swimming blackness all around, but from a great distance, he heard a voice which was somehow familiar.

"Boy! Boy, what is it? What happened to you?"

He struggled to wakefulness and it was Old Tipso's gnarled hands which were holding him.

"A dream," he said feebly. "I must have been dreaming. The earth shook—"

"And trees came toward you?" cried Old Tipso.

"Yes. And there were falling stars and rocks. And hands. And I saw—"

"Hush!" cried Old Tipso quickly.

"A vision," breathed all the warriors, freshly awakened from their sleeps, their voices low with reverence. "A vision has come to Mal-tee-ny's son, to our old friend."

"It is an omen," said Chief Jo solemnly. "A good omen, on this eve of our battle. Some Ta-mah'na-wus has thought kindly of Kow-ha-ma, who shall be called that no longer, but shall be given a new name. It is good for all of us to have this thing happen today when he is with us, but better still for him, since the Ta-mah'na-wus will be fresh, giving him greater protection."

Once before he had been accused of having received a vision when none had come. At that time he had denied the fact in words, spoken words for all to hear. The Yamhills had

not believed, but the Ta-mah'na-wus had known. They had held nothing against him.

He should speak out now, for there was no greater sin than claiming spiritual power which did not exist. He opened his lips dryly, but no words came.

"You had a vision?" insisted Chief Jo, his intent face peering close. "You know your Ta-mah'na-wus? It has claimed you?"

Slowly he nodded his head, his eyes moving from face to face, reveling in the kinship he had been so long denied.

"It happens thus sometimes," said Old Tipso reassuringly. "Usually the coming follows a quest, but sometimes a Ta-mah'na-wus arrives unbidden. One came to your grandfather once in such a way, for I was with him."

"I have heard my father speak of that time," nodded Chief Jo thoughtfully. "It was on the eve of a battle with our enemies, the Modocs. The Ta-mah'na-wus which came unbidden to the grandfather of Kow-ha-ma put words of peace into his mouth. He urged our people to parley, and it was well we did, for we found that the Modocs outnumbered us many times over, and that they were prepared for what we planned as a surprise attack."

"I was there," agreed Old Tipso. "It has been a long time ago. Perhaps——" He paused and looked at Tom carefully. "But the Ta-mah'na-wus will bid him how to act, what line he must follow when the time comes."

Tom was silent. The faces around him were smiling, eager and joyous at this thing which had happened. Perhaps, he told himself, it had been a Ta-mah'na-wus. The others had all received such visitations, and were sure it was so. But no single object had stood out in his dream, only people. All

kinds of people. It was more likely to have been a bad dream, and he should confess it at once. But then, he asked himself, why should he? He would take this moment and as many more as would be given to him. As Phil Sheridan said, what did he have to lose?

CHAPTER XVIII

The Peacemaker

Long before daylight Jo's party was aroused. More than one looked longingly toward the direction from which came the sound of the river's passing. It would be a fine thing to dip their sweaty bodies in the cool stream, but today such things must wait. They were painted for war, and the water which would refresh their spirits would wash off the clay. Breakfast was unthought of. Man fights more fiercely on an empty stomach.

Tom was almost embarrassed by the attention he received. It was as though everyone was determined to make up for the long weeks when he had been left severely alone. His old friends clustered about him, speaking of things which had occurred when he was young. Did he remember this? Did he recall when they did that together? His capture by the Klamaths and his months of servitude with the Yamhills were delicately avoided. It was as though they were determined to lift that portion from his past life and fit the present against the far distant. Resolutely he put down his feeling of guilt and grew warm in the light of their friendship.

"Perhaps," said Old Tipso hopefully, "when we return

victorious, you will begin to make a new bow for yourself. You were an apt pupil, and if your inclination is to turn to working in wood, I will help you even more."

"Our greatest hunter, who was taken to the Happy Hunting Ground, spoke kindly of you when he was here," said Jo thoughtfully. "Nor has he forgotten our people, for in the time of the great sickness, he sent us game every night. It would not surprise me if he begged his own Ta-mah'na-wus to take into protection one of our tribe who needed guidance."

The younger braves nodded eagerly, but their eyes were careful to avoid Tom's face lest by a gesture or facial expression he should give himself away.

As the darkness faded into the cloudy light of dawn, Tom's good fortune was erased from their minds, and they began to stir uneasily. It was already long past the hour when Chief Sam and his warriors should have arrived, yet there was no sign of them.

"They will come," frowned Jo. "My brother would not change our plans without sending me word."

"But if the soldiers come first?" demanded Old Tipso suggestively.

"Take cover!" ordered the chief. "We are enough to make our own victory. When the soldiers round the turn, let them come on until the last man is in arrow range."

They fell on the ground of the hillside, green waving branches serving as cover, brown bodies blending with the earth so that it seemed the whole party had been swallowed up. Each lay so that he faced the road to the agency down which would come riding blue-coated Dragoons, but their ears were turned to catch a rolling pebble, a mashed clod of

dirt under a careless foot from behind. Chief Sam would not desert them; he would arrive momentarily.

It was light enough now so they could see clearly, the river running swiftly on their left, the line of rolling, barren hills rising above them on the right, with the road a rough brown strip, like buckskin, running between. Tom lifted his eyes, then turned his head in sudden amazement. The crests of the hills were no longer barren. They were crowded with Indians, with Clackamas and Cow Creeks, Chinooks and Santiams, and all the other tribes from the reservation.

He was not the only Rogue River who had seen the spectators. Around him he heard contemptuous grunts, and he felt his heart grow heavy within him. It was easy enough to guess what had happened. Ever since their arrival, the Rogue Rivers had been boasting before the other tribes of their own superiority. At any time they pleased, they said, they could overthrow the soldiers and return to their old homes. He, himself, had once talked in such a way. Now he knew that talk was easy, and, if one talked loudly enough and swaggered, there were many who would believe. There were others who waited for proof, and that was the reason for the rapidly increasing audience on the hilltops. They had come to see the Rogue Rivers make good their claims. If they were unsuccessful, the tribe would lose face, its members could never again boast superiority.

On the morning air came the clear notes of a bugle, and the staccato sound of marching feet encased in leather boots. But the sound did not come from the road to the agency. It came from behind, from the way they themselves had come. A double column of Dragoons, looking strangely incomplete without their horses, rounded the turn and came to a flourish-

ing halt just beyond the range of any arrow. A moment later and the ranks opened. Two troopers, holding between them an almost naked but gorgeously painted figure in the war bonnet of a chief, stepped out in front. Sheridan had ferried his company across the river below the agency, plowed a way somehow through the forest, surprised the sleeping village, and taken Chief Sam prisoner.

There was no longer need of lying in ambush. Jo's men sprang into the open, their voices hurling insults as they jumped up and down and shook their weapons at the enemy.

"We have your chief," bellowed Sheridan in a voice which echoed against the hillside. "I'll have him killed instantly if so much as one of you lets fly an arrow."

"I know him. He means it," said Tom. He did not know he had spoken aloud until he saw Jo's face scowling into his own.

"Arrange a parley," said Tom quickly. There was no time now to think of the watchful Indians on the hillside. The range of musket shells in the hands of the troopers was greater than that of an arrow. They were quite capable of wiping out every angry Indian on the roadside. "I'll go with you. Maybe we can come to some terms."

Chief Jo and Old Tipso exchanged looks.

"Do as he says," advised Tipso in a low voice.

"Tell him we will make talk," ordered Jo gruffly.

"Chief Jo will meet the lieutenant in the open space between the lines," called Tom. "The chief will leave his weapons behind, and the white soldier must do the same."

Without bothering to make an answer, Sheridan unbuckled his holster belt, handed it to the soldier nearest him, and started marching briskly forward. A stray breeze tugged at

his cap, and he pulled it impatiently from his head, crushing it beneath his armpit. Tom handed his bow to Old Tipso and fell into step behind his chief.

They met at the center between the lines, and for a long moment the angry eyes of the Rogue River chief looked into those of the white officer. Neither gave way.

"I want the sixteen men who killed that woman yesterday," said Sheridan flatly. "They must be given up to me now."

For a second the hostility in Jo's eyes was swallowed by his surprise. Was this white man a novice? Did he not understand that the points of argument should be led into gradually, that they should be presented in embellished terms, and replied to in the same manner? Sheridan, however, had no time for formalities today. He was tired, red-eyed from lack of sleep, and out of patience. The chief floundered for words at this disregard of established convention, and Tom, who had been with the white men enough to understand some of the workings of their minds, spoke instead.

"We do not admit that the sixteen men who killed this woman, who deserved to die anyway, were Rogue Rivers. But if we find that they are and deliver them to you, what will you do in return?"

"Turn over your chief to you," answered Sheridan in surprise. "That's what you want, isn't it?"

"We would want more than that," said Tom firmly. "We would want signs of friendship from you toward our people, so that the tribes watching on the hillside will see."

"Hm," said Sheridan, glancing up in surprise. Apparently he had not noticed the audience before.

"We would want your promise that no punishment will

come to our tribesmen because they took arms against you yesterday."

"The sixteen men have to take their punishment," insisted Sheridan grimly.

"Only one arrow of the sixteen carried the death blow," argued Tom. "The other fifteen only gave wounds which might have healed."

"But how do you know which one it was?" demanded Sheridan suspiciously. "You can't know."

"There are ways hidden to a white man which are known to an Indian," insisted Tom. He turned to the tongue-tied chief at his side. "Cultus Jim," he said in Athabascan.

Gradually a great smile broke over Chief Jo's face. He had been startled and a little resentful at the way Tom had taken over the parley. Of course, Tipso had warned him before they left that it might happen thus. The Ta-mah'na-wus of peacemaking had come to Tom's grandfather, and it might have come to Tom. Now it seemed that the Ta-mah'na-wus added cleverness to its virtues; it suggested a way of getting rid of a worthless and undesirable member of the tribe. The fact that Cultus Jim had nothing to do with the shooting of his mother did not enter into the matter.

"Will you let the other fifteen men go free if we are able to discover the guilty sixteenth?" demanded Jo, taking over the parley himself.

"No," said Sheridan, shaking his head. "They must all be punished. But we might be lenient, and not insist on death."

"What punishment then?" insisted the chief.

"Work. They must wear an iron ball and chain about their legs so they cannot run away, and they must work at the agency for one full moon."

Tom caught his breath, but there was no stopping Chief Jo now.

"A moon passes swiftly," he agreed. Then his voice grew stubborn. "But the guilty man must be punished. A life for a life, that is the only fair punishment."

"You want me to shoot him?" Sheridan looked startled.

"I will order the sixteen men who shot the Devil Woman to stand in a line," nodded Jo eagerly, forgetting that before this he had denied knowledge of their identity. "At a signal, I will tell the fifteen innocent men to run to the right of the line. The sixteenth guilty man will stand fast on the left, and you will shoot him with your guns as he stands."

Sheridan ran his hands through his hair.

"All right," he said after a moment. "I agree. Go back to your people and tell them. I will return to mine and give the necessary instructions."

Jo returned to the Rogue Rivers in fine humor. True, they had missed the excitement of a battle, but the day was not wholly lost.

"He is a good man to have on a parley," he told his warriors at once, jerking his head in Tom's direction. "Words of great cunning run from his mouth, and the enemy agrees. Of course, it was I who made the final arrangements."

"Ah!" said all the braves, looking at Tom with respect.

"This, then, is our agreement," continued Jo, and went on to tell his warriors the matters which had been discussed. Only Cultus Jim was not in accord, but in the face of so many threatening, fully armed tribesmen, he had no other course but to agree. The fifteen men who must work with an iron ball and chain on their legs looked glum too, but Jo promised

them presents, and soon they were smiling. The atmosphere began to assume something of a festive occasion.

At last both sides announced themselves ready to begin. Sheridan, with a painted, war-bonneted chief on either side to show his friendship for them, stood apart from the firing squad which lined up in the middle. The main party of the Rogue Rivers massed themselves across the road, sprawling over onto the bank on the west, while the Dragoons occupied similar positions on the east. The sixteen men selected for the occasion lined themselves up against the side of the hill opposite the firing squad. Fifteen of them were grinning. The sixteenth scowled with distended cheeks, puffing futilely at the white men opposite.

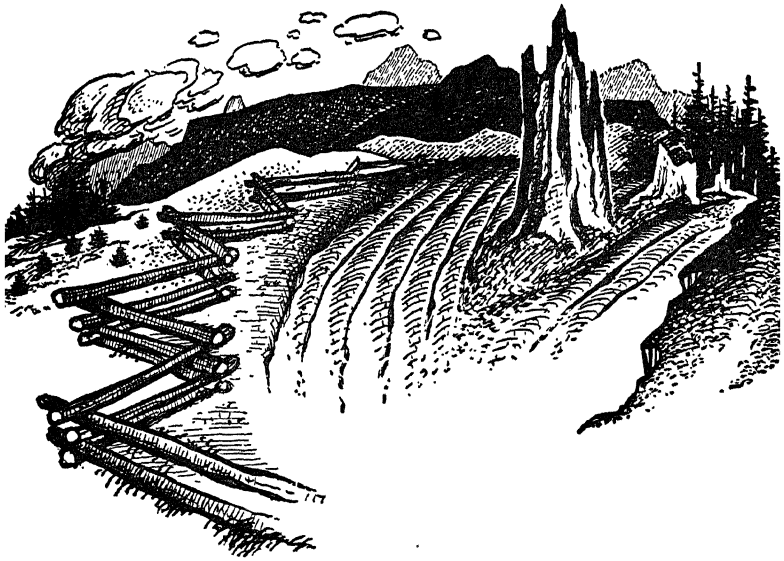
Sheridan raised his hand, and at the signal the beaming line raced to the right. Cultus Jim stood his ground, blowing to the last, and at the crack of a musket, he staggered, grasped at his leg, and fell to the ground. The air was rent with the sound of his howling.

Chief Jo looked at Phil Sheridan in surprise.

"He dies slowly," he said.

Sheridan shook his head, motioning for stretcher carriers.

"He won't die yet," he said cheerfully. "I'm afraid this time my men were careless with their aim. They seem to have hit his leg instead of his heart."



CHAPTER XIX

A Ta-Mah'Na-Wus for Tom

Tom and Andy Fuller sat swinging their legs on the railing of the agency porch, their noses twitching appreciatively at the aromas of roasting meat which floated to them from the slow-burning fires in the square.

"It's sure been a long old summer," complained Andy. "I thought Pa'd never let me stop working. I wanted to get over here before, but he kept finding things for me to do. Take my advice, Tom. Don't ever be a farmer."

"But I'm going to," said Tom seriously. "At least, I'm going

to have my own land. I've got the piece all picked out. It's mostly forest, so there'll be hunting, and there's a camass field—my mother saw to that—and a lot of plants she's got her eye on. I may build us a house like the one I built the lieutenant, but for a while a wickiup will do for the two of us to live in."

Andy stared at him in amazement.

"Farm? You're going to farm?" he demanded. "I thought all of you were dead set against it."

"No, not all of us," admitted Tom honestly. "I think the Chinooks and the valley Indians always took to the idea. They've lived among whites, you see, and the whites farm."

"Then why didn't they go before, if they wanted to? They've had John Miller on tenterhooks all summer."

"I think it was because the Rogue Rivers wouldn't go. And the Rogue Rivers were the leaders."

"Were? You mean they aren't now?"

Tom flushed and tried not to look at the fifteen toiling men, weighed down with balls and chains on their legs, who were pounding ruts of the road bed. Cultus Jim was still recovering from his wound, but, when it healed, the lieutenant said that he must serve the same sentence. For the tribe it had proved a harder punishment than death, for the other Indians, seeing the forced labor under guard, stood around and laughed. These were the mighty Rogues, they taunted. See how they are punished like naughty children! The tribe had not lost too much face the day they challenged the white soldiers to battle. True, they had not fought, but a parley ending with the white officer shaking hands with the two chiefs was just as good. But they were losing it now, for no one could forget that the prisoners were members of the

proudest tribe of all. They were reminded of it day after day.

Andy sensed that his question had been indelicate, and changed it quickly.

"But you say you're going, and you're a Rogue River."

"I am the only one," explained Tom quickly. "And I feel that I must go. The others remain here, at least for the present."

The agency door opened and an Indian woman in a flowing Mother Hubbard stepped out on the porch. Her eyes squinted against the sunlight, then, as they focused on the two figures on the rail, her face split in a wide smile.

"Ah, Tom. Tom," she exclaimed. "Remember, I treated you as I would my own son while you were with me? When you were good, I rewarded you. When you were bad, I punished you. Ask John Miller to give Martha today the blanket which is due her next month."

"I would if I thought it would do any good, Martha," Tom answered soberly. "But you know how stubborn the white men are about rules."

"Rules! Rules!" she scolded, waddling down the steps. "A promise is a promise. The blanket will come to me in time. Why should I wait?"

"So you're like her own son now," laughed Andy. "People like that will miss you when you move away on that precious farms of yours."

"Yes," said Tom seriously. He did not say that the people who greeted him warmly were the reason for his leaving. They made him feel uncomfortable every time he met them, for they were a reminder that he was living a lie.

"Do you ever see Ne-whah any more?" continued Andy sociably.

"She died. In the sickness. A lot of us did."

"I know," agreed Andy sympathetically. "You go along thinking nothing happens, and all of a sudden you find out all kinds of things have been happening, right under your nose. Like Lieutenant Sheridan being ordered away tomorrow."

"I know," said Tom somberly. "Just when I've finished his new house, too."

From those who tended the fires there came a sudden shout that the meat was ready. Then someone began banging two pieces of iron together. Answering shouts arose from every side, and the Indians began pouring from the tribal encampments they would occupy that night for the last time. This was their feast of farewell. John Miller had been successful in his undertaking, and tomorrow all but the Rogue Rivers would separate, each family going to his own land.

"Come on!" cried Andy, jumping up. "I'm sure glad I happened to come today when John Miller was having a party. Let's go see if it tastes as good as it smells."

In the great throng of crowding, laughing Indians, they were separated, but Tom did not worry about his friend. Andy Fuller was quite capable of taking care of himself. He pushed his own way up to the long trestle which groaned under the weight of a whole roasted beef, and as he waited his turn he found himself beside the Chinook tyee, John Smith.

John's flattened head was perpetually covered these days by a white man's hat of rusty black felt, for he had somehow discovered that his distorted skull was distasteful to the eyes of other than his own tribesmen. His black eyes smiled at Tom from under the brim.

"It may be the last time for many moons that we will all meet together in this way," he said.

"I know," agreed Tom. "Are you sorry that you are taking a farm?"

"No. For it will be mine, and my children's after me, and their children's after them. No one can set foot on that land without my permission."

"It will be lonely."

"I have six sons," laughed John Smith. "Six sons to make me poor, since I must buy them wives. Can I be lonely with six sons and their families who will come someday?"

"No. But with me there is only my mother," confessed Tom. "She is used to having her friends about her. I do wrong to let her go with me."

"And does she think so?"

"No, but she is so filled with gladness these days that her heart has room for nothing else. In the months to come, she may know loneliness. And worse than that." He hesitated. "It would be better that I go alone, but she will not hear of it."

"Of course not. She is your mother, and her place is with you. Someday you will bring home a wife. And then there will be children. You need not think of loneliness any more than I."

Tom shook his head. He would bring home no wife. He could not stop his mother from going with him, since she insisted, but he would ask no one else to share the fate which must someday overtake him. He knew now that he had no Ta-mah'na-wus, no guiding spirit to look after him, and since he had broken so many taboos, one would never come. It was best to go away and live the remainder of his life in loneliness.

Later he stopped to talk with Mal-tee-ny as she lingere with the women waiting for the men to eat first, and onc more he tried to tell her she would be happier living with th tribe as she had always done than going alone with him.

"You fret like an old woman," she scoffed. "I have bee parted from you before, Kloash-wau-wau. I will not b again."

He was startled, as always, by the use of the new nam which had been given to him. It was his grandfather's name for, after due consideration, the Rogue Rivers had decide that sufficient time had elapsed since the death of the ol man to make it safe. It meant "good talk" or "peacemaker," and was a proud name indeed, but he still liked "Tom" best He laughed a little self-consciously, and moved away, havin glimpsed Andy Fuller through the crowd.

Andy was deep in conversation with Chief Sam as he cam up.

"Oh, several bushels to a tree," he was saying. "And in a bushel—let's see—maybe fifty apples. That's a guess, o course. Depends on size."

Sam grunted, his face screwed with speculation. As Ton reached them, Sam grasped his shoulder with a hand stil greasy from the meat he had been eating.

"You are to build me a house," he ordered. "A fine house A chief's house. Like the one you built the white soldier."

"A house?"

"I will no longer live in a wickiup," said Sam gravely. "I am a chief. I will live as one. I will pay you in apples. Apple and onions."

"He's made up his mind to take a farm after all," explaine Andy with lifted eyebrows. "I suppose he's been talking t

John Miller, but he collared me to check up. He's figuring on selling apples and onions at two bits apiece to all his braves. I'll bet they have to buy them, too."

Tom stared at the solemn old warrior, who had once been the dread of all the settlers in the Rogue River Valley. Battle and strife were the farthest things from his mind now, replaced by visions of apples and onions. But where he went, his people would still follow.

"I haven't told him how long it takes an apple tree to come into bearing," said Andy in English. "But the onions ought to hold him for several years."

It was much later before Tom found Phil Sheridan. The lieutenant had been delayed at the fort, finishing last-minute matters before he left for his new assignment in the morning. It was almost dark by this time, and all of the meat had been eaten, the last of the marrow sucked from the bones.

Fires had been rebuilt, not for cooking or because of warmth, but because it had always been done after a feast. Once blazing fires might have been needed to keep wild animals at a distance, but tonight they were only symbols, reminders of a fading past.

Sheridan came riding down the road from Fort Yamhill, where a newly completed blockhouse and a high stockade gave evidence of the industry of his men, and Tom went out to meet him.

"I hoped you would come, so I could say good-by," he said.

"Good-by?" Sheridan dismounted, tying his horse to the hitching rail. "Don't sound so final. I'll be back. I'm just going up in the Coast Range. Not more than sixty or seventy miles away. When Fort Haskins is finished, Captain Russell wants me back here."

"He does?"

"Of course. I've got to live in that new house you built me, haven't I?"

Tom smiled. It was such a pity, he had thought, such a waste, for a fine house to go unlived in. He had worked hard on it, and was proud of his efforts. It would stand there long after he himself was gone.

"Don't worry about it being empty, either," said Sheridan briskly. "I've thought of that, too, and I've made arrangements for a young woman to look after it while I'm gone. She's one of your people, by the way. Her name is Harriet."

Tom nodded. Harriet was a good girl. She could be depended upon to obey orders, to see that the pack rats did not carry things away, to keep the doors closed and vandals out.

"Of course, if John Miller hadn't told me you'd made up your mind to take up land, I would have asked you to look after it," said Sheridan. "You built it. You've got more interest in it than anyone else but me."

Tom shook his head.

"I must go away," he said. "It is better that I do not live in your house. It is better now that I be by myself."

Sheridan looked at him shrewdly.

"Come over here and sit down," he ordered. "There's something on your mind."

Tom followed him to the empty steps of the agency building. They were in shadows, for the light of the fire did not carry so far.

"Now what have you done?" began Sheridan. "What new taboo did you break this time? What awful punishment is skulking just around the corner?"

"There are no new ones," admitted Tom reluctantly. "I

have broken the worst. I said I had a guiding spirit, when I have none."

"You do have one," insisted Sheridan. "And so far as I can see He's done a pretty good job of looking after you."

Tom shook his head helplessly. He knew it was useless to try to explain.

"Once before I tried to tell you this," continued the lieutenant, frowning as he sought for words. "You're right in thinking a guiding spirit is important. I guess every man needs one, white as well as Indian. And unless he's all bad, he's got one. It's what makes him do the right thing, to be fair, and to get along with his fellow men. If he does that, his guiding spirit usually looks out for him in return."

"That is the white man's Ta-mah'na-wus, perhaps," agreed Tom, trying to be polite. "It is not for Indians."

"Sulphur and blue blazes," cried Sheridan. "I've just finished telling you the guiding spirit of the white man doesn't look at the color of his skin." He broke off suddenly, his heavy face falling into lines of astonishment. "Well, well," he exclaimed softly, a new note creeping into his voice. "My own guiding spirit must be looking after me today. Here I can't find words to tell you what I mean, and help falls right into my lap."

Tom's eyes followed his pointing finger. Hesitating at the edge of the firelight was a stranger. He was a white man, but unlike the other white men Tom had met. Instead of trousers, he wore a long black garment like a woman's, with a hood which had fallen back from his bald head and now hung about his shoulders.

"Who is he?" asked Tom.

"His name is Father."

"Father? Do you know him?"

"I've never seen him before," said Sheridan flatly. "But I've got a hunch the Great Spirit sent him along to help you solve your problems. Come along. We'll go meet him."

A little unwillingly Tom got to his feet and followed the lieutenant across the shadows and into the edge of the firelight. The white stranger seemed to sense their coming and turned to await them smilingly. His face was old with years and wrinkled with wisdom and laughter, and from out of their encircling lines a pair of bright eyes twinkled with interest and friendliness.

"Good evening, Father." The lieutenant shook the stranger's hand warmly. "I'm not sure, but I think you arrive in answer to an unspoken prayer. This is Tom, and for a long time now he's been looking for a Ta-mah'na-wus——"

"A Ta-mah'na-wus?"

"A guiding spirit," explained Sheridan hastily.

The priest turned and regarded Tom with interest. Then he smiled.

"If you're looking for Him, He is looking for you, my son. I am sure you will find a guiding spirit." His voice was warm and sympathetic, a voice which would be able to answer away many troublesome problems.

NOTE

Although some of the people in this book come from my imagination, many of them are real. Chief Jo and Sam and John of the Rogue Rivers were, at one time, very much alive, as were Tyee Mary and Harriet. John Smith, Jim Pierce, and John Wacheno were real Indians who once lived at Grand Ronde. In his *Memoirs* General Philip H. Sheridan gives an account of the killing of the Devil Woman, and also of the last stand of the Rogue Rivers, but I heard the same story from Billy Simmons, who had it from his Rogue River father, who was present. I am indebted to him and to Hattie and Mose Hudson of Grand Ronde for further details concerning the early life and beliefs of their people. The house which Tom built for Phil Sheridan is still standing. And although its use is now forgotten by the remaining Indians, traces of the bowl and the trench may still be found on the top of Spirit Mountain. As for Tom, his story is based on an actual happening, but as Old Tipso says, "It is better that some things die in the memory of the old ones." For that reason I have changed his name.