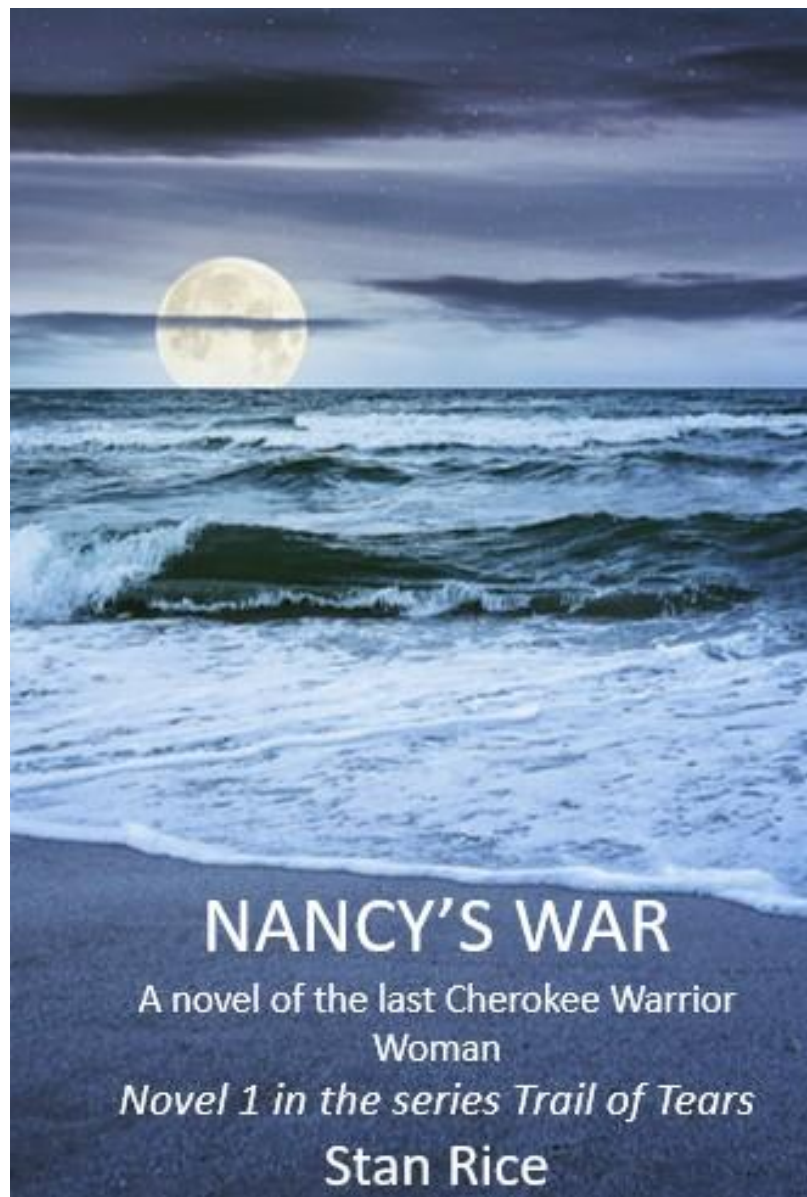




Nancy's War

A novel of the last Cherokee Warrior Woman

Novel 1 in the series *Trail of Tears*:

Novels of Cherokee Identity

Stan Rice

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This story, though fiction, is based on real events including those in the life of the author's third and second great grandmothers.

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Summary of the series

Trail of Tears: Novels of Cherokee Identity

These three novels (*Nancy's War*, *Elizabeth's Exile*, and *Edd's Land*) are very fictionalized accounts of the experiences of my sixth-great-grandmother Nancy Ward, my great-grandmother Elizabeth Hilderbrand Pettit, and my grandfather Edd Hicks—based mostly on real people and historical events, with a lot of imagination added in. They are novels of Cherokee identity because Elizabeth Pettit was only one-eighth Cherokee, and Edd Hicks only one-fourth. The most famous chief in Cherokee history, John Ross, was only one-eighth Cherokee. Cherokee identity is not the result of blood quantum, but of tribal experience, such as speaking the language and living through the major events of tribal history. Or in John Ross's case, not even speaking the language. Edd was the last person in our family to qualify for this identity; my mother and myself derived our Cherokee identity from what we remembered about our ancestors, through family stories.

Each novel is self-contained. You do not need to remember the main characters of one novel in order to fully appreciate the later ones.

The last Cherokee warrior woman Nanyehi (Nancy Ward) sought peace between her Cherokee people and white Americans in the eighteenth century in the Cherokee homeland in Appalachia. Her sacrificial quest amazed, puzzled, and sometimes angered both her own people (especially her warrior cousin Dragging Canoe) and the whites. To Nanyehi, the path to peace was always and never clear. To her uncle the tribal peace chief, she was the leader called by the white wolf to bring peace to the Cherokees. To her people, she was a war hero. To her warrior cousin she was a prostitute of white men. To the whites, such as trader Bryan Ward whom she marries, Nancy was a squaw who astonished them with her wisdom and power. To Thomas Jefferson, she helped to inspire democracy. To her refugee descendants like me, her compromises proved futile. The story arc is completed when Nancy Ward decides to not betray Dragging Canoe to the American authorities.

Elizabeth's Exile is about Nancy's great granddaughter and the true story of her experiences on the Trail of Tears, in which the American government forced almost the whole tribe to leave their Appalachian homeland and relocate to what is now Oklahoma. Survival on the trail, and afterwards, as America experienced a civil war, was not easy or guaranteed.

Edd's Land tells how white swindlers stole Cherokee land even after Oklahoma statehood, as told through the eyes of Edd Hicks, my grandfather. He accepted his fate, but his brothers did not, and one of them took matters into his own hands to do something about it.

The true story of Cherokee history needs to be told from the inside, and I am the one to do it. Compared to novels about the slave experience, the continuing oppression of Native Americans remains largely untold. Native American presence in fiction is far less than that of other minorities in the United States. Most of the fiction depicts drunk Indians passed out in a ditch on the rez in flyover country, which is a racist image. For me, telling the stories of the Cherokee experience is a mission. I think it is time for an own-voices novel about the Cherokee experience—*my* family's Cherokee experience.

Summary of *Nancy's War*

The last Cherokee warrior woman Nanyehi (Nancy Ward) seeks peace between her Cherokee people and white Americans in the eighteenth century. Her sacrificial quest amazed, puzzled, and sometimes angered both her own people (especially her warrior cousin Dragging Canoe) and the whites. To Nanyehi, the path to peace was always and never clear. To her uncle the tribal peace chief, she was the leader called by the white wolf to bring peace to the Cherokees. To her people, she was a war hero. To her warrior cousin she was a prostitute of white men. To the whites, such as trader Bryan Ward whom she marries, Nancy was a squaw who astonished them with her wisdom and power. To Thomas Jefferson, she helped to inspire democracy. To her refugee descendants like me, her compromises proved futile. The story arc is completed when Nancy Ward decides to not betray Dragging Canoe to the American authorities.

Part One: Nancy Ward

Chapter 1

"We know he's in here somewhere, Mrs. Ward," the American captain says. "You'd better tell us where he is. If we find you're hiding him, you're in a mess of trouble too!"

"Why would he be here?" I say, motioning around at the tables and chairs of my inn. "Why don't you try to find him on Lookout Mountain?" Just outside of American-controlled Tennessee, Lookout Mountain is the last holdout of my cousin's Chickamauga warriors.

"We saw a wagon that came from there come right up to this inn of yours." The captain holds his rifle ready but does not point it at me. He calls to the private, "Find anything yet?"

"No, captain," says the private who, in his shabby uniform, is just a boy.

"You're hiding him," the captain says to me.

"Why would I hide him?" I say. "Perhaps you are not aware that, on several occasions, my cousin almost killed me."

"Is that so?" The captain lowers his rifle.

"Yes," I answer. I do not call him "captain," because I am not an American and he has no authority over me. "My cousin and I do not agree on very much. We are not allies."

My conflict with my cousin Tsiyu Gansini began a lifetime ago, when I was still the little Cherokee girl Nanyehi. It is not merely personal. The entire future of our Cherokee Nation depends on it. My cousin and his warriors want to fight the Americans, while my cry is all for peace. I believe that God, or Selu or Whatever name he or she finds pleasing, desires all people under the sun to live in peace. Besides, I know we cannot win an armed resistance against the Americans. Each moment we delay in our submission to the brand-new United States brings more American vengeance upon us.

"Did you check all the bedrooms?" the captain asks the private.

"Yes," the private answers. "And he ain't in the pantry neither."

I wince because the pantry was where I hid my cousin last night. But they won't find him. This morning I hid him under crates in the back of his wagon. The wagon is on its way back to Lookout Mountain.

"Well, then, Mrs. Ward, if he ain't here, do you know where he is?"

I could tell the soldiers right now how to find him. I know which road he is on, and which wagon he is in. But since I do not know his exact location, I'm not actually lying when I say, "No, I do not."

"Keep lookin'," the captain commands the private, then turns to join him.

I, Nancy Ward, am the last Ghigau of the Cherokee people. (This is pronounced *gi-ga-hyu*.) It is the year the white calendar calls 1792. I am the last warrior woman, I who converted to being a woman of peace. Mine is the voice to which my people listen. My cousin's voice is revered only by his small band of warriors. Most Cherokee men have settled down to be farmers, and most Cherokee women to be churchgoing housewives. And they listen to me. I am in charge

here! I have the right, given to me by my people, to betray my cousin to the Americans. Some would say I have the duty to do so. He was once a great warrior. He is now an old man. But he remains dangerous. Why do I hesitate? The captain is standing right over there. All I would have to do is wave to him and unburden my mind.

As I look around the inn, most of which I have converted to an orphanage, I think about the Cherokee families that have already been killed by war with the Americans. And white families, too. My hesitation will only prolong the war and increase the number of orphans, red and white. The war might claim my inn, my orphanage, the orphans, and myself as its victims. I start to raise my hand to betray my cousin, with whom I had a quiet and loving conversation this very morning, perhaps the first such conversation we ever had. And almost certainly the last. I keep my hand down.

I think back over the times Tsiyu Gansini wanted to kill me. Like the time I rescued the white woman Lydia Bean from being burned at the stake by his warriors. Mrs. Bean, who became my friend, was just about the only prize that Tsiyu Gansini could show for his attack at Island Flats. The attack failed because I released Isaac Thomas, a white man, from the hut in which we held him captive, so that he could warn the Americans that an attack was imminent. My cousin was about ready to kill me for that, too. He had his knife at my throat. I kept a stern face. I don't think he ever knew how frightened I was.

I am smiling now as I think of my cousin. He has always exulted in the blood and prowess of the warrior. He never had much time for the love of women. He had a woman long enough to have a son, but that was a long time ago. He acts now as if he never cared about women. In contrast, I have had time for men. This is one of the things he does not like about me. He thinks I sold out when I married Bryan Ward, a white man, and later when I took another white man, Isaac Thomas, as my lover. Yes, the same Isaac Thomas whom I released. I think women disgust my cousin.

Soldiers can stop and search the wagon that my cousin is in. But they will not, because there is a Cherokee woman sitting on the crates. And she is pretending that she is in her period of the moon. I am trusting that the gallant American soldiers will not make her get up from her seat. This is an old trick I borrowed from the white man's Bible. Rachel, the wife of Jacob, smuggled idols from her father's household by hiding them under a pillow she sat on, pretending that the way of women was upon her. It worked for her; maybe it will work for my cousin also. The thought that the great warrior Tsiyu Gansini, who scorns women, should escape while a woman is seated just inches over his head is so amusing that, well, I have to let him escape. I smile at his discomfort. But it would not be funny if he actually gets caught and executed. So, I must lie as much as I can to save him, regardless of the burden of war he will yet bring upon my people.

Chapter 2

The citizens of the new United States believe that they are the only Americans. They believe that their cities, Boston and Philadelphia and Williamsburg and Charles Town, are where the important events occur. But in July of 1776, when their eyes were focused on Philadelphia, I was helping to decide the fate of their nation on the western frontier in Tennessee—and the fate of my own nation, the *Tsalagi Ayeli*, the Cherokee Nation.

Americans have never heard of me because my name is on none of their important documents. My name shows up on none of the treaties they made with my people—treaties they have broken, every one of them—because they would not negotiate with a woman, but only with our male chiefs. Their commissioners could only act puzzled that a woman should be speaking to them. They do not even listen to their own women. I told them once in a speech to which few of them listened, *we women, red and white, are your mothers and the mothers of your children! Why do you not listen to us?*

When I was young, we Cherokee women had power. We made the decisions at home. We even had our own council in the government. Quite simply, men could not tell us what to do. When my uncle, Tsiyu Gansini's father Attakullakulla, went to England in 1730, he was amazed that their government had no formal input from women. And he told them so. "Where are the women?" he asked Parliament. The power of Cherokee women amazed the English as much as the powerlessness of English women amazed my uncle.

But now we Cherokee, except for my cousin and his warriors, have become white in all ways but the color of our skin. Soon enough, our world will be the same as the American world. My inn looks like any white American inn. I serve beer and beef. My voice is a mere curiosity from the past. A council of men makes our decisions. Our women are now chattel just like American women.

My cousin is also a great orator. He said, in some of the most stirring words I have ever heard, that all the great native peoples have melted like snow before the heat of American conquest. Which one of us is right? I believe the way of peace will allow us to maintain a separate and equal Cherokee Nation alongside the United States of America, profitable allies one to the other. But will the Cherokee Nation instead melt like snow before American greed, as my cousin says? I will probably be dead before we know the answer to that question.

The American Declaration of Independence calls for freedom, but what kind of freedom? It calls for the freedom of white men to kill our men and women and children and take our land. One of the things the Americans did not like about King George was that he drew a line on the map in 1763 and declared that the land west of that line belonged to the Cherokees and commanded the colonists to stay east of that line. They wanted the freedom to ignore that line, the freedom to consume our land like a horde of grasshoppers. That is what freedom and independence mean to them even now that they have their own nation.

I fear that our Cherokee leaders will eventually give away our land, so that our people will become refugees to a land far to the west, to a land where I believe the United States will eventually dump the leftover bones and gristles of all tribal peoples.

Chapter 3

The captain and the private are preparing to leave.

“We will find him,” says the captain as he and the private turn and go out the door.

Eventually, they will find Tsiyu Gansini. But not today. He is on his way back to Lookout Mountain, where he is hiding out with his Chickamauga warriors, and the women and children who have taken refuge with them. They are not all Cherokees; there are some Creeks, some Shawnees, even some whites. Many of the Cherokees are half white, or more. Someday soon, Tsiyu Gansini and his pitiful band of warriors, his brave and hopeless warriors, will have to surrender.

Part Two: Nanyehi

Chapter 1

Before my Uncle Attakullakulla took me to Charles Town and back, in the year that the white calendar calls 1749, I was just a little Cherokee girl, Nanyehi. On that trip, I became a woman. I had no idea that I would become the great Nancy Ward.

From my earliest days I knew there was something special about me. Adults would listen to me as if I had something important to say. They would listen to me seriously, more than they would to any other child in our town of Chota. But it was not until after my trip with my uncle to Charles Town, South Carolina, that my people started treating me as if I had a special calling. I started that trip with no plan to do anything heroic. But watching, listening, and asking questions can lead you down the path to heroism, whether you think it will or not.

I had never been to a city as large as Charles Town. Nor have I been to one in all the years since I visited it with my uncle. When I was there, I saw nothing that made me want to return or to see another large city. I had never even been outside of the forest where all of my ancestors lived. For anything I knew to the contrary on that day, the forest went on and on forever. Where our forest ended, the forest of the Muskogeas began, but it was still the same trees and vines and flowers and birds and deer. I could only imagine that this forest continued forever toward the sunrise in the east and the Darkening Land in the west, where the spirits go when people die.

Uncle Attakullakulla told me that in the east the forest ended at the ocean, which was like a lake too big to see the opposite shore. On the shore, on our side of that ocean, was Charles Town. He also told me that many thousands of people lived in Charles Town. I did not understand. I knew the word for thousand, *iyagayuh-li*, but could not imagine it. My uncle told me to think of all the people in our town, Chota, which is one of the largest of our Cherokee towns, and then to imagine a hundred people for each of ours, and that is what Charles Town was like.

My uncle said he had traveled to a land called England, across that ocean, about twenty years earlier. Their cities were even larger than Charles Town. Almost all of the people in these cities across the sea were white. I had seen white people. Some of my friends and family even have white ancestors. My cousin Tsiyu Gansini told me that white people are sick and weak, like a corn leaf that has lost its color. But if they are sick and weak, how could there be whole cities of them?

“Why do you need to go to Charles Town?” I asked my uncle.

“I need to ask advice from a wise man,” he said.

“But we have wise men here,” I said. “Like you and Oconostota.”

“Yes, Na-ni,” he answered. “But we are wise only about the things in our own world. We now need advice about the white world. I have to ask a white lawyer.” He used the English word for lawyer since we had no word for it in Cherokee. He did not wait for me to ask what a lawyer

was. "A lawyer is a man who tries to resolve disputes about laws. Like when our councils meet and the chiefs dispute with one another."

I think I surprised him with my next question. "Are any of the lawyers women?"

After a brief pause, my uncle said, "No. The whites have no councils of women, and no women judges. They have no *ghigau*." Of course, I could not imagine that I would grow up to wield a white swan's wing, to be one of the *ghigau*, one of the revered and respected women. In fact, to be the last *ghigau* of the Cherokee people.

"Then what do their women do?" I asked impatiently.

"They do what our women do. They manage the household."

"So, the houses belong to the women?"

"No," my uncle answered. "Their husbands own the houses."

"Do the white women own anything?" I persisted.

"No," my uncle answered. My mother Tame Doe owned our house in Chota. When my father, a Delaware warrior, left, for reasons never explained to me, he took nothing with him. The food, the tools, the house, and the children (myself and Long Fellow, my brother) belonged to Tame Doe and to our clan, the Wolf Clan. His departure, when I was a baby, was the reason that my uncle was the closest thing I had to a father.

I was not a typical Cherokee girl. I could run through the woods like a doe. I could throw sticks and stones straighter than most of the boys. And I could hide in the underbrush better than anyone. One time the boys walked right past me so close that I could have tickled their ankles with a raven's feather. I was always running into the woods and getting lost. Well, I knew where I was; it was only the grown-ups who thought I was lost. That is why I was called Nanyehi, the wanderer, one who wanders like the branches of the wild rose. The *tsitsuna-giske* wild roses pop up from the underbrush, always in surprising places.

I was not a tender girl, but I was a light one. I could step through the undergrowth without making a sound. I could do this because I saw everything. It was not just underbrush to me, to be trodden upon; each flower and shrub was a living thing. At first, I was always apologizing to the flowers when I stepped on them, but after a while my feet learned to never disturb them. When I hid, I was right next to the beetles and centipedes, and almost felt as if I was one of them, as if I had temporarily become as small as they were. And they all talked to me, as did every leafy branch and every breeze and every crystalline drop of water flung up by the waterfalls. And the birds. Always lots of birds. We did not communicate with words, of course. I have heard stories about the Nunnehi, the spirits of the forest. I think that it must have been these Nunnehi, which are nothing more than insects, birds, flowers, and water drops, with whom I was in nearly constant communication when I was out in the forest. But the deer did not say very much to me, other than, *Your time is not yet*. And the other large animals of the forest, the raccoons and beaver and wolves, never showed themselves to me. I had the feeling that they were waiting for the appropriate time to reveal themselves. I just knew it.

"Do any of the white women go to war alongside their husbands?" I asked.

"No," my uncle answered. "Their wives are like most Cherokee wives, who stay at home when their warriors go to battle."

"But our women stay home only if they choose to stay home," I said. After a long minute of thinking, I said, "Someday, when I am a wife, I will go with my warrior husband to battle."

My uncle could have told me that I was too young to think about war. But he knew, as I did not yet know, that twelve is no longer young. Very soon I would be a woman. My mother already combed my hair with the ivory comb that was one of the few items she ever got from a white trader. Soon I would use an extract of sumac berries to give a vermilion tint to my dark hair, like a woman. Soon I would have to spend a few days each month in the women's hut near the edge of town. Soon my breasts would grow. I'm not sure I wanted to grow up. I was afraid that the chatter of the birds and the sound of the leaves would stop talking to me. On the other hand, I wondered if maybe the larger animals would start talking to me when I became a woman.

Then my uncle smiled and interrupted my thoughts. "Just like Tsiyu Gansini," he chuckled. "My son is a warrior, a strong young man, but he wanted to be a warrior even when he was younger than you are now. And now you want to be a warrior woman."

Tsiyu Gansini means He is Dragging His Canoe. When he was just a little boy, he wanted to go with his father to battle with the Muskogees. Attakullakulla told him that he was too small.

"How small is too small?" my cousin had demanded, just as I would have.

His father reflected a moment, then said, "If you are strong enough to carry a canoe, then you are big enough to go to battle."

Without hesitation, my cousin walked over to a canoe grounded in the mud on the creek bank. He could not lift it. He struggled and strained, but his feet only sank further into the mud. Then, to everyone's surprise, he started pulling the canoe through the mud. It was only a short distance, no further than the upper ribs of a deer are long, but his defiant smile, when he looked fully into his father's face, proved that he thought he had fulfilled his father's requirement. Attakullakulla allowed Tsiyu Gansini to tag along on the outskirts of the battle.

My aunt Nionne Ollie was packing a leather bag for my uncle, with some small pouches of dried venison, fish, berries, and nuts, and a metal pan he got from a white trader for heating water. Along with his flint and steel, she placed a block of kanuchi wrapped in leaves into the bag. Kanuchi is ground pecans, pressed together into a form that can be stored and transported. She also packed the clothes that my uncle would wear when he met with the white man.

"So, Uncle," I asked, "why are you taking me with you to Charles Town?"

Attakullakulla and Nionne Ollie stopped and looked at one another for a moment. My aunt resumed her work, and my uncle looked at me. He said, "I want you to start learning about the world of the Yonega." That is our word for white people. "You may need to know about it someday."

"What do we need advice from the white lawyer for?" I asked, already including myself in tribal affairs without thinking about it.

"Some of their farmers are cutting down trees and planting their crops on Cherokee land," my uncle said to me.

"Can't our warriors just go and make them leave?"

"We need to encounter the Yonega with wisdom. As when you meet a bear in the forest. Sometimes, when you are hunting, you need to meet the bear directly with spear and arrow and gun. But the rest of the time, you keep a respectful distance. Sometimes you have to retreat. You have to let the bear be a bear, whether you are hunting him or not. We know how to deal with bears. But the Yonega? How do we deal with them? We need advice from one of their wise men."

"So, this is one of the times we must retreat from the Yonega?" I persisted.

"That is what I must find out," said Attakullakulla.

"No, it is not," said a defiant voice from the door of the cabin. It was Tsiyu Gansini, who was now about twenty years old. He always wore the traditional leather breechcloths and leggings and moccasins. Nearly all of the men's heads were shorn except for a crest down the middle, but unlike the others Tsiyu Gansini kept his crest perfectly trimmed, and as soon as any hairs emerged from the rest of his skull, he would pluck them out with small clamshell tweezers. His eyes were no whiter than anyone else's, but it was always his eyes that you noticed first, against a background of red and black war paint that he nearly always wore. He said it was because he was always ready, instantly, to go to war. The rest of us knew that he was also hiding the disfigurement caused by the smallpox that had nearly killed him when he was a boy.

"What is there to ask? What is there that you do not already know?" my cousin demanded of his father. "The white farmers are on the land on which Selu has permitted our women to raise corn, and Kanati has allowed our men to hunt deer. What more is there to know?"

"White ways are different from our ways," said Attakullakulla.

Dragging Canoe came into the cabin and sat on the dirt floor beside his father. He seemed to always notice and disapprove of his father's cloth pants and shirt, and the thick-soled leather boots that protected his father's feet but did not allow him to feel the life of the soil as he walked.

"The Yonega can have their white ways in their white lands," my cousin said. "Although I remind you, Father, that those lands used to belong to the Natchi and the Yuchi and the Mabila. Where are those people now? The whites have killed them all and turned their lands into big anthills. They have a hunger that knows no satisfaction. They..."

"I know," said his father, who had heard his son give this speech before.

"And they didn't all die. Nionne Ollie is a Natchi," I told my cousin.

"My mother?" my cousin asked. His mother had left Uncle's pouch beside him and was sitting in the corner sewing the edge of a deerskin blanket we would be taking with us on our journey. "Nionne Ollie was almost starved to death when she came to us." She looked over at us with sad eyes. "A few of the Natchi survived, but they lost their homes." My cousin stood up and faced me as if I were an opponent in a debate around the council house fire. I, a little girl twelve years old! He could not have guessed that a time would come when our differences would be taken with the utmost seriousness by our whole tribe. "Even these few survivors like my mother would have died, if we had not adopted them into our clans," he said, stamping his foot.

"I just want to understand the Yonega so that we do not have unnecessary conflict," said Attakullakulla. "They claim that they bought the land from us."

"Conflict is their choice. They have made it necessary." Tsiyu Gansini was defiant. "The Yonega cannot buy the land. We cannot sell it. It belongs to no man or woman. Oh, if they want to hunt on the land, so long as they do not kill too many deer, we can talk to them about that. But that is not what they want. When they come, they cut down the trees and destroy the land. When that happens, nobody else can ever use the land again."

"That is not quite true," said his father. "The Ancient Ones who lived in the land before us built great cities, maybe not as big as Charles Town, but they destroyed their lands. Today, all that remains are some of their large mounds. And the forests have returned where their cities once stood."

"But first," said Tsiyu Gansini, "the Ancient Ones had to die. The roots of the trees now grow around their bones in the mounds. Where are the Ancient Ones now? The trees grew back only when the Ancient Ones died and stopped cutting the trees down."

"Yes, they died," said my uncle. "Nobody had to kill them. They destroyed themselves. Perhaps the Yonega will destroy themselves."

Tsiyu Gansini was now yelling. "The Yonega are grasshoppers that will not destroy themselves so long as they can keep consuming more and more land. We must stop them!"

Attakullakulla rose. "I am glad, my son, that you think for yourself. You see with your own eyes, then decide what you think is the right course of action. But you are still young. I hate to have to do this, but I must tell you now to be silent. Our future course of action depends upon what the elders, such as me and Oconostota, decide. We will listen to you younger warriors, and to the women, and then we will decide what to do. But for now, be silent."

"And why are you taking Na-ni with you?" my cousin demanded. "Why her?"

"You mean," said Dragging Canoe's father, "why not you? I think you know the answer. I need someone who can listen and learn and prepare for the future. But you—you will not listen and learn. Your mind is already made up! If you were to speak to the lawyer as you have spoken about the Yonega just now, what would happen? You must remember that this lawyer, this particular, individual Yonega, wants to help us. No, you speak but you do not listen. This is your strength, my son. It will be very valuable to our village and to our people. But this is not the time for the particular kind of strength that you have."

"Very well, Father," Tsiyu Gansini said, struggling to contain his wrath. "But someday the tribe will listen to me, and the warriors will follow me."

"If by then you are one of the elders, then you will have the right to do this. But for now, you must be silent." Attakullakulla considered the discussion to be at an end.

Tsiyu Gansini turned to me. "And what about you, young cousin? Which direction will you choose when you become a woman?"

"I suppose," I answered, "that by then I will know. But meanwhile, your little Nanyehi has not yet finished wandering."

He smiled. "Good answer, Na-ni. I trust that in time you will see that I am right." He turned toward his father, as if to address him.

"Why do you care what I think?" I blurted out.

This took the men by surprise, and they looked at me. They knew the answer to that question. My uncle said it. "When you were born," he said, after a few moments of hesitation, "the animals of the forest gave a sign to us. We do not understand yet what it means, but they have a special task for you. Someday."

I knew it. *I knew it.*

"Why didn't anyone tell me?" I demanded.

"Because," said Attakullakulla, "we did not want you to go around thinking that you have already been chosen as one of our leaders. To go around acting as if you already have authority. No, I think the spirits of the animals are waiting to see what you will do before conferring on you your special destiny."

My uncle looked at his son, who frowned. Whatever it was that the animals had said, whatever this special destiny was supposed to be, Tsiyu Gansini did not like it.

"Which animals?" I asked. "What did they say?"

"Your mother will tell you," said my uncle. "They spoke to her. She will decide when the time is right to tell you what they said."

"Or perhaps the animals will decide when to tell me!"

"Perhaps, Na-ni."

I was ready to run out and ask the animals myself, right then. But it was nightfall. I would have to go home soon. I did not have to be home for dinner, because we did not really have dinnertime in those days. Oh, we have a set dinnertime now. Before my daughters got married and went to live with their husbands, in the manner of white people, I expected them to be home for dinner, and they expect their daughters to be punctual, in the manner of white people. But back when I was a little girl in Chota, beloved and vanished Chota, we just kept a pot of corn porridge and some pieces of venison and bean bread hot near the fire, and everyone ate when they felt hungry. My uncle dipped a half gourd into the porridge and handed it to his son, who put it to his lips. My uncle dipped out some porridge for himself and began to eat it with a spoon that he had gotten from a trader.

Tsiyu Gansini tipped up the gourd and drank the porridge and put the gourd back down. He grabbed a piece of bean bread and quietly left the cabin.

My uncle gave me some porridge also, and a spoon. Then he said to me, "I do not believe there is ever a time when it is good to know less than to know more. That is why I will go and talk to the white lawyer. You might think," he looked into my eyes, "that I wish my son would learn more about the white world. But if he did so, he would perhaps be more convinced than ever that we need to fight. He mentioned the Natchi, the Yuchi, and the Mabila. Those are just the people that he knows about. If he only knew how right he was. There are many more tribes who have vanished. Where now are the Wampanoag, the Narraganset, the Pequot, and the Mohegan? The Yonega now have their land, and the big city of Boston sprouts from it like a

mushroom. Where are the Montauk and the Manhattoes? Their land is now in the shadow of New York. And the Nanticoke? Everyone in the white world has heard of Baltimore, but they have not heard of the Nanticoke.”

“Where did you learn all of this?” I asked.

“Why, from the white lawyer whom we will visit. He told me about them. Tsiyu Gansini will not believe it, but this white man actually wants to help protect the Cherokees from suffering a similar extinction.”

Chapter 2

The next morning, we were ready for our trip to Charles Town. I usually went barefoot in the summer, but today I wore sturdy moccasins, and a deerskin dress with fringes. Uncle had the pouch that Nionne Ollie had packed for him, and he had a gun slung on a strap over his shoulder as he rode up to the cottage of his sister, my mother. We had to start early, for it was a long road to Etchoe, where we would stay with one of my Wolf Clan cousins. As my mother handed me up to my uncle, and he slipped me in front of him on his horse, my mother looked apprehensive, almost frightened. I almost asked her what the animals had told her, but I knew there was not enough time for her to answer, or even to decide whether to say anything at all.

By midday, my uncle and I passed the last of the mountain ridges that I recognized. I expected to see strange new lands right away. But the new lands looked pretty much the same as the ones I knew: the same chestnuts and oaks, the same rivers lined with azaleas, the same little trees along the riverbanks with white flowers that looked like bells. The birds spoke to me in the same way they always had. The horse was trotting along too fast for me to listen to the insects, and the air hung too heavy for the wind to create a song.

We stopped for a few minutes to eat, climbing down from the horse. On a rock overlooking white rapids in a river, my uncle and I smelled a dead animal. A vulture was circling in the sky. He was flying too high for us to see his beady little eyes, but he seemed to be looking at me and telling me something. We looked for the dead animal. It was a deer. Uncle was not pleased. I looked at the carcass and understood why. The skin had been removed, but all the meat was rotting.

I looked up in the sky and saw the vulture flying away, toward the Darkening Land. But not for long, he seemed to say to me. He would be back when we left. I felt him saying that we were about to enter a land of death. I shuddered.

“Why did the hunter leave all of the meat?” I asked my uncle.

“He was a greedy hunter, who wanted only the hide,” my uncle answered.

“But there was enough meat there to feed a large family for several days,” I persisted. *There still is*, I imagined the vulture saying.

“The hunter killed the deer,” my uncle explained carefully, “so that he could sell the hide to a trader and get something in return. Maybe something useful, like bullets, or maybe something not so useful, like a ring for his finger, or ribbons for his wife. You see, Na-ni,” he continued as he sat down, and I sat beside him. “My son and his young warriors want to preserve our traditional Cherokee life. But our traditional life is already gone. It has been gone for many years. Our hunters used to kill only the number of deer they needed. But now our people have become almost completely dependent upon the Yonega. The Yonega want deerskins to make leather and hats. In turn, we depend upon the trade items they give us. Our ancient treaty with the animals of the forest is now broken, as we slaughter them for their skins. It is not just the Yonega

who have created a land of death. We Cherokees have already brought death into the world. This is what Tsiyu Gansini does not understand.

“And it is not just useless items that we obtain from the Yonega in return for deerskins,” continued my uncle. “Sometimes it is things that are not just useless, but evil.”

I smiled, not because I approved of the hunters, but because I felt like I was growing up. “I know what you mean, Uncle. I know what whiskey is. When we have our celebrations, I can tell which of the dancers have been drinking it and which have not. One who has not been drinking can move gracefully and keep doing it all night. One who has been drinking, well, he *thinks* he is dancing, until somebody steps on his hand.” We looked at one another soberly, and then we both burst into laughter.

“No, seriously,” my uncle continued. “I know whom you are talking about. That young man from Toquo, the one with the big head. He will not be able to provide for a family. He makes a lot of noise but, from what I have heard, he can’t shoot straight. And he’s clumsy even when he *isn’t* drunk. He says that the spirits speak to him when he drinks. What a liar.”

Yes. What a liar. *I* am the one to whom the spirits will speak, I told myself.

My uncle continued, “You stay away from men like that when you are older.”

“I want a man who will listen to my advice and let me go with him to war,” I said.

“Well, then, you probably won’t have any trouble. Men like Fat-head from Toquo don’t listen to women. His mother needs to give him a good stiff lecture, as if he were still a boy.”

Then we got back on the horse and continued our journey.

Chapter 3

When we got to Cousin Buck's place, I was greeted warmly then ignored by nearly everyone. My Uncle was the one with all the stories about England and Quebec. We sat around the fire as the sun set and listened to him.

Then, from the babble of conversation, I heard a voice call me. "Nanyehi. Over here."

It was a friend of Buck's youngest son. I have forgotten his name.

"I'll show you something," he said.

"Show me what?"

He beckoned me to follow him, and we slipped out behind the house.

"He thinks I don't know he has it."

"Who?"

"My father."

"Has what?"

He took my hand and led me into the darkness behind the leaves. He had to feel around the rocks and tree trunks with his free hand.

"Here it is." The boy let me touch the small, sturdy jug. This was the first time I had ever encountered a jug. I deduced its appearance from what I felt, and I could hear him slosh a liquid around inside of it. He pulled out the stopper and let me smell it. The stopper was made of fragrant sassafras wood, but there was another aroma, intense enough that it almost made me sneeze.

"Don't sneeze, they'll hear us," he said. Then he pushed the jug right under my nose. The vapor burned. "Do you want to drink some?"

"I know what this is," I said. "My uncle would be able to smell it on my breath."

"You don't have to drink *that* much. Just a little. Or, here. Try this."

He must have inserted his forefinger into the bunghole of the jug and sloshed some liquid onto it. Then he touched my face with his little finger, found my mouth, and nudged it open. I did not move away. He touched his forefinger on the tip of my tongue, leaving a little drop of the liquor. My whole mouth seemed to burn. When an owl flew above us, under the thick branches, I heard its quiet call. Even at night the birds were watching over me. I felt that the big animals were watching me also but did not want me to know. The owl's call filled my whole mind. Colors filled the darkness. I stood and started to walk toward the colors, away from the boy's hand, but I stumbled and fell. I heard the stopper slipping back into the hole and a rustling noise when the boy hid the jug back in its place.

"That's enough," I said, getting back up.

He touched my forearm. The short deerskin sleeves of my dress hung loosely from my upper arm. Then, even more lightly, he slipped his hand onto my shoulder, under the leather. I have been touched by boys more times than I can remember, especially when us children would play in the river. But this was different. His touch tingled like vapors.

"That's enough," I repeated.

"Do not worry," he said. "I'm Paint Clan, not Wolf Clan."

An American may be surprised at how much freedom young Cherokee boys and girls had back then, before they made all of us go to their schools and churches. I believe that if my uncle had known what had just happened, he would only have urged me, without anger, to wait until I was older. But had this boy been Wolf Clan, Uncle would have been angry—at least, as angry as the wise Attakullakulla ever got. Sexual relations within the clan were nearly unthinkable.

"I'm only twelve," I said.

He laughed quietly. "Turtle's twelve," he said, as if that was supposed to prove something.

"I don't care if she's the same age I am," I answered. "I'm not a woman yet."

"I will be a man and you will be a woman someday soon. Sooner than you think."

"You might be right about that," I said. "But there is something that I have to do first. I don't know what it is. It has nothing to do with the way of a woman with a man, but otherwise, I do not know what it is." I could not tell him about the animals.

He slowly removed his hand from my shoulder. I savored every moment of the contact, but never regretted telling him to stop. He touched my tingling fingertips and led me back to the house.

Chapter 4

On the second day, my uncle and I approached the indistinct border of the Cherokee lands. There were a few farmsteads, cleared and built by white men with Cherokee wives who wore cloth like white women. The children, some of whom had light hair and skin, also wore cloth. In Cherokee society, men help the women to plant corn, but it is the women who grow the crops. Except for when we plant and harvest, farming is women's work. But for the Yonega, farming was men's work. Perhaps, I thought, a white farmer is a type of warrior. I saw one white farmer leaning on his hoe. With its long wooden shaft and sharp metal end, it looked like a warrior's spear from the time before our warriors used guns.

The town of Keowee was right at the edge of Cherokee territory, before the land descended smoothly toward the great ocean. We were welcomed by a Wolf Clan family we had never met. Nearby was Fort Prince George, where white soldiers were crowded together. These soldiers might have come out against us, or they might have protected us, and it was up to people like Attakullakulla to determine which of these actions they took. Many of the soldiers had Cherokee wives who lived in Keowee and who brought them provisions to supplement their disgusting rations of army food.

The fort, like the old Cherokee towns, was surrounded by a solid palisade of tree trunks, but unlike one of our old towns there were no trees inside of the palisade. We no longer built palisades, which were useless against white artillery. But the palisades of white forts could resist our guns and arrows. Inside the forts, the summer heat would bear down upon the soldiers, and they would walk around in the dust with their tongues hanging out like dogs. At least that is what our host's husband said. He should know. One of those soldiers was his son-in-law. The white soldiers even devastated a margin of land around the fort. Tsiyu Gansini was right to call their settlements anthills.

The next morning, soon after we passed the fort, we came to a gate that spanned across the road. Beyond it was the first toll road I had ever seen, leading into the British colony of South Carolina. The idea of charging money for a toll road seemed ridiculously white to me, as did the concept of money itself, but there were even some Cherokees who charged money for toll roads within the boundaries of the Nation. At this gate, the toll master was a filthy and ragged young white man who lounged on a rock. My uncle gave him some British coins from a pouch hanging around his neck, and the man sat back down as we continued on the road.

The toll road was crowded with wagons full of white people and the things they cherished and wanted to sell to us and wanted us to cherish. The great road was like a river carrying many canoes both ways. Something seemed very strange about this road. I thought about the roads between our towns and the trails through our forests. Then I realized what it was. Our roads and footpaths followed the contours of the land. Our trails curl around trees. Exposed roots of large trees formed natural steps. Sometimes we cut away branches and briars that hung overhead, but otherwise the trail was marked only by our feet and the hooves of our horses and

the mud ruts of an occasional white trader's wagon. The white road, in contrast, went straight. If a tree was in the way, they chopped it down. Our roads wound through forests the way snakes and creeks do, while theirs rammed through like spears or gunshots. The forest invited our people to pass through it, while the whites invaded the forest. The forest, to them, was an impediment, while to us it was a home. I could not put it into words at the time, but I recognized that our Cherokee world was curves while the white world was straight lines. When we used white guns, the marksman could look straight at the victim to aim, while an arrow has to be aimed a little high so that it can trace an upward arc—just a slight one—on its journey to its target. There is nothing in our tribe that is straighter than an arrow made of river cane, but our hunters and warriors, in the days before white contact, shot them roundly. You may think that tree trunks are straight, but if you look at them closely, you can hardly see a straight line: each fiber of bark twists, round knobs emerge from the wood, and then on top the branches curl out in great arcs.

For the first time, I saw Yonega plantations covering a vast plain. Our people have always had farms, where we raise corn. In our fields, bean plants climb up each corn stalk, and squash vines form a mantle around each base. We used sharp sticks to dig holes into which to plant the seeds. We hacked away the wild plants because they would have grown all over our cornstalks. We only destroyed enough of the plants to hold them back. Our fields looked like rough meadows in which the cornstalks were playing with one another the way the older kids played stickball. But the white farmlands were plowed. The metal plowshares would turn the soil wrong side up, forcing the underworld of worms into the upper world of sunlight. And the plows made long, straight rows, once again like spears. To the Yonega the wild plants needed to not just be cut back but needed to be slain. Some of the farms grew crops that came from over the sea, such as rice, but the largest and healthiest crops in the white plantations were those that they got from us, especially corn. They are proud of their fields and speak as if without the blessings of their churches the corn would not grow. I now understand that, to white farmers, the men rape the soil and inject the seeds, which the fertility of the soil causes to grow. As if the Earth has to be forced to give tribute to them. To them the farmer is a father. But to us the soil is a mother. I believe now that the wide world needs more mothering. I suspect that it has had about all of the fathering it can take. I did not yet know this when I gazed upon the vast fields of the white farmers. But I knew that if they raised a good crop, it was only because Mother Selu had given them corn just as she had given it to us Cherokees.

We stopped next to a white cornfield in which the leaves were tattered and pale. Grasshoppers crawled all over them. Of course, our fields had grasshoppers too, but these grasshoppers were different. They did not look different; they acted differently. There were so many of them, and they chomped relentlessly. Our grasshoppers hopped and flitted in free circles and took time to talk to me with their terse little buzzes. But the grasshoppers in this field moved along the ground in straight lines like the white armies I had heard about. They were far, far too busy to talk to me. Our warriors slink through the woods united by a common leader but with no absolute commander, while white soldiers walked in straight ranks and sometimes even marched

to drummers. Our drums are a mother's heartbeat, while theirs are a tyrant's commands. Once there were enough of them present in one place, the grasshoppers stopped acting like warriors and began acting like soldiers.

But why were there so many grasshoppers in this field? I wanted to ask my uncle, but I know what he would have said to me: Figure it out for yourself. So, I looked around the cornfields we passed as our horse trotted eastward. I did not see anything that would answer my question. Then I did something else my uncle had told me to do. I thought about what I did *not* see. I did not see very many birds in these fields. Our cornfields had a lot of mockingbirds and blue jays, which eat grasshoppers, as well as a lot of little sparrows that eat smaller bugs. But I did not see these birds in the white man's cornfields, and that must be why there were armies rather than little warrior bands of grasshoppers. But why weren't there very many small birds? I again looked into the sky for an answer, and this time I noticed a presence rather than an absence. I saw a hawk. I tried to imagine that I was a hawk searching for food. My food is not grasshoppers, but mockingbirds. Our fields were bordered by trees, in which mockingbirds and jays can hide. But in this large cornfield there was no place for a jaybird to hide from a hawk.

I also saw the vulture circling high overhead. It was the same vulture I had seen the previous day because all vultures are one vulture. He repeated to me that I was entering a world of death.

We came to the end of one toll road and entered another. The toll master at this gate was another white man. But while the previous toll master had expressed a feeling of laziness, this one projected a message of hatred. I could see it in his fat whiskery face as he glared at my uncle. He briefly looked at me. I glanced away almost in pain. When I looked back up at my uncle, I saw him in a new way. The clothes my uncle wore were not very different from what the white men wore, except that he did not wear a hat. In fact, only his dark skin, and his partially shorn scalp, revealed his identity as a Cherokee.

Then the birds began to gather around us. I could hear them telling me that this white man was evil. The whites whom we met on the road had looked at us in mild curiosity, but nothing more, for they had all seen Cherokees. But this man hated us. This was the only time that the birds had gathered to warn me about one of the Yonega.

I could not understand the conversation my uncle had with the toll master. My uncle seemed to greet him courteously in English, but the man, choked with anger, could hardly speak. He must have said how much the toll was, for Attakullakulla, towering over him on horseback, handed him some coins. My uncle said a polite farewell. We rode away. My uncle did not look back. I did. The man looked at me with that same intense hatred.

"We are going to meet him again," I said.

"Of course, we are," said my uncle. "We have to come back this way to Chota."

"Why does he hate us?"

"I don't know, Na-ni. He must have seen lots of Tsalagi. Why would he take special notice of us?"

We rode through several small Yonega towns. There was something different about the white towns, and I finally figured out what it was. They had cut down all the trees, just like the soldiers inside of the fort. I noticed this when I began to feel the heat of the sun as we rode through one of the towns. When we built a new town, we cleared out some of the undergrowth, but we left the large trees standing. Of course, part of that was because we had no metal hatchets except a few from the traders. But on summer days the shade of the trees feels nice, and in winter, the trees slow down the wind.

The houses looked different too. All of the wooden beams were straight. Not just the overall shape—we used straight poles in our houses too—but in the details: they cut round boles into square poles. Even their windows were square. Our houses usually did not have windows. Our summer houses had the upper part of the wall underneath the eaves open to the air; and our winter houses had no windows at all. We thatched our roofs from grasses and canes, and they formed roundish little tufts quite unlike the straight English roof shakes. My imagination got the better of me, perhaps, when I wondered why they did not insist on having square wheels on their wagons. I started laughing at the thought. My uncle just looked back at me and smiled.

All the white men and women wore cloth. Uncle wore cloth too, but not as much. And I wore only deerskin. White men, and even more so the women, seemed to cover every part of their bodies with cloth, except their faces. I seldom saw a man without a hat or a woman without a bonnet. They were hiding their bodies, which made me wonder if their bodies were ugly. Even the little kids playing in the mud were fully dressed though not nicely. They stared at me. At first, I thought it was only because of my dark skin, but, as my uncle said, they have seen Cherokees before. I imagined that the grown men leered at me. Then I realized it must be because my bare legs stuck out of my dress. I suddenly felt naked, even though I had more of my skin covered than I usually did in Chota, and certainly more than the young men and women do during stickball games.

Toward the end of our first day in South Carolina, on our third toll road, we stopped at a little remnant of forest between two of the white towns. I realized that I had not seen very many large trees since we left Cherokee land. I saw a lot of stumps along the road. I laughed a little to think that the white people were like beavers, always cutting and building, while we were like deer. The world is large enough for both beavers and deer, so long as the beavers stay in their ponds and let the deer run free in the forests.

The big trees in the little forest remnant were chestnuts. It was a little early in the year for chestnuts, but a few mature bristly nuts had fallen down on the ground. My uncle started a fire and heated some water by holding the pan over it. He hacked off a piece of kanuchi from the chunk in his pouch and made it into a delicious slurry in the warm water. He threw in some dried blackberries from another pouch, and the new chestnuts. We ate the kanuchi stew with spoons and gnawed on the hunks of dried venison that my aunt had packed. At nightfall, we tied our horses back in the trees, away from view of the road, and then slept between deerskins.

On the next day, I saw slaves in a cotton field for the first time. I could not make any sense of the scene before me. The first thing was that I had never seen cotton plants. We used plant fibers. I had seen cotton cloth, but I never knew where it came from. It puzzled me that the Yonega would cut down a forest and plant a crop for fiber, because one can get plenty of fibers from the forest plants and still have the forest in which one can hunt deer. The Yonega always do things the hard way, I thought.

Well, actually not. That was the second thing I noticed. The white people weren't doing it the hard way. Black people were. It was the first time I had seen black people. They bent over to pick the cotton, and they stayed bent over. It looked like an extremely uncomfortable thing to do even for a few moments, but they appeared to have been doing it all day. Occasionally one of them would *run* with a basket full of cotton to a little shed, where a white man sat. The white man wrote something down on a sheet of paper and the black man or woman dumped the cotton into a large wagon. I knew that skin comes in lots of different colors, but I was amazed by the tight curls of the hair, the broad noses, and the large lips of these suffering people.

"Where did those people come from?" I asked my uncle. I was fairly sure that they were not members of any of the native tribes that surrounded the Cherokee Nation.

"They came from Africa."

"Where's..."

"Africa, like England, is on the other side of the great ocean, only further south. I think all of the people there are black."

"Why was that man running with the bag of cotton?"

"The foreman is keeping a record of how much cotton he has picked. If he doesn't pick enough each day, he will be punished."

"It looks like they are very uncomfortable. Do they do this all day?"

"Every day."

"How long? Maybe a week?"

"No. Just about every day of their lives there is some heavy work for them to do."

"Why do they put up with it? We wouldn't."

"They don't have any choice. They're slaves."

I will not recount the agonized process by which I tried to understand plantation slavery. In the old days, we Cherokees enslaved captives from other tribes. And if we did not have enough women in our towns, we would capture some, usually from the Natchi and Yuchi. But we never made them work like this. Our slaves usually lived pretty much like the rest of us, and more often than not they were adopted into our clans. We even, in the old days, tortured some of the prisoners of war. Some of the older women still remembered how, when they were girls, our warriors would let the women torture the captives by cutting and burning them. But the captives were not tortured very long. If the prisoner had done evil things against us, he would be killed. But if not, then the prisoner was either released or adopted. The captives were miserably frightened by the women, except when they saw a *ghigau* approach and wave the white swan's wing at him, the signal for him to be spared. And we never tortured women. Furthermore, we

never thought we *owned* any of our captives, even back when we had them. We didn't think of our horses as being something that we owned. We were their partners. Since that time, we have started owning cows. I am partly to blame for that. At that time, we didn't even own land. We have started owning land, and for that I am not to blame. But to own people? I did not know that I was to become the first Cherokee to own black slaves. But I have never treated them like this.

That was also the first time I saw cows. The cows looked a lot more comfortable than the slaves.

"Why don't the slaves run away?"

"Some of them do, but they usually get caught."

"You mean the owner chases them down? What if more than one of them runs away at the same time?"

"Other white people catch them and bring them back. The owner pays them a reward."

"What if someone finds them, but doesn't tell the owner? Maybe helps the slaves escape?"

"That is against the law of South Carolina. The white man—or Cherokee—who harbors the slave is imprisoned or has to pay money. And then," he continued, "the slaves get whipped."

Of course, he had to explain this to me as well. Whipping was like switching only it left a cut or bruise on the skin. My mother never switched me, but some of my friends got switched by their mothers. Just a couple of quick snaps on the butt, using a nice flexible branch, usually an elm branch. Certainly not something like an oak branch that might actually leave a bruise. And it was not like whipping a horse. A horse whip whips the air and creates a noise that makes the horse obey. But leaving bloody wounds on the backs and shoulders of the slaves?

The white overseers had whips, but I never saw them use them. I asked my uncle about it. "The most effective whips are those that are inside the minds of the slaves," he said.

Chapter 5

On the fourth night, we slept in a woodlot not far from Charles Town. The next morning, we washed ourselves in the creek.

We approached the city. The first thing I saw when we came over the last rise was the ocean. I knew it was blue water retreating infinitely into the distance, but I could not make myself believe it. I looked, blinked, looked again, and it seemed more like a dark blue haze without depth. Then I saw a whole plain filled with houses. At first it reminded me of grasshoppers so tightly pressed one against the other that there was no room for any one of them to turn around.

We rode into the city. I saw lots of garbage in the streets. Our streets in Chota had garbage in them too, but we would clean out our houses and streets once a year, during the *Agawela Selu Utsi*, or Green Corn festival.

The Green Corn festival occurred every summer, when the corn husks were green, and the corn was ready to eat. There was a lot of dancing. But it was a serious time as well, when the warriors and the *ghigau* purged themselves with the black drink made from the yaupon holly and sought visions and renewal. During one of these dances, when I was about four years old, I ran up and joined the warrior men and women. I jumped around playfully. My mother started to grab me back, but one of the *ghigau* looked at me seriously and took my hand. I became serious also. I imitated the dancers, not knowing what I was doing. But I knew I was not playing.

After the dancing was over, the women would sweep the all the garbage from the streets into a bonfire in the center of the town. We even burned our old clothes and blankets. My mother said that this was a way to get rid of the biting insects that lived in them. Then we all ran down to the river and bathed. We put on new clothes and walked on clean streets to cleansed homes. But when did the Yonega ever clean out their cities? Did the garbage just accumulate forever?

And then I got to see what happened to the garbage in Charles Town. A woman threw garbage out of an upper story window of one of the crowded houses. Right away, some screeching, squealing animals came running around the corner.

“Uncle! What are...”

“They are pigs,” he said, using the English word.

The pigs started eating some of the garbage and pushing one another aside to do so. I do not know which was worse, the garbage or the behavior of the pigs. I listened to them, expecting to hear them say something to me. But in all my life, though many animals have spoken to me, I have never heard a pig say anything.

The fronts of some of the buildings had windows covered with what I now know is glass, and filled with things: hats, gloves, boots, barrels of flour, furniture.

“Why does that house have so many hats?” I asked my uncle. “How can one family have so many hats?”

“It is not a house,” he answered. “It is a store where you can buy hats.”

“Like a trading post?”

“Yes, except they use money.”

“Look!” I said, pointing at another storefront. “There is a whole store full of scalps!”

“Those are wigs,” said my uncle.

“Most of the scalps are white! Do white people scalp each other and then sell the scalps?”

“I’ll explain later,” Uncle said.

“It’s not fair!” I practically screamed. “Our warriors have to fight to get the scalps of their enemies. But the Yonega can just go to a store and buy scalps and pretend to be heroes! Are we supposed to have respect for white people?”

“I’ll explain later,” my uncle repeated.

“Will the Yonega kill us and sell our scalps?” My uncle did not answer me, but I knew that if there were any such danger, he would not have taken me to Charles Town. I figured we must be safe, because nobody in Charles Town would want to wear a Cherokee scalp. They might put them on their walls as trophies, the way our warriors sometimes did. But they would not want my scalp. They might want the scalp of Attakullakulla, but not mine.

Chapter 6

We stopped at one of the buildings, climbed off the horse, and my uncle said something in English to a servant woman who answered the door. A black man came around from behind the house to take our horse. He was skinny, stooped, and old. He wore a coat and pants, though frayed, and wore boots like everyone else.

The white man who then greeted my uncle wore a long green coat, decorated with rows of gold braid, and white pants. He wore no hat, I supposed because he had been inside his house. His yellow hair was thinning as it fell behind his ears. He wore what I would later know as spectacles.

After the man smiled at my uncle, and held his hands warmly, he turned to me and smiled down at me. "What big eyes you have," I said, but he did not understand me. He held my hands also, smiled, and said something I did not recognize. He led us inside the house. The hallway was like a small cavern, every surface of which was paneled with straight boards of painted wood. Then a woman, the servant whom I had seen earlier, led us down the hall to our bedroom. At first, I thought each room was a separate house since our houses have only one room.

The woman was very beautiful. Her skin was just slightly dark. Her hair was wavy and brown, not curled like that of the man. Her eyes were brown, and her lips were full when they smiled. Her lips hid bad teeth. All the city people seemed to have bad teeth, worse than our teeth, which are usually good. I have always been proud of my teeth, and every man with whom I have been intimate has had good teeth. My children and grandchildren have good teeth. We can smile boldly. This woman could not. But her eyes were expressive. She spoke quietly to us in English and closed the door as she left. That is, a wooden door on metal hinges, not a flap of deerskin or a screen of reeds like our doors.

It was not the first time I had seen a bed. Some Cherokees have rope beds, which keep them suspended above the floor where the mice run and the snakes slither. But I had never before seen mattresses. I do not know what they were stuffed with, but it was not down. Much later I touched the down mattress that my daughter shared with Colonel Martin and marveled at its softness. But the mattress in this room was probably filled with cotton picked by slaves.

"They want us to refresh ourselves from our journey," said my uncle.

"We washed in that little creek before we got into town," I said.

"Well, we won't be doing that in Charles Town. There are no creeks of clean water here. See here, we have a bowl, a pitcher of water, and a towel. A towel is a soft cloth to dry our faces. And some soap." The soap was whiter than what my uncle bought from traders.

Uncle poured water from the pitcher into the bowl and used the soap on himself. The pitcher and bowl were shiny and white, and decorated with vines and flowers. He emptied the bowl out of an open window. Then I washed myself. I enjoyed the fresh feeling of the soap. I started to carry the bowl to the window. I was clumsy. Fortunately, my uncle caught the bowl before it spilled or broke.

My uncle told me to stay where I was, while he went to the other side of the bed. Then he told me it was my turn. "I think you will figure out what to do," he said. When I got to the other side of the bed, I saw one of those porcelain bowls that white people like to store their shit in. I thought, *What is wrong with these people? They keep their shit inside their houses!* And they keep it inside of beautiful white crockery, as if it were some delectable dish of meat. In our towns, we went out into the woods to expel our wastes, and then buried it. I did not know where our wastes went. I supposed that the worms ate it. It would smell bad for a while, which is why you had to be careful that your little bush was not one recently used by somebody else. But there was no shit inside of our villages. We could simply ignore our wastes since there were few of us and we were spread out in the forest. But how much shit there must be in a big city like Charles Town! The bowls never got full, and I later discovered that this was because slaves emptied the bowls of their owners out the back window. When we had both finished, Uncle put the lid back on the bowl and slid it under the bed, and we washed our hands again.

My uncle put on his clean white-man clothes, in honor of his Yonega host, but also, as a representative of our people, wrapped a dark red turban around his head, tied some feathers to a tuft of hair that he left exposed, and put a leather belt, studded with beads, around his waist. I think it may have been the same belt he wore when they painted his portrait in England. He certainly did not wear it around our town or even at council meetings.

It was about noon when we went into the room where the lawyer worked. He usually sat at a large oaken desk to meet with people, but today he sat on a couch, silky but threadbare, and invited my uncle to sit beside him. A large piece of paper was spread on a low table before them. I sat on another silky chair and watched.

The main thing I noticed in the room was the wall of books, too many to count. A couple of them were open on the desk. I could see symbols of black pigment on white paper. As nearly as I could understand, every word, or maybe it was every sound, in the English language had its own symbol. This was an amazing insight to me. It meant that a person could write something down, and it could be interpreted by another person far away, or even many years later. I never did learn how to read and write, but my granddaughters, the ones who are married to the Hilderbrand brothers, read and write English very well. There is a man named Ssiquoya from Tuskegee who tells me he is working on a writing system for the Cherokee language. Though I have not mastered the art of writing, I could see even when I was twelve years old that this was more powerful than any tool given to us by the spirits or invented by our minds. More important than the English or American guns.

And yet there is something very white about these books, very different from the figures we stitch into belts or the paintings that we make on wood or deerskin or on cliff faces. Each page of a book is a flat plain on which the letters are arranged like English soldiers, unlike the tales of our storytellers who weave tendrils of thought together into hammocks that hold the plots and characters and let them sway. Our stories run like animals in the forests, never the same twice, whereas the words in a book are always the same. You either read them exactly as written, or you are wrong.

This is especially true of the English Bibles. The truths in these Bibles have to be straight and can mean only one thing. But when our storytellers speak about Selu, which the English call the Cherokee Corn Goddess, they mean not just the goddess but also the corn and the spirit of all corn plants. There is no important distinction between corn and corn goddess; we call them both Selu. Of course, we do not actually worship corn. We aren't stupid. The corn is not a goddess in the sense that the English think of their God. But there is a holy presence in the corn. When our storytellers speak about the wolf and the turtle who were talking to each other, they do not mean that the animals speak words as humans do, but that each animal knows what the other means, the way the birds (and later, the larger animals) spoke to me. As if the birds and animals were shining their thoughts to one another. But the white preachers tell us stories that can only mean one thing, and doctrines that must be recited word for word.

Now my uncle and the lawyer were looking at the large paper spread on the table. It was a map. This was a little easier for me to understand, because I could imagine it to be a landscape as seen by an eagle or a vulture. I could see the curves of rivers and mountains, and the broad plain leading to the sea. I could tell it was the sea because it had no landmarks except for what had to be islands. Here, too, I noticed a difference between whites and Cherokees. White surveyors come through a forest, marking straight lines. Even they aren't stupid enough to ignore a boundary formed by a river or a mountain ridge, but they drew straight lines whenever they could. My uncle had met a surveyor named Peter Jefferson, who was later to have a famous son named Thomas. Peter Jefferson and another surveyor, Joshua Frye, were working on a map of the state of Virginia, the western part of which had once been Cherokee land. Land, that is, entrusted by the spirits to us. That is another thing that bothers me about white maps. They draw an image of a tract of land, and put a name on it, and it becomes property.

I walked up to the table and looked at the map. This would never have bothered my uncle, and it did not appear to bother the lawyer either, even when I interrupted them.

"That's a river," I said, pointing at a place on the map.

"Uh," my uncle said in Cherokee. Yes.

"Which river?"

"That's the Hiwassee."

"And that one?"

"That's the Tennessee."

"What are those?" I asked, pointing at little x's.

"Those are our villages," he said. "That one right there is Chota."

"And what are those little boxes?"

"Those are the white villages."

It bothered me a little that white villages would be boxes, and ours only little x's. Then I pointed to a big lump shape on the map.

"That's Charles Town," he said. The lawyer smiled, finally recognizing a word. "It is in the state of South Carolina. North Carolina is up here."

"And what is this up at the top of the map?"

"The state of Virginia."

"Why do they call it Virginia?"

"They named it after their queen."

"What is a queen?"

"It is a woman who has as much power as a king."

"What is a king?"

"It is a man who has authority over a whole land. Imagine that all of the chiefs of all of our towns were replaced by a single man."

"Does anyone ever disagree with the king, the way our chiefs are always disagreeing with each other?"

"Not very often, and not for very long."

"But what if the king makes a mistake? Like that time Oconostota was wrong and you told him so and he had to admit he was wrong."

"Some men give advice to the king, but nobody can tell him what to do."

"Are there any women who give him advice?"

"I thought you might ask that question."

"Well, are there?"

"No, Nanyehi, they have no *ghigau* in England."

"What does Virginia mean?"

"It means the queen was a virgin." The words are not similar in Cherokee.

"Poor woman. Then how did they end up with a queen?"

"The old king's son died, so one of the old king's daughters took his place."

"How did they decide which daughter would take his place? The oldest one?"

"No. The oldest daughter was Catholic. But the Protestant daughter became the queen. I know what you are going to ask me. Catholics and Protestants are both Christians, but Catholics don't think Protestants are Christians and Protestants don't think Catholics are Christians."

"What happened to the English Catholics?"

"I think the Protestants killed most of them, but I'm not sure. I didn't see any when I was in England. But most of the French are still Catholics."

"Are there any French Protestants?"

"There were. They were called Huge Nuts or something like that. I think the Catholics killed most of them, but I'm not sure. I didn't go to France."

"So, the English Protestants are coming at us from the great ocean in the east and the French Catholics are coming at us from the great river in the west?"

"That's pretty much it, Na-ni."

"So, we are going to have to choose which ones we want to join?"

"Eventually, unless we join the Spanish who are down in Florida."

"Are they Protestants?"

"No, they are even more Catholic than the French are."

"Do the Catholics and the Protestants have the same Bible?"

"Yes. I mean, no. I mean, mostly."

"Do the English in Charles Town have to do what the king in England tells them to?"

"Uh, they have to obey the king."

"But England must be so far away. It must take them a long time to find out what the king wants them to do."

"Yes, so they make their own decisions while they are waiting to hear from the king."

"Are there any trees in England?"

"Yes, but not as many as here. The English cut most of theirs down already. That's why they want to cut ours down, so they can have wood to make ships."

"Do they have the same kinds of trees in England as here?"

"I think so. I think they have oak trees, as we do. And along a creek in England I saw something that I was pretty sure was an alder. But when I asked to look at some of their trees, they just acted puzzled. They just wanted me to see their cities."

The lawyer's patience was not unlimited, and he said something quietly to my uncle, who answered him in English.

Then I interrupted again. "What did you say to him?"

"I told him that I am pleased that you are asking questions. After all, someday he might have to talk to *you* about these maps, not just to me."

I was astonished and fell away from the men. My uncle smiled at me, as if to say, *Let her think about that one for a while.*

Chapter 7

The men did not notice when I slipped out of the room. I walked toward sound and found myself in the kitchen, which was a separate little building just past the back porch. The woman I had seen earlier was cooking at a fireplace back in the corner. She smiled at me. I had never seen a stone-lined fireplace, but I figured it out. Our houses have central firepits, so that the whole house is warm in winter. Our houses, constructed entirely of flammable things, frequently caught fire from these firepits. Of course, it was easy to escape from our small, flimsy houses. We certainly had no upper floors. Our houses were flimsy by design, you see.

The woman could tell I was asking what everything was, even though she could not understand my words. She reached into the fireplace with a metal hook and pulled out a kettle, which was suspended over the fire by a metal arm. Vegetables I did not recognize were boiling inside the kettle. A hunk of what I now know was beef sizzled on a spit above the fire. Fish simmered in a metal skillet.

"Aja'di," I said.

The woman smiled.

A loaf of bread, fluffy with air unlike our bean bread, sat on a cabinet top, beside an apple pie. I had never seen apples, but I had eaten wild crabapples.

"Suhkta," I said.

She smiled again. The kitchenware, especially the knives and cleavers, looked like something a warrior might have.

Chapter 8

When the men finished talking, the woman started setting dishes and silverware on the small table in the small dining room. Dishes of what I would later learn to be cheese and butter sat on the table. I could not have guessed that I would be the one to introduce cheese and butter into Cherokee society. When I first saw it that day, I thought that cheese smelled and tasted like waste, but I was instantly intrigued by the butter. It sat obediently on a dish on the table, but in my mouth, it melted. It was like the grease of ducks and geese, only it did not have the strong flavor of a bird. Light from candles danced in the crystal glasses of cider. I sat and studied the china dishes. They were so delicate. They had the same decorations that I had seen on the pitcher and bowl in the bedroom.

This house, and probably every other house in Charles Town, and in every other white city in the world, was filled with delicate things. Even the windows are fragile. Each house is a hoard of things that white people cherish. We Cherokees had a few items that we valued, but we could easily carry them with us when we moved. Aside from these few items, my people in the old days would get rid of everything, not just old clothes and blankets, during the Green Corn Ceremony.

And it was not just our material lives that we started over every summer. During the ceremony, some people whom I did not recognize, or barely remembered, came into the town. These, my mother explained, were people who had done some offensive deed or other and were banished. They now came back to be reunited with their families and friends. Sometimes their families and friends did not want them back, and sometimes the offenders did not want to return, but reconciliation was necessary. There was no reconciliation for murder, however. Each clan sought blood revenge for the murder of one of its members. But all other crimes were brushed aside along with the garbage that the women swept into the fire and the old clothes and the sucking insects.

In Chota, we began over again each year. To us, time was circular, beginning anew each summer. We knew that a few people died each year, but we did not think they were really dead. They were now part of the spirit realm. They had moved from the physical to the spiritual realm that surrounded the physical world, rather than having died in the past. And so, as I looked around the dining room, I tried to imagine whether the white lawyer could ever bear to throw all of these belongings into a fire.

My mother told me what the Green Corn Ceremony was like when she was young, but also how it had changed. Now that the traders had come, they gave us things that were expensive. My mother had a hard time explaining to me what that word expensive meant. The women who started to wear dresses of gingham and calico did not throw these dresses into the fire, even though they probably had biting insects in them. Certainly, the warriors did not burn their guns. So now, in each household, the list of a few precious items had grown into a pile of nearly everything. Each family threw only a few broken items into the ceremonial fire, a mere

acknowledgement of the past. I imagined that they also did a poor job of cleaning out their animosities and feeding them into the rising column of sparks. We were becoming more like the whites and, someday, we might have piles of delicate goods in our houses, I thought. And that is exactly what happened to me, much later.

The lawyer spoke what must have been a prayer. My uncle sat silently with his eyes closed. The woman stood in the corner, her eyes also closed. She opened her eyes briefly, looked into my eyes, then quickly closed them again.

When we started to eat, I had my spoon and knife ready, clenched vertically in my fists. The tablecloth had delicately sewn designs, all perfectly lined up. I did not watch how the men took their pieces of meat, but I stabbed mine with the knife.

"No, Na-ni. You use your fourchette." He held up his fork. "I learned how to use this when I was in Quebec."

So, I used my fork to spear a fish. I had never seen a fork before. I didn't know I was supposed to be delicate, so the fish fell into pieces when I started to lift it with the fork. The men just watched to see what I would do. I kept trying to spear the smaller pieces, which only created more damage. Finally, I just scooped the pieces of fish onto my plate with my spoon. I began cutting the beef with my knife, holding it in place with my fingers. Then my uncle showed me that I was supposed to use the fork not just to spear pieces of meat or fish, but to hold them in place, and even to lift them to my mouth. I made a disastrous mess trying to eat potatoes and which fell apart as soon as I forked them. I also had a hard time trying to balance vegetables on the fork. The fluffy white bread was delicious, especially with the amount of butter I put on it with my fork. I imitated the men by wiping my face and hands with a clean white napkin. When the woman cleared away the dishes, her eyes met mine and I was sure she was trying to not laugh.

The woman brought out desserts that I did not recognize. My eyes inquired of my uncle, and he gave me the English name of the dessert: flummery. It sounds even stupider in Cherokee than it does in English.

"What is the white stuff on top?"

"It is whipped cream."

I sighed. "What is cream?"

"It is the greasy part of milk."

I sat up straight. "Milk? You mean, like what our mothers feed to babies?" I imagined that there must be, somewhere in this vast city, a building where nursing mothers, probably slaves, pumped milk into jugs, and that there was a store somewhere where white people bought these jugs.

"Not human milk," said my uncle. "Cow's milk. The cream floats to the top."

"What is whipped?"

"The cook beats it until the air makes it fluffy."

"Oh, whipped, the way they do slaves."

"Uh. Same word anyway."

“It is certainly very good. Even more delicious than the butter! And what is underneath the cream?”

“That’s gelatin. It is made by boiling gristles for a long time.”

Before I could say anything else, a fragrance took me by surprise. I breathed deeply. “It smells like roses! How did they do that?”

“The gelatin is made with rose water. Mr. Harker has a rose garden in his little back yard, and Galena soaks the petals in water.”

“Are they *tsitsuna-giske*?”

“No, not wild roses. They are European roses with big flowers.”

“I wish my hair could smell like that.”

Chapter 9

The men resumed talking after dessert in the room full of books. I could tell that the lawyer was saying something to my uncle that he did not wish to say nor my uncle to hear.

As my uncle and the lawyer talked, I carefully pulled books off of the shelves and looked at the drawings in them, drawings of people and landscapes too delicate to actually exist. I looked into what I later found out was a Bible and saw lots of drawings of spirits that flew through the air and of a big city in the sky, like Charles Town but without shit, and of kings like what the French thought my uncle was. There were no drawings of the beautiful world of trees and birds and wolves, except for one, in which a man and woman were being forced out of a beautiful woodland by an angry bearded man floating above the trees. The man and woman wore skins, like Cherokees. I did not at the time understand the drawings of a man, wearing only a breechcloth, hanging from a piece of wood. It looked like his entire weight was supported by the nails in his hands. This kind of torture is worse than anything our women ever did to the captives or, I think, that the white people ever did to their slaves. I wanted to ask about these drawings, but I could see that my uncle was no longer willing to be disturbed.

He did, however, want to take me somewhere before we went to bed. It was already twilight when we got on our horse and rode down a broad main street which led to the Atlantic Ocean. There was a broad beach with sand and shallow waves. And just above the ocean horizon was a pale full moon. It was so beautiful and peaceful. That image has stayed with me for my entire life. Even in our beautiful mountains, I have never seen anything so deeply moving, not even the full moon.

We went back to Mr. Harker's house. My uncle was still quiet. Nor did he say very much when we slept on the soft bed.

Chapter 10

The next morning, we met for breakfast at the table where the woman had laid out cold sliced beef and fresh cornbread. It was fluffier and sweeter than our cornbread, but eating this cornbread was the first experience I had since we reached Charles Town in which I felt at home. There was a little decanter of honey. Even when I was a child, I was one of the best people in Chota at following the bees and finding their combs.

We were ready to bid farewell. As the lawyer and my uncle were speaking with one another, I slipped back into the kitchen to say goodbye to the woman. The old black man was with her. They both smiled at me. Before I had a chance to say anything, the old man said, “*Donadagohuh-i.*”

I was astonished that he knew some Cherokee. I asked him how he knew our language. He just nodded, smiled, and repeated the phrase a couple more times. I finally understood this was the only Cherokee he knew. He knew it meant *till we meet again*. If I could only believe I would meet them again! I knew it was not likely to occur; and, indeed, I never saw them again.

The old black man brought our horse to the front door, and my uncle and I got on it. As a parting gift, the lawyer Harker handed me a book and a small glass bottle. The book was a Bible. Not the same one I saw the previous night. He must have had several. And the bottle contained rose water.

“*Wado,*” I thanked him.

He smiled and said something.

Once we began riding, I paid no attention to the city. I wanted to find out about the black man who knew just one phrase of our language.

“His name is Jupiter,” my uncle said. “His mother was a Cherokee slave.”

“The whites have Cherokee slaves?”

“Not anymore, I think. But a couple of generations back, they did. They also had black slaves. The man’s father was a black slave. Most Cherokee slaves were women, and most black slaves were men.”

“Mr. Harker didn’t treat him like a slave. He didn’t beat him.”

“Not all slave-owners beat their slaves, Na-ni. Some of them treat their slaves the way we treat our Yuchi slaves, almost like family. And there is another way the slaves are family. Galena is Mr. Harker’s half-sister.”

“But, how could she be? She’s really beautiful! Wait, I didn’t mean it to sound that way. I just mean that she doesn’t look like him. And if she’s his sister, why didn’t she eat with us?”

“Galena is *his* half-sister. And his slave.”

“What?”

“Galena’s mother was Jupiter’s sister. And her father—are you following me, Nanyehi?—her father was Mr. Harker’s father, the elder Mr. Harker. So, she is a slave. Because anyone who has a slave mother is a slave.”

“Not like our slaves, whose children are full members of our clans.”

“Correct, Na-ni.”

“So, Galena is white, black, and Cherokee,” I mused. “But wait! Her grandmother was Cherokee, which means her mother was Cherokee, which means she is still a member of our tribe! And Jupiter too! What clan are they, Uncle?”

“I don’t know. I’ve never had a chance to talk with her. She may not even know she is considered a member of our tribe.”

“Why doesn’t Mr. Harker let her go? Why does he keep her a slave?”

“It is against South Carolina law to let her go, Na-ni.”

“South Carolina law? Again? You already told me a slave cannot run away nor can anyone help or hide a slave. But you mean a slave-owner can’t let any of his slaves go?”

“Not unless he provides a job for the slave. Which Mr. Harker is not rich enough to do. Most of his clients are like me, and we cannot pay him very much. He hates slavery, Na-ni, and would never have bought a slave. But he inherited Jupiter and Galena from his father. It takes almost all he can earn to keep them fed. He won’t sell them, of course, because Galena is his half-sister.”

“Then how can he afford all those books?”

Attakullakulla chuckled. “Those books are about all he *can* afford, Na-ni, besides food. Sometimes I think he would rather have books than food. He has debts, and if he weren’t a lawyer, one of his creditors would already have claimed his slaves and sold them. Separately.”

I was exasperated and did not care to understand any more of the details of the situation. “Well,” I said, “they could all come and live with their clan. Jupiter and Galena’s clan would probably adopt Harker as well.”

My uncle chuckled again. “If it were only that easy,” he said.

This time, when I watched the people in Charles Town, I saw them differently. I wondered if any of the white people were half black, or one-quarter black, or one-eighth black, and were actually slaves. When we were out of town, I saw slaves in the cotton fields and corn fields and wondered if any of them were Cherokees.

Chapter 11

When we got back to the toll road with the evil toll master, I felt once again that the birds were warning me about him. Uncle paid his toll, and the morose white man accepted it, without an exchange of words.

We found the same little forest in which we had spent one of our nights. Once again, we camped back away from the road. We ate some of Harker's cold beef, which Galena had packed for us. Uncle no longer had his chunks of kanuchi, which means he probably gave them to Galena to cook for Mr. Harker.

A light breeze stirred, gentle at first, then impatiently whipping us. It was chilly, even though it was early summer. I did not sleep deeply, but I did start to dream. A premonition of dread overtook me, and I either raised my head or dreamed that I had done so.

I had never seen a wolf, so how could this be a hallucination? The animal looked like the descriptions I had heard, but I doubt that my imagination would have produced so vivid an image. It looked like a dog, but instead of having a look of obedience and loyalty in its eyes, it had a look of fierce independence. I felt no danger, for I am in her clan. The wolf was white and was almost glowing in the darkness spattered by a few drops of white moonlight blood. And the wolf was warning me about something. The wolf slipped away. I lay my head back down, but I was unable to sleep.

If I had not remained awake, I would never have seen him. There was just enough moonlight for me to see that it was the toll master, quietly approaching our camp. And he carried a large hatchet. For just one heartbeat, I felt fear. But it did not persist. Though I could not see the white wolf, I knew she was still with me. I nudged my uncle and spoke rapidly into his ear. He tensed. He did not move until he had planned what he would do. Suddenly my uncle arose, just as the white man, holding his hatchet in the air, approached. As our blanket slipped away, I scampered into the undergrowth. I am very nimble, and careful, in the daytime, but at night, I could not know whether I had slipped into the vines that cause our skins to blister and itch. I did not care. I felt rather than heard a distant chorus of wolf howls, harmonizing with one another. The wind became stronger, but it was very slow, and its sound was very deep.

The man appeared to move very slowly, and so did my uncle. The man raised his hatchet as he moved toward my uncle, and I could tell that my uncle would not be able to avoid the blow. I felt a little nip, as from a wolf pup, against my heel, and I launched myself into the space between the man and my uncle. I, too, floated through the air with the same weird slowness that I saw in the others. The air was cold, as if it consisted of thousands of little fishes, invisibly small, which themselves moved slowly. I watched my body, almost as if from another angle, as it approached the man's shins.

Then when my shoulders made contact with the man's shins, everything seemed to happen very fast. The man fell, dropping his hatchet. He kicked me away from the place where he lay on the ground. We both turned and saw that my uncle had grabbed the hatchet.

The man, prone upon the ground, scowled in pure hatred at my uncle and spat out some words. My uncle answered him in his language, which must have been English but did not sound like the English that my uncle had exchanged with Mr. Harker.

Then my uncle spoke in Cherokee. "Get the gun, Na-ni. It is loaded. The ball and wadding are already in it, and I hope the powder is dry. All you have to do is pick it up and aim it and pull the trigger." He held the hatchet over the tense white man. "Don't shoot unless you have to."

The man sat up and looked around. I'm sure he remembered me, but he could not see me at this moment. He and my uncle exchanged some words.

My uncle could tell that I had not moved. He did not look directly at me when he said, "Just do it, Na-ni. Maybe I should have brought Tsiyu Gansini with me instead of you!"

I strongly resented his words, but I knew they were meant to spur me into action. I said nothing, afraid to betray my location to the man or to remind him of my presence. I slipped noiselessly through the leaves, as I had so many times before. I found the gun, lifted it. It was very heavy. I aimed it by putting the handle to my cheek and looking through the telescope.

"No, Na-ni! The gun will strike back and crush your face. You have to put the handle to your shoulder. Yes, like that. It will still hurt your shoulder. It will probably knock you over. Make sure you get it right, then it will not matter that you have been knocked off of your feet."

The man looked around for me, but my uncle swung the hatchet in the air and the man hesitated. They exchanged more words.

Then the man turned and saw me pointing the gun at him. He started to laugh. He was rushing toward me when my uncle hit him on the head with the hatchet just a breath of time before I would have shot him. Attakullakulla did not hit the man with the blade of the hatchet, but broadside. The man fell but did not bleed.

Attakullakulla then dragged the man toward a tree and pushed him back against the trunk. I hoped it had poisonous vines around it. At the same time, my uncle said to me, "Go find the man's horse, Na-ni. Keep the gun in your hand in case you need it." Attakullakulla stood over the man, hatchet ready. "Find a rope. He must have one."

I found it.

Attakullakulla put down the hatchet and took the rope that I brought to him. I knew to keep the gun pointed at the man. I was only a couple of paces away, so I could not miss him if I needed to shoot. Attakullakulla tied the man to the tree, loop after loop, securing each one and pulling it tight. By the time the man started to revive, he was immobile and Attakullakulla held the hatchet in his hand again.

The man now looked with defiant hatred into my uncle's face and started speaking. My uncle prompted him a couple of times, and the man spilled a whole story that I hoped my uncle would have a chance to repeat to me. Then Attakullakulla and the man looked at one another in intense silence. My uncle raised the hatchet and buried it into the tree trunk so close to the man's scalp that it must have pulled out a few of his hairs.

“We are leaving, Na-ni,” he said to me. “I will gather our belongings. You go and chase the man’s horse away. We are leaving him here. He will be a much wiser man when somebody finds him.”

“Tsiyu Gansini would have killed him,” I said.

“And a contingent of South Carolina militiamen would have come into our land,” my uncle answered.

“They probably will anyway, Tsiyu Gansini would say,” I responded, still holding the rifle.

“Their Bible says an eye for an eye, and a life for a life. But the Yonega often go further. They might try to take a life in return for me even tying this man up.”

“Tsiyu Gansini would say...”

“Na-ni, I didn’t bring him. I brought you.”

Chapter 12

After we had ridden several miles, I asked, "Uncle, what did the man say?"

"Well, Nanyehi, he said he recognized me. I told him he was wrong."

"Recognize you from where?"

"When he was a little boy, his family lived just north of here, on the border of Cherokee territory, or what was our territory at the time. A band of Cherokee warriors attacked their cabin and killed the rest of his family with tomahawks but did not see him hiding behind blankets in the corner. All of these years he has been waiting for a chance to take revenge."

"What did you tell him?"

"I asked him if his family had done anything for which the warriors were seeking revenge. Our warriors do not kill white settlers without provocation. At least not yet. But if someone in his family murdered someone, or raped a woman, then the clan would take revenge."

"Blood for blood, Tsiyu Gansini would say."

"He is right about that. The man answered that, in his considered opinion, a white man can do whatever he wants to a red man or woman. Nanyehi, how did you see him coming?"

I told my uncle about the white wolf, and he became silent for a long time.

"Can't you see the white wolf?" I asked my uncle. "She is running alongside us right now."

"No, Nanyehi. Only you can see her. And now, the time has come for me to tell you what the animals of the forest told your mother when you were born."

"Let me guess. She saw a white wolf."

"That's right. Can you figure out what that means?"

"We're Wolf Clan."

"There's more, Nanyehi. I am Wolf Clan, but I have never seen the White Wolf."

"Uncle! I think I can see them!"

"The White Wolf?"

"Well, yes, the white wolf is still running along beside us, but I mean the other animals too. Can't you see them? The raccoons and the possums. I've seen their dead bodies, but they have never shown themselves to me alive. Now they are all watching me from the trees. Tell me what's so special about seeing a wolf."

"It is the White Wolf, Na-ni. The White Wolf is the messenger of peace."

"Then this means we shall have peace in our towns? That we will quit fighting with the Muskogeese? That the good white people will visit us, and the bad white people will stay home?"

"No. The White Wolf is not telling you that peace will arrive and settle upon us. It is telling you that we are to follow the pathway of peace. That is different. Peace is easy, if it is given to us, but it will be very difficult for us to take it. It will not be easy to find that pathway. There are no blazes on that trail."

"All we have to do is to follow the white wolf," I said.

“Na-ni, you might be the only one who can see the White Wolf. You will have to tell us where the White Wolf goes, and which path to take in order to follow it.”

“To peace.”

“Yes. We will have to walk carefully on that path, just as our horse is now moving slowly, since much of the road is in darkness.”

“Look, Uncle! A porcupine!” The only porcupine I ever saw before was from a hunter, and we used its spines to decorate our jackets.

“I cannot see it, Na-ni. And I still cannot see the White Wolf. As I said, only you can see the White Wolf. Tame Doe saw the wolf only once. You, Nanyehi, will lead us on the path to peace. And remember that it is a path, not a place. There is no City of Peace in the sky, as the Yonega imagine. There is only the path. And you will never know if you have arrived anyplace on that path. Look up.” I did. “You notice that the eastern sky is just barely light, as the sun approaches. At what moment does morning begin? It is morning even before sunrise. Even sunrise is not an exact time, for the sunlight splashes the tops of the mountains, then the tops of the trees, and only then does it touch us. The moment of sunrise depends on where you are, whether you are on the top of a mountain looking down or the bottom of a mountain looking up. In the canyons of the Chattahoochee, it might not be sunrise until almost the middle of the day. Moreover, peace is a confusing path, because unlike the coming of the dawn, peace advances and retreats. You will never be sure exactly how to pursue that path, Nanyehi, but we will have to listen to your words, for the rest of us cannot see the path clearly, or, in my son’s case, at all.”

“I think I understand now why my cousin is displeased. He wants us to follow the path of war. So, my task will be easy. I will simply tell our people, every time we have a problem, to choose peace. And I will simply tell them that my cousin is wrong.”

“If anything were only so simple. Sometimes you have to fight for peace. Peace is easy with people like Mr. Harker. The path of peace would always be in the daytime if all white people were like him. It is people like the toll master who force us to try to find our way on the path of peace at night. The path of peace and the path of war are sometimes right alongside one another, curling around one another, making crossroads. There will be times, Nanyehi, when you will come to a crossroads and not be sure which path is the path of the White Wolf. And there are times when you will feel the call of hot blood and will have to force yourself to remember the path of peace.”

Chapter 13

As soon as it was light enough to see the road, the horse galloped rapidly. We went around the toll gate since the lazy toll master was not there. It was late afternoon when we arrived back at Keowee. As we sat in the house and ate, I watched the swallows flying in and out under the eaves. My uncle was talking with our hosts. I was too far away to hear what they said, but they looked at me often.

Instead of taking a nap, which is what I wanted to do, I walked out into the forest. I sat down, listening to the susurrus of the leaves, which had been my friend for so many years. *Susurrus* was a word I heard in a poem that Bryan read to me many years later.

That was when the large animals started gathering around me. I am fairly certain I was not dreaming. I am also fairly certain I had not simply failed to notice the animals before, for I noticed everything, as I have said. Nor did all the animals come. They sent their representatives, as if to a council fire. Even the animals that usually slept during the day were there. I got up and walked.

To my right hand there was a little creek, and I saw a beaver and an otter and a muskrat. They live in waterways but not in the same ones, so it was strange to see them together. To my left I could see the eyes of a cougar from the shadows, but the rabbits and squirrels and deer were not afraid of the cougar. The porcupine, which smells like a white man, was seldom afraid of anything, but seldom brave. The weasel was not afraid of the bear. The skunk was there also, telling me that he was saving up his scent to use at the right time. They were not all lined up like people on the benches of the seven clans in the council house. I never saw more than one of them at any moment, but they were all there as I walked along a trail that dipped down to the creek and up into the bluff woods.

Many years later, I heard a Bible story about a little child leading the lion and the lamb in the peaceable kingdom. That must have been what was happening to me at that moment. At least two prophets said in the Bible that the lion shall lie down with the lamb. But the animals I saw that day were not lying down, except the crouching cougar. Though not afraid, they were wary of one another, and allowed each other some space. As my uncle had told me, peace is a path, not a place. Peace is a balance. It is not a place where any animal or any person can take a nap.

And then I saw the white wolf. The wolf of peace, its white fur not blending into the undergrowth. Her eyes seemed to tell me that our world, the world that the Tsalagi shared with the animals, was in danger. The eyes also told me to be very careful where I stepped. Walking along as I was in a kind of prophetic trance, I did not watch my step very well.

Which is why I brushed up against a hornet's nest. All the animals were instantly gone, and it was just me and the hornets. I ran, crushing grasses and flowers, rocks crumbling underfoot and rolling down into the stream, greenbriers ripping at my dress. Soon some of the buzzing yellow insects were upon me. I shook my arms and swatted my hands violently. When I got to the creek, I jumped in, and immersed myself. There were even a couple of hornets that

clung to me under the water, but I brushed them away. As soon as I came up for air, they were waiting for me. I gasped and sunk again. This time I swam downstream toward what I did not realize was a little waterfall. I struck my ribs against a rock at the bottom and pulled myself out of the white water. The creek had turned a corner, and a rock was hiding me from the hornets. I waited for them to go back home. Only then did I count my stings, far fewer than I expected.

That must have been the vision that the animals wanted me to have. I had just returned from the white world. There were more white people than I had dared to ever imagine. They chew up forests to build their houses, like hornets building their paper nests. And if we stir them up, even by accident, they will come after us like hornets. In straight lines.

No longer feeling any enchantment, I picked my way back into Keowee and to the house.

“What happened to you?” asked the host.

“I think she just became a woman,” answered Attakullakulla.

*

When we got back to Chota, my mother ran to greet me, but stopped short. She looked into my face. Something she saw there troubled and pleased her.

“Did she see the white wolf?” my mother whispered to Attakullakulla, not knowing that my ears caught every rustle of sound.

My uncle nodded.

Part Three: Kingfisher

“Watch out, Kingfisher,” my friends told me. “Nanyehi is interested in you.”

This was exactly what I wanted. I wanted Nanyehi to notice me. This was in the year the white calendar called 1751. In the next stickball game, I made sure that Nanyehi saw how nimble and strong I was. I was good at using the two wooden sticks, which were more like long-handled spoons, to pick up the ball. The ball was just a rock wrapped in leather and bound by tendons. And I was even better at keeping the ball away from the sticks of the other boys. While they were whacking me with their sticks, I launched myself up, the sun shining on the sweat of my shoulders, and heaved the ball into the air, overhand, with both sticks. It hit the wooden fish at the top of the pole with a loud and satisfying report.

I imagined that it echoed. I imagined that Nanyehi smiled.

When the girls joined the game, Nanyehi held back. The other girls slapped the boys and grabbed for the ball with their hands. I wanted Nanyehi to see how much the other girls playfully slapped my shoulders and rammed their hips against mine. Sometimes the boys and girls formed almost a solid mass of bare flesh flecked with flapping breechcloths. Nanyehi stood, with a serious look on her narrow face, and watched us. She was only thirteen years old, and her breasts had just started to swell a little, not as much as those of the other girls. A stickball game was the best time for the boys to really check the girls out, or for the girls to see how strong and nimble we boys are.

Her eyes, I told myself. It is something about her eyes. She sees something and knows something. She sees into my hollow self.

Then, as we all swirled around looking for the ball, which was about the same color as dead leaves and sticks and leather breechcloths and our skins, I found myself outside of the crowd, and right next to Nanyehi. She looked into my eyes, and I was in love. She smiled at me. But I think the reason she smiled was that she saw the ball. It flew out of the crowd and hit me on the back of the head. She laughed, picked up the ball, and tossed it into the air, just as the crowd trampled me. The ball that she threw hit the wooden image of a fish on top of the pole.

You would think I would have been happy when I heard that Nanyehi had a special liking for me. Nanyehi, the niece of Attakullakulla. The cousin of the warrior whom I admired more than anyone else in the world, Tsiyu Gansini. But I was a little bit afraid as well. You see, Nanyehi was so strange. She was always running out into the forest by herself.

At first, I assumed it was because she was meeting some boy there. Her eyes saw everything, so I knew I could not follow her to find out. The other boys told me that she was not meeting anyone out there, but was talking to the animals. Or she thought she was. While the other girls were learning the fine arts of homemaking from their mothers and aunts, Nanyehi was out in the woods. It's not that Nanyehi had failed to learn the basic skills of homemaking. She could do everything she needed to do at home. I had seen her scraping flesh from deerskins and sewing. And sometimes she came back from the woods with a bag of berries or honeycomb, which made me suspect she had some useful reason for being in the woods. But sometimes she brought back only that mysterious look on her face.

Even though she was only thirteen, I knew she could bear me a child. I had seen her going into and out of the women's hut for almost the past year. Nanyehi had no sister. Now if I married Covers-her-fire, I could also marry her sister Meadow Fire. But if I married Nanyehi, I would have only one wife. Meadow Fire would be a good second wife. She is a bit chubby, but this means she would nurse our children well.

But perhaps, with Nanyehi, one wife would be more than enough.

*

One afternoon I saw Nanyehi approaching me. I knew the moment of decision was about to happen.

"Kingfisher," she called, using my Cherokee name, *Tsula*. She walked straight toward me.

"Nanyehi." I could not take my eyes off her beautiful face and slender form.

"You're the one."

"I'm the one what?"

"You are going to be my husband."

"Just like that?"

"The spirits have told me. They said you are going to be a great warrior and wise counsellor. And I am going to be great also. We are the ones to lead our people, *Tsula*."

"I mean, we have never, you know, been alone together. Gotten acquainted in private."

"We can if you like," she said, placing her fingers on my arm and stroking it. "But it won't change anything."

"What if I say no?"

Her smile was painful to me as she said, "You won't say no."

"The spirits told you? Well, they haven't told me," I said to her.

"They never tell you anything," she said.

"Well, that sounds like a problem to me."

"They told me that I could introduce you to them. Come."

She did not lead me directly out along her forest path. Instead she held onto my hand and led me all around the town. All the other boys must have seen us, for none of us had left with our fathers yet for the winter hunt. I imagined that the other boys were watching me. I had been suddenly chosen by the most beautiful and strange girl any of us had ever seen or heard about.

Once we were in the forest, Nanyehi sat down on a large, flat rock covered with a bed of green moss. She motioned me to sit beside her.

"Wouldn't we be more comfortable down there?" I indicated a deep bed of crunchy autumn leaves.

"This is where I always wait for the animal spirits," she said, patting the rock surface. I sat as close to her as I could, and she let me put my arm around her back. I looked very closely at her face. Her teeth were strong and white. She had only one little scar, near her left eye, where a

hornet had stung her, and the sting had swelled up. Her breath was sweet. Covers-her-fire loved to eat wild onions, as all of us boys knew. None of us knew what Meadow Fire's breath smelled like.

I was intoxicated. Her hair smelled like roses.

"Look," she said.

"Where?"

"Over there, by the big tree trunk."

"I'm looking at you."

"Plenty of time for that later. For now, please look over there by the tree trunk."

Of course, I saw nothing. I heard a stick crack, so I knew I should see something. I know how to recognize the signs of deer, the swirls of leaves where a doe beds down, the ripped bark where a buck rubs his antlers. I know how to find deer in the shadows. But I could not see whatever it was that Nanyehi saw.

"What am I supposed to see?"

"You'll know. They will show themselves to you eventually. Maybe you can't see them yet. But they see you. And they approve of you."

I kissed her hungrily, my eyes closed. When I opened my eyes, I mostly saw her face, but for just a second in the corner of my vision I saw a cougar in the tree branches behind her. I started to fall over in surprise, and our lips pulled apart. I put down my hand to right myself on the rock surface, and a rabbit hopped away from that very spot. When we eventually did lie down in the leaves, and I was nearly faint with the experience of her, I pushed myself up and looked down upon her face and chest. A centipede sat on her breast like a necklace of those little stone rings we find in the rocks.

As we walked back, I imagined that I saw little *tsisqua* everywhere. A horde of *saloli* seemed to follow us. *Talala* flashed their black and white feathers at us. *Tsisgwogwo* chuckled quietly at us. And, as if to confirm that I was now seeing what Nanyehi saw, I heard a *tsula*, a kingfisher, laughing out over the river.

She took me straight to my parents to announce our marriage. They were perfectly happy to see me wed a woman from the Wolf Clan, the most prominent clan. Then Nanyehi took me to her mother, uncle, and aunt. I could not look Attakullakulla in the eye as he smiled at me. I met his approval. If I failed him, he could always ask Nanyehi to find another man. But for now, her whole clan accepted me.

Even Tsiyu Gansini. He came and sat beside me.

"So, Tsula. Will you be a great warrior?"

"Not like you, Tsiyu Gansini."

"Of course not, you flatterer. Will you, then, be a good warrior?"

"I am afraid of nothing and no one, Tsiyu Gansini."

"Oh, really? Then you are a fool. A warrior is one who knows when and what to fear, or not to fear, and acts even when he is afraid."

"That's what I meant."

"Of course. Are you brave enough to be my cousin's husband?"

I thought that was an odd question. "Brave enough?"

"She has a kind of power, as I suppose you have noticed."

"Oh, yes. This very afternoon, she caught me like a fish, and here I am."

"Do you love her?"

I looked the great warrior directly in the eye and told him the truth. "Very well. Here is one thing I fear. I love her so much I am afraid love will make me weak."

"So, you are not such a fool after all." He smiled at me, white teeth surrounded by his black and red face. I could see his little smallpox scars. They only made him look stronger, as if he had looked at the sun and defied it while he blistered. "Can you tell her *no*?"

"About marriage?"

"About these things she says that the spirits tell her."

"She has only today told me about them."

"Well, someday you might have to choose whether to follow me, or to follow the White Wolf."

"White Wolf?" I turned to look at Attakullakulla.

"So, she has not told you yet about the vision of the White Wolf?" Attakullakulla asked me.

"We saw animals this afternoon," I said, "but not a wolf."

That evening, Nanyehi's uncle fed sticks into the fire and settled back. I watched flames consume the sticks as Attakullakulla told me what Nanyehi saw a year earlier.

Once the word was out about my engagement to Nanyehi, the other guys started treating me with respect, almost a kind of awe. My ghost of a smile told them that she had let me into her secret spiritual world.

I should not have been surprised that everyone in Chota came to our wedding. It was a busy time, right before the winter hunt, but the ceremony did not take long. I gave her a dry hunk of salted venison—a symbol that I would bring meat home for her from the hunt and for the rest of her life. She brought a large deerskin blanket she had dressed and that her mother had decorated. She wrapped our bodies together in the blanket as we stood before the town.

"A kiss! A kiss!" the men, married and unmarried, called out.

I kissed Nanyehi gently on the lips. Then she let go of the blanket, which fell to the ground. She grasped my face and kissed me tight as a leech.

Part Four: Nanyehi

Chapter 1

Our daughter, Ka-ti, was born within a year of my marriage to Kingfisher, and a year later, our son, Little Fellow. I was consumed with the work of a mother and did not get out into the forest as often as before. And when I went out it was usually for some practical purpose, such as finding honey or gathering salt. I knew where to find salt and kept the secret closely guarded. This did not give me very much power over the other women, however, for they simply bought salt from the traders.

Little Fellow was only a year old when our war chief Oconostota called a meeting at the council house. This was in the year that the American calendar, now ours as well, called 1755.

"Perhaps it is just a misunderstanding," said Peace Chief Attakullakulla.

"Oh, no it is not," answered Tsiyu Gansini, standing up as if he was in charge. "The Muskogee hunters are shooting deer in our hunting grounds at Taliwa. They know perfectly well what they are doing. I caught up with them and challenged them." He turned to address the rest of us. "The Muskogees have their own hunting grounds. We need the woodlands of Taliwa. We need the meat for our own hungry stomachs."

"And the hides?" asked Crayfish.

"No. We have already trapped ourselves into selling hides to the white traders. We should not do any more of it. My guess is the Muskogee have started doing so, and they want to expand their hunting grounds to get more hides to sell. Either that or their chiefs have given away their old hunting grounds to the whites."

"I think," said Attakullakulla, "that they did not give away their old hunting grounds. I think the Colony of Georgia simply took them. The whites have pushed the Muskogees into our land."

Tsiyu Gansini spoke louder. "Well, then, let the Muskogees fight the Yonega and get their old hunting grounds back." He looked around at all of us women. "Some of you are wearing buckskin, some of you calico and muslin, bought from traders in return for buckskins. Either way, what would you do without our hunting grounds? Raise all the corn you want, pound all the kanuchi you want, but even if we did not eat the meat from the hunting grounds, we would still need the hides. It is clear what we should do. Anyone who disagrees is a coward!"

The town fell silent at this challenge to the authority of the elder chiefs. Then Attakullakulla got up and stood beside him. "My son, I am no coward. I agree with you that we need to drive out the Muskogees, but not from any fear that I have of what you might call me."

I, too, was completely convinced that we must go to war with the Muskogees. Those of you who know me now may be puzzled. What had become of the White Wolf, you will ask. But remember my uncle had told me sometimes you have to go to war to get peace. I believed that this was one of those times. I think now that I was wrong, but I was not unreasonable. Ka-ti was three years old and Little Fellow a little less than two. I was thinking like a mother who wanted food and clothing for her children even more than for herself. I thought about the White Wolf

and reflected on the fact she was alone when she shone her message of peace upon me only three years earlier. If she had her puppies with her, she would have snarled and snapped at anything that came close to her. That is what I felt like doing also, to the Muskogees. Beware the wrath of a mother!

I left my children with Tame Doe, packed my bag, and accompanied my husband with the other warriors, a few of whom were also accompanied by their wives. More and more warriors joined us as we hiked quickly through each of the Cherokee towns, until finally we were a band of almost five hundred warriors.

It took us two days to reach Taliwa in the northwest corner of the colony of Georgia. As I knew we were approaching Taliwa, my senses became sharper. The greens were greener, and the scarlet of the azaleas burned like coals in the campfires around which our warriors would later dance to purify themselves before the battle.

When our trail reached the top of a ridge, we looked down on a great river. Powerful waters rushed around boulders. Tsiyu Gansini climbed up on a rock and called for all of us to listen to him. "Below us is the Etowah River," he said. "And not far from it are the Taliwa hunting grounds! Tomorrow is the day!" I looked down upon the river and I knew exactly where the battle would take place. It was toward which I saw the birds flying and the animals running, to be there when I arrived. I have never forgotten that view. I have tried to return to that spot, but I cannot find it. I know it is not far from Dahlonegah, also a part of our Cherokee lands. Gold has been recently discovered there, which is one reason the white Georgians want our land. But the landscape itself has changed so much. The land now belongs to the American state of Georgia and is filled with farms and towns. I probably would not recognize it even if I stood in exactly the same spot.

We descended the slope, almost running. We leapt from rock to rock as we crossed little creeks.

Chapter 2

When we got near the river, we camped and built a great bonfire. Nearby was a mound that some of the warriors said had been built by the Ancient Ones who lived here before us, whose civilization had collapsed. I watched the warriors dance as the sparks rose to the stars. The Ancient Ones must have had battles at this very place. I now wonder if war will ever end. But, that night, I thought about nothing of the sort.

Kingfisher danced a little bit, but I could tell his heart was not in it. But with five hundred warriors, no one noticed that Kingfisher danced less than others. He came and sat beside me. He had eaten nothing all day, nor had I. Tobacco smoke had heightened the senses of others, but Kingfisher just felt dirty from it. On the eve of battle, Kingfisher could not defile himself with sexual contact, but we did sleep off by ourselves so that I could hold him to me.

That is when he made his confession to me.

"Na-ni," he said. "I feel that I can trust you with my words."

"Of course, Tsula."

"Na-ni, I am afraid."

"Of course, Tsula. Remember what Tsiyu Gansini told you? Only a fool is never afraid."

"I mean, I feel enough fear that I may not be able to force myself to go into battle. At least, I will not be one of the leaders."

"What difference does that make, Tsula? You do not need to prove your heroism. You need nobody's admiration but mine, and you have mine. If you were a coward, you would not have come."

"I'm not sure about that."

"I will be with you, Tsula."

"But brave as you are, you are a woman. What kind of man needs a woman to make him brave?"

"What kind of man? Don't worry about it."

"It is not so much that I fear death. Either my soul will go to the Darkening Land..."

"That is, if your killer is avenged."

"Yes. Either that, or I will return with you to Chota. What I fear is not death but dying."

"As I said, I will be with you. You concentrate on shooting. I will take care of everything else. I am confident we will win."

"I know. The animals are telling you."

"Well, they're usually right."

"I suppose so, Na-ni. Where are you going?"

"I will be right back," I said. When I returned, Kingfisher could smell the rose water in my hair.

Chapter 3

That night I dreamed the animals spoke to me. They told me it would have made more sense for us to sneak up on the Muskogee and take them by surprise. I answered them that this is not the Tsalagi way. Stealth is good and right for the animals of the forest. But the Muskogee are as stealthy as we are. If we tried to sneak up on them, they would know it. We might as well boastfully proclaim our presence, as we did with the large bonfire. Besides, to intimidate the enemy is part of the battle itself. If we can frighten them, they will not fight with as much vigor. They will look to one side and the other and behind them, rather than at us. I did not see their bonfire. I supposed this was because they knew they were trespassers.

The next morning, we saw the Muskogee warriors standing among the trees on the opposite bank of the Etowah River. Our war chief, Oconostota, walked out into the meadow on our side of the river and stood by himself looking at the Muskogee warriors. They did not move. They were in a defensive position, just far enough away that our bullets could not reach them, nor theirs us. Our warriors wore traditional breechcloths and leggings and moccasins. And war paint. So did some of the Muskogeese, but many of their soldiers wore white clothes and boots. Maybe they thought that white clothes would intimidate us. If so, they were very wrong.

Some of our leaders, including my cousin, joined Oconostota out in the meadow. Kingfisher and I were with the other warriors among the trees around the meadow.

Oconostota and the leaders stood for what seemed like hours. The Muskogeese did not move. Then suddenly there were gunshots. Some of our warriors had crossed the river upstream and attacked the Muskogeese from the side. Their war whoops rang out and my heart leapt. Oconostota turned his back on the Muskogeese and raised his arms. Kingfisher and his comrades shouted their whoops as well. I rose with them to start leaping from rock to rock across the river. The rapids looked dangerous, but I saw an otter stick up its head. I felt that it was telling me not to worry. And, indeed, my feet never slipped. My deerskin dress was loose enough to allow my legs to make great strides from one foothold to another. Kingfisher had only his gun; I carried everything else. I had braided my long hair so that it did not get in my face as I quickly looked in every direction. Shots ricocheted from the boulders, and I saw a couple of our warriors fall.

One of the bullets hit Tsula in the leg. He did not cry out but stopped suddenly and watched the blood pour from the wound.

"I cannot feel it," he said.

"We can take care of it later," I told him. "I will dig out the bullet and then put herbs and bear grease into the wound."

"Men sometimes die from these wounds, as surely as from bullets to the heart, only more slowly."

"Well," I told my husband, "in that case you might as well devote yourself entirely to the battle."

And he did. When we sloshed ashore, we had hardly found a tree trunk to hide behind before he was looking for a target. As fast as I could, I got the powder horn, the bag of bullets, and the wadding, all of it still dry, out of the leather bag that also held a knife. Right away, I started chewing the bullets to give them irregular and sharp surfaces on the leading edge so that they could tear into the flesh of our enemies. As I look back on it, I wonder what the White Wolf was thinking right then. I was not fighting for peace. I was doing all I could, with rapidly beating heart, to inflict suffering.

My husband peeked from behind the tree, saw a Muskogee warrior, and shot at him.

"Missed," he muttered.

"I wish I had a gun too," I said, reloading powder, wadding, and bullet. "I wish I had one of the white rifles." Our guns had long barrels, to make the bullet go straight, but only rifles had spiral grooves inside the barrel to make the bullet's aim precise. We were all, Cherokee and Muskogee, reloading now. Even in the heat of battle, with five hundred warriors on our side and perhaps the same number on theirs, you could hear silence between shots, sometimes long silences, since reloading took so long.

"Watch for a fallen warrior—preferably Muskogee—and take his gun," said my husband, who finally got in a successful shot. At least, the Muskogee warrior did not get back up out of the brush. "Let's go get his gun, Nanyehi—your gun! But, of course, carefully." He looked all around, and we advanced a few feet and hid in some ferns behind a log. The shade was deep underneath the hemlock boughs, and we took a few moments to watch the battle.

Something was wrong. I could not explain it, but I could feel it. It looked to me as if our warriors suffered a few more losses than the Muskogees. But this was just enough to shift the balance. Let me try to explain what I mean. Each time you wash a shirt or dress, it becomes a little thinner, but you hardly notice it. But if a hole forms in the fabric, you have to sew the hole shut right away, or the hole will get bigger very quickly. The hole reveals the fact that the entire fabric has been getting invisibly thinner. There was just a slight imbalance of warriors in favor of the Muskogees, just a small hole in our attack. But I could feel it.

"I think we can do this! Let's go!" said my husband. Blood splattered his leg, and he ran with a limp that he seemed to not notice, leaping over the log and across a small clearing, inland toward the Muskogees.

That is when I could actually see the hole in our fabric. A shot rang from behind us. The Muskogees had allowed our warriors to enter, perhaps had even anticipated our broadside attack, and were closing us off by coming in *behind* us. The bullet dug into the tree next to me. I looked back and saw an enemy warrior raise his rifle and aim it at us. He was very close.

It was at that moment that I experienced a slowing of time, exactly as I had that night when the white man attacked Attakullakulla. I heard the Muskogee warrior's second shot, but only long after I saw the puff of smoke. The sound of the shot was very deep and was like water in my ears. I tried to turn back to my husband, and could not, as if I were embedded in syrup. It was then that I saw the bullet. It swam toward us, as small as a minnow and as slow as a catfish and straighter than an arrow. I tried to call out to my husband, but no sound came from my

throat. As the bullet came closer, it moved even more slowly. The air, just as it was that night when I was twelve years old, was slow cold fishes. I thought I could try to catch the bullet with my hand. I was, in fact, able to move my hand slowly toward it. It was moving so slowly that I thought I could pluck the bullet like a berry. I strained with all my might to catch it with my fingers, but when my hand finally closed the bullet had just passed. I could hear my heartbeat—very deep and very slow—as the bullet moved past my face. It moved so slowly that, had I looked at it only a moment, I would have thought it was suspended in the air.

Once my face was finally turned, and I could see my husband, I could tell that the bullet was heading straight toward him. If there were only some way for him to move faster than everything else, he could be saved, but we can never do anything faster or slower than or different from that which we call our world. I knew I would have to watch as the bullet killed him. I could not even turn my head away.

During that last long, long moment, the light began to change. It was no longer white sunlight. The light progressed through the colors of the rainbow. First, everything looked blue, as if the sky had eaten us. Slowly, the blue became green, and I and my husband and the gun that he still clutched and the bullet were all inconsequential scraps in the utter greenness of the leaves. Then the green faded and was replaced by yellow, then by burnished gold. I had spent much time as a child watching the colors of campfires. Everyone knows campfires are yellow, gold, and red, but they have flecks of purple and blue. That's what everything looked like at that moment. As gold bled into crimson, I saw flashes of purple. My husband's face seemed unaware of the bullet that was only inches from him.

No chance to say goodbye to him. To tell him again that I love him. I had only told him I loved him about seven times that morning, but that did not now seem to be enough. What spirit is it that makes me watch the death of my husband? That forces me to watch the bullet pierce his skin with excruciating slowness? The gods of thunder, perhaps? Or the demons that the Christian preachers tell us about? I thought love was the strongest force in the world. My love for Tsula was the strongest emotion I had ever felt. But here the gods were forcing me to watch him die.

I tried to scream, but before I could, the sound of my voice rumbled very low and very loud. It was the shout that I had uttered what seemed like several minutes earlier, only now making itself manifest in the fiery world.

The bullet was heading straight toward my husband's heart. But then, the red became deeper and deeper until it was almost black. Just at the moment that the bullet reached my husband's body, the blackness surrounded me. I did not, after all, have to watch him die.

I fell to the ground. I lifted myself up. My heart was racing. All the colors were back to normal, except there were no shades and tones. Everything had a distinct color, and everything was flat like a painting. I saw all the warriors from both tribes—only later did I wonder how I could see all of them—running around rapidly like spiders. I saw the warrior who had killed my husband reload, shoot at someone else, reload again, and shoot again, in what seemed like a few heartbeats of time. I found that I could move rapidly also. I grabbed the gun from my husband's loose hand and reloaded it. I grabbed the bag of bullets, the wadding, and the powder horn,

stuffed them into the bag, and tossed the strap around my shoulder. With the gun in my hand, I leapt out of the little clearing where my husband lay.

In just a moment I stood right before the astonished Muskogee warrior and shot him. I screamed out a war whoop that seemed to my ears louder than any I had heard. The Cherokee warriors looked at me. I pranced out into the war zone. Whenever I found a fallen warrior, I grabbed his gun. I started tossing the guns into the waiting hands of our warriors who had lost theirs.

Go! I shouted. *Go!*

I did not have time to reload. I ran right up to a Muskogee warrior and struck his head with the butt of my husband's gun. I pulled the knife out of my bag and slashed the blood vessel in his neck. Before I withdrew the blade, I wrenched the knife to make sure it would inflict a large gaping wound. Then I did something that I had never learned to do. I cut off his scalp and pulled it, bleeding, from his skull. I held it up and shrieked, *Go! Go!*

The Muskogee warriors had been reloading and were stunned to find some of our warriors running toward them rather than shooting at them, all of them screaming, *Go!* This gave just enough time for our marksmen, off to the side, to shoot the confused enemy warriors. Now the balance shifted in our direction. When the first Muskogee warrior turned back, like a leaf in a breeze, their whole army turned, like leaves in a gale.

Two enemy warriors grabbed me from behind and began to strangle me. I bent over and put one of them off balance. I whirled around rapidly and delivered a kick where I knew a man was weak. My knife was still in my hand. I do not remember what I did with it, but within moments I was running and shrieking again. It seemed like all the Cherokee warriors were following me. Even—was it possible?—my cousin.

By the time the evening light faded, we could not see any Muskogee warriors. That evening, around a bonfire, our warriors danced, but I danced with more energy than they did, leaping around, even into and out of the fire. The warriors, even my cousin, made way for me and cheered.

I do not remember sleeping that night, nor do I remember being awake. It was as if the next day began immediately. We searched the woods. Our warriors could hardly keep up with me as I ran. The Muskogee warriors had retreated south of the Chattahoochee River. Some of our warriors remained behind as sentinels to make sure the Muskogee did not come back.

The rest of the warriors wanted to walk back to their towns slowly and with celebration. But I ran and they had to keep pace with me. I seemed to have boundless energy every moment that I was awake, and then to fall into dreamless sleep as soon as we got back, at dusk, to the first Cherokee town.

In every town, Attakullakulla, Oconostota, and Tsiyu Gansini sang my praises. The next two days I continued to run until I could not feel my feet and legs. I could have injured them and not known it. No one carried the news ahead of me, for I ran faster than all. Imagine the uproar when I led the warriors, that is, the ones who had not yet reached their own towns on the main

road, into the center of Chota. I was caked with mud and scratched by brambles. My dress was torn. I held up my husband's gun.

As soon as I reached the center of town, I fainted.

*

I awoke in my mother's house. It was midmorning, perhaps two mornings later. When my mother saw me, she came to me with a gourd of honeyed water. I saw I was wearing a new dress and my skin was clean and my wounds were dressed. Someone, it must have been my mother, had washed my hair with the last of Mr. Harker's soap and poured rose water in it. I blinked at everything without understanding it. I sat all day in utter exhaustion.

I felt a little more energetic when, in the evening, a bonfire was burning in the town center, and my mother took me by the hand and led me to it. Everyone was there. My mother handed me off to Tsiyu Gansini, then joined the crowd. Tsiyu Gansini smiled grandly and raised up my arms as the people cheered. He then led me to Attakullakulla and Oconostota, who stood with their backs to the fire watching over the crowd.

I knew Tsula was not there, but I searched the crowd for him anyway.

"The Council has met," Attakullakulla announced. "And every member of the council voted to grant Nanyehi the title of Ghigau." All the people whom I had known all of my life, except for the warriors who had died at Taliwa, cheered loudly.

All during this time, I said nothing, and my face was expressionless.

In the silence that followed, I realized they were expecting me to say something. Never in my life had I ever hesitated to say anything to anybody. But now I had nothing to say. Ghigau? I am only seventeen years old, I told myself. Ghigau? But this is not something that a woman makes herself into. It is not even something that the Council makes a woman into. It is something that the Council recognizes that she has become. It really wasn't up to me. I was now one of the ghigau.

I looked beyond the crowd for some inspiration, some idea of what to say. I saw one animal. It was the White Wolf, which looked at me with those same baleful eyes that I had begun to resent. Everyone thinks that the Battle of Taliwa was the defining moment of my life. But actually the defining moment was when I stood before my people, beside the bonfire, and looked into the setting sun and into the eyes of the White Wolf.

"I am Ghigau," I said quietly.

"Ghigau!" screamed Tsiyu Gansini, with a big smile. "Warrior Woman!"

When the cheers had stopped, I added, "I am a widow."

Tsiyu Gansini looked a little confused. Of course, he knew it was true, but not why I had chosen to say it right now. Attakullakulla's expression remained inscrutable.

"I am also a widow," said one of the women. "But you are Ghigau."

I raised my voice. "My children have no father."

"Nor do mine," said the same woman. It was someone I knew, but I did not notice at that time who it was. "But you are Ghigau."

The White Wolf loped away into the forest.

Tsiyu Gansini seemed exasperated for just a moment. Then he spoke up. "If only Kingfisher knew, he would believe that the honor his wife has received was even better than the bravery he showed in our victorious battle."

"Oh, yes," I said, raising my voice for the first time and trying not to weep. "We won. But don't expect me to celebrate." I was aware that a feast awaited us. And I had lost so much weight that I could hardly afford to not partake of it. "Let me eat by myself in my mother's house, for I am a widow, and my children have no father."

Tsiyu Gansini started to say something else, but I interrupted him.

"The Muskogee warrior who killed my husband. His wife is now a widow, and his children, if any, have no father."

Tsiyu Gansini could stand it no longer. "Nanyehi! You wanted the Creek warrior to die! You wanted them all to die. That's why you were chewing the bullets."

"So was I," said Running Water, a woman who had gone to the battle with her husband, as I had with mine.

My voice was loud and clear. "Every time we kill a warrior, we make a woman into a widow, and make children fatherless. This cannot be good! What is wrong with all of you? We must stop fighting with the Muskogees."

"That's the way it has always been," Attakullakulla finally said.

"Your son will be a warrior," Oconostota said to me.

"There has got to be a way out of this," I said. "They kill us. We kill them..."

Tsiyu Gansini interrupted me. "This is the only path of honor." He stood tall before me. I was once again just a bony girl next to him. A little bony ghigau.

"And as we die, the English grow stronger and more numerous. How can we stand up to them if we keep fighting with the other tribes?" I said. I imagined the voracious grasshoppers all lined up and looking at us with their reflective eyes.

Then Tsiyu Gansini smiled. "Ah, I see. You are already becoming a wise ghigau, not just a courageous one. For a moment there, I thought you were urging us on a path of dishonor. But what you are calling us to is a higher path of war—a war to rid this land of the pestilence of the white man. I see, my little cousin. I see, my honored Ghigau! Yes, we must be ready for the battle against the English. And the French. Don't forget the French." He spat. "Yes, the English and the French are no more different from one another than we are from the Muskogee. And they are fighting one another. If you will but lead us, Nanyehi, we might be able to join with the Muskogee, and the Choctaw, and the Chickasaw, and drive away the English and the French while they are fighting with one another. This is brilliant, Nanyehi! Brilliant!"

The crowd cheered loudly. Only a few people heard me say, "The white man's heart beats the same as ours, and the wife of a dead white soldier is as much a widow as I am at this moment. The White Wolf told me to tell you this. I have done so."

I turned to go home, where my mother waited with my children. But before I got there, I sat down on a rock, not far from the door screen. I could see my mother's eyes from the darkness inside. Loud sobs rose from my breast. I fell to my hands and knees and beat the ground in anger. Everyone in the town could see me and hear me, but I did not care. After many minutes, I simply looked at the ground in silence. My weak arms could not hold me up.

Part Five: Bryan Ward

Chapter 1

I had to get me a squaw. I knew that these red people would not trust me if I was not one of them, married into their tribe. I suppose that makes sense. That's what we would think back in Ireland. Some of my friends do not believe this, but I do: the Cherokee are people just like me and mine. So, a squaw it is, I said. My wife back in South Carolina won't mind. She knows it is a regular thing for traders to have Indian wives. Maybe I don't even have to tell her, I thought. It won't change anything. My wife, not my squaw, will still be my heir. You know, the house, the land, the little bit of money I take back. Not that the wagon full of things that I have brought with me into Cherokee land was of any great value back in South Carolina. Nay. Our white women could get stockings and ribbons and iron pots and scissors, and our men could get guns, from any merchant. But among the Cherokee, my wares were valuable. Especially the guns, for each of which I could get fifteen deer hides, and the ammunition at thirty bullets a hide. And there was a great demand for those deer hides back down in South Carolina. It was 1758, and I was one of several white traders selling goods in the town of Chota, the nearest thing the Cherokees had to a capital city.

That was another reason I needed the goodwill of the Cherokees. I needed the building I now occupied to store the hides before I took them back to Charles Town. It was convenient to use this building as a store, rather than always peddling from my wagon. I took the wagon out to the smaller towns, once in a while, but I usually never left Chota. And even a building is no protection if the Cherokees are not fully convinced of the goodwill of us white traders.

But these squaws! Their beady black eyes, their short fat bodies, their big cheeks that make their faces look like masks. And they love to eat wild onions in the springtime. But business is business, I say. The Crown expected me to pay my taxes, don't you know. That meant I had to make money any way I could. I decided I would have to take one of those dumpy squaws. Of course, in the dark, inside one of their little huts, who cares what she looks like? And, truth be told, these Indian women don't smell half so bad as some of ours. The traders who go to Africa, or to Asia, accept the women as they are, and they have done so, ever since the days of the great trade route through the deserts to Cathay, according to the legends I have heard.

Then imagine my surprise when a tall, slender, and beautiful Cherokee woman came to my store. I was instantly intrigued by her. I realized she must be the famous warrior woman of whom I had heard so much. She certainly acted like a woman who had honor. She asked how much this or the other thing cost. But she spoke with a firmness that let me know straightaway that she would drive a hard bargain. No man was with her. Her strength was her own.

"You English bring us your merchandise which is not good," she said, holding a bit of discolored lace. "You keep the best for yourselves and bring us what is flawed."

"You speak English well," I said.

"I learned English from my uncle," she answered.

"Attakullakulla?" I asked.

"You have heard of him?"

Of course, I had heard of him! Why, he was their Peace Chief, just as Oconostota was their War Chief. I had met both of them. They lived here in Chota. "Yes, I believe I met him once," I answered her.

"Well, then, you are in great company," she said. "He has met the king of England."

"Is that so!" I exclaimed, even though I already knew it. "And you must be Nunnehi." She started laughing.

"My Cherokee is not so good," I stammered.

"Oh, do not worry. But the *nunnehi* are the little spirits. I am Nanyehi."

"Oh, of course! The great Nanyehi! I have heard all about you!" I smiled. I knew more about Attakullakulla than about Nanyehi. "I should have recognized you! How stupid of me! And please forgive me..."

She smiled. God in Heaven, what a lovely smile. And with good teeth. That's rare enough. "You have not offended me," she said. "We love the *nunnehi*. Most of us have never seen them, but they protect us."

I took a chance right then, one that changed my life. I said, "You have seen them."

She stopped and stared at me. "Many times," she said. "Only to me they look like animals." Naturally I considered this a wee bit odd, but who was I to spoil the moment? And, there is more in heaven and earth than you know, that English bard said. The bard who wrote beautiful words but no music.

Then she said, "Many of my people do not believe me about the *nunnehi*. They say that the old stories and the old medicine are wrong. They say that the old medicine did not protect us from smallpox."

"You can't expect the spirits to do everything, I'd say. But if you say that you saw them, then you saw them."

"Since my uncle has met your king," she continued, "I think he might not remember meeting you. He *knows* about you, of course." She picked up a clay mug, embossed with the image of King George II. "It is his business to know all about the traders. So that you will be honest with us. Which trader did you say you were?"

Even though I suspected that she very well knew my name, I said, "I am Bryan Ward." I rolled the r's. She acted as if she did not notice. "And," I continued, "you are wrong about one thing."

"What is that?" she asked, still looking at the mug.

"You promise to not tell anyone?"

"How can I promise that? But I will tell no one unless it is necessary."

"I'll take that as yes. That man, King George, is not my king."

She put down the mug and looked at me in obvious surprise. "An Englishman who disowns his king?"

"Now you see why I want you to promise..."

"I understand. I will tell no one what you said. Who, then, is your king?" Her eyes lit up as she thought she had figured out the answer. "The Moravian preachers talk about their Jesus as being a king. I suppose you mean him."

"Well, after a manner of speaking, that's true. But that is not what I meant."

She pretended to be interested in some little jingly bells. A woman like her would not be so interested in little jingly bells, and she knew that I knew it. We were already inside of one another's minds, and I was not sure I liked the feeling of weakness that came from it.

"Then who is your king, Englishman?"

"I am not an Englishman."

"Then you are French? How did the English let you into our land?"

"No, I am not French."

"Spanish, then? I did not know any Spanish had red hair. Of course, I have only the word of my uncle on this..."

"No, not Spanish."

"Then which empire do you come from? Wait, I know. Doosh."

"You mean Dutch," I corrected her.

"That's what I said," she replied.

She probably had no idea what a Dutchman was. After the transfer of New Amsterdam to British control almost a century before, the Dutch were of little consequence in the New World. A world new to us Europeans, aye, but not to the Cherokees.

"No, I am not Dutch."

"Then, I ask again..."

"I come from no empire."

She waited for me to continue.

"I am Irish."

I had her attention. She had never heard of Irishmen.

"Oh," I said, "I am a subject of the King of England. But I am not English. My country is Erin, the land of the Irish. The English have conquered us. We are a conquered tribe. We have no king of our own."

"Just as the English may conquer us," she said.

"Exactly," I said quietly to her. I now had a bond with her. And through her, I hoped, with Attakullakulla, and through him, with Oconostota, then with the whole tribe. But I could read another feeling in her eyes. She was looking at a man from a conquered tribe, and I did not look all that bad. I certainly looked like no bedraggled captive or slave.

"How did your people survive being conquered?"

"Some of us didn't. The ones who fought the British didn't."

"So, that is the way to survive," she said, looking into my eyes.

"You mean, to not fight?" I prompted.

"That is part of it," she said, looking into the distance. "Perhaps that is what we Cherokee should do—not fight. If we fight, they will kill us. If we do not, they may conquer us, but we will still be Cherokee. Of course, we could fight, and win, unlike you Irishmen. I wonder..." I could tell that she was not wondering—that she already knew what her people should do. Then she asked, "Do all the Irish speak English just as you do?"

"Most of us do, and I grew up speaking English. But as a child I did learn a bit of my ancestral tongue."

"So, even though you are conquered, you still have your own language and your own way of life. To be conquered was not the death of the Irish way." She looked at me with definite interest. And I looked at her as more than just a potential squaw. I really wanted to talk with her about our two tribes, equally falling before the English. "Is your Irish language like English?"

"Oh, no, it is not," I smiled. "It is a beautiful language. We have many songs. Irish sounds very good when it is sung."

"Will you sing one of your Irish songs for me?"

"Not here," I said. "You could come to my hut. Ah, but your husband would not approve."

"My husband is dead," she said, casting her eyes down. "He died in the Battle of Taliwa, just three years ago. I still feel that he is with me." She looked at me. "If you, as you say, know all about me, you would have known that."

I scrambled for something to say. "I knew that, of course," I lied. "But I assumed that you had a new husband now."

She smiled. I could tell she knew I was lying and that she forgave me. "No, I do not. Can I trust you, if I come to your hut?" She knew my hut was at the edge of town.

"I'll leave the door flap open, so that we have no secrecy, if this is what you prefer." I knew I had to start somewhere. "Please, come and share some food with me. Do you like beef?"

"Beef is the food of the weak white man," she said, with disdain. But she was just playing with me. She smiled. "But I like it." Then she saw something amidst my wares. Something shiny. She grabbed it. "What is this?"

"What do you think it is?" I said.

"That is exactly what my uncle would have said," she answered with a smile. Now I knew that I had her esteem, because she compared me with her uncle. "It looks like a pipe. Is it?"

"After a manner of speaking. But it is not for smoking."

"It is a pipe for sound," she said. "We also have these. We make music with these pipes, and with rattles, during our dances."

"Please, accept this tin whistle, as we call it, as my gift to you. Only first I must show you how to play it."

She blew in the wrong end. She turned it around and blew again. She jumped a little at the penetrating sound. "It sounds like a frightened bird, or like a sharp wind," she said.

"As I said, I must show you how to play it."

When the sun was low, she came walking to my hut. She was wearing beads around her neck, and what appeared to be a new leather dress. This was a good sign. A couple of heads popped out of houses to watch us. I supposed that this was also a good sign.

I stepped out of my door as she arrived. "Welcome," I said. She did not smile. I knew she was going to evaluate me. I supposed that this, too, was a good sign. She was not just playing with me. I realized I had no idea what the proper Cherokee etiquette should be to greet a guest. Should I let her enter the door ahead of me? Or should I be inside when she enters? Should I embrace her, or at least touch her shoulder? In these situations, what has always worked well for me, as a trader, has been to imagine myself in the shoes of the other person. I should not bow, as if I were a servant or slave. She would not appreciate this.

I found out from the people I talked with that afternoon—the people from whom I quickly traded for fresh corn to roast on the fire—that this woman was not just famous, or from a famous family, but a geegaw. That was about the finest thing a woman could be among the Cherokee. She had not only fought alongside her husband in the battle of Taliwa, but when he died, she took his rifle and led the victorious charge against the enemy tribe. She was a war heroine. And this was when she was only seventeen years old. I had spent the last hour or so feeling very, very inferior to her. And yet here this woman was, coming to my hut. Closer and closer. What should I do? I had to trust my good intentions would be recognized, by Nanyehi, and by whoever was watching us.

"Please, come in," I said, standing outside my door. I extended my hand toward the inside of my hut.

"I have brought a present," she said. "In exchange for your pipe. It is a different kind of pipe." She held out a tobacco pipe, made of wood. The bowl was carved into the shape of a turtle from a very fine red stone.

I crouched down to look closely at the pipe, rather than kneeling before her. "Oh, this is fine," I said.

"The bowl is of a special kind of stone. It comes from far in the north," she said, stepping into my hut. I rose and followed her. She turned back and spoke to me. "Very far. It is from the Anishinaabe people."

"Please, make yourself comfortable," I said as I entered behind her, even though she was already sitting down by the fire. It was just a small fire, since it was early summer, a fire just large enough to roast four ears of corn. I already had slices of beef on a plate. I sat beside her and lifted the plate to offer her some of the meat. "Here, make yourself weak," I said, smiling. "If you prefer, I do have some salted venison from the deer I shot recently." I wanted her to know that I, like Cherokee men, could hunt deer.

She ate in thoughtful silence. I think I roasted the corn nicely, but she probably had better corn than this almost every day. I had the uncomfortable feeling that she was judging my cooking. This was all wrong. But what else about me was she to judge? I did not do any of the things by which a Cherokee woman judges a man, and she knew it. Since I was a trader, perhaps

she expected me to display a little wealth. But my wealth was all tied up in those deer hides, and in my white family.

And then I knew I had failed. I knew I had never had a chance. When Nanyehi finished eating, she started to get up.

“What was I thinking?” she said. “A ghigau needs a warrior.”

I tried one last desperate thing to keep her from leaving. “You asked, *What was I thinking?* Well, I’ll tell you what you were thinking. What you were thinking is that you wanted to hear my music. And you are not just a geegaw; you are Nanyehi. It is *you* who will determine what a geegaw needs.”

She nodded her head thoughtfully and sat back down. I looked outside. The sun had set. I think people were sitting outside and watching us. “People are watching us,” I said. “Unless they are your little nunnehi,” I added.

She looked at me fiercely. “You mock me?”

“Oh, no,” I said, with utter sincerity. “We Irish have our little people as well.”

Her anger instantly vanished. “Have you seen them?”

“No,” I said. “But that doesn’t mean they aren’t there. We call some of them leprechauns. The others are *shee*. Just as with the Cherokee, many of us Irish say that the leprechauns and shee have done us no good, certainly not protecting us from the English. Or from the pox. So, the little people of your tribe, and the little people of mine, do not seem to help us very much, do they? But we listen to them, and they listen to us, and maybe that is all any of us can do.” I think my statement met with her approval.

Then she asked, “What would my name be in English?”

“Oh, that’s easy,” I said. “You would be Nancy.”

“What does Nancy mean?”

“I don’t know that it means anything. Our names are just names.”

“That’s odd. Will you call me Nancy?”

“From this moment forth,” I said. “And I shall be the only one who does.” I could not believe how well this was going. We now had a personal bond, shared with no one else.

“Now sing me your music.”

I was prepared for this and had carefully selected my song. I could have chosen a jig, with a quick lightheartedness that might have just confused her. Instead, I chose a song, one of many of our Irish songs that poured the whole spirit into a cry to the heavens. Not unlike the songs of the Cherokee warriors. Only it was not a song of power. I knew I was taking a bit of a risk, to sing a song of sadness. I sang the first verse in Gaelic.

“What language is that?”

“It is Gaelic.”

“Gaelic?”

“The Irish are not the only tribe that the English have conquered. They have conquered the Manx and the Welsh and the Scots. We all have similar languages.”

I then translated the words for Nancy, fitting them into the same tune.

*I know a valley fair, Eileen Aroon,
I know a cottage there, Eileen Aroon.
For in the valley shade I know a tender maid
Flower of the hazel glade, Eileen Aroon.*

“What’s a hazel?”

“It’s a kind of tree that grows in a glade, or a meadow.”

“Sing some more.”

I did, then sang the English words.

*Who in the song so sweet, Eileen Aroon,
Who in the dance so fleet, Eileen Aroon.
Dear are her charms to me, dearer her laughter free
Dearer her constancy, Eileen Aroon.*

*Were she no longer true, Eileen Aroon,
What would her lover do, Eileen Aroon?
Fly with a broken chain far o’er the sounding main
Never to love again, Eileen Aroon.*

“What’s a main?”

“It’s the ocean. Have you seen the ocean?”

“Just once. So, the man would be, as you would say, heartbroken forever?”

“Aye, Nancy.” I felt a bit brave in talking to her about such things.

“Love can do that to a man, or to a woman,” Nancy observed.

“As you well know,” I said. “And, as scripture says, *Love is stronger than death.*”

I think she was about to cry, but she said, “Please, continue. I must hear how this song ends.”

*Youth will in time decay, Eileen Aroon,
Beauty must fade away, Eileen Aroon.
Castles are sacked in war, chieftains are scattered far
Truth is a fixed star, Eileen Aroon.*

I had to explain to her what castles were.

“And you have chiefs, just as we do.”

“Aye, Nancy. And no king. Remember that.”

“I’m not sure I believe the part about truth being as unmoving as a star.”

“I don’t know either. But there is one truth that never moves.”

"Yes, Bryan," she said. I do not believe she had previously called me by my name. "That one truth is that love is stronger than death. And it lasts for life, even when beauty fades away. Or at least it can. I wonder what it must feel like to have a man love me for my entire life."

"I am sure that Kingfisher still loves you, wherever he is." I made sure, that afternoon, to learn his name.

"What is the story of your song?" she asked me, leaning forward with her hands comfortably on her knees.

"There was a man who could sing well, and he loved a woman. But she was a great woman, and laughed away his words of love to her, for he was a humble man. At her wedding, to a great man, he was the musician hired to sing. And he sang this song. She looked at him and knew that she loved him. And they ran away together."

"I do not believe," she said, hugging her knees against her chest, "that we have any songs like this. None of our warriors would sing about being so troubled by a woman."

She closed her eyes again and did not see me pull out the tin whistle and begin to play the tune. Oh, it is a heart-wrenching tune, it is. I had sung it not too far off key and had sung it with vigor. But only on this instrument could I really get the pitch of the notes right. I concentrated on it. I did not attempt any of the frills that tin whistle players usually use, for I had not dared to practice within earshot of the people of Chota.

But I knew I had played it right, or well enough. Nancy still had her eyes closed, but she was crying.

Then she shook her head and suppressed her tears. "I am ghigau, and I bear the burdens of my people. I cannot allow myself to be weakened by love. I allowed myself to feel such love for a man one time, and then I watched him die. I cannot let that happen again."

"Then let me play you something happy," I said. I thought about the jigs I know. Problem was, being out of practice, I was not sure I could play any of them. Too many notes.

"No," said Nancy. I put the tin whistle, my gift to her, down beside her.

She slipped the tin whistle into a pocket. "Well," she said, "I suppose that it is time for me to return home."

"I am pleased that you came," I said. My brain rattled with thoughts of all the conversations I wanted to have with her. I wanted her to tell me everything about herself. And me? I did not want to talk about myself. Perhaps that was because, after many years of avoiding the thought, I just now become aware of what had happened to my people, the Irish, and the suffering of my own family back in the homeland. Of course, maybe Nancy did not want to talk about the suffering of her people either. We both started to fall down a hole of sorrows, from which we were both scrambling out.

She was crouching, ready to stand up. "Is that a jug of whiskey on the corner table?"

"Why, yes," I said, "it is."

"You were going to let me leave without offering any of it to me?"

"Please! Have some, if you like."

She smiled. “No, I do not want any. I was expecting you to offer me some, get me drunk, and then start touching me. But you did not do this.”

“Oh, no, Nancy. You are an honored woman.”

She stood up and pulled down the flap of leather that served for now as the door of my hut. “I can trust you.” Then she announced, “You’re the one.”

“You mean, just like that?” I asked, trembling at the great fortune that had just encompassed me.

She smiled as she blew out my candle. “I’ve been watching you,” she said.

Chapter 2

Nancy and I were married soon thereafter. I told her about my white family. She said she already knew, and she would have pulled out of the marriage if I had not told her. And the next year, our child, our only child Elizabeth, was born. And I was happy to be a father to Ka-ti and Little Fellow as well. During that time, my business prospered. But I was astonished, and even a little bit frightened, by the power of love that I felt for Nancy. This I had not bargained for. Nor had I bargained on how much I would love little Betsy. I sang her Irish lullabies. Of course, all she knew was that I was paying attention to her and making a soothing noise. It was Nancy who drank in the haunting beauty of the melodies. Nancy practiced playing them on the tin whistle. She made a lot of mistakes, but Betsy didn't seem to mind.

I was afraid to trust the beauty that had filled my life. I knew that it could not last. Scripture, which I hear now and again, says that there is a season for everything. There is a time to build, and a time to tear down. There is a time to sow, and a time to reap. A time to love, and a time to hate. I tasted the sweet honey of Nancy's love, and the friendship of her clan, but before long I was to encounter the hatred between the English and the Cherokees. Because she was a geegaw (what an ugly name for such a beautiful thing), she could not simply ignore what was going on. We could not simply enjoy our love and let the rest of the world fight. And, too soon, I discovered one more thing that was right in that scripture. There is a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing. That is the one promise that I have heard from scripture that was true.

The English had built Fort Loudon just a few miles from Chota about 1756. This was the year I had come to Chota and was the main reason I came. With this fort, the English could protect the Cherokees from tribes that were allied with the French. The English and French each had their tribal allies, and war raged all along the frontier. I would be safe back in Charles Town, but if I were to be safe anywhere in Cherokee land, it would have to be in Chota.

This situation started to change almost as soon as I arrived. I heard rumors of raids and battles between the English and the Cherokees. There was retaliation back and forth. The reason was clear to me. Both the Cherokees and the English practiced blood for blood. This was what the Old Testament taught the English: eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life. I believe what they got wrong was, the Bible meant that a particular man's eye should be taken as punishment for some other particular man's eye. But to the English, and to the Cherokee, it was *anyone's* eye in the enemy camp in retaliation for *anyone's* eye at home, or at least for anyone in the same clan as the offender. Perhaps it is that the Cherokees considered all white people to be one clan, and all of us equally guilty for the deeds of any of us. This is a road to disaster. When I hunt, I do not shoot wildly; I take aim at a particular target. The English did not take aim at any particular Cherokee but used the entire Cherokee Nation as a target.

Also, there was a total misunderstanding of leadership. The English have a king, and they just assumed that the Cherokees did also. In 1759, the year after I met and married Nancy, the English held several Cherokee chiefs as hostages in Fort Prince George, just over the South

Carolina border, in response to a Cherokee raid. They thought Attakullakulla could order the Cherokees to surrender the warriors who were responsible for the raid. But Attakullakulla could not make the other Cherokees do something they did not want to do. The English could simply not understand this.

So it was that in 1760 the Cherokee warriors laid siege to Fort Loudon. The soldiers inside the fort grew desperate from hunger. In response to this siege, General Archibald Montgomery marched his army from Fort Prince George up into Cherokee territory to relieve Fort Loudon. Oconostota, the War Chief, was ready. The road went through a narrow pass, and this was where Oconostota attacked the British soldiers. Montgomery's forces never made it to Fort Loudon. They did, however, devastate the Cherokee town of Etchoe. So, the Cherokee warriors continued their siege of Fort Loudon. Fort Loudon had to surrender. Just as with General Montgomery's soldiers, not many of the soldiers in Fort Loudon ever made it back to the British colonies.

The Cherokee warriors under Oconostota were following the eye for an eye principle in one important respect. The British had killed twenty-eight warriors. When Oconostota's warriors attacked Montgomery's forces, they killed exactly twenty-eight soldiers, and then retreated. Now, in addition to calling them bloodthirsty, the British called the warriors cowards. But they did not understand that, to the Cherokees, it was life for life, *and no more*. Exactly twenty-eight.

Things got so bad that it was not safe for any white man to be in Cherokee territory. The other traders left. I stayed partly because Nancy had the authority to protect me. She carried around her white swan's wing, the symbol of the geegaw, so that nobody would forget that I was to be kept safe. I also stayed because Nancy would not let me leave.

That is, until one day it was perfectly clear that even she would not be able to protect me. She hid me whenever warriors from other towns came through, asking if there were any whites. On our last night together, she perfumed her hair with rose water. It was a special gift that I had brought in from Charles Town. We were in a winter house, which had no opening to allow the smoke to escape. Every night, the smoke in the winter houses nearly suffocated me. I could only get away from it by going outdoors for a smoke. But that night, all I could smell was the rose scent of Nancy's hair and skin.

We rode out of Cherokee land on one horse, constantly watching for warriors. We could not bring my deerskins. Haste was important. Every time we went through a town, including the few huts still standing in Etchoe, Nancy held up her left arm, to which was affixed the white swan's wing, so that everyone would know the white man was under the protection of a geegaw. We spent one night in the house of one of her cousins, who did not speak to me. Nancy and I could barely, and silently, touch under our blanket. She tucked the swan's wing up over our shoulders.

We were almost ready to cross the border into South Carolina, so that Nancy could deliver me to Fort Prince George, when we met her cousin Dragging Canoe and some warriors who were with him. I could not understand what they talked about, in their language, but Dragging Canoe pulled me down from my horse, grabbed my neck from behind, and held a

sword to it. An English sword, of course. He rejected the ways of the white man, except when it came to the implements of war. He even drew a few drops of blood from my neck. I still have the scars. Then he shoved me to my hands and knees. He showed Nancy, oh, he showed her, that it was only respect for her position that made him spare me. While I was with Nancy, I felt like I was her willing slave. Not so her cousin the warrior, who was not yet a great leader, but whose name the British and later the Americans would come to fear more than any other. I could not look into his eyes as Nancy took me by the hand and helped me remount my horse.

Before nightfall, we arrived at Fort Prince George. She stayed out of rifle range, and I walked up to the gate, looking back at her frequently. She forced her face to show no expression as she raised her chin and looked north, the direction of the cold blue wind. She did not meet my eyes, but just held her arm and the wing aloft. Then she began to cry, quietly at first, then loudly. But she never looked away from the north.

As I came near the fort, dragging my heart's broken chain, I heard a guard say, "Why look there at that woman! With a bird's wing! She must be one of them gigger women. And look what the gigger woman brought!" Once I was inside, and the gate closed, he said, "So the savages let you go, eh?"

I could not meet his eyes. I muttered, "That gigger woman, as you call her, is my wife. And I'll be thanking you to not say anything bad about her." As I continued into the fort, I heard him mutter, "Sorry, man."

Chapter 3

Eventually, the Overhill Cherokees were at peace with the new United States. The Chickamauga Cherokees, led by Dragging Canoe whom the Cherokee call Tsiyu Gansini, were still at war, but it was safe for an American, which I had become, to travel in most Cherokee towns after about 1780. I could have gone back to Nancy. But by then, I was settled with my white family. So much had happened in our lives that we both knew we could never re-create the love we had experienced in 1759. I even heard she had a white lover. I did see her once. We have both grown older. Her slim face had started to have some of the sharpness so easily visible in her cousin's face. And I? I was not the man Nancy had admired. Of course, beauty must fade away, but love is a fixed star. The best part of our relationship after 1780 was our memories. I cannot any longer bear to sing sad Irish songs or play the tinwhistle. My wife, that is, my white wife, is very practical, and she does not notice that I no longer sing or play music. To her, the wheezing of a church organ is enough. And I guess that it is now enough for me as well.

Part 6: Colonel Richard Byrd

Chapter 1

The Cherokee chief Attakullakulla arrived at the army camp that I commanded in Virginia on July 18, 1761. His English name was The Little Carpenter. Yes, he was little; a short man who stood tall. He was a carpenter not of wood but of ideas. He would find ways to avoid conflict, ways to give each warring party something it wanted. His diplomacy fit in between the stout beams of English and Cherokee idealism like little wedges of wood, like little sweet-smelling flexible twigs of sassafras. Wherever he went, in the white world as in the red, he was greeted with immediate respect. He asked to see me, and he brought a twenty-three-year-old woman with him, his niece Nanyehi, also known as Nancy Ward.

I already knew about the Cherokees. Their warriors could be brutal, there is no denying that, but from what I had seen of the Cherokee towns, if you came to them in peace, you were received with warm hospitality. I visited several Cherokee towns. And their food was good: corn stew, venison, and those peculiar North American nuts called peecans. Legends have spread around Europe that the savages greet their civilized visitors by offering them virgins. This, I must report, is ridiculous. In fact, their women seemed to be in charge of the household, and the men did as they were told at home.

So, when General Amhearst ordered me to attack the Overhill Cherokees and relieve the siege of Fort Loudon, I found every excuse I could to delay implementation of the order. You see, Attakullakulla was not the only one who could find little interstices into which to insert diplomatic excuses.

I first met Attakullakulla back in '56, when he hid me, to protect me from angry warriors who wanted to avenge some Cherokee deaths by killing some Englishmen, any Englishmen. You see, the Cherokees consider all of us Englishmen to be members of the same clan and thus liable for retribution by any of their clans.

And here was my dilemma that day in 1761. The only way I could help the Cherokees was to remain a colonel in the Continental Army. But the only way I could remain in the Continental Army was to eventually march against the Cherokees.

Now, General Amhearst had ordered Colonel James Grant to march against the Cherokees, from the south, just as he had ordered me to march from the north. Grant found, upon arrival in Cherokee territory, that his mission was unnecessary. Just a couple of weeks before he came to my camp, Attakullakulla had been at Fort Prince George to discuss peace. There was no need for anybody to subdue anybody else. But Grant had his orders and would not talk with Attakullakulla. I know Jim and can tell you that he looked upon this encounter as a chance to advance his career, even though he had little personal animosity toward the Cherokees.

And so, Grant marched his troops uphill toward the Cherokee town of Etchoe, en route to Fort Loudon. This route required them to go through the same narrow pass in which the Cherokee warriors had caused such trouble for General Montgomery a few years earlier. But Colonel Grant was ready for them. He sent ahead a group of Catawba Indians and some white

frontiersmen dressed as Indians to create a diversion. The Cherokee warriors thus revealed their positions and wasted their ammunition, allowing Grant's troops to drive them off. Attakullakulla could have prevented this. All of this destruction was unnecessary.

When Grant reached Etchoe, on June 13, 1761, he ordered his troops to pull up and stomp on all the corn, squash, and beans, and then to destroy all the houses, even the ones well outside of the town. Most of the people had fled, but they found an old squaw who could barely walk or see. Grant had his troops bring her into the town square, where he let the eager Catawba warriors torture and kill her. This, too, was unnecessary.

Then Grant marched his troops at night into Middle Town territory, inhabited by Cherokees who had never fought with us. The next morning, they surprised the Cherokees, that is, the old men, the women, and the children who were there. Five thousand Cherokees fled as Grant's troops destroyed all the crops.

One of Grant's officers was a man named Francis Marion, the Swamp Cat from South Carolina, who kept a journal. He let me read it. Here is what he wrote:

We proceeded, by Colonel Grant's orders, to burn the Cherokee cabins. Some of the men seemed to enjoy this cruel work, laughing heartily at the curling flames, but to me it appeared a shocking sight. Poor creatures, thought I, surely we need not begrudge you such miserable habitations. But when we came, according to orders, to cut down the fields of corn, I could scarcely refrain from tears. Who, without grief, could see the stately stalks with broad green leaves, with tasseled tops, the staff of life, sink under our swords with all their precious load, to wither and rot untasted in their mourning field?

I saw everywhere around the footsteps of little Indian children, where they had lately played under the shade of the rustling corn. When we are gone, thought I, will they return, and peeping through the weeds with tearful eyes, will mark the ghastly ruin where they had so often played?

"Who did this?" they will ask their mothers.

And the reply will be, "The white people did it. The Christians did it."

Thus, for cursed mammon's sake, the followers of Christ have sowed the selfish tares of hate in the bosom of these pagan children.

I had nothing more to say to Attakullakulla that day in July when he visited me, a month after Colonel Grant's attack. I said I would do what I could. I was under the command of Officers of the Crown and was limited in what I could do, I explained.

Then his niece spoke to me. "Tell me about this Prince of Peace. Your preachers have told me about him. I was wondering what you think about him."

I told her he was the Son of God.

"So, this Jesus proclaims peace, while his father commands war?"

"That would be just the opposite of us," Attakullakulla said. "I, the father, proclaim peace, while my son, Tsiyu Gansini, The Canoe, calls for war."

I tried to explain that Jesus and God were the same person only not. I didn't try very hard.

"So," Nancy Ward said, trying to get her mind around our beliefs, "your God and your Jesus agree with one another completely? Just like all of your generals and majors and colonels agree with one another completely?"

At last I had a way out of this confusion. "You are wrong to suppose," I said, "that all of us English agree with one another. It is wrong to suppose that I see things the same way as Colonel Grant does."

"But you have to do what your General says," Attakullakulla observed. "Am I correct?"

"This is the duty of an officer," I answered.

"Then you are going to march against our towns?" asked The Little Carpenter. I could see him trying to weave some lattice of vines in his mind to delay us.

"And, if your soldiers saw me and my three children, you would kill us?" asked Nancy.

I looked into her big beautiful dark eyes. I could not ignore the fact that she was a very shapely woman. I had been informed that her white husband, an Irish trader, had fled from Cherokee territory. I knew her to be alone, vulnerable, and available.

How many times since that day I have wondered at the decision I made. I had such a beautiful treasure in my hand and could have gotten some favors from her in return for special treatment. But I did not do this.

"No, that is not going to happen," I said.

"How can you avoid doing what your general says?" asked Nancy's uncle.

"It is actually quite simple," I said. "I will resign my position as Colonel in the Continental Army."

Within weeks a peace treaty was signed, and hostilities ended. The Cherokee War of 1759-1761 was over. Perhaps they would have been over if I had not caused the delay that I did by resigning, and perhaps not. I like to think that I saved many lives, of soldiers as well as of Cherokee, by what I did that day. I can never know, not until I reach the shore of Heaven and ask the Maker Himself. I fully anticipate that He will tell me, "Welcome, Good Servant, into the Reward that has been prepared for you." I want something more. I want to know that my decision was not merely good but wise. I want to know that my resignation saved more lives than I could have saved if I had remained in command. I must wait for this answer.

Chapter 2

I have joined in with a group of Moravian missionaries who are trying to translate the Bible into Cherokee. They were happy to have me join them, even though I had barely begun to learn Cherokee. I had the frontier experience they needed if they were ever to have any hope of taking their Bibles to the Cherokees. First, they had to teach the Cherokees to read, something that neither the settlers nor the Cherokees were eager to do. The Cherokees viewed “talking leaves” with suspicion. The settlers did not want the Indians to have the power that came from literacy.

“Can’t we, maybe, leave out the part about how the Israelites put whole tribes of, you know, Jebusites and Gileadites and Amalekites and Ammonites to the sword?” I asked the Director.

“It is Holy Scripture,” he told me. I could hear the capital letters in his voice. I’ll bet that the Cherokees, if they ever write their own language, will not have capital letters.

“Listen,” I said. “We can’t do the whole Bible right away. Maybe we can start with the part about Jesus and the lost lambs and loving your neighbors as yourselves and Put Away Your Sword Peter and...”

“Well,” said the Director. “We can start with the Gospel of Matthew.”

Of course, that meant that we had a whole chapter of *begats* to get through before we got to the part about the little baby whom Fat King Herod wanted to kill so much that he put a whole city full of babies to the sword to do it, about a star of hope in the east rather than the fire of cannons in the east. And then the Cherokees could read about this man Jesus who said that the meek shall inherit the Earth and who condemned the eye-for-an-eye practice of both red and white men. About Jesus who said that the lilies of the field were of greater value than all the luxurious riches of the men from the east and Whom the holy white men tortured and killed but Who vanished from His tomb but then was seen just once in a while by His followers, at the most unexpected times and places, never when they wanted to see Him and always when they did not, unbidden like the visions that the Cherokee warriors had when they consumed the black tea.

Part 7: Tsiyu Gansini

Chapter 1

From that day, when I struck my hatchet into the war pole at the council meeting, I have been the one chosen to lead my people to victory—or at least to survival. There is only one way the tribal peoples of this land can survive, and that is by banding together, and by fighting the whites, all of them. All of them!

There is a kind of vine that grows in the forest, with stems the same color as our war paint. Each stem is weak, and when one stem grows out into the air and waves in the breeze, it has little chance of ever finding a place to grow. But I have sometimes seen three or four of these stems wind around one another when they stick out into the air. When they do this, they are as strong as a branch. The tribes—not just my Cherokee tribe but all the tribes north and south of the Ohio River—used to be strong. The white people have beaten us down so that we can barely creep through the forest. Formerly we each had our proud independence from one another, but now we are weak. Our only hope is to grow together like vines.

Back in Chota, the white preachers told us we had to believe everything they said about a man who lived a long time ago and a long way away, or else, when we died, we would go not to the Cherokee Darkening Land but to a place where we would burn forever, with no end to the pain. This man from long ago, I think his name was Sweet Jesus, had some wise things to say. But if these things are true, then they should also have been things that other men, not as long ago or as far away, could also have understood to be true. What authority does this Sweet Jesus have? Even the white preachers did not believe what this man said. The Sweet Man said to forgive your enemies over and over, but the whites never do this. My cousin, that woman Nancy Ward who has troubled us for over a decade, and who shows no sign of shutting up, says something similar to what the Sweet Man says. I do not think my cousin really believes in this Sweet Man, but she claims that forgiving our enemies is the practical way to our survival. Strange thing for a warrior woman to say. Well, she used to be a warrior woman, many years ago. I remember what she did at Taliwa. She was like a god from the sky that day. She quickly turned soft.

There was a white preacher once, I forget his name, who came to Chota. Even the other whites did not like him, because he was strange. Whenever he talked, and one of the traders translated for him, the strange white preacher did not read the same parts of the Black Book that most of the preachers read. He never talked about the monster who stoked the flames and tortured our souls forever. He didn't even talk a lot about the Sweet Man other than to acknowledge him. I remember him reading once from this Black Book. One part went something like this:

I know that there is nothing better under the sun than for people to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink and enjoy their work—this is the gift of God.

Another part said:

Surely the fate of human beings is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; humans are no better than animals. Everything is meaningless. All humans and all animals go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return.

This was very different from the parts of the Black Book that the other preachers read to us. It made me think that, perhaps, the different parts of the Black Book disagreed with one another, like the chiefs in our council meetings. Here is the part I will always remember. I had the strange preacher read it to me over and over, so that I could remember it.

Two are better than one. If either of them falls, one can help the other. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help him. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

The cord of three strands, like the red vine in the forest. And it is not just the red vine. I have seen the greenbriers do it also. That is my main objection to the path of peace that my cousin and my old father tell us to follow. They are speaking only for their own gain! They want the wagon loads of things that the whites offer to them! They are like the scrambling vines of wild rose, not the red vine. They each go their own way, and the whites can hack away each vine, one at a time. I want to unite all the tribes.

The whites have tribes, too. The English, the French, the Spanish. And then the English colonists fought with the English from over the sea. And that is not the end of it. The English over the sea did not approve of the Watauga settlers and told them to get off of Cherokee land. But the rebels wanted the Watauga settlers to join them to fight the English. The Wataugans were a separate tribe from both the royalists *and* the colonists. And even within each white tribe every man wants to advance his own status. When that man Henry Timberlake came to our land, and married Ostenaco's daughter, and then took Ostenaco and other chiefs to London, over thirty years after my father went to London, what did he want? He acted not just for the English on our side of the sea, but he wanted to get respect and wealth back in his homeland. The whites are also scrambling like vines. Now is the time to put an end to them!

Let me tell you what happened with the Watauga settlers. It began in your year of 1768, when a white man named William Bean decided to build a house and plant a farm near the Watauga River. He had seen the land when he came sneaking in with his friend Daniel Boone. The next year Bean moved his family to the new place, and his wife's brothers came with him. Thus began the Watauga Settlement. Soon there were other settlements as well, at Nolichucky and at a place named after the white man Carter. The problem from the Cherokee viewpoint is obvious. But there was also a problem from the white viewpoint. The Watauga and other settlements were west of the line that Fat King George, third of that name, in England had drawn on a map in 1763. The king commanded that no whites could settle the land west of that line. Oh, this sounds like it is good for us Cherokees, to have a line on a map that protects our lands. Some of our land was on the east side of that line, so we lost it when the king drew his line.

In 1774, the English sent a representative, Alexander Cameron, to the Watauga Settlement to tell them they had to leave. Of course, the Wataugans had no intention of leaving. They knew they could not fight against both us and the English army. So, they deliberated among themselves. They knew our warriors could torture and kill them and burn their settlement. The English army, on the other hand, was not very likely to come, especially when commanded by Fat King George. Ostenaco told me this king is stupid as well as fat. And arrogant as well as stupid. I was not surprised this king was unable to unify the English, and I suspected he would lose the war the colonists had begun to wage against his loyalist troops.

The Wataugans decided to negotiate with us to lease the land. James Robertson and John Bean (William's brother) told us very clearly what this meant. It meant they would stay on their farms and raise their families for ten years, and then they would leave. At the time, even I thought that this might be acceptable. My father, Attakullakulla, was quite happy about it, especially since we would receive many wagonloads of supplies from the whites. My father called the Wataugans "my white brothers" and said, "It is but a little spot of ground they ask." Little spot? You cannot see the borders of this "little spot" from where you stand at the Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga River. Every place you can see from there is part of this "little spot." But when the Wataugans spread out the paper on which the treaty was written, my father and the other old chiefs put their X's on it.

Of course, the Wataugans made no preparations to leave as their time grew short. In fact, they settled past the borders agreed upon in the treaty. It was 1774. Though I had seen forty-two summers, my heart was with the younger chiefs. We were growing impatient. Then, during a horse race at Sycamore Shoals, a time when white and red men were supposed to be friends, a white man shot a Cherokee. My chiefs and I were ready to go to war. Now, I know it was only that one white man who wanted to kill Cherokees. The other Wataugans did not wish to go to war. They sent James Robertson to Chota to apologize to our chiefs. But the whites can do a lot of damage if they keep killing our people, and then each time telling us that it was a mistake and apologizing. Pretty soon, these little "mistakes" of theirs add up to some serious war.

Everyone knew if I or my chiefs found Robertson's party alone, we would kill them. He had to get out of Chota and back to Watauga pretty fast. But he was protected. While in Chota, he stayed with Nancy. She had gathered a big collection of white treasures. She wore white cloth along with her Cherokee beads. She had English plates and serving bowls. Her house had wooden floorboards and a stone fireplace. And even though she was by then 36 years old, my cousin was still a very beautiful woman. I have been told that Robertson was quite attracted to her while he stayed with her. I do not know what they may have done when they were alone, but it was my cousin who, wearing her white swan's wing on her arm, escorted Robertson out of Cherokee country, just as she had done years before with that white husband of hers, Betsy's father, the one who now lives down in Tugaloo with his white wife.

Things got even worse. In the early spring of 1775, our chiefs met with the Wataugans at Sycamore Shoals to sign another treaty. Not only did this treaty omit any mention of the Wataugans—now grown strong in number—leaving the leased land, but it demanded even more

Cherokee land to be sold to them. Once again, my father was happy about the many wagonloads of goods we would receive from the whites, as I suppose a Peace Chief might be. But the old war chief, Oconostota, was impressed also. It looked to me like everyone was nodding his head in agreement with Attakullakulla when he talked mostly about how he met the king decades earlier rather than about what the Cherokee Nation needed right then. Of course, Nancy was there at the meeting also. She was the leader of the delegation of women. I expected her to consent to every white treaty. But my father? And Oconostota? Hanging Maw and The Raven seemed to be going along with it also.

As if swept by a strong wind, I arose and stalked to the front of the council. I felt the words flying from my throat. They were not my words but the words that the spirits wanted my people to hear. Over a thousand of my people were watching from outside the council house. And here is what I said.

Whole nations have melted away like snowballs in the sun before the white man's advance. Even their names remain only on the maps made by the white men. Where are the Delawares? They have become a shadow of their former greatness.

I looked at Nancy, whose father was from this once great nation.

We had hoped that the white man would stay on the east side of the mountains. Now that hope is gone. They have crossed the mountains and settled on Cherokee land. Now they want a treaty that says that they can keep the land on which they settled. Next they will take more land and demand a treaty that lets them keep it. And they will keep doing this until they have taken all of the land of the Ani-Yunwiya, the True People. Our people, once so mighty, will have to flee into the wilderness toward the Darkening Land. And even there, our people will only be allowed to stay a short while, and the greedy white people will come again, but this time we will have no place to go, and it will be our death. Oh, yes, we will still have some descendants. There will be some white people, living in white houses, whose mothers or grandmothers were Cherokee...

I looked at Nancy again. Her eyes did not meet mine.

But the Ani-Yunwiya will no longer exist. Each time the whites take more of our land, they grow stronger, and we grow weaker. Now is the time for us to fight against them. If we wait, we might become so weak that we lose everything. I say that we should not give up any more of our land. Any of it! Who is with me?

The silence was like waiting for thunder. Would anyone listen to me? I strode out of the council house and through the Tsalagi crowd outside. They murmured as I passed. No one followed me that day, but the old chiefs knew I was right. They closed the session without signing the treaty.

A few days later, however, they met again and signed a modified treaty. This time, the arrogant Wataugan whites demanded even more land. I sprang to my feet again, and said:

We have given you our best land, and now you demand more! You will not stop until you have all of it! Already there are no deer left in this land. I tell you that there is a heavy cloud hanging over this land. And when you try to settle it, you will find darkness and blood!

This time when I left, there were cheers, and some of the chiefs left with me. Bloody Fellow, Doublehead, Young Tassel, The Raven.

There was no agreement among our people that day. Of course, my father and Oconostota signed the treaty, but they spoke only for themselves! And not only that, but there was no agreement among the whites. By English law, the Transylvania Agreement was illegal. And then the colonists began fighting the English. The old chiefs expected supplies, in return for the land, to come uphill from Charles Town. But this path was blocked by the English soldiers. Then the old chiefs expected supplies to come from the Spanish in Pensacola. Both the English and the French blocked that route.

By 1776, the Wataugans had built more houses and even a fort. A few years earlier, we could have destroyed them. Now they were strong. See what comes from making treaties and waiting! But that year something very important happened, something that made it clear I am the great leader of our people.

Who should come into Chota one day that year but fourteen chiefs from seven northern tribes: Iroquois, Mohawk, Delaware, Ottawa, Nantucas, Shawnee, and Mingo. They came to the Cherokeees with the same message that I had for my people: we must not let the whites take our lands. But in addition to what I had told my people before, there was a new message. We must resist the whites *together*. The chiefs wanted to form a union. If the white colonies could form a union against England, then certainly the tribes could form a union against the colonists.

Ten days later, chiefs from many Cherokee towns assembled to welcome the fourteen representatives. I put fresh red and black paint on myself, and on the war pole in the council house. The Mohawk chief spoke first. He told us that the whites had killed many of his people in addition to taking their land. Then he raised up a war belt. I accepted it. The Delaware chief said the same thing, and he offered me his war belt. The Ottawa chief said the same thing. I allowed The Raven to accept his belt. Then the great chief of the Shawnee, Cornstalk, gave the last speech.

The land where the Shawnee until recently hunted is now covered with white forts and soldiers. When the soldiers build a fort, you can know for sure that the settlers will follow. It is clear that the whites wish to completely destroy our peoples. We should fight the whites, rather than to let ourselves be destroyed by small steps. Our cause is just!

Cornstalk's purple war belt was as long as two men are tall, and as wide as the span of a warrior's hand. He held it up, and I splashed red war paint onto it. There will be blood! As the crowd silently watched, I accepted Cornstalk's war belt. Other young chiefs joined me. Then we began to sing the war song, a song almost forgotten among our people. Drummers joined and the noise became wild. We struck our tomahawks into the war pole. We carried Cornstalk's war belt around and around the council house, dancing in a frenzy.

At last, we took our stand, and we did so unified with the other tribes. This was the moment I had been waiting for, when the spirits called us to once and for all rid the land of the white plague. I must have thought that warriors from other tribes would come streaming into our towns to help us drive out the whites. It was not to be. They were busy with their own wars. They could not help us, nor we them.

It was clear what our first target would be: the Watauga settlement. And this was perfectly clear to the white traders who remained in Chota as well. We could not allow them to leave, for they would go back to Watauga and warn the settlers. We kept the four traders imprisoned. We did not treat them badly. Nancy saw to this. She brought them food, and even stayed to talk with them. She was especially friendly with the trader named Isaac Thomas. This was about July 4, 1776, which I understand is an important date in United States history.

And then, on the night of July 8, the four traders escaped. I knew right away what had happened, and I looked for Nancy. I found her in her house the following day. She was sitting in a nice chair that one of the Watauga settlers had recently made for her. Her feet rested on a small rug. She did not smile as she welcomed me. I sat on a little stool on the fine wooden floor. A few other members of our clan were present. The door was open, and people gathered outside. Anyone who had seen me striding to her house would have known what was about to happen. And just before I spoke, old Attakullakulla, my father, came in the door and took the chair that had been reserved for him.

“You know why I am here,” I said to Nancy.

She raised her eyebrows like one of the white queens.

“Do you care only about your own pleasure?” I asked. “You would sacrifice our people just to please your lover?” Her expression did not change. “We all know about you and Isaac Thomas. So, you let the white man slip into your bed. And that daughter of yours! Everyone knows about her, too. Everyone knows Betsy has become the squaw wife of Major Joseph Martin. Generation after generation of women offering themselves to the men who will give them gifts and power.”

“And power,” said my father. “Major Martin will help us. He has a promising future. I believe he will become very important in the English army. He will help all of us, not just Betsy.”

“Just like, even at this moment, Isaac Thomas is helping the settlers to prepare for our attack?” I threw this in my father’s face. “She also released three other men.”

“As was her right,” said my father. “As Ghigau.”

Then I turned on Nancy. “Well, my cousin. Open your door to the white men. Let legions of them tramp to your door and leap into your fine white bed! And Betsy, Betsy Ward—let Major Joseph Martin find delight because her skin is not quite as dark as ours. She is white enough that the great man can pretend she is white, rather than a squaw. Why don’t we just open all the gates of all our cities to let white men come in and sleep with our wives and daughters? Yes, maybe that will bring us peace! Well,” I said to her, “let the white men come to your bed and snore. Let them drool on your fine linen pillowcases. And in their sleep, they may find their

necks slashed by Cherokee knives!" I brandished my knife as I stood and approached her, with as powerful a look of disgust as I could produce on my face. She stood. I held the knife against her throat.

"She is our Ghigau," my father said. The older ghigaues in Chota, and most of the older ones in our nation, had died.

"That does not give her permission to destroy our people," I said.

"It means," my father responded, "that you have to let her do what she has the privilege to do. You are a warrior; that is your privilege. Your warriors follow you. I am the Peace Chief and cannot stop you from that. But our Ghigau has the privilege of pardoning and releasing any captives. She has acted entirely within her traditional power."

"And that power," I said, "was first given to ghigaues back when our women were not...what is that word that the white men use for women whom they pay for..."

"Do not say more," my father commanded. I lowered my knife. I looked around the room, and out the door. I know that people heard me, and I know that they understood what I meant.

Then my father added, "You wish to save the Cherokee people. But if you destroy the power of the ghigau women, you have made our people a little less Cherokee. Remember that. We are not simply people who have land and hunt deer and eat corn. We are people who have and respect traditions. If we become nothing but warriors, will we not cease to be Tsalagi as surely as if we become nothing but victims?"

Then Nancy spoke. Mumbled, actually. I expected some dramatic speech from a ghigau. But she just mumbled something about grasshoppers and hornets.

"My time is short," I said, ignoring her. "My warriors cannot expect to arrive at Island Flats before my cousin's *lover* will have started them on their preparations. But we must go as soon as possible. You will now have no cause to speak to me about the choice I have made, Father. From this moment, I will not live in Chota. My warriors and I, the real men, and their women, the real women, will build our own cities. If we cannot defend all of the land of the Ani-Yunwiya, we can at least defend our own."

With one last glance at my cousin, I stalked out the door. There were no cheers from the people outside, but several of the men walked with me.

The Wataugan settlers were ready for us at Island Flats. We lost the battle, of course. I was shot in the leg. I hold my cousin directly and forever responsible for that. I recovered and was later to lead my warriors. But that day I lost thirteen warriors. And not one white scalp to show for it.

It was not just my cousin who humiliated me in these battles. It was white women as well. When young Chief Old Abram attacked Fort Watauga, some women were out milking cows. They raised an alarm and ran into the gate just before it closed. But one woman was caught outside. It should have been so easy for our warriors to capture her. But Kate was tall and athletic. She ran to the palisade wall. A man reached his arm down for her. She leapt up, not unlike the way my cousin did that day at Taliwa. The man caught her arm and pulled her safe

inside. I heard that they later got married. One of the great love stories of the whites, and one of my great embarrassments. And now that man, John Sevier, is one of the enemy generals.

And as if that were not enough, when Chief Old Abram's warriors tried to set fire to the fort, some women were ready for them with cauldrons of boiling water, which they poured down on our warriors. The warriors went screaming back into the forest.

If we had attacked before the fort was built, the Watauga settlement would have been destroyed. If we had attacked without warning, we might have won. But my cousin's treachery—for what else can I call it?—made my warriors the subject of scorn. The whites were laughing at us. Cauldrons of boiling water! Defeated by women!

Chapter 2

My warriors and I moved our habitations down toward Chattanooga, starting in 1776, near the place you call Lookout Mountain. For good reason. We use it for that purpose. We now call ourselves the Chickamaugas, named after the creek, where we built our towns. One of my fellow warriors, fighting against the people who now call themselves Americans, is an Englishman, John McDonald. We store some of our supplies in his farmhouse. And Alexander Cameron, the Englishman who tried to evict the Wataugans, has joined us also. Their hearts are red.

We are not yet conquered.

Part Eight: Lydia Russell Bean

Chapter 1

My husband, William, told me not to worry about the Indians. So did my brothers. They built farmhouses on the Watauga River in 1768, near a creek William named in honor of his friend, Daniel Boone. When he was exploring with Boone, William saw the land near Sycamore Shoals, and came back to me with stories of how rich the soil was, and how abundant the timber.

The land on the Watauga River clearly belonged to the Cherokees, being west of the 1763 line drawn by King George III. Not that the king's will has much importance out here on the frontier. Certainly, no British army could help us if the Indians attack. My husband said to not worry; he knew how to deal with Indians. He could help them get hunting guns and ammunition and powder. The guns were not rifled; that is, there were no little grooves in the barrel to make the bullet go straight. We would give the Indians only inferior weapons, and, thereby, retain our advantage over them. Even so, they still wanted the guns, which were better than bows and arrows. And we would supply blankets and cloth and trinkets and metal pots and pans. If we gave them such items, they would let us stay on our farm, William told me. So, I moved to the Watauga settlement in 1769. I was forty-three years old. I had expected to live out my life in the safety of civilization, but I followed my husband to the frontier.

At first, things went very well. In fact, William and some of the other men wrote a treaty that pleased the Cherokees, and some of their representatives signed it in 1772. He had no authority from the Crown to make any such treaty. The treaty specified we would only lease the land, and after ten years we would leave. It did not seem to bother him that at no time did he have any intention of leaving, or that more and more settlers were arriving from Virginia. A royal representative, Alexander Cameron, came to our settlement and told us to leave. *Not now*, said my husband. *We just put in the crops. Check with us next year, maybe then we'll leave.* I figured I would start worrying in 1781, before our lease ran out. Maybe by then William would be ready to move back to Virginia.

Chapter 2

The first time I ever saw Nancy Ward was about 1776, when my husband's friend Isaac Thomas brought her into our settlement. She was tall and elegant. Her large eyes seemed to see and remember everything. At the time I thought this was not necessarily a good thing. She wore a buckskin skirt and coat, and a white cloth blouse that came from the traders. The blouse hung loose over her beautiful form. A leather band with embedded beads encircled her head like a crown. I wished I looked as beautiful as that woman. She seemed to be especially interested in our cows.

William came up behind me and said, "That's Nancy Ward."

"She has an English name?" I asked.

"She is married to an Irish trader," William answered.

"Does Isaac know about that?"

"Of course. But among the Cherokees, the woman decides whom to marry and how long to stay married. I am sure her coming here with Isaac was her choice."

"But what if the Irishman thinks differently?" I said, looking back at my husband.

I could see the humor in my husband's eyes. "I think he went back home to his white wife. I know that love can smite a man's heart..." He looked into my eyes, eyes still young even though my skin was wrinkled, and my flesh sagged. "And I can see why Isaac has latched onto her. But Isaac is too wise a man to put himself in unnecessary danger."

"She acts like she owns the place," I said.

"After a manner of speaking, she does," William answered. "I mean, speaking as a technical matter, the Cherokees do own this land. And she is a leader among the Cherokees."

"A woman leader?"

"That is their way. And is it so bad? After all, I listen to your opinions..."

"Spare me, William."

"I listen *respectfully*..."

"And then you do whatever you were going to do anyway." I smiled to let him know that I was at least resigned to our arrangement. After all, my life would not be worth a half penny out here in the wilderness without his protection. Out here among the savages.

The idea of being among savages frightened me, especially when I saw their warriors, painted in red and black and whooping like banshees at dances. On the other hand, a tribe where the women get to choose how long to stay with their husbands, and who can be leaders? I looked at Nancy Ward with renewed interest.

And then her eyes met mine. She walked over toward my husband and me.

She addressed my husband first. "Mr. William Bean. It is good to see you again." She was probably one of the Cherokee negotiators, so of course she already knew my husband.

"My wife," William told her. "Lydia Russell Bean."

“Part of the Russell clan?” Nancy asked him, not yet looking at me. I have since learned that clan ties are extremely important to Cherokees, even though many Cherokees consider all whites to be just part of the white clan.

Then she looked at me. I was astonished at the reddish luster of her black hair, hanging as free as a waterfall down her back. Her hair seemed clean, in contrast to my matted yellowish-brown braids with silver streaks. And she smelled like roses.

Isaac walked up. He had a big, stupid grin on his angular, handsome face. He stood tall and showed his muscles. He said to us, “So, how do you like my Wild Rose of the Cherokee?”

We all smiled, Isaac with his dumb grin, my husband with a commanding smile, and Nancy with a mysterious quietness.

“We’ll let the women get acquainted,” my husband said, taking Isaac with him. There was always work to do.

“Which house is yours?” Nancy asked, looking around.

“The one over there, furthest from the others,” I said. “Would you like to come in the cabin for a visit?”

“Yes,” she answered. We walked along the little dirt path that connected our house with the town center.

“Do your children live here in the settlement also?” she asked.

“Six of them,” I said proudly. “The last one was born in ’69.” I did not mention the three who had died.

“I have three children,” said Nancy. “A daughter and a son, by a warrior named Kingfisher, and then a daughter by Bryan Ward.”

“How nice,” I said. “Three little kids.” She looked like she was at most twenty years old.

She looked down at me. “Catherine is twenty-two years old, and lives with her husband. Little Fellow is twenty. Betsy is fourteen.”

This woman must be...in her late thirties? How could she look so young and healthy? Life is hard out here in the wilderness. She smiled. She had all of her teeth. I gave a lopsided grin that hid a missing left tooth. My other teeth, thank God, look fine.

“My husband, Kingfisher, was a great warrior,” Nancy said. Then she told me about a battle down in Georgia in which she had become a war hero. I felt very inferior to this woman. William later confirmed that she was not making any of it up.

When we got to the cabin, I realized I had nothing to offer to her except either William’s whiskey or the milk I got that morning. When I offered her milk, she eagerly accepted it.

“Do you have cows?” I asked her.

“Yes,” she said. “But we do not milk them. We just use them for beef. And we don’t keep them penned up like yours. We let them run free in the forest. When we want to eat one, the warriors go whooping after it like it was a bear.” She smiled. “Not enough deer and bear left for any really good hunting anymore. Just the cows.”

“We don’t pen up our beef cattle,” I said. “Just the milch cows. You should get yourself some milch cows.”

She looked up, a white moustache glistening against her smooth copper skin. My son liked to pretend he was a man with a moustache when he drank milk. "This is delicious," she said. "Sometimes my stomach hurts a little after I drink it, though. And it goes sour so quickly."

"Well, you can do something about that," I said. "You can make cheese. It lasts."

"I know about cheese," she said. "But I don't know how to make it."

"I'll teach you sometime," I said. "And how to make butter also."

She looked over at my loom. "That is where you weave cloth," she said.

"Oh, yes," I said. "It's much too expensive to buy all the cloth we need."

"Yes, it is," she said. "We buy cloth from traders. We have to trade lots of deerskins for the cloth. It doesn't seem like a good deal to me. Will you teach me how to use one?"

"Yes," I said, without thinking.

Nancy could see the immediate look of worry on my face. I might have just cut into an important part of Isaac's business. Nancy studied me for a moment and said, "Don't worry, I won't tell Isaac or William. I only tell them what they need to know."

Chapter 3

We did not have to wait until 1782 for everything to start going wrong.

We were getting along fine with the Cherokees. We even had a horse race with them on the Sycamore Shoals floodplain. It was a beautiful, sunny day in 1774, and I was beginning to feel confident in our future, when someone shot Cherokee Billy. This brought an end to the races, and as soon as the Cherokees left I was certain that we were in serious trouble.

My husband still told me not to worry. And by the next year he and the other settlement leaders had written a treaty with the Cherokees and had arranged for wagonloads of goods to come to Sycamore Shoals as payment to the Cherokees. The old Cherokee chiefs were about to sign the treaty. I was watching from the crowd, with the other women of the settlement. Nancy was up with the Cherokee leaders. When she saw me, she threw me a glance of friendly recognition.

Before anyone could sign the treaty, a warrior got up and stalked to the front of the crowd. He was almost prancing with fury and excitement. I do not know what he said, but it was very loud and vigorous. He flung his arms around better than any orator or preacher I ever saw. We were all silent. Then the warrior stalked off through the crowd and walked away. He walked right past me. I imagined that he looked at me with an expression as hateful as Nancy's had been friendly. I knew all about how the Indians scalped people, even women and children. I knew that it would only have taken him a couple of heartbeats to chop off my miserable pelt, had this been a raid. The Cherokee men milled around a little, and then started to leave. Nancy stood watching the warrior walk away and get on his horse.

"Lydia," she said when I walked over to her.

"Greetings, Nancy," I said. "What happened?"

"I apologize for the behavior of my cousin Tsiyu Gansini. Do not hold my cousin's actions against me."

"If you take no offense at my cousins," I said.

"Tsiyu Gansini is very angry," Nancy continued. "He says that you whites will keep taking our land until none of it remains and all of the Cherokee die. He is a great orator."

"I can tell," I said.

"I hope that the people did not listen to him," said Nancy.

I then said something that made all the difference in my life, and that I would never have guessed I would say.

"What," I said, "if he is right?"

Nancy looked at me with a frigid stare.

"Not that *I* would ever want to hurt any of you," I quickly added.

Nancy's gaze softened. "No," she said, "you wouldn't. You're too busy with your milk, butter, and cheese to think about war."

"And with my loom," I added.

Chapter 4

A couple of weeks later, the white and Cherokee men signed the Transylvania Agreement. The warrior made another impassioned speech, to no immediate effect.

My husband acted as if, treaty in hand, we had nothing to worry about. We stored up cribs of corn and blocks of cheese and a little barrel of salt beef. There had always been at least a few Cherokee visitors to our settlement. But now there were almost none. I mentioned this to my husband. He did not answer.

I was out in the cornfield when I heard the cry of alarm. I would have to run to the fort as quickly as possible. But, being fifty years old, this was not easy for me to do. Then I heard an arrow, which narrowly missed me as it vanished among the cornstalks. I knew right then I had no hope of reaching the fort. I fell down. A warrior grabbed my shoulder and turned me over. I saw his outline against the sun with his hatchet raised. It has been a good life, I thought, and the pain will be brief. Good luck with my scraggly little scalp. Much good may it do you.

At that moment another warrior said something to him, and he lowered his tomahawk. The two warriors talked quickly, and I heard the word "Bean." They tied me up with leather straps and dragged me staggering off into the woods.

This was the attack I was later to learn had been an embarrassment to the warriors, in which young Kate Sherrill, whom we later called Bonnie Kate, jumped up the palisade wall. Her future husband, John Sevier, a man who later caused a lot of damage to the Cherokee people, caught her arm.

Sammy Moore and I were the only captives that day. The warriors scalped Jimmie Cooper and left him for dead. He escaped, and to this day Jimmie often goes about without his wig, showing off his scars, to keep the flames of hatred against the Cherokee burning. It was also the day that, over at Island Flats, the great warrior that I had seen at the treaty signing was defeated after taking no white lives.

I heard later that the warriors had taken the other captive, Sammy, to their town of Tuskegee and tortured him to death.

And the warriors made the most of my capture. They made me ride sidesaddle, with my legs bound, to one of their settlements, called Toquo. They pounded a stout stake into the ground and pushed me toward it. I was too confused to think about what might be happening. They bound me to the stake with leather ropes. I remember thinking, just briefly, how glad I was to be old, so they would not rape me. Of course, in their state of mind, they might have anyway. The drums began to beat as the warriors danced around and whooped wildly. How could these be the same people as Nancy Ward? Or the old chief Attakullakulla? They started throwing dry branches around me until I was nearly buried in them. I could see the flames of their torches as their celebration continued past sunset.

I did not understand what was happening. I almost felt like dancing with them. Those drums, pounding and pounding, will fill a person's mind and make him think he is dreaming.

Only when one of the warriors touched his torch to the sticks did I realize what was going on. My scream was lost in their shrieks.

Fear gripped my spirit. When I looked into the fire, which was not just red and yellow and orange but even had a few licks of blue, where the fire was hot from an explosion of pine sap, all I could think of was the time that I spilled hot water on my leg. I still bore the scars. All I could think was that my entire body would soon feel that same pain and that this time it would not stop.

But then I began to feel at peace. Maybe it was just because the fire had tainted the air, but I felt that Heaven was welcoming me. The red flames became jewels. They danced beautifully and beat with the drums. A brilliance surrounded me. I could smell the sweat and grease of my body mixed with the smoke. There must have been a dozen warriors dancing around me, but I could not see them as individuals. The evening star glowed in the sunset, and its glow became larger and larger. Though my lungs were gasping for breath, my soul was serene. The scent of my burning hair rose as a sacrifice to Jehovah.

The screams of the warriors changed. Where once they had sounded confident, they now sounded frustrated. Was it possible that I was being rescued? I didn't care! I had not experienced such a beautiful feeling, and I did not want to leave it behind even to return to an earthly life.

Into this circle of serenity stepped Nancy Ward, with a knife.

Welcome, Nancy. I am ready. You may sacrifice me now.

What are you doing? You are cutting something with your knife, but it is not my heart.

What is that purple brilliance surrounding you? Is your hair burning also, like mine?

Nancy Ward cut my bonds and thrust me away from the stake. I tumbled onto the dust and rocks outside the flames. It was the first time I became aware of pain. I felt my blistered scalp and screamed. I looked up and saw Nancy sticking her arms into the flames, pulling burning branches out of the pyre, and tossing them aside. The fire, a moment before so beautiful, was now ugly and the smoke was disgusting. Then Nancy started stomping on the branches with her leather moccasins. She picked up handfuls of dust and threw them angrily at the last flames.

She turned on the astonished warriors. Of course, I could not understand what she said. At first, they shouted back at her. But eventually, one by one, starting with the oldest, they pulled back into the darkness. She kept saying the same thing over and over, whatever it was. I think the word *geegow* was in it.

She turned back to the smoldering coals and started stomping on them as she had the flames. She whooped as loudly as the warriors had. She was wheezing as she kept stomping on them even when all of the glow was gone. Maybe they glowed with a redness that only she could see.

She looked at me, her chest heaving.

"Lydia, listen to me," she said as she grabbed my shoulders. But I heard nothing else.

Chapter 5

Nancy's brother, Long Fellow, and her son, Fivekiller, the one whom they had previously called Little Fellow, were with her in Toqua, where I had been tied to the stake. After bandaging my wounds, they conducted me to Nancy's house in Chota. When Nancy arrived, she cleaned away the dirt and blood from my skin, and she anointed my scalp with a salve made from bear grease. She fed me, at first with corn gruel, and later with a stew made from nuts.

She laid me down in her bed. She slept on the floor. The next day, she sat beside me, and we talked.

"Nancy, your beautiful hair is short," I said.

"Not as short as yours, but for the same reason, Lydia. It will grow back. So will yours."

I touched my fingers to the painful, bare skin of my scalp and felt around for the few remaining tufts of hair.

"Meanwhile, Lydia, keep your bonnet on when you leave, which you will probably do soon. I will conduct you back home to Watauga."

"Where are we?" I asked.

"At my house in Chota," she said.

"It is a beautiful house," I said. The beams and floorboards were strong and straight. A fine wooden washstand stood next to the bed.

"Yes," she said. "It is my third house at this spot."

I pushed myself up with my elbow. "What happened to the others?" I asked.

"Chota has been burned twice by the English army," she told me.

"And you came back and rebuilt it?" I asked.

"What else is there to do?" Nancy responded. "You Wataugans can go back to Virginia if it gets too dangerous for you out here. But for us Cherokees, this is our only homeland. Of course, we rebuilt."

"How many of your people must have been killed when the English soldiers came," I sighed and eased back down.

"Oh, that was not the worst of it," Nancy said. "Our warriors were gone, and only old men, women, and children were in Chota when the English soldiers came. They did not kill any of us. They did not have to. Most of us women had fled into the forest, fearing rape, but we could watch the soldiers. They burned our houses and destroyed our crops. And our storehouses. You see, they did not have any need to kill us. They wanted to starve us."

"But you Indians know how to live out in the forest, don't you?" I asked in sincere amazement.

"Like animals?" she asked.

"Well, yes," I said. "I don't mean that as an insult."

“No offense taken, Lydia,” she smiled. “But the forest is not an easy place to live. It is not like your Garden of Eden. The forest does provide everything a person could need, this is true, but not all at once. There are birds and animals, but without bows and arrows, how can you hunt them? In the spring, there are green shoots on the briars, in the summer there are berries, and in the autumn, there are nuts. But there is no time during the circle of the year when all of these foods are waiting for you to eat them. For months, you can watch the pulpy fruits of the persimmon growing on the tree, but you do not dare to eat the fruit before the first frost or before the fruit is not just orange but wrinkled. And then you have to get to it before the raccoons. No, Lydia, when the soldiers destroyed Chota, some of us made it to other towns, which sometimes had food and sometimes did not. Some of us did not make it to other towns.

“Of course,” Nancy added, “do not forget that we raise crops. We have forgotten how to live without corn, without Selu. Selu does not live out in the forest, but only in the fields that we create for her. Well, I have a new house now.”

“Yes,” I said. “Isn’t that what is important? A house with a roof to keep out the rain and a fireplace for warmth in the winter.” I sat up against the pillow. “Why can’t we all just stay home and mind our own business, instead of going to war all the time? There’s plenty to do, what with raising the corn and the hogs and the cows and the chickens...you have chickens?”

Nancy smiled. “Yes. We got those from you a long time ago.”

“Well,” I continued. “As I was saying, there’s plenty to do. Even with the chickens. You have to get the eggs as soon as they’re laid, or they’ll go bad. And, pound for pound, it takes as much work to pluck and gut a chicken as to dress a deer. And those milch cows. You’ve got to get up before dawn to milk them, otherwise they get so much milk in their udders that it hurts them. And then there’s making cloth, and sewing, and so on...”

“How well I know all of this,” Nancy said. “But you asked why we cannot just all stay home, and not fight against one another. But you did not stay home. You came to Watauga.”

“It was getting too crowded back in Virginia,” I said.

“That is because you whites have too many children,” Nancy responded.

I reacted with shock and indignation. “How can you have too many children? That’s what us womenfolk are on the Earth for, to produce children. And the Good Book says to be fruitful and multiply and fill the Earth.”

“How many children did you say you had?” she asked me.

“Nine, of which six have survived. And you have only three.”

“So,” continued Nancy, “the two of you, you and William, will leave the world, and in your place, there will be six people. No wonder you are getting crowded.”

“But the Good Book says...”

“Lydia, you told me already. Fill the Earth. But it sounds to me like you have *already* filled the Earth. Maybe it is time to start thinking about doing something other than making babies.” I started to argue with her, but she continued. “Where does it end, Lydia? Will you white people eventually be stacking your children up like firewood?”

“How do you do it?” I asked.

"You mean, how do our women keep from having nine babies each? Well, we keep ourselves busy with something other than..." She looked at the fire in my eyes and sighed. "I meant no offense to you personally, Lydia. Our men are gone for long periods, hunting. And we women get to decide how often to make babies."

"That wouldn't work with us," I said.

"I understand," Nancy said. "If you had told William, while you were still young and had only, say, three children, that maybe you didn't need any more, he probably would have quoted that Good Book of yours."

"Well, of course," I said, still confused by this turn of conversation.

"Don't you see, Lydia?" Nancy moved her arms and hands as she spoke. "By having so many children, you whites are not acting like people, but like grasshoppers and hornets. That is why you form hordes and spill over your borders. I'm sure you wish you could just live your lives without bothering anybody else, but you are following not your own individual minds but the mind of the horde. People should not do this. People should not ravage the garden like grasshoppers, but take care of it, the way your Good Book talks about Adam and Eve taking care of the garden."

I was astonished that Nancy seemed to know more about the Bible than I did. As I recall, she does not even know how to read. But her mind is a library even bigger than the ones in the rich homes in Williamsburg and Charles Town.

"And there's something more," Nancy began. "You and I, Lydia, could live in peace, because what we really want is to just be at home. But the men! They want to go out and fight! Many of your men are soldiers, and ours are warriors. They are the ones who are always restless and eager for a fight."

"That's the way God made us," I said, but I did not feel convinced.

"No, it is not," said Nancy. "Your Good Book says that the good men, starting with Abel, raised sheep out in the hills. It was the evil men, starting with Cain, who had farms and built cities and towers and empires. Good men take care of their animals and their children, instead of going off to fight."

"Well," I said, "we aren't going to be able to change men. They will always be the way they are."

Then Nancy surprised me by agreeing. "I fear you are right, Lydia. This is the way it is with all animals, is it not? It is the bucks that grow big antlers and fight with each other. It is the cocks that fight and get up on the fencepost and crow out their songs. And it is the bulls you have to be most careful with. The cows, not so much."

"I still say, you need some milch cows, Nancy."

"Yes," she told me. "And you can help me with this. Tell me where to get some, I'll pay a fair price, and then show me how to make butter and cheese. You told me you would do this back when we first met. And some of that fluffy bread you make. I love cornbread, but enough is enough!" She smiled. "Don't you see, Lydia? This is something us Cherokee women can do to help provide food to our people. You white people are chasing away and shooting all the deer. I

mean, the white *men* are. I want to help my people by giving them the gift of reliable food. Our warriors are too busy being warriors to do this. It is up to Cherokee women such as me. If there is going to be peace, it is going to have to come from the women. I know what I'm talking about. I am Ghigau."

I shifted to make myself more comfortable. "You make it sound as if all the problems are already solved. Of course, that all sounds wonderful. I'm happy to help. I guess I'd do *anything* for you, saving my life the way you did. And all you want is to learn to use a butter churn?"

"And a loom," she said.

"Oh, yes, I did mention that," I said. "Well, there is only one more thing."

"And what is that?"

"What can *I* do to make *my* people more secure and peaceful?"

"Your women raise the children. You, yourself, probably won't have any more children, but you have only begun to have grandchildren. Tell them that we Tsalagi are people, just like you, and that if our two peoples wish it, we can live together in peace."

And from that day, when Nancy Ward began to nurture me back to health, until now, as I approach the end of my life, I have been teaching my grandchildren the way of peace. It has not always been easy. They tell me about the terrible things the Cherokee warriors do. But I tell them these are the Chickamauga Cherokees, not the Overhill Cherokees. To which they respond, all the Cherokees look alike. Well, I tell them, to the Cherokees, the British and the Americans were hard to tell apart. We are all just people, all sons and daughters of Adam and Eve.

Part Nine: William Bartram

Chapter 1

A ship in harbor is safe. But that is not what ships are for.

I am William Bartram, a botanist and the son of a botanist. My father John and I live in a nice house in Philadelphia, in the British colony of Pennsylvania, and have a famous botanical garden. I could have just stayed in this safe garden, writing scholarly books and selling exotic shrubs to wealthy landowners. But I had a calling. Botanists are brave; don't let anyone tell you otherwise. We travel all over the world and put ourselves in danger, seeking new kinds of plants to study and to sell. The disciples of Linnæus himself risked their own fortunes to collect plant specimens in dangerous places and send them back to him. Pehr Kalm explored Canada during the height of the tensions between France and England. Fredrik Hasselquist explored the lawless land of Egypt. Pehr Osbeck went to China, where Europeans often vanished. The least I could do was to leave the comfort of the British coastal colonies and explore the lands just inland, where the native peoples still ruled. This is why I went to the Cherokee Nation in 1776, right after Philadelphia had started the Revolution. The Cherokee Nation maintained its proud independence even as its lands were claimed by the surrounding colonies. Like anyone who ventured into the frontier, I was putting myself in danger. But I wanted to be the pioneer North American botanist.

I was not on a mere plant-hunting expedition, however. I was seeking remnants of the grand forests that grew all over the northern continents millions of years ago, forests now lost to the world. Hardly any plants that once grew in these forests remain in Europe, but my fellow botanists have found many of them, such as rhododendrons and magnolias, in Asia. I hoped to find some distinctly American remnants of Eden, perhaps even better than the botanical treasures of Asia, just beyond the frontier of the colonies.

And I did. When I was scouting along the Altamaha River in northern Georgia back in 1765, I found a shrub similar to the beautiful tea and camellia shrubs of China; I named it after America's premier scholar, Benjamin Franklin, and after the river on the banks of which it grew: *Franklinia alataamaha*. As far as I knew, this shrub grew nowhere else in the world. Very soon after I found them, this entire population of shrubs was destroyed by settlers to whom every tree and shrub is an obstacle and every wild animal a threat.

And then I found a little patch of *Franklinias* in another place—in northern Georgia near Rome. The forest patch was rapidly retreating before the axes of settlers in the little town of Green Hollow, who were encroaching on Cherokee land. I had already gathered *Franklinia* cuttings and seeds for my father's botanical garden from the Altamaha population before it was destroyed, but I wanted to save this little patch of land in the Cherokee Nation so that the shrubs could survive in the wild.

My fellow Americans acted as if they controlled the whole forest. In reality they controlled only a narrow band of the dirt road that connected Rome to Green Hollow, where I rented a small cabin, and this band of earth incompletely. During storms, the road became a torrent, then afterwards it became a ditch of sucking mud, and finally a topography of ridges that

made the carriages lurch, tip, and sometimes fall over. Even the road existed at the whim of Nature. We botanists know that the trees, not people, are the rulers of the land, at least until people hew them down in mass slaughter. Whenever I walked on the dirt road out to the little trail that led to the patch of shrubs, I would wait for horsemen and carriages to pass before slipping unseen into the forest. I was protecting my shrubs, but I had no idea of what to do next. As it turned out, the decision was made for me.

Chapter 2

One day in early summer 1776 I was walking along the dirt road. I was accustomed to people passing me on horseback or in carriages on this road and looking down on me. But on this particular day, I saw two travelers on foot. I am not sure I ever saw any other people walking on this road other than myself. I squinted at their shimmering figures in the harsh sunshine. The thick dark wall of huge trees allowed direct sunshine only at midday in the summer. The noon world was a stark contrast of dazzling sunlight and deep shade. I stepped to the side of the road and sat on a stump amidst brambles and briars and little ash saplings in the shade of a gigantic red oak. I was waiting for the travelers to pass, hoping that they would not bother me with their conversation.

Hundreds of little acorns, aborted by the oaks so they could fill the ones they kept, and big spherical leaf galls shed by the oaks, had gathered in the ruts. I lifted my satchel and vasculum by their canvas straps and placed them on the ground beside me. The satchel carried my personal items and my notebook, and the cylindrical metal vasculum is where I kept plant specimens in a damp cloth so that they would not dry out before I had a chance to return to my cabin and press them. I would press them between layers of thin paper separated by blotters and corrugated ventilators, so they would dry flat and unwrinkled, before mounting them on large sheets of heavy paper. The specimens were destined for herbarium collections at major Eastern universities. Sweat formed a dark patch on my shirt where the vasculum pressed against me.

The dusty, sweaty travelers approached me. The woman wore a white dress with lace and a short vest of deerskin. The man wore dark pants and a white shirt with a black cravat. They were more like go-to-meeting clothes than traveling outfits. The man's shirt and the woman's vest and dress were decorated with colored quillwork, like the porcupine quills that the Indians use. The woman, strong and walking strongly, carried a small traveling bag. Her light brown hair, uncovered, was wild with sweat, but her blue eyes were calm. The man was slightly shorter than she, had a firm jaw, short stubble, and sharp eyes, and also seemed quite powerful. His dark tangled hair served in place of a hat.

I was certain that they scowled at me, until as if on cue they smiled when they drew near.

"Good day," said the man with a guttural accent I did not recognize.

"How near we are to Green Hollow?" asked the woman with the same intonation.

"It's less than half a mile. You come a long way?" I asked.

The man and woman looked at one another. They may have understood my question, or they may have given an answer prepared for general use. "Russia," the man said at last.

"Russia!" I exclaimed. The strangers' words had soft consonants, not like the sharp ones I had heard from the Russian botanist who visited Harvard when I was a student there. "You didn't walk from Russia," I said. When they did not seem to understand me, I repeated, "Walk," and lifted my legs in imitation.

The man smiled. "We run out of money," he said. "Just enough for in the beginning."

I smiled a welcome at them. "Your names?"

"Andreea and Ivan Manin," said the woman. I have spelled her name the way I heard her pronounce it. She emphasized the last syllable of *Ivan*. I was puzzled that she put her name first and the man's second. I assumed she was his wife rather than his sister, even though she wore no ring on her left hand. Of course, I knew almost nothing about Russians; maybe Russians didn't wear wedding rings.

"We need place to sojourn and later to build house," said the man.

"Well, you're in luck," I said. I wondered how they knew words like *sojourn* yet could hardly understand my simple English. Their smiles, I thought, were a little forced. "The Smiths had a house, right near the edge of town," I continued. "It's empty now. The Indians killed them." And now, I did not add, Deborah Winfield and Cyrus Hoskins were missing also. They vanished after church last week. "You need to know there are hostile Indians here who may attack and kill you."

Ivan looked at me intently when I said this to him. He seemed to understand. "So," said Ivan, "you cannot blame them? You take their land, you kill them." Then he added, "Same with Siberia people in Russia."

"I, personally, do not approve of how we have treated the Indians. I am just here," I said, waving to the forest, "to study the trees and the flowers. And I would like to learn about them from the Indians. But the other Americans have got the Indians mad at us, so I have been unable to meet any of them."

The travelers must have understood a little, at least that I had spoken approvingly of Indians. Andreea asked me, "You help the Indians to keep land?"

I almost did not hear what Andreea was saying because I was struck by her beauty. The beauty of a woman always strikes me at inconvenient times, not when I first lay eyes on her but later, usually in the middle of a conversation. And always with women who were beyond my reach, as I assumed Andreea to be. It happened this time when Andreea pushed a lock of her sweaty hair back from her forehead and I saw her soft hard eyes. I also noticed her bosom pressed occasionally against her dress. She was wearing no chemise or petticoats. I turned my eyes away from her, I hoped, before she noticed my stare.

I looked away and laughed. "Of course! I would love to help the Indians. But I would become very unpopular among my fellow citizens if I actually did so."

"We will go unto town and ask the Smith house," Ivan said. "And you? We will visit you sometime. Your name?"

"Bartram. William Bartram," I answered. I extended my hand to Ivan, who seemed to have never shaken hands before. Peculiar Russians. Ivan also raised his arm as if in a liturgical blessing, rather than waving, as they parted.

When they were gone, I entered along my secret pathway through the woods, slipping past poison ivy and nettles, through the towering pokeweed at the edge of the forest. Inside the forest shade, the path was easier, because only the sunny forest edge was thick with weeds, shrubs, and vines. I stepped through gentle touch-me-nots and clearweeds, past spicebushes and

maple seedlings. At the great beech I turned right along the creek, slipping through box elder and sycamore saplings. I wanted this beautiful forest to remain unviolated by the axe but could think of no way that it could ever be protected. Unless, of course, the Indians won.

I approached an unusual rock formation towering over a small creek. Virginia creepers and wild grapes grew in the cracks of the cliff. And right there were the white *Franklinia* flowers, only a dozen bushes. I breathed their fragrance deeply. The petals were just beginning to fall; had I discovered them a few weeks later, I might not have recognized them, for their leaves look very similar to those of many other shrubs.

But the sweet aroma was tainted with an unpleasant stench. Sniffing around, I determined that the stench was coming from someplace ahead and off the trail, in a spot where the snakeroot and sweet cicely herbs had been trampled down. A dead animal, I thought.

But when I approached the source of the odor, I found two naked, decomposing human bodies, one male, and one female. I knew at once that it must be the two young people who had disappeared. "Oh my God!" I yelled. The forest, except for the mosquitoes, was silent, and absorbed my scream.

I hurried back through the annoying weeds and obstructive branches, to the road, where I flagged down a carriage. It was Miller, the blacksmith. When I told Miller about my discovery, he pulled me into his carriage and hurried his horses back to town. Soon we were at the militia headquarters.

It was almost dusk when the American revolutionary sergeant, Thad Hall, and his two corporals stood with me at the edge of the trampled area. Dark, greasy pools surrounded the corpses. The trees were already happily absorbing the decay, transforming it into green life. No one admitted it, but all had keenly eyed Deborah Winfield's figure, and knew this must be her. Her light brown hair, long and straight, was tangled in her rotting flesh. Her eyes could not blink away the flecks of dirt in them, and the loosened flesh of her face seemed to snarl as it fell back from her teeth. One of the deputies dropped a kerchief over her abdomen. They had brought two rude wooden coffins. As the two deputies lifted Deborah's body, it started to fall apart, so the sheriff supported it with a shovel. The body turned face down as it tumbled into the casket. The cause of death was immediately evident—a large knife wound in the back.

Young Hoskins's body was next to Deborah's, and he was also naked. The arrow was still in the young man's neck, as straight as truth, and he was scalped.

Chapter 3

Most of the people of Green Hollow were already in bed when the wagon with two coffins arrived. Sergeant Hall awakened them by shouting, "Indian massacre! Indian massacre!" People assembled in the glow of torchlight around the sheriff in the main square. Among the onlookers were Mr. and Mrs. Manin.

The sergeant, dressed in a tattered uniform, stood in the circle of light and related the facts to the villagers. His corporals had already broken the news to the families of the victims, who were not present. People looked uncomfortably at the dark windows of the Winfield and Hoskins houses, aware of the grief within, and aware that the grief might soon be theirs as well. "We can thank our God in Heaven above," said Hall, "that we have formed a militia. This is an extremely urgent situation," he continued. The brass buttons on his loose coat glittered in the torchlight. "This makes two instances of murder—the Smiths, and now Miss Winfield and her young admirer. Who will be next?"

The women huddled under shawls, covering their heads. They clutched their children tightly. I noticed one woman who stood tall, with uncovered head: Andreea. Hall noticed her and her husband and spoke to them. "I regret this tragedy had to occur upon your first day among us, after such a long journey, Mr. and Mrs. Manin," he said. Everyone had already heard about the Russian immigrants. The newcomers remained silent.

The sergeant continued. "We must ask the help of every citizen, in two ways. First, keep watch, all of you. Do not let any sign of danger go unreported to us or to your neighbors. Second, we need more of you to sign up for the militia. When mustered, you will get the usual pay..."

"Not in continentals, I hope!" said Dillard, the town clown, whose voice was frequently heard ringing from the town's tiny and only tavern. He referred to the probably worthless currency now being issued by the Continental Congress. There were a few chuckles, as much to relieve the tension as to support Dillard's outburst.

Hall said, "You'll get paid when the War for the Revolution is over. Damn it, the most important pay will be the protection of your own scalp!"

"I agree, of course," said Dillard, now serious.

"I will do it," said Ivan Manin during a moment of silence.

"Sir," said Hall, "I was primarily looking for single men, who could stay in the fort, prepared for battle." The newly built fortress grounds inside its palisade were even smaller than the tiny village. "Perhaps your best place would be protecting your wife."

"I will do it," Ivan repeated. "It is duty to my new country. But I hope you let me visit my wife."

"Well..." said Hall.

"Will you let the other soldiers do some visitin'?" asked one of the foot soldiers.

"Ain't no bordellos for fifty mile," said Hall.

"I do anything that you say for me," said Ivan. Andreea's face was calm, not from strength of duty, but as if she did not really care whether John lived with the troops or not. "I am not man of your country, but..."

"That doesn't matter," said the sergeant. "Out here, all us folks are foreigners. This is a new land for all of us. Well, who else is willing to join up?"

After another silence, one of the Springer boys raised his hand.

"Josh, it's dangerous," his mother said louder than she intended.

"So's stayin' to home," was his answer.

"Anyone else?" asked Hall.

"Me, I guess," said Dillard. "I ain't got my corn planted by now, I ain't gonna get it planted, so 's-well-ta join up."

"Anyone else, just let us know," said the sergeant. "Now, a final announcement. We were going to announce it in a coupla days, but circumstances bein', we might 's-well-ta announce it now. In four, five days' time, the militia will raid an Indian village. There's a new Cherokee town not far from here that our scouts found. It's not one of the old towns where peaceful Indians live. Stands to reason that it must be where the Indian raiders are comin' from."

When the idea had first surfaced, before actual plans had been made, the Johnston family, all Quakers, had protested, "Can't we live in peace?" Tonight, however, they just looked silently at the two coffins.

"We have a little more trainin' to do," continued Hall, "but time is of the essence. Every day we wait, the more chance there is they will attack us."

"We must have them no mercy," yelled Ivan Manin. A quiet chorus of approbation followed.

As the villagers dispersed to their homes, Hall approached me.

"Listen here, Dr. Bartram," he said. "I have to warn you. If you go out in the forest lookin' for plants, you are in grave danger."

"I am fully aware of this," I answered.

"And we can't protect you," Hall added.

"I was fully aware of this before I came," I responded.

"A brave collector of wildflowers!" Hall shook his head and smiled.

Andreea was listening to our conversation. I did not know if she understood any of it, but I saw her smile.

Chapter 4

I was searching among the plants near the cliffs and the creek one afternoon. If a tiny population of *Franklinia* shrubs is here, what else might I find that is equally rare, equally precious, but less obvious? I sat very still, watching to see what sorts of pollinators came to visit the nearby plants. I wrote in my notebook that bumblebees visited the winged sumac (*Rhus copallina*) in the plant family Anacardiaceæ, and hummingbirds visited the trumpet creepers (*Campsis radicans*) in the Bignoniaceæ. In a spot that had been trampled, not far from the place where the young man and woman were murdered, a few plants in the mustard family—shepherd's purse weeds from Europe, now consisting only of dead stalks—grew. European plants, like European men, spread through North America, but the reverse did not happen, with either plants or people.

As I bent low, hidden by the leaves, I heard a noise of rustling in the brush. I did not lift my head up very high. I wanted to determine the source of the noise, which was presumably a deer. In the event that it was an Indian, and I was unable to negotiate peace, or that it was a bear, in which case negotiation was impossible, I had a pistol, although I would probably have no time to stuff the wadding and powder and ball into it, or even to cock the flint.

It was Andreea. She was wearing the same dress, now soiled, that she had worn the first day I saw her. She carried her vest on her arm. I started to rise and greet her but remained hidden in a moment of curiosity. I felt it was probably my duty to warn this Russian immigrant about the dangers of poison ivy, for according to my copy of Linnæus's book, poisonous species of the family Anacardiaceæ with three leaflets were unique to North America, even though species with many leaflets, the sumacs, could be found in northern Europe as well as America.

Andreea seemed to know exactly what she was doing. She gathered small herbs, mostly from the sunny edge of the clearing, and from what I could see they were mostly from the mint family Lamiaceæ, famous for its many aromatic spices. This should not be surprising, I thought to himself, for Russia undoubtedly has many mints, and they are so easily recognizable by the leaves rising in elegant pairs from their square stems. She also picked some sweet cicely, from the family Apiaceæ, a family that contains many poisonous plants, such as the *Conium maculatum* that killed Socrates. She stuffed all of these into a little cloth bag, then ran down to the creek. Surely, I thought, her knowledge of Russian plants might be very good, but I must warn her, lest she eat or touch something poisonous.

I started to rise but fell down on my haunches the moment Andreea turned her back to me. The lower back of her dress was torn and stained with what I assumed must be mud. My heart raced as she removed her dress, not only for this rare sight—at least, rare for me—of an unclad woman, but because I feared being discovered watching her, especially as she was another man's wife. By the time I looked again, she was totally nude. She slipped into the deepest part of the shallow creek and relaxed against a ferny rock. Her arms were strong, and her chest muscles held up beautiful breasts as full as those on the marble statues I saw in Boston and

Philadelphia. I assumed that no human women actually had breasts that looked like that. Certainly, the one woman whose bosom I saw, during a brief and humorously incomplete visit to a bordello—of which Philadelphia had hundreds—had disappointed me, for they looked more like animal teats than classical breasts. But Andreea's body was perfect.

Then the purpose of the plants in the bag became evident. Andreea took them out, in bunches, and rubbed her skin with them, particularly under her arms, then in her crotch. She smelled herself, as if disgusted by her own scent, and was gradually relieved that its stench was replaced by the freshness of spice. She got out of the stream and stood tall, stretching her arms heavenward, with perfect grace. A large triangle of brown hairs hid her abdomen. Just as well, I thought. The genitalia of the woman I saw at the bordello were, there is no other way to describe it, ugly. The only things uglier than female genitalia are male genitalia. But this woman! *Oh God in Heaven!* I heard myself whisper. What a lucky man Ivan must be...he who just volunteered himself to leave her for the militia, like Uriah the Hittite leaving behind the beautiful Bathsheba in order to fight in King David's army. I kept drinking in her beauty, as blinded as bees must be when they drink nectar from flowers open to the sunlight. She bent over the creek to wash her hair with the plants, and then to wash her dress with sand in the water. She rinsed the dress thoroughly then forced herself back into its clinging closeness. She looked almost as voluptuous in the dress as without it. Wet auburn curls fell over her collar.

Andreea began walking down the trail toward me, looking for more plants. I knew she would encounter me, so I had to think of a plan. I slipped behind the rocks, stepping lightly over the fresh earth from which the bodies had been exhumed, and pretended to approach for the first time down the trail on which Andreea had come. She heard me, turned around, and smiled.

"Willem!" she called.

I forgot to even say "Hallo," for I was astonished at her smile. Her teeth were flawless and white. It was no exaggeration to say I had never before seen a man or woman with such beautiful teeth. Tooth decay was absolutely ubiquitous among whites, including myself. Though I tried to rinse my mouth regularly, and avoided major dental catastrophe, the smile I flashed at Andreea was like a smoky yellow torch compared to the sun of her smile. The toothpaste available to only a few city folk was a mixture of honey and charcoal, which removed the buildup of plaque but left a stain almost as bad. The Indians generally had good teeth, which scholars back at Harvard attributed to a diet high in vegetables and wild grains. I assumed Russians had bad teeth also—but not Andreea.

When I finally greeted her, she said to me, "I am to gather the herbs." She pronounced the H.

"And," I asked nervously, "your husband?"

At first, she seemed puzzled. I assumed she was unfamiliar with the word. "Oh," she said when I spoke Ivan's name. "No, he is to home." Then she said, with a big smile, opening up her arms, "I cleansed! Sweat makes such bad smell. I wash whenever I can."

I wondered if this was a Russian practice. I was nearly certain it was not. "It is the smell all humans have, even though it is not good," I said.

"Oh, no," said Andreea. "The Indians, they bathe very much. Even when they do not, they have not this bad odor. They tell me that because I am white, my body make this odor."

"Which Indians? And when did they tell you this?" I asked. She did not answer. I persisted, "I am genuinely interested in learning about Native American medicinal plants and would like to meet these Indians to whom you refer."

Her glare was almost hostile. "And now," she said, changing the subject, "I gather last of the berries. Most of them are finish." She pointed to the trifoliate leaflets of wild strawberry; the fruits were gone. She pointed to blackberry bushes and picked through the thorns to find a few last berries left over from the June bounty.

"And this one?" I pointed to a raceme of green poke berries rising high above big shiny leaves. "They will be ripe in late August."

"No, they are poison," said Andreea. "Do not eat."

"I won't," I said. "I study plants, and know much about them, so I know that these are poisonous. But you also know much about plants." As far as I could remember, the pokeweeds of *Phytolaccaceæ* were found mostly in North America. (When I got back to my cabin, I checked in Linnæus' book. I had remembered correctly.) How could a Russian woman, fresh off the boat—fresher than any white woman I had encountered—know that pokeweeds were poisonous? I was even more astonished when she picked leaves from the *Lindera benzoin* spicebush to put in her cloth bag—to make the cabin smell nice, she explained.

She started to lead me onto the main road at the trailhead. Because I did not want anyone to see us alone together, I told her I wanted to remain behind and look at the plants. She smiled, "I like you." She turned onto the road and walked quickly toward the village, barefoot. I noticed that a torn place on the back of the dress had been patched up with cloth that did not quite match the rest.

After allowing Andreea to get a respectful distance ahead of me, I walked toward the road. Before I left the trail I knew so well, I noticed another one, off to the left. I had not seen it before. It was a new trail: the branches of the euonymus and spicebush shrubs were freshly cut; the herbs had been only recently trampled, and though flattened were still green. And only a few of them, as if someone had walked very carefully. I knew sunset was approaching but decided to explore the new trail for a little way. It followed the creek, up to the place where it joined Barton Slough, the waterway which ran past the village. My sense of direction, which is always well developed in a wandering botanist, told me it went parallel to the road, and I assumed I could simply follow it back to the village. With this new trail, I could perhaps avoid ever walking on the main road again and keep my botanical visits secret.

I heard more disturbance in the brush ahead. In my brown clothing, dyed with husks from the butternut tree, I blended well with the earth under the pawpaw trees. I watched to see who or what would pass. Deer, I supposed. But I had supposed wrongly. Two Indians walked quickly down the trail, not as silently as they could, since they believed themselves to be alone. They wore buckskin breechclouts, leather leggings, and no shirts. Their raven hair was long, and they wore no decorations. One had a leather pouch hanging by a buckskin cord around his neck. Both

of them had knives, hanging from straps and ready to hand. The visage of the larger one, with hawk-like eyes, had a big scar on the left cheek. They could surely have seen me had they been looking. In a moment, they were gone.

I considered telling Thad Hall about them, but I realized Indian scouts must be very common. After all, we knew they had a village only a few miles away. Of course, they must be watching us, I thought. But they can be no threat to a white town that is vigilant, armed, and filled with numerous militia men.

The trail approached where I knew Green Hollow would be. When I emerged into a clearing just at sunset, I found myself very near the Smith cabin, where the massacred family had lived, and where Ivan and Andreea now resided. And there they were, outside of their cabin. I hid quickly, not wanting them to think I was intruding on them. I tried to think of an alternative route to get back to the road. I made several false starts, but every path I tried would have exposed me to their view. I decided to wait for the last light of dusk to slip back to the road, and I hoped I would not fall into a ravine or brush through poison ivy.

With nothing better to do, I decided to watch them. Here I was spying on them because I did not want them to think I was spying on them! Then I saw they had partially removed their clothes. They were behind their cabin, out of view of the rest of the village. Ivan wore only a breechclout, just like an Indian in summer. This was a practice that made sense for whites to adopt from the natives, so long as the smoke from a fire kept the mosquitoes and biting flies away.

Andreea wore a petticoat as she sat sewing something from dry goods material. Her upper body was incompletely covered with the loose leather vest, inside of which I could see her breasts. John was doing something at the fire—which, I realized, was outside, Indian style, rather than in the hearth. A cookpot with a tripod of long legs stood in the fire, over which John had strung small thin pieces of meat to dry and cure. Was he making jerky, pioneer style, or pemmican, Indian style? Would a Russian know how to make either? Russians must dry meat also, I supposed. I was ready to hide my eyes if any nuptial intimacy began, but the couple never touched. They ladled some hominy soup from the tripod into metal bowls and ate it with large spoons, probably the tableware left by the Smiths. In the fading light, I saw flecks of green in the hominy soup. It contained fresh leaves, not the customary fare of white Americans, or, I assumed, of Russians. I realized that this couple was acting, in many ways, like Indians, except that their skin was white.

The light of dusk faded, the fire died down, and the couple moved inside, taking the bowls, spoons, and meat with them. Before the fire was completely dead, John lit a torch to start a fire in the hearth just big enough to shed light. Didn't they know how to use the kerosene lamp or candles? Surely, they must have these in Russia.

Now I dared to move along the edge of the forest. The only way open to me not blocked by boulders was right past the window of the cabin. I glanced inside and saw their shadows on the planked puncheon floor. I saw them looking, by the light of the small fire, through the contents of the cedar chest that the Smiths had left. The redolent cedar would inhibit the insects

from eating the cloth inside. I heard them discuss each thing—mostly blankets and greatcoats for winter—in a language that, I was now convinced, could not be Russian. It had too many soft sounds.

I remained hidden and silent as first Andreea, then Ivan, went into the forest to relieve themselves. Then they went to bed. But not together. Andreea lay unclad on the blanket draped over tightly strung bed ropes. John lay naked on small bales of straw on the floor. What kind of marriage was this? A Russian peculiarity? How could Ivan, and his organs, remain so placid when in the presence of such a beautiful woman? Thomas Jefferson once remarked, in the brief meeting I had with him in Philadelphia, that Indian men seemed to have “less ardor” with their women than was customary with white Americans. Russians, I concluded, must also be very repressed.

In the last light of the fire, I saw that the straw of John's mat was not grass but had little whorls of linear-shaped leaves. They had to be the partially dried stalks of *Galium* bedstraw. My eyesight for plants was very good. The practice of using bedstraw to kill bedbugs was known in Europe; Linnæus listed twenty species, from both sides of the Atlantic. As the last flame flickered, I looked around the room, seeing none of the shiny icons I assumed every good Orthodox Russian would hang on their walls. Perhaps they lost or sold them on their journey.

I picked my way back to the road and to my cabin. I entered the door and locked it by slipping the simple wooden bar into the groove. I lit a candle in the coals of my fireplace. It cast long trembling shadows across the bare dirt floor. I had dug a trench around my cabin to keep rainwater from seeping onto the floor. I was as concerned with keeping my plant specimens as keeping myself dry.

Was I safe? I thought about the two Indian scouts I had just seen. Not even metal bars on windows and the door, which nobody in the village had anyway, could protect us. I realized the only protection we had from Indians was friendship, an option that seemed impossible, even for someone like me who desired it.

Chapter 5

I next saw Andreea when I went to the general store in the village to leave a manuscript for the postman to pick up some time that week. It was a letter, with scientific observations, for the Harvard botanists. Andreea wore what appeared to be the same dress and vest as before, but she had removed the lace and collar from the dress and sewed a new hem. This time, I noticed, she wore a chemise and petticoat, which she probably found in the trunk, and which hid her figure from the curious eyes of men and the disapproving eyes of women. Andreea greeted me with a smile and waited to converse with me.

"I am to visit the Winn Fields," she said.

I was shocked. "The family whose daughter was killed? Why, the funeral is today. You have hardly met them. Why are you going to visit them?"

"Their small child, Willy, is sick. He need a nurse. I tell that I can do this."

"How very kind of you," I said. I noticed her cloth bag. "Have you been gathering herbs again?"

"Yes, of a course," she said. "Every green plant, after its own kind, and lilies of the field. They are need for the little boy."

"How do you know so much about American wild herbs?" I asked. "I am a botanist, and I wish I knew as much as you do." She seemed to not understand me. I pointed to the bag.

She nodded. "They are same as Russia," said Andreea. I knew she was lying.

Andreea proceeded to the Winfield house while I finished my postal business. As I was returning to my cabin, I saw Andreea on the porch with Mother Winfield.

"What are you trying to do to my little boy? With them herbs?"

"Mrs. Winn Field..."

"What business you have telling me to not give him calomel? That's what everybody says to do, exceptin' you. If we only had a doctor here! But we had a doctor back where I come from, and he always said, give them calomel. And the new patent medicines—Abe's got 'em at the general store." She referred to Abishag Johnson the storekeeper. I always thought the name was humorous, since the Biblical Abishag was not only a woman, but a beautiful one. Abe was no beauty.

"These things are not good for boy," insisted Andreea.

"Look here, Mrs. Manin, I 'preciate your willingness to help, but you just don't know what you're doing. After you've been here in America a spell, you'll learn, but for right now, I just have to ask you to leave my house. Maybe you can come later."

"I know this is time of weeping and gnash of teeth for you," Andreea said, using yet more Biblical language. "It is my wish to help only," she said. "I do not want to your little boy be more ill..."

"Thanks, but you can keep them weeds to yourself."

"Please try," said Andreea, pushing the cloth bag into Mother Winfield's hands.

Mother Winfield ended the conversation by turning away. But she kept the bag.

I saw Andreea next at the funeral that afternoon. It was held in the church, built just last month of logs, its interstices not yet sealed with mud. Logs were the benches, and the great windows had no coverings yet. Andreea and Ivan sat on the log right in front of me. Philo Fuller, the Baptist preacher, stood in front, without a pulpit, but not without a Bible. A great storm threatened, and thunder punctuated the preacher's pronouncements, in a high voice, about the eternal bliss of Deborah's chaste soul. What else have we to give, he said, other than our lives, as we open this wilderness to the light of civilization? Bringing the light of salvation to the savages. Perhaps, the preacher said, the savages hated Deborah so much because they simply could not conceive of so celestially pure a being as she.

But there is also sadness, the preacher added, in the Hoskins family, who had lost their son. For they are Catholics, may God have mercy on their souls. They have no priest out here in the wilderness, and they refuse to receive a proper burial from one of God's true ministers. They are doing the best they can, with a private family service, but their own tortured souls will not let them rest, knowing their son Cyrus received no last rites and no proper Catholic burial. If only they could experience the freedom of life in Jesus Christ...

Everyone filed past the closed coffin, the rough wood dusted with little streaks of the lime which had been shoveled in to hide the stench of decomposition. I remembered, in full vivid detail, the young woman's corpse when it was exhumed. This damned human species, I told myself, in which one race kills another, even though Linnæus named us "wise man" *Homo sapiens*! What good has the Spirit of Jesus ever done to make us a wiser and holier species?

And yet, there were some truly kind and beautiful people in this species. I found myself staring at one of them: Andreea. She shifted uncomfortably, scratching inside of her vest at the place where the rip had been patched right when the preacher mentioned the murder of the girl. Andreea was a wise woman, who closely observed and loved the herbs and grasses and flowers of the field and wanted to nurture a little boy she had never met, in a family she had never met, back to health. And Ivan, perhaps he was a kind and gentle soul also. He wore the same go-to-meeting clothes I had seen when first meeting him on the road, only this time all the other men were similarly dressed. I wondered that they would enter a church that was not Russian Orthodox. I assumed they left their country's religion when they left their homeland.

As the villagers filed homeward, Mother Winfield caught up with Andreea, which was difficult, as she was bent and broken with grief. "Mrs. Manin," she called to her.

Andreea turned around. She had also been crying. "Oh, Mrs. Winn Field..."

"I have to thank you," said Mother Winfield. "We tried the herbal gargle that you gave us. Boiled that weed in water, let it cool, and let little Willy gargle with it. He was so weak, he could barely keep it in his mouth and spit it out. And he seems to be getting better now. And it has only been a few hours! I am *so* sorry that I treated you rudely."

"Think not of it," said Andreea. "You have great gnash of teeth." They embraced.

Two days later, the Winfields had a potluck feast for their neighbors. Generosity was the only way they could overcome their grief. Besides, their old cow was dying, and had stopped giving milk, so Old Man Winfield, the grandfather, slaughtered and hung it, with the help of his grandsons. Then they carved up the carcass, smoking some of the meat, pickling the rest in a brine barrel. At Andreea's suggestion, they moved Willy outside, away from the smoke. They boiled the cow's head, with the windpipe still sticking from it, to allow the steam to bubble out; they fried the intestines, after rinsing them; and they baked the heart, stuffed with corn meal, in the hearth. The neighbors brought their own bowls and utensils, and all the fixings, mostly various kinds of bread: some of it unleavened; some of it sourdough raised by spoiled milk; with only the richest family bringing bread raised by baking powder. Two boys brought fish they had caught in the slough. There were pies made from a handful of apples, first in the season and first in the land, from trees planted just a decade earlier. The planting of apples was considered a sure sign that the land was being civilized, so it was one of the first things a settler did. It also allowed the production of applejack. The apples, small and lumpy, were good for little but baking and applejack.

The honored guests, including Thad Hall, took the first portions of the tender tongue of beef, but they took only small portions. Andreea brought the stew I had seen her eat just a few nights ago—hominy with green herbs, which I recognized now as watercress *Nasturtium officinale*, which grows with its roots floating in the shallow water of the slough. Someone else brought butter, large chunks of which were globbed into Andreea's stew by everyone who ate it except Ivan and Andreea.

I prepared pastries with honey and nuts. The nuts were last autumn's hickory nuts and walnuts, which I carefully protected from vermin, insects, and mold. The honey came from a hive I found on one of my botanical hikes. I had returned to the hive, built a fire, and stolen the honeycomb. There was one other food, which I savored and which I considered to be very healthy, but which I did not bring. I raised a little patch of tomatoes, *Solanum lycopersicum*, behind my cabin. Most people, including all of my neighbors, considered them "pizenous", which was wrong but not surprising, since most plant species in the Solanaceæ are indeed poisonous. I, however, ate them all summer, usually raw, but also cut up in the vinegar in which I pickled the wild onions I had preserved from springtime. I knew, I told others about, but only I practiced, the art of avoiding scurvy by eating lots of fresh vegetables, such as tomatoes.

As everyone sat, finishing their meals, Sergeant Thad Hall arose. Everyone saw him and stopped their conversation.

"The time is now," he said. "The day after tomorrow, at daybreak, we will advance toward the Cherokee village that is about four miles from here. The militia will go. This includes Mr. Manin, whom we enlisted, as he requested. Say, where is he?"

Everyone looked around.

"He was just here a moment ago," someone remarked.

"I will make him to know," said Andreea.

Chapter 6

The whole village of Green Hollow was well organized. Every man guarded his own house against anyone who might approach from the forest. We had not yet had time to build a palisade. When the morning came for us to march against the Cherokee village, we left behind the older boys—and Abe, of course, who was incapacitated—to protect the village. The wives kissed their husbands goodbye, none of them knowing whether it might be the last time; all, that is, except Andreea Manin. John stood impatiently at the edge of town with his gun ready.

We headed down a little trail that led from the road, in a direction opposite of the little trail that led to my patch of flowering bushes. Ivan seemed to know the way, although he had not been in the group of scouts that discovered the Cherokee village. He would start off on a trail that only he could see, then stop and let the scouts confirm the direction he was going.

And before long, we could see the Cherokee huts, quickly lashed together with briar vines. They also had no time to build a palisade like those found around settled Cherokee towns. We had planned to sneak up. Perhaps it was impossible for even the most careful white men to sneak up on an Indian village. At any rate, Ivan ran ahead straight toward the village. He charged up onto a little hill that overlooked the village and shot into it. Shouts rose from within the village, and John leapt into the air and called to us, “I got one! Big warrior, him I got!” Ivan was immediately met with a volley of arrows, all of which missed, as he knelt to reload his rifle. He stood and shot into the village again, causing more shouts and more arrows. He danced a little victory dance on the knoll. It seemed suicidal. Perhaps he was in a soldier’s mental state of altered reality, such as I have read about in translations of the Viking sagas. Meanwhile the rest of us approached the village, guns ready.

We might have been able to see Ivan’s victims lying on the ground in the village, had we been able to enter. But right at that moment, a band of warriors emerged from alongside the trail behind us. The first attack was silent, as tomahawks cleaved into flesh and sundered backbones and skulls of the men at the back of the line. When the alarm was raised, our militiamen turned to fire, but they hesitated for a couple of crucial seconds as the Cherokee warriors raised a blood-curdling whoop, all in tune, like a demonic wolf.

The only survivors, including myself, were those who ran through the forest in the general direction of the road. Ivan ran also, but along the trail. I saw him turn back to fire a last shot. A Cherokee warrior fell a few seconds after Ivan fired. These warriors must be strong, I thought, for this one had fallen what seemed like a second too late to have been the victim of Ivan’s gunfire. The whole battle, which was for us an ignominious rout, seemed strangely out of rhythm. I had not gotten in one shot with my pistol.

The people of Green Hollow anxiously awaited our return. They had anticipated cries of victory from far down the road; instead they heard the shuffling of feet. The village women did not need to ask their men what the outcome had been. Each one scanned the group to see if her

husband had survived. The ones who saw their husbands ran to them, followed by their children. Others loitered at the end of the group until they saw the bodies being carried by the survivors.

Thad Hall, at the lead, looked angry rather than sad. A wellspring of oration was pent up inside him, but he kept silent, until he had expressed condolences to each of the women whose husbands or sons were dead. They ran to their houses where they tried, without success, to hide their wails. Nineteen men and boys had died, out of thirty-four. Over half.

Shocked by the bloodshed I had witnessed, and overcome with fatigue and sadness, I had not even so much as looked at any of the trees and bushes and wildflowers that lined the paths to or from the Cherokee village. At that moment, I was no longer a botanist or the son of a botanist but a tired, dirty man, whose mind was on carnal things. Not so much on food, for I was too exhausted and depressed to be hungry. But I was thinking about Andreea and felt a strong lust when I saw her. Almost dying, as I had that day, makes a man think about all the things he has not yet experienced. Ivan's safe arrival did not seem to surprise Andreea. They embraced just as they had known that they would, or so it appeared to me.

When Hall stood on the "speakin'-stump" he had used before, everyone knew to listen. Except for Mrs. Wright, now a widow, who wept loudly. No one dared to tell her to keep silent.

Hall's anger emerged. "We were betrayed!" he announced. "Somehow, someone told the Cherokees we were on our way, and they were ready for us. Either we were betrayed, or Indian spies are a-watchin' us. At first," he looked down, steadied his voice, then resumed. "At first, we seemed to be a-winnin' the day. It is at this point that I will relate the only good news we have. Our new resident, Ivan Manin, bravely risked his life to shoot down into the Cherokee village. I believe that the only Cherokee casualties today were the warriors he shot." There was no rejoicing, but just a murmur of approval, as the sergeant presented Ivan for the admiration of the village. Ivan's eyes were downcast in humility.

Nobody looked at me, but I knew what they were thinking. I had publicly said nice things about the very few Cherokees I met, and about Indians in general. I was the only one who did not raise my voice to disparage them as savages. In fact, I caused a sensation the day I arrived by announcing that one of my objectives was to meet Indians and learn herbal medicine from them. Everyone else, I believe, made public proclamations about Indian savagery, though few were as outspoken as Ivan, who had demanded we show no mercy to them.

Chapter 7

"I thought you liked trees," Thad Hall said to me as he planted the last of his twelve apple seedlings. "Here I am a-planting apple trees, and you don't seem right happy about it."

"I do, of course," I said. "But, look at all the trees you have cut down to make room for these apple trees." Hall's cabin stood in the midst of a desolate clearing. In the last few weeks, since the failed raid on the Cherokee village, the forest had receded from the axes of the men and boys, except around my cabin, which became a little green island.

"Apples are a wonderful food," said Thad. "And you know as well as I another reason we are a-cutting the trees down," he added.

"I do indeed," I answered. "I have helped cut some of them myself, much as I hate to do it. I know how badly we need the palisade for our protection." As if a palisade could protect us, I thought. The solid wall of tree trunks had nearly been completed around Green Hollow, which, except for the little grove around my cabin, was now brown rather than green.

"That's not all I meant," said Thad, becoming grave as he stood and brushed dirt from his hands and pants. "Only a fool wouldn't know that. You know I meant that we have to cut down the trees because that's where the enemy is hidin'. The trees keep them alive, and with the trees dead, they will be dead too, the sooner the better." He added, "All of them. All of the trees, and all of the Indians."

"The trees keep us alive too," I said, but did not pursue the argument further, for the times I had done this before my arguments had fallen on deaf ears. I told them the trees cast cool shade on the land and prevented the rain from washing the soil into dangerous and ugly gullies. What difference does it make, I asked, if the Indians kill us, or we kill ourselves by destroying the beautiful, bountiful, tree-covered land?

"I grow my corn, and pretty soon I'll have my applejack. They'll keep me alive powerful well," concluded Thad Hall, who walked away from me, annoyed.

Chapter 8

Near the edge of the village was a gigantic bur oak tree, the largest tree I had ever seen. And I had seen many large trees in the eastern forests, hundreds of them larger than any trees that later generations will behold. Little matchstick woodlands will eventually grow back after the big trees have been cut. For me to see an oak or a maple with a four-foot trunk diameter was not at all unusual. I had seen many tulip trees, which everyone called poplars, the tree Linnæus had called *Liriodendron tulipifera*, with light gray trunks breathtakingly straight up into the canopy, seven feet around at the base. But this bur oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*, had a trunk diameter of twelve feet. Twelve feet! I measured its thirty-seven-foot circumference myself.

I saw Thad Hall and a dozen other men standing around this tree, with hatchets. I knew what was going to happen and was surprised it had not happened earlier.

“Spare this tree, at least,” I had said to them. But they just laughed at me.

When this tree fell, it was an event witnessed by the whole village. All the men had gathered to hack away at it, disfiguring its beautiful trunk as much as possible. This would have been a waste of energy in a normal tree-felling—smaller logs were more useful—but it was an act of celebration for the village. The tree was like a captured enemy, being tortured before execution, the way the ancient Assyrians used to do, or, I did not like to admit, the way Indians did to some of their captives. By now, the other trees around it had been felled, and when it collapsed, it was into a dead brown space, so that all of the great noise of snapping limbs and thrashing leaves was from it, and it alone.

Chapter 9

I went out along the forest trail again, a few days after the villagers cut down the bur oak. I was looking for wildflowers that might have just started to bloom. A lot of them are difficult to identify until you can actually see the flower. The *Franklinia* bushes now looked like ordinary bushes, their flowers having faded without producing seeds. Perhaps they needed a certain insect to pollinate them, and the insect had become extinct because so much of the forest had been destroyed. The forest immediately around the bushes was still intact, but the forest edge was rapidly encroaching upon them from the direction of the village. I sat in what might soon be the last of the shade, mournful about what the future would bring.

And I hoped to see Andreea again.

Instead what I saw was a small white plant growing in the deepest shade. Its white stems curled upward like frozen mist, and its white leaves were very small. Tiny flower buds were forming at the blunt top. Botanists in Europe say plants need their green pigment in order to grow with only light, water, and air. Occasionally, there are white plants like this one, plants with none of the green pigment, and they seem to get their food from decaying wood and bark rather than making it themselves. This was a plant in the *Orobanchaceæ*, a plant Linnæus called *Monotropa*. You might mistake it for a fungus, except it has flowers. I slid down under the grasses and herbs to look at it closely. Should I pick it, put it in my vasculum, and press it for one of the eastern herbaria? Or should I leave it to grow? And if I leave it, will it simply be annihilated by the white destroyers?

Andreea was walking down the trail. I froze in indecision, hoping to see her bathe, but also not wanting to compromise a married woman, or at least not wanting to be caught compromising one. But she saw me and began walking toward me, slipping nimbly past the *Laportea* nettles without being stung by them.

"Oh, those!" she exclaimed when she saw the *Monotropa* flowers.

"You know them?" I asked.

"I have seen them many times," she said.

"In Russia?" I asked.

Andreea frowned at me. "What call you them?"

"We call them Indian pipes," I answered. I crouched over further to look at them closely. "They get their food from dead wood..."

Before I spoke any further, Andreea knelt right next to me, her body touching mine, her head next to mine. I smelled her herbal scent, and strands of her hair tickled my face in the motionless humidity. My thoughts were leaping savagely. What should I do? All I could think of was to keep talking. That's what we scholars usually do when confronted with a puzzling situation.

"The roots go right down into this piece of wood..."

She put her arm around my shoulders. I straightened up, standing on my knees. Her breath was an herbal liquor. Not like that Philadelphia prostitute whose mouth was like a fermenting spittoon. Andreea kept her arm around my shoulders, knelt, and pressed herself against me. I looked down at the throbbing artery in her neck. I could hardly hear her breathe, even as her mouth was next to my ear, because of the whooshing of blood in my head.

When I put my arm around her shoulders, we pressed together even more tightly. I felt something cold and hard against her chest as she shifted slightly, something very different from her soft bosom. I knew it had to be a knife. I was confused about what to do next. Thinking about her weapon, I did not want to make her feel in danger from me. I thought about how Ivan, the fearless Indian fighter, would be a vengeful husband; but I knew that I would be willing even to challenge him to a duel for this woman. I did not want to shatter the beauty of this moment or of any of the moments that might come next. We botanists are timid people, except when we climb cliffs to find rare ferns. I thought about the landscape of her body and its hidden fertile recesses. Little runnels of sweat poured like tiny waterfalls between our bodies.

"You are such sweetness," she whispered.

"Mrs. Manin..." I began.

She pulled her face away. I knew I had broken the spell, but it was perhaps the only safe thing for me to do. Then I saw she was smiling. She laughed. "Willem," she said. "Ivan is my brother."

Now it was my turn to laugh. "Well," I sighed, "that changes things, doesn't it?" Then I looked more seriously into her eyes. "But everybody in Green Hollow thinks you and Ivan are married."

"If they know he is brother, one of your men would kill him and take me," she said, now with a serious expression. "Like your Bible story."

I was pretty sure that the Genesis story to which she referred was about Abraham, or was it Isaac, one of those two, or both, pretending that his wife was his sister, rather than the other way around. At least I now understood why Ivan and Andreea showed no ardor, to use Mr. Jefferson's term, for one another.

"You may call me by my child name," said Andreea. "I am Tsisqua. And Ivan—tell him not that I told you—is Talala."

I repeated the names as Tsisqua smiled at me.

Then I said, "So, as far as the people in Green Hollow know, you are Mrs. Manin. That means that our love must be secret."

Her face lost its smile, but she did not move her eyes or her body away.

"But we, my Tsisqua, have our own secret garden."

We kissed one another's mouths hungrily. Then I dared to touch, just barely touch, her breast. She froze and moved away, crying.

"You are such sweetness," she said again, this time almost fiercely. She rammed her face into mine, and I could taste her tears. "But I cannot feel you."

I started to mumble something about loving her, and ordered my hand to explore a little more, hoping that she might forget whatever thought momentarily troubled her.

Then she moved away several inches and glared at me. "I cannot feel you," she repeated. She was almost gasping. "What will I do when you die?"

Colors rushed before my vision. Intoxicated by her, I could not understand what she was talking about. "Die?" I asked. "Why would I do that?"

"All you will die," she said, "so I cannot feel you."

She stood up, pushed her wild hair out of the wetness of tears and sweat, turned, and ran back toward the village.

I sat back on my heels, looked down and saw the *Monotropa* had been mashed into the mud, and carefully picked up the broken stems and put them in my vasculum. That night, I pressed them so that I could glue and mount them to paper. When I wrote the label for the specimen, I noted where the specimen was found, and then added, "Where I conversed with Miss Tsisqua Manin."

Chapter 10

A couple of nights later, I was counting my money and thinking about going back east. I did not have enough money to stay into the autumn, to collect goldenrods and asters that bloom amidst the grass as it turns golden. I heard a commotion in the village, though it did not seem like an emergency. Nor did it seem like a celebration. I went out to look. A Cherokee man and a woman, each on horseback, had arrived. Thad Hall pointed his rifle at them. Seeing them unarmed, he lowered his rifle barrel.

"We come in peace!" the woman called out.

"Who are you?" demanded Hall.

The woman spoke. "This man is my uncle, the Peace Chief of the Cherokees, Attakullakulla. And I am the last Ghigau of the Cherokees, Nancy Ward." She pronounced her title *gi-ga-hyu*.

"Peace Chief? So, there is a War Chief also?" asked Hall.

"Yes," said the old man. "That is Oconostota. But he wants peace too."

"Well, then, who are those Indians who are tryin' to kill us?"

"That is what we have come to talk with you about," said the woman. "That is, if you will let us be your guests long enough to tell you more about them."

"I guess we better find out what we can," said Abe, who had come out to join Thad. Then Abe spoke to Attakullakulla, "Tell us what you have to say, and be on your way."

Thad looked into Nancy Ward's eyes. "I think we can do better'n that," he said. "We can be hospitable to these two particular Cherokees." Then he said to them, "Please feel welcome in our village and at my house. We can prob'ly scrape some food together."

The Cherokees dismounted. Attakullakulla was old but stood straight. He seemed tall, though he was not. Nancy Ward, however, was tall, younger, and exquisitely beautiful, even though, in my mind, any difference between her and Tsisqua was to the Cherokee woman's diminishment. Both Attakullakulla and Nancy Ward wore buckskin clothes, except for the woman's white blouse. Each had a leather band around the head, studded with beads and sprouting feathers. To Nancy's left forearm was attached a white bird's wing. Soon Thad Hall was escorting the two travelers into his cabin. A few other prominent men of the town followed them. I joined them, and others came in behind me.

The meeting turned into a spontaneous feast. The Cherokee visitors had brought pressed balls of ground nuts and salted venison. Thad's wife got out almost-white bread, butter, and cheese. She also had stew made from roasted corn. Abe brought a bottle of whiskey and a tiny, tiny glass from his store. I retrieved some dried fruit from my cabin. When Nancy Ward saw the fruit, she recognized it, but did not know the English name for it. It was pawpaw, I explained. I did not say that it was from *Asimina triloba* of the Annonaceæ. I had been saving it, but now that I was planning to leave, there was no reason not to share it.

Both of the Cherokees spoke English well. I took a seat right across the table from Nancy Ward. She and her uncle sat silently with their eyes closed during Thad's prayer. When they ate, the Cherokees used the knife and spoon elegantly. Nancy Ward explained that her Cherokee husband had been killed in battle, and that she then married an Irish trader.

"So where is Mr. Ward now?" asked Thad.

"He is now in Tugaloo," answered Nancy.

"So, the two of you have a house in Tugaloo?" asked Abe.

Nancy repeated, "He is now in Tugaloo."

The head men of the village had little to say that was not obvious. The conversation was dominated by Attakullakulla, who proudly told us about his visit to King George II, the father of the King against whom we had begun to fight. He had praise for London splendor but also some humorous stories about how the King's Court thought more highly of itself than any evidence could account for.

"I've heard the current king is an idiot," said Thad.

"I hear only the same rumors that you do," said Attakullakulla. "And as for the people in England, they are no better than you and I are."

"Amen!" said Abe. The other men joined him.

"So, tell us about that white bird-wing you got there," said Thad.

"It is the symbol of my office as ghigau," she said. The food got cold on the table. Nancy explained that the tribe had chosen her as a leader because she was heroic in a battle twenty-two years earlier, when she was seventeen years old. When Nancy finished her story, Mrs. Hall and her eldest daughter collected the leftover food and the dishes. Since it was summer, and near sunset, we moved outside. Thad built a fire, primarily to keep the mosquitoes away, more or less.

Attakullakulla passed around the pipe of peace. All the men, and Nancy, puffed on it. I did a little arithmetic in my head. This beautiful young woman was now thirty-eight years old. I would never have guessed. Most of our white women of that age were wrinkled and almost toothless.

"So," said Thad, "we hear that you Cherokees are on the side of the King."

"Our cry is all for peace," said Nancy.

"That's not what I hear," said Abe.

"Neither Oconostota nor I can stop the raiders," said Attakullakulla.

"We have been traveling all around the Carolinas and Georgia, trying to explain to as many of you as possible that our chiefs are not like your kings or military commanders," said Nancy. "Each leader does as he sees fit, though we have councils that try to reach agreement. And so, we have come to warn you there are small groups of Cherokees nearby who wish to kill you."

"We knew that," said Thad.

Nancy Ward continued, "There is no point in trying to negotiate with them. Their minds are set. Besides, very few of them speak English well. And we ask you to please not hate all of us because of what some of our evil warriors do. Their leader is my cousin, Tsiyu Gansini."

"My son, alas," said Attakullakulla.

"Not meanin' any disrespect," said Abe, "but why should we trust *you*?"

Nancy's eyes flashed as she told us a story about how she had rescued a white woman, whom her warrior cousin had captured, from being burned at the stake.

Abe smiled. "Quite a story," he said.

Thad turned to him again. "I believe I have heard this story from the lieutenant over in Rome," he said. "Mrs. Ward is not making this up. Why, it happened earlier this very summer."

"Although we do love to make up stories," said Attakullakulla, "this one is true."

It was night and our visitors wanted to get on the road early in the morning. I was sitting near the Cherokees as we started to leave. A bird called from one of the few remaining trees. Attakullakulla looked at his niece and said, "The *talala* has called us to bed."

I froze in astonishment.

Nancy Ward turned to me and said, "I would love to hear about your study of plants."

"What did your uncle just say?" I muttered.

"He referred to the bird, what you call a woodpecker. Is something wrong?"

I blurted out, "Does *tsisqua* mean anything in Cherokee?"

"Why, yes, William. It means bird."

"I'm sorry to run off, Mrs. Ward," I said. "But I must leave now," I said. "How do you say in Cherokee, *until we meet again*?"

"*Donadagohuh-i*," she said.

I made a creditable imitation, and she was satisfied.

"You have made a promise, you know," she told me.

I shut myself into my cabin, lit a candle from the smoldering coals, and sat down to think. I could feel the excruciating pain of Tsisqua's presence and her absence everywhere. The flame of the candle danced wildly as if truth itself were swirling in the motionless air. But I forced myself to think. Maybe one name or word being found in both Cherokee and Russian could be coincidence, but two?

Back when I was in graduate school at Harvard, we had a visitor who wrote and peddled his own books. A sort of prophet-preacher, he claimed to present evidence that the Indians were the lost tribes of Israel. He had presented some words—very few—that were shared between Hebrew and some Indian languages. There were many different Indian languages, so how could they all be derived from Hebrew? But Cherokee and Russian? I wondered what the man would have to say about *that*.

And then in one of those blinding moments in which a man realizes his stupidity, I stood up and comprehended everything.

Ivan and Andreea are not Russians. God in Heaven, how stupid we have been. They are not Russians. Their native language is... But how could their native language be Cherokee? They are white. I had heard of some intermarriage between Cherokees and whites, but this had begun recently enough that there were only a few half-breeds, and no Indians who were more than half white. Nancy Ward's daughter Betsy was one such half-breed, I had learned this very evening.

But Tsisqua, who looked white, must have been the product of at least three generations of white ancestry.

Then I smiled, stupidly, again. Of course, Tsisqua and Talala are white. They were white children who were captured by Cherokees on a raid of an American settlement, in the early days of contact, and raised as Indians. This would, of course, explain everything. It would explain all their habits, including Tsisqua's cleanliness, her knowledge of Indian ways, and her knowledge of American plants. They must have learned much of their English from a missionary and his Bible. That explains the "gnash of teeth" and other peculiar phrases.

I walked around the room. *I am sick with love*, said the writer of the Song of Songs. To distract myself from my feelings, I dug out the Bible a missionary gave to me when he heard I was going to the frontier. I looked for the verses I remembered from the only book of the Bible I had ever really been interested in reading, the Song of Songs.

Your love is better than wine.

Your name is like an anointing oil poured out.

Your eyes are like doves.

As a lily among brambles, so is my love among maidens.

Your breasts are like two leaping fawns feeding among the lilies.

You have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes.

You are like a stream of living water flowing from the mountains.

Let the south wind carry your fragrance to me; I will come to your garden and eat of its choicest fruits. Your navel is a bowl that never lacks for wine. I will come into your garden and eat your honeycomb along with your milk.

You are as stately as a palm; your breasts are like clusters of dates. I will climb the tree and lay hold of its clusters.

You are altogether fair, my love; there is no flaw in you.

Feed me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am sick with love.

Drink deeply, O lovers! I adjure you, do not awaken love until it pleases.

For I am sick with love.

I had been saving it and knew the time had come to pull it out: my bottle of whiskey. I imagined Tsisqua saying to me:

You are as to me as a bag of myrrh hanging between my breasts.

My love says to me, Arise, for spring has come, flowers appear on the Earth, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in the land. Arise, my fair one, and come away with me!

Come, my love, be to me as the stag upon the mountains!

You are altogether fair, my love; there is no flaw in you.

Feed me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am sick with love.

Drink deeply, O lovers! I adjure you, do not awaken love until it pleases.

For I am sick with love.

I imagined meeting Tsisqua out by the cliffs, near the bushes, and her saying to me, *My love, you are like the doves in the clefts of the rock.*

I blew out the candle and lay on my bed but could not sleep.

I lay in my bed, but my heart was awake.

I could think only about Tsisqua's penetrating blue eyes, briefly so close to mine.

Turn your eyes from me, my beloved, for they disturb me.

I got up and walked around inside my dark cabin again. I was supposed to be watching the forest anyway. An army regiment was to arrive very soon, the next day or so. Meanwhile we were all supposed to be watching for hostile Indians. I went outside into the fragrant humid night. I could not walk straight. I had to lean against my cabin. Unaccustomed to drink, a mere quarter of the bottle had unmanned me. I heard an owl; its call filled my mind.

I went back to my bed and lay thinking about Tsisqua's eyes.

Turn your eyes from me, my beloved, for they disturb me.

Chapter 11

The next morning, I could barely move. I stumbled out into the sunlight and stood beside the big opening where the body of the dead bur oak lay. At least, I thought, the wood might go to some use. By now the trunk had been chopped into smaller pieces and dried a little, and the branches and leaves were brittle. The palisade had been completed, but none of the bur oak's wood had been used for it. The men had cut down other trees for the palisade and left a circle of devastation around the village.

That evening the dusty red sunset, once hidden by the forest, was now visible everywhere in the village. The people gathered for another celebration around the great tree. Instead of using its wood to build anything, they burned it. The bonfire lasted all night. I saw the dancing villagers in the firelight, transmogrified from quiet demure women and hard-working decent men into savages, and I told myself that these people, this race into which I was born, was just as bad as the savages, indeed worse, for the pagan Indian feasts lit up an intact and healthy forest, while these Christian pagans seemed to have an insane desire to destroy God's good green earth.

The next afternoon I decided to force myself to do my last botanizing before I left Green Hollow, the sooner the better, to get away from Tsisqua's eyes. I did not see her; perhaps she was avoiding me, though I still did not completely understand why.

I walked past the glowing remnants of the trunk of the big bur oak tree on my way out into the forest. When I entered the forest, I noticed something was very different this time. The ground seemed a little firmer, as if many feet had trodden it. But the branches along the path were unbroken, though a few were cut; the feet had not been those of white Americans. Those who were at war with the forest, and with its dusky inhabitants, would have broken every branch they could as they walked. By the time I realized I might encounter a band of hostile Cherokees, I was already within sight of the cliffs, the creek, and the *Franklinia* shrubs.

A campfire burned in the midst of the shrubs. Warriors dressed in buckskin talked quietly around the fire. I crouched to watch them. One of the warriors was Ivan.

The moment I started to stand and turn around to run back to the village to tell Thad Hall the urgent news of the band of warriors, I found myself face to face with Tsisqua. And with her knife.

At that moment, I had another blinding realization. One I might have had earlier had I not been sick with love. Perhaps, I realized, this would be the last realization that would ever flow through my mind. Talala and Tsisqua had been raised not just by Cherokees but by one of the hostile bands of Cherokees, the ones following Nancy Ward's cousin, and had come to Green Hollow to find a way to help those Cherokees attack it. On the day of the battle that the militia had lost, Talala only pretended to fight when he shot into the Cherokee village. No wonder he had been struck by no arrows. The warriors he shot at only pretended to be hit and only pretended to shoot at him.

"Get head down, stupid," said Tsisqua, brandishing her knife. She, too, wore buckskin.

"I will leave now," I said, turning away from Tsisqua's eyes.

Tsisqua grabbed my arm. Firmly, very firmly. "Get down, or I scream to them," she said.

"I understand everything now," I said. This, complete understanding, was a Deist's idea of the attainment of life's fullness. To a Deist, this was an appropriate time to die. I thought I was perhaps, just perhaps, stronger than Tsisqua, and could prevent her from killing me. But her knife was already pressing against my shirt. And certainly I would arouse the attention of the warriors if I struggled with Tsisqua. I sat down under the canopy of nettles, and Tsisqua sat beside me, still holding my arm.

"They tell me I kill anyone who sees us," said Tsisqua.

"I suppose you must," I said. Then I tried the only argument of which I could think. "But I am not like the other people in Green Hollow."

"I know," said Tsisqua.

"They hate the Indians. But I, I came here to learn from the Indians."

"I know," Tsisqua repeated.

"And they hate the trees. But I love the trees."

"We will save trees," said Tsisqua.

"I know," I sighed.

A voice cried out from the gathering of men.

Tsisqua called back to them. Then she said to me, "They want to know where I am. I told them I was in the way of nature."

"Thank you for hiding me from them," I said.

"Come with us, and save trees," she said to me.

"What? What did you say?" I gasped.

"I cannot kill you," she said. "You are such sweetness."

"And you also," I said. Our breaths mingled. "But what can you do? You have to kill me or let them kill me. If you let me go, how do you know that I will not warn the people of Green Hollow?"

"I do not know. All what I know is, I cannot kill you. Any else, I would kill without thought."

"Do you not see?" I asked her. "You may win a battle now, but soon, the Americans will destroy your land and your tribes. The land will become farms, so that for you, it will be dead. Your people will not rise again."

"We will prevail. The gods are good. They will not let evil people win forever," said Tsisqua.

I was wrong, for I did not know that Nancy Ward's cousin would hold out against the whites longer than anyone would have thought possible. And Tsisqua was wrong, because she did not know that the whites would eventually defeat them all.

"Do you promise," she asked, "to not say of what you have seen?"

It would have been easy for me to say yes, then go back and warn the people of Green Hollow. But I believed strongly in the integrity of my word, for I was not merely a man of honor, but a scientist. I thought about the bur oak tree. I thought about the arrogant men of the village. I thought about the women. I thought about the innocent children of Green Hollow, dying at the hands of the Cherokees. Or perhaps they would be spared, then raised as wild and free spirits of the forest, perhaps further west, where the Americans had not yet settled. I thought about the bur oak tree. I thought about people like William Penn, who would have peacefully settled alongside the Indians rather than trying to drive them away. I thought about the bur oak tree. I said, "I promise."

"We know your house," Tsisqua said. "You will be safe. We will enter village behind house where I live with Talala. Where there is no guard."

"When will you attack?" I asked.

"I cannot tell," Tsisqua answered. "If you know, you might say something even if you mean not. Tomorrow? Next week?" Then she said, "Come with us. Come. With me."

"Your tribe will kill me," I said. "They do not think I am such sweetness. You trust me. They do not. Or if I join you, the Americans will find me, when they finally capture the last of your villages. They will know that I betrayed them. They will convict me of treason, which our Constitution defines as 'aiding and abetting the enemy,' and which carries the death penalty. So, your warriors could kill me, or the Americans could kill me. I marvel, Tsisqua, that there are so many ways to die. What kind of world is this?"

Tsisqua could not have understood very much of what I said but must have understood some of it. She repeated, "The gods are good. The end will be good."

"I wish I could agree with you," said the Deist to the pagan.

A voice rang out again from the warriors. Tsisqua answered them, then whispered to me, "They call me to them. Please go. I trust you with my life."

Tsisqua kissed me, then scampered to her feet and joined the men.

I crawled, then scampered, on the trail. Once I was over the little rise that separated the swale from the roadway, I walked. I walked to the road. I fell to my knees and sobbed loudly. Tsisqua had spared my life, but it was a life without her. I forced myself to get back up. I stumbled past about a quarter mile of towering trees. I walked past a half mile of stumps and dead branches. I walked past the corpse of the bur oak. I walked into the village at nightfall.

I saw a wagon in front of Abe's store. I quickly rushed to the door and knocked. After a few minutes, Abe answered.

"William," he said. "What is your business?"

"When does this wagon leave, and where does it go?" I asked.

"Tomorrow morning, east," was Abe's answer. "The driver is just staying the night here."

"Might it have room for me?"

"Why do you wish to leave so all of a sudden?" Abe's left eyebrow twitched.

"I have many plants pressed in my collection, and it is time for me to deliver them to the herbarium at Harvard," I answered. "I am running out of money, so this might be my last chance

to leave.” This part was actually true. “I hope to come back and collect more plants, when I get more money.”

“By the time you come back,” said Abe, “there won’t be a tree left anywheres here, except the apples. But stop on your way out to the frontier. This will be the road to it. Yes, I reckon there is room. The driver will be right happy to hear he has a paying customer.”

“With,” I added, “several crates to boot, for which I will pay. Thank you, Abe. You can rent out the cabin to someone else now. I hate to leave my tomatoes. Perhaps you would like them?”

Abe spat. I had begun to feel sorry for Abe’s imminent fate, but the feeling quickly passed.

I had my crates, one of my personal possessions and three of my specimens, outside my cabin at dawn. I imagined I heard hatchets and saws at work on the last little grove around my cabin even before I left the village. As the wagon bumped and lurched eastward, I saw almost all the forest near the road had been cut. Here, not in battle, was the death of the Cherokee, I thought.

The wagon made little progress over the road, for a flood from a freak summer storm had washed part of the road away. We got around the damage but were only five miles down the road by dusk. We continued traveling, for there was no inn where we could stop. The driver considered pulling off the road for the night, until he looked to the west and saw a red glow that was not the sunset.

Chapter 12

I heard later that no one remained in Green Hollow. There was no one left who could report that a man named William Bartram had mysteriously left town the very morning before the Indian massacre. My conscience bothered me, but I changed ever so slightly the dates and locations on the labels of my plant collections, to protect my secret. The *Franklinia* bushes near Green Hollow are, I assume, now gone, as are all *Franklinia* bushes in the wild. The species survives only in gardens where my father and I planted them.

I also heard that the American children of Green Hollow had been sold as slaves to another tribe. Were they treated as badly as the Southerners in America treated their black slaves? This was one of the few things I did not want to know. I wanted to know about everything else, however: every plant, every land, every language, every story of love and loss and triumph and rage throughout human history.

I kept my promise to meet Nancy Ward again. I visited her inn many years later. She knew about the massacre of Green Hollow, but I never told her about my role in it.

I have never again read or looked at the Song of Songs in the Bible. I do not even know if it contains the phrase, *You are such sweetness*. I want to believe it does.

Part Ten: John Franklin Stanhope

Chapter 1

I, John Franklin Stanhope, was a young lieutenant in the Army of the United States when we met with the Cherokees at Long Island on the Holston River in Tennessee. It was July 26, 1781, and we were there to sign yet another treaty. It was clear to everyone that we could not fight both the redpaints and the redcoats. The Cherokees didn't have much choice either. Aside from the way that skunk Alexander Cameron was helping the Chickamaugas, the redcoats could not help the Cherokees very much. The king's men had been doing well down further south; they had Charleston tied up. I was confident we Americans would eventually prevail. Meanwhile we needed peace with the Indians as much as they did with us. Let's just sign the treaty and get it over with, I thought to myself. The sweat trickled down my back.

The Cherokees camped outside the agency compound, where Major Joseph Martin was the Indian agent acting on behalf of the colony—the state—of Virginia. And the Indians had a dance and a feast the previous night. Lots of drums and whooping. It all sounded like the same thing over and over to me. It took a few swigs of whiskey before I thought it sounded pretty good. Don't let the dancing and feasting fool you. It doesn't mean they're happy.

At last, that morning, the ceremony got started. Colonel John Sevier spread the treaty on a table, the white commissioners behind him, the Indians in front of him. He was one of our heroes. At Fort Watauga, he was the one who reached down and pulled Bonnie Kate, now his wife, over the palisade walls. Major Martin was beside him on this morning. General Nathaniel Greene was in charge, and it was he who read the treaty aloud.

The treaty began with the usual blandishments about how much the Cherokee People and the white settlers were beholden to one another. It went on about where the borders would be, as if it really mattered.

And then there was a clause that got my attention. It was something about enlargements of confirmation as would seem to them requisite. What the hell was that supposed to mean? I looked around at my fellow officers, most of whom seemed to be dozing. It sounded like the Cherokees were supposed to have the right to determine what was requisite. My suspicions were confirmed when General Greene read aloud, "You are hereby charged to call on the commanding officers of the adjacent counties for force and assistance to prevent further encroachment by the subjects of the United States on the lands of the tribes of the Indian Nations."

I looked around. Were we just going to sit here and take that? We the military were required to use force to prevent white encroachment on Indian land? Everything was wrong about this. It isn't encroachment; it's civilization. And what's this about subjects of the United States? We aren't subjects. Fat George has subjects. In America, we are citizens. And since when do the Indians have "nations"?

I nudged Lieutenant Collier, who sat next to me.

"You hear that?" I asked.

“Yes,” he said, stirring from what I had assumed was sleep. “Don’t worry about it. It don’t mean nothin’.”

Then General Greene read some words that needed to be said. “The Cherokee delegates are hereby given to understand that the British Allies can no longer furnish aid to them, and that they will have to look to the Americans for any help or cooperation they might receive.”

“Amen,” I whispered.

“The Indians know that already,” said Collier. “That’s why they’re here.”

A trader then translated the treaty for the Indian chiefs. What happened next was a little confusing to me because it seems that the Indians don’t have a chain of command. How can anybody do anything without a chain of command? It’s not just armies. Our whole society depends on chains of command. Churches have chains of command. Even universities have chains of command.

Finally, one of the chiefs, an old man wearing buckskin clothes and feathers and beads, stood up to announce the group consensus. He said something loud and dramatic.

“That’s Old Tassel,” said Collier. “Attakullakulla is dead, and Oconostota was too old to come. But The Tassel is a great man, too.”

“Great men? How can you say that about warriors who savagely attack us?” I demanded.

“Don’t get yourself all het up,” Collier said. “The Tassel will explain it.”

The trader then translated the chief’s words. “The Cherokee people regret the attacks that have been made upon your people by the younger chiefs, led by Dragging Canoe. These attacks were carried out without the permission of the chiefs or the people of our nation. The young chiefs would not listen to us. But I am happy to talk with you. You have risen from among the warriors to be a Beloved Man among your people, as I have among mine. I hope that you will speak well with us.”

Colonel Sevier said, “We have never hated the Cherokee. We have fought you only to preserve the safety of our people.” The trader translated it.

The old chief began to speak. The Cherokee language is very beautiful, full of voweled syllables with just enough *tsi* and *tsa* sounds to sound like the rustling of grass. I started to doze off. The trader translated. I picked up a few words, something to do with the mountains and the bears and the sun and the moon and the rivers and the trees. The Indians act as if the things in this world are their allies. But for us they are just resources. Rivers are to navigate, trees are for timber, and bears are for rugs. There was some more back and forth. I opened my eyes and started toying with one of the shiny buttons on my dress jacket. I thought about the things I usually think about, such as whether I was ever going to get paid.

Then I heard a woman’s voice. It was deep and strong, and filled the space under the council tree. I looked up in astonishment. A Cherokee woman, tall and elegant, stood before the negotiators, in front of the chiefs, and addressed them with firm confidence. She was beautiful. She wore buckskin clothes, feathers, and beads like the men. She had a white bird’s wing affixed to her left forearm and pronounced each word as if it were an incantation.

“Who the blazes is that?” I quietly asked Collier.

“That,” he said, “is Major Martin’s mother-in-law.”

I heard that Major Martin had a squaw wife, and that the marriage was strategically important. I assumed it was on account of the squaw’s warrior father. But, on account of her *mother*?

Her mother? This woman looked like she was about thirty years old. I found out later she was forty-three.

My inclination was to dismiss her talk, or any woman’s talk, as a waste of time. But when I heard her speak in Cherokee to her people, and I saw their rapt attention—even more attention than they gave to the old man—I knew she was a force to be reckoned with. And then she turned to the commissioners.

“You look upon your women as nothing,” she said in English. “Where are the women from your towns? Has anyone asked them what they want? Do you have their permission to say what you say or to write the words in that treaty? We are your mothers; you are our sons.”

She was not old enough to be my mother, but almost. And here I’d been thinking about her...never mind.

Then she raised her voice. By now, all the officers around me had roused to attention.

“Our cry is all for peace!” she shouted. “And this peace must last forever. Let our women’s sons be yours, and let your sons be ours. Hear my words! And let your women hear my words!”

I was quite moved, but the feeling quickly passed. Not so with the commissioners. General Greene and Colonel Sevier looked moved and somber. General William Christian stood. He looked as if he might cry. I nudged Collier.

“Him? Christian? He’s the one who spared the Cherokee town of Chota, where this woman lives,” said Collier. “He’s soft on the Cherokees.”

“Isn’t he the one who destroyed Cherokee villages?”

“Yes, he destroyed Toquo and Tuskegee, but that was because those were the Cherokee towns where the warriors tortured and killed white captives. Or, in the case of Mr. Bean’s wife, almost tortured and killed a captive. He could have destroyed more but chose not to.”

And then Colonel Christian turned to address the Cherokee women. The women! “Mothers,” he said. “No one can listen to your talk without being moved. Such words and thoughts show that human nature is the same everywhere, in all people. I shall make sure that our women hear your words, and I know they will be moved by them as much as I have, or even more. After all, all of us humans are descendants of the same woman. We do not wish to quarrel with you, if you will stay at home and let us live in peace.”

The trader translated his words to the Cherokee women, and they nodded in agreement.

Even if the commissioners had been sincere in their words to the Cherokees, it would not much have mattered. Our war with England was not yet over. We weren’t even sure which state was which. The white settlements in what would later be western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee declared themselves to be the State of Franklin, and they were not bound by the Treaty of Long Island. Neither Congress nor General Washington recognized the State of

Franklin. Over on the coast, lines of command and boundaries between colonies were pretty clear; but out here in the west, I was never sure what was going on, except that every year there were more settlers and they carved out spaces for themselves just about anywhere they pleased. Occasionally the Indians would massacre a homesteading family, such as the family of a certain John Kirk. This man, and his son John Jr., were gone at the time, and they came back to find their family murdered.

Chapter 2

What was the government's solution to all of this confusion? Another treaty, of course. As soon as the war was over, and the treaty of Britain's surrender signed in 1783, the new United States government called for another negotiation, this time at Hopewell in Tennessee. Having advanced in rank to be a captain, I attended this meeting. I expected to see this woman, the famous Nancy Ward, and I was not to be disappointed. Once again, her son-in-law was one of the chief negotiators. It was November 1785, and almost a thousand Cherokees were camped outside the treaty grounds.

Joseph Martin, now a general, rose and addressed The Tassel. "We are not interested in taking any of your lands or anything else that belongs to you," he said. "This treaty will be the first one made by the new government of the United States of America. Its purpose is to renew our pledge of mutual friendship." A trader translated the words for the Cherokees.

The Tassel stood up, a bit frailer than I remembered. He said something and held out a string of white beads. The trader said the chief was reaffirming friendship with the white beads, as white is the color of peace.

And that was that, I figured. But then The Tassel went up to the map that was part of the treaty document and drew a line on it. He said, through the translator, that he had no problem with white settlements, so long as they did not approach too closely. But now they were within twenty-five miles of Cherokee towns. The line he drew on the map was an arc about twenty-five miles from Cherokee towns: it went through Mt. Ocunna and Mt. Carahee. He said the white settlers would have to leave those towns. Just those, not the others. The only problem was there were a whole lot of towns in the area he said we would have to vacate. And the city of Nashville.

Nashville? The Cherokees expected us to abandon Nashville? The chief's demand was absurd, and General Martin knew it. The general politely said he would bring the matter up before Congress. Which he never did.

I figured that was the end. But then The Tassel asked permission for the Woman of Chota to speak. Nancy Ward arose and spoke directly to the commissioners and to all of us officers assembled.

"I am glad that we now have peace," she said, smiling. But I could see in her eyes that she knew that the peace was temporary and superficial. She continued, "I take you by the hand in true friendship. See this pipe and tobacco that I have, which you commissioners can smoke with us in peace." Now I knew she was playing a game with us. She handed the pipe to General Martin, her son-in-law. "I am happy we now have peace, because the years of war were terrible, for both the white people and the red people." She was right about that. She probably knew nothing about what our patriots suffered at Valley Forge. But even out here in the west, not all of the suffering was borne by her people. Just ask John Kirk.

"I am old," continued Nancy Ward. I did a little counting in my head. She was forty-seven or forty-eight. It was hard to believe that she was so old. "I am old, but I hope to yet have children who will grow up and people our Nation..." I smiled, wondering who would father her grandchildren. General Martin and Betsy Ward already had a daughter, Nancy Martin. "And they will prosper, now that we are under the protection of your Congress." I couldn't help but smile at that one, too. Collier, who was a captain now, actually snorted. He had been an open supporter of the State of Franklin. "Even the young warriors of my town rejoice that we now have peace, and we hope the chain of peace will never again be broken." She sat back down. Apparently, she had already told the Cherokees what she was going to say. I had to admit that she was a great orator.

General Martin read the treaty. I had the same uncomfortable feeling that I had back at Long Island when I heard the words. "Any settler who fails to remove within six months from the land guaranteed to the Indians shall forfeit the protection of the United States, and the Cherokee may punish him or not as they please." I told myself they were just words, and that the Cherokee had no protection from our army or from the Congress that imagines itself to be in control of us.

This fact was made clear a few weeks later when a certain Major Hubbard put on his gentlemanly airs and arranged a meeting with the Cherokee leaders. Among them were The Tassel himself, and even the warrior who had failed them in the attack on Watauga almost a decade ago, Old Abram, who now really was getting old. Hubbard flew the flag of truce over the cabin where the chiefs assembled. Then he closed the door, locked it, and handed a hatchet to a young corporal who was with him. The young man was John Kirk, Jr., and in a bloody rage he killed all of the chiefs. He sank the hatchet into their skulls and dug the blade into their necks. That one soured on my stomach a little. I had to admit I could see some truth to the viewpoint of the chief who had never participated in any of the treaty negotiations, the scourge of the south, Dragging Canoe. He treated us like unredeemable enemies. And maybe he was right. All I know is that Dragging Canoe's forces grew in number after that day. Maybe it is more profitable, after all, to smile and swap beads, the way Nancy Ward and General Martin did.

We Americans ratified our Constitution in 1789. Time for a new treaty, I thought. Secretary of War Henry Knox was quite upset at the disregard the white settlers had for the Treaty of Hopewell. Not on account of the Indians, but because the settlers were showing contempt for the authority of the new federal government.

A couple of years later there was a new treaty, as ineffectual as all the previous ones.

Part Eleven: Nancy Ward

Chapter 1

By 1790 most of our people, at least the ones wealthy enough to have land, live on farmsteads rather than in towns. In place of the council houses there are churches for us to meet in. We now talk about God rather than the Spirit, but the missionaries assure me they believe in the same God as we. Most of the hostilities between Cherokees and Americans have ceased, except for a few raids that my cousin continues to lead from the Chickamauga villages.

I moved to a small cabin on the banks of the Ocoee River. I was closer to Betsy there, and the grandchildren. I was only fifty-two years old in 1790, not old enough to stop working, but it was clear to me that my messages were not being heard by the Cherokee Nation. They continue to honor me, but mostly for my past work. They think my 1781 speech at Hopewell was my crowning achievement. In terms of historical value, this may be true. Nearly everyone agrees with my message of peace, but they do not want to listen to me when I tell them we should not sell our land to the Americans. The Americans want all of the land, and, if my youthful vision of the grasshoppers and hornets was true, they will eventually get all of it.

My slaves and farmhands raise traditional Cherokee crops, and I have them do so in the traditional way. I hear we were supposed to get a flour mill. There is a German named John Hilderbrand who might build one nearby. Until then, however, there is not much point in raising wheat. And cotton? The road past my cabin is good, but not good enough for transporting a crop like cotton. Besides, I want something I can store up and eat if we have a crop failure, if those soldier grasshoppers eat our fields. Of course, I have cows in a fenced pasture and pigs in a pen. My cabin is not unlike most others you could see in the Nation.

I live near a ford in the river that many people, American and Cherokee, use. In recent years they frequently stopped to ask me for a little food, or a place to let their horses graze in the part of my field that was not penned. So many travelers stopped at my house that I finally decided to start an inn. I had no trouble getting credit and hiring workers to build a wooden structure with four rooms. I did a fine business. That was how I eventually got most of my wealth. Where once I wore buckskin, and owned just one white blouse, now I have a wardrobe of colorful calico and gingham clothing.

But first I invested everything I earned back into erecting yet another building to expand my inn and purchasing better furniture and dishware. I could accumulate wealth later.

I enjoy talking with the travelers about where they are from and where they are going. Nearly all of them want me to tell them about my life. In good Cherokee fashion, I embellished the stories a little, especially about the little people, the Nunnehi.

But not about the White Wolf. I never told them about the White Wolf, which is a sacred memory to me.

One of the travelers was William Bartram. I met him when my uncle and I visited the little town of Green Hollow in 1776, right before it was destroyed by a band of warriors who must have eventually joined my cousin in the Chickamauga villages. I had not had a chance to discuss Dr. Bartram's work with him at that time. He did not want to talk about Green Hollow, and I did not press him.

Dr. Bartram was still very interested in which plants we use for food and healing. I told him about the black tea that the warriors consumed to cleanse them before a battle, and I showed him the shrub from which we made it. One of the privileges of the ghigau is to make and serve black tea to the warriors. I suspect the only person who still used it in 1790 was my cousin. Dr. Bartram told me it was a type of holly, *Ilex vomitoria*. He already knew about its properties. It is also called the yaupon, a name based on the Catawba word for it. He was about to publish a book about his travels through the Cherokee country. Now he was looking for living plants to grow in his garden in Philadelphia.

Something I had sworn to myself to never do was to sell whiskey. But the travelers all expected it. I cannot blame them for not trusting the water. I boil the water that I drink. General Martin told me that the scientists in Europe have seen little animals swimming around in drinking water. I realize, of course, that disease is caused by evil spells and bad air, at least that is what everyone says, but I don't feel right inviting living animals into my body, no matter how small.

One evening one of the travelers said, "You've had quite a life, Mrs. Ward."

I said nothing. I arose and walked out of the door. I hope I did not offend the man. But I had to think about what he said. I was fifty-two, and I "have had" a life. I was not ready to sit in a rocking chair, the way Lydia did before she died, and think about the past. I remember that night clearly. There was a full moon in the sky, and it shone upon the roiling waterfall. Water never rests, night or day. Water may look lazy enough in a pond, but if you watch the little green duckweeds, you might see them move. The water is circulating like messengers.

Perhaps I have finished what the White Wolf wanted me to do, I thought to myself. I still saw the wild animals once in a while, but not as often as I did when I was younger. Did they think that I "have had" a life?

I looked at the moon for a long time, thinking about the time I saw it rise over the Atlantic Ocean in Charles Town. I have often wondered what the moon actually is. We have stories about it, and I repeat these stories to the children of the travelers. We believe the moon is male, and the sun is female, which surprises most of the American visitors. I tell them, only half in jest, that the women do the work in the day but the men are only home at night. But these stories tell me nothing about what the moon actually *is*.

I have already said that we do not believe that trees and rivers are gods; so neither is the moon. Is it a place where people can live? If so, I'll bet that it won't take very long for these enterprising Americans to colonize it and, if it has any native peoples, to take the moon away from them. But it doesn't look like a place where anybody can live. One of the visitors said that the moon had oceans and land and forests and fields, just like the Earth. A preacher was also

visiting, and in between bites of my very tough, very dense, and very tasty bread he explained there could not be any people there, because Jesus did not die for them. To which the first visitor replied, where do you think Jesus flew off to when he left the Earth? I wanted to say that people are not the only kinds of beings that can inhabit a forest or a field. Maybe the moon has its own Nunnehi. I do not believe anything lives on the moon. Where is the color of trees or fields or oceans?

I never learned to read, but I can remember a passage that I heard once from the Bible. Something like this:

The moon rises, the moon sets, and then here it comes again! The blue wind blows from the north, then comes around to the south, where it becomes the white wind, going round and round the Earth. The streams join together to form rivers, and the rivers flow to the sea, day after day and year after year, but the sea is never filled up. What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done. Is there anything of which it can be said, Look! Here is something new! But it has been already, in the ages before us. No one remembers what happened in the past, and nobody will remember what is happening now, and nobody will remember what will happen in the ages to come.

Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil, and a striving after the wind.

Behold the man who has no family, but he works hard and becomes rich. For whom is he toiling? For he will simply die and someone else will have all the riches he has gathered. He was born naked into the world, and he can take nothing with him out of the world.

Behold all the oppressions that occur under the gaze of the moon. See the tears of the oppressed, and there is no one to comfort them. The people who are already dead are more fortunate than those who are still alive; and more fortunate yet are those who have not yet been born, so they do not have to see all of the oppression that occurs under the gaze of the moon.

I must have stood there for what your clocks say is an hour, what for me is the time that it takes for the servants to clean up the dishes. For what is time? Our language calls it *iyuwakdi*, and yours calls it *time*, but none of us know what it is. I suppose your scholars will figure it out someday. Whatever it is, it is not like the ticking of a clock. *Saligugi* the turtle moves slowly, but to him it may not seem slow. *Walela* the hummingbird moves rapidly, but to him we humans might seem as still as the trees. And do the trees think anything about us, or do we move so fast that the trees cannot distinguish us from the mists?

To the preachers, time is a road. It starts with the Creation, and it will end with a big battle. But whoever wrote the part of the Bible I was thinking about that night must have thought of time as a circle. Maybe time is a blanket hanging over our world. Nobody really is born or dies but comes into our world from that blanket and then goes back out.

During this eternal present time, the moon has gone around and around, watching everything we do from afar, and not caring what happens to us. We are all its orphans.

That is when the idea came to me. In earlier years, we had many orphans from war. And many years into the past we had orphans from disease. We still do. Now many children are almost orphans, because their fathers have been devastated by the white man's whiskey.

I looked over at the darkness of the unfinished second building against the near darkness of the starry sky. Here is the opportunity that has fallen into my path. The new building, I realized, would make an excellent orphanage.

Chapter 2

The news of my orphanage spread through our towns. Before long, many people brought children to me, some tiny, some nearly ready to become young men and women. It occurred to me I should have established some kind of rules, so that only the neediest children would be left in my care. I wondered if I would soon be overwhelmed.

It was then one of the traveling preachers stayed at my inn and saw the orphanage. I mentioned to him that my resources were strained, and that was why I was charging more for his room and board than he might have expected.

He told me a story about the man Jesus. There were thousands of people listening to this man Jesus preach on the hillsides. They loved his preaching so much they just ran out to listen to him. Most didn't think to pack any food and forgot about the time.

Like sheep, the preacher said. Sheep are pretty dumb, and so are most people. Not having raised sheep myself, I had to accept his word. I've seen wool, and this man's hair looked like wool, so I figured he might know what he was talking about from firsthand experience. Jesus took stock of the resources available to him. Jesus' friends asked around for food. They found only a few fish and loaves, not enough to feed everyone. Then Jesus told his friends to pass around the food they had gathered. His friends thought this was stupid, as did I when I heard this story. But before long everyone had enough to eat and there were even leftovers.

"You probably expect me to say that Jesus performed a miracle," said the preacher.

"What's a miracle?" I asked.

"Never mind. The extra food did not just come from nowhere."

"Of course not."

"I believe what happened is when other people saw the food coming around, they took stock of their own resources. Perhaps quite by chance, some of them had a little food with them. Jesus shared food, which caused other people to share food, which caused other people...do you see where I'm going with this? That's what faith is."

This Jesus was like a spark that started a fire of generosity in that sheepy crowd.

"So, what I should do," I said, "is use whatever resources I have, and more will come along, even though I cannot guess where it will come from."

"Then you are a woman of faith, regardless of doctrinal details," the preacher said.

That is exactly what happened. One young woman who brought two children to me asked if there was anything she could do to help. Is there? I put her right to work. Soon there were more women. I was able to assign them to tasks for which they had skill and experience: baking bread, mending clothes, feeding and bathing children, keeping older children out of trouble. I could hardly believe my eyes. The stew pot never grew empty. The people who brought children, or checked on them, must have thrown in some food. One day I even found a little pan of kanuchi stew sitting off to the side of the hearth. Visitors to the inn left extra coins. The traders gave me discounts on blankets.

It was interesting for me to see it was not the rich white travelers who were the most generous to the orphanage. The visitors who had meager reputations and resources were the most generous. The rich visitors expected special treatment, even without paying more. It occurred to me that white people are judged by what they have, but the Cherokee by what they give.

Resources for the orphanage kept coming. I had never been happier in my life.

Part Twelve: Thomas Jefferson

Chapter 1

Although many years had passed, I recognized her instantly. I had forgotten her name, and the beautiful young Cherokee woman was now middle-aged, but I could never forget that noble face.

"Welcome to my inn," said Nancy Ward when I arrived one evening in 1791. I was Secretary of State in the first administration of the first president, George Washington, but Mrs. Ward seemed to not recognize me. I'm not sure why she should have since the Cherokee Nation existed and exists outside of the American border. "I hope you like the food and find the lodging comfortable. This inn is also an orphanage, and if you feel like helping with the sweeping or the laundry, it would be appreciated."

I was still standing and gave a little bow. "I think I might just do that," I said.

"The chamber pots need cleaning out," she said.

"I've had worse work to do," I responded, thinking of my dealings with Congress. Then I said, "We have met before."

"Please sit down while I get some food for you," she said, motioning to the empty table. "I've met many people," she said, brushing crumbs from a table and turning toward the kitchen. "Forgive me for not remembering you."

Her silhouette had already darkened the kitchen door when I said, "It was 1762, at the College of William and Mary, in what is now the state of Virginia."

She stopped.

"We had both listened to one of the most magnificent orations that either of us had ever heard or are likely to ever hear again, by one of your chiefs, Ostenaco."

She turned to face me. "My uncle Attakullakulla's close friend," she said. "And you?"

"I was a student at the college," I said. "I was studying law, and I became a lawyer soon afterward. But it was not the first time I had seen Ostenaco, God rest his soul. He was a frequent guest at my father's house as I was growing up. His oration was, therefore, no surprise to me."

"Your father knew Ostenaco?" she asked. "Who was your father?"

"Peter Jefferson, the surveyor," I answered.

"Peter Jefferson's little boy! Yes, now I remember. A mapmaker. One of the maps that had a line on it—a line moving ever westward—that allowed the Americans to take away our land."

"That was not my father's intention," I said. "He was a great admirer of Ostenaco, and he loved your people."

"And your name?"

"Thomas."

"Forgive me for not recognizing it," she said.

Chapter 2

First, it is time for a confession. Most of you think that I got my ideas about freedom and democracy in the Declaration of Independence from the European Enlightenment writers. I, as they, referred to the laws of nature and of Nature's God when explaining why the people should rule themselves. But my earliest exposure to these ideas was the best expression of them: my encounters with the Indians.

For some Americans, the first meeting with Indians was either by experiencing an attack from them on the frontier or seeing them in abject poverty begging for credit from frontier traders. Some Americans have seen civilized Indians, that is, Indians speaking English and wearing suits and even taking on white names.

That is, many whites believe Indians "in a state of nature" are evil or worthless or both, and the only way the Indians can be worthy of survival is to remake themselves in our white image. Kill the Indian to save the man, they say. Most Americans know no more about Indians than the caricature of them portrayed during reenactments of the Boston Tea Party. The actors put on feathers and leather jackets and make loud nonsense sounds like a child babbling.

But it was from the Indians, in what we call a state of nature, that I first encountered the ideas of democracy. It began when I was present, during a journey inland from our home at Shadwell in Virginia, at a Cherokee council meeting. Of course, being raised an Englishman, I expected to see a single leader commanding the others what to do. Instead I saw all of the leaders equally disputing among themselves before reaching a consensus. Some of the older leaders had more prestige, but the lesser chiefs had no hesitation in standing up to and denouncing them. I could tell this even though I did not understand a word that they were saying. There were hundreds of Cherokees, including women, watching the meeting. I knew their opinions, including those of the women, were an essential part of the decision process.

If people we call "savages" can govern themselves, then self-government must be something that is part of human nature, so long as it is not brutally suppressed by kings and nobles.

I came to a vivid realization of this on that night in 1762. I watched the great Cherokee orator Ostenaco, on the eve of his departure for England. The moon was in full splendor, and to her he seemed to address himself during his prayers for safety during the voyage and for his people during his absence. His sounding voice, distinct articulation, animated action, and the solemn silence of his people at their several fires, filled me with awe and veneration, although he spoke in Cherokee. He did not cultivate his abilities by imitating European nobles, none of whom he had seen; it came from his experience as a leader of his own people. And his own people had chosen him because of his merit, not because of his ancestry. I wondered what the snobbish Englishmen would think of him, whom they expected to be a groveling savage.

From my experiences with the Cherokees, I learned the value of oratory. In the United States, and even more so in Europe, popular leaders often speak loudly. But that is not oratory; that is demagoguery. The practitioners of priestcraft do it, too. Even though I could not understand the words of the Indian orators, I knew from their gestures that they referred to the sky and the land and the water and the trees and the animals, to the long past and the future prosperity of their people. The Indian orators were not aggrandizing themselves, but saw themselves as the focal points, for that moment, of what nature and history were telling us. To them, words were holy, rather than just being tools of information or to dominate other people. I was never a great orator, but since that night, in all my writings, starting with the Virginia Declaration of Rights and, later, the Declaration of Independence, I thought about what Ostenaco might have said and how he would have said it.

I do not believe I was the only American statesman who was influenced by the Indians. George Washington was a great general, but he was also a great leader of the people in peacetime. This is what the Cherokee war chiefs are like also, with the exception of that wild man down in Chickamauga. Take, for example, Chief Oconostota, who sought peace at every opportunity but fought bravely when there was no recourse. President Washington knew several Indian leaders from tribes in the north, and must have learned from them the same things, even from the ones against whom he fought, that I have learned from the Cherokees.

After Ostenaco's great speech, I ran up to him and, once I got through the little crowd of admirers, red and white, I called to him.

"Sir!" I said. "As an American, let me say that I am proud to have you represent our colony in England."

Ostenaco nodded as if he understood, but he had to get some help from a young Cherokee woman who stood beside him. He said something to her. The first words I heard from Nancy Ward were, "You must be Peter's little boy! Ostenaco thanks you. He says he will give a great speech in London, but he does not expect anyone to appreciate it. He has to depend on the imperfect translations of that something-or-other Henry Timberlake, his sponsor."

*

As I recounted these events, Mrs. Ward remembered the speech but still did not remember me.

"You looked so noble that night," I said to her. "Your calico and buckskin clothes were so nice. And you held a swan's wing in your hand."

She chuckled. "I'd show it to you now, but I think the vermin got it. Not that it matters much anymore. Back then, if you would believe it, that wing represented great authority, and my people listened to me almost as much as to Ostenaco. But those days are gone."

Chapter 3

On that night long ago, as Ostenaco retreated toward his lodgings, the woman also started to go in that direction. I glanced longingly at her. I did not know what I could possibly say to her, but I did not want to leave her. Then she whirled around and faced me.

“Remember me, Mr. Thomas,” she said.

“I could never forget you, Miss...”

“Mrs. Nancy Ward. My first husband was the Cherokee warrior Kingfisher, and my second husband an Irish trader named Bryan Ward. I have three children. My heart is for them, and for peace for all of my people.”

I, a college boy (though merely three years younger than she), suddenly felt that my life had been of no consequence.

“Do well in your classes, Mr. Thomas. Maybe you will make the world a better place someday.”

I started to say, “I certainly hope so,” when she turned to leave. She started into the darkness of a passageway between rows of poplar trees. Everyone else had left. Well, almost everyone. One of my fellow students—I have forgotten his name—jumped out of the shadows and grabbed Nancy and covered her mouth with his hand.

“You squaws can be so beautiful, some of you,” he grinned. He was short but powerful. I was tall but slight. In the dim light he must have mistaken me for a tree trunk. “Just a kiss, just a kiss,” he muttered.

Nancy tore her face free from his hand. “Do you know who I am?” she demanded.

“I know what you are,” he said, brushing his lips against her cheek.

“One word from me and your scalp will be in a warrior’s hand,” she said.

“Oh, savage!” he smiled. “I love hearing you talk savage.” He kissed her.

I stalked up to him and called him a swine or something. He let go of Nancy, but she did not flee. Both of them looked at me intensely.

“Oh, it’s the tall guy!” he said. “The tall intellectual one. Come to recite me some poetry I suppose...”

“You will soon discover I can do a lot more than that,” I told him.

He smiled and was ready to strike me, but Nancy kicked him right in his manhood. He crumpled but pretended to feel no pain. She pulled off his wig and spat on his pate. A second later, she had a knife at his throat.

“You’re a very good fighter,” he said to Nancy.

I hit him with my fist in his solidly muscled stomach. This appeared to have no effect on him. But he backed up when Nancy cut the smallest slit on his throat with the knife, releasing just a drop of blood.

“You leave right now,” I told him.

“Why should I listen to you?” he asked me.

“You leave right now,” said Nancy.

“Yes, ma’am. I got my kiss. That’s all I wanted.” He looked frightened as Nancy turned the knife blade around and around, looking at the tiny bit of blood on it.

“What’s that?” he asked. I looked confused, and Nancy did not look up from the knife blade. “It sounds like wolves!” He looked around. “Wolves, by God! I didn’t think there would be any in Williamsburg!”

Chapter 4

“So, you were the man who rescued me that night!” said Mrs. Ward as she sat down across from me.

“You might call it that,” I said. “You did most of the work, as I recall. Tell me,” I continued. “Were there really any wolves there?”

She looked up at me in surprise. “You heard them?”

“Yes.”

“Well, bless you, I don’t know. I used to see and hear them all the time. No more, though. All the same, thank you for delaying the man long enough for me—and the wolves—to do something. I know it didn’t seem like you did much. But sometimes just kicking a little bitty rock can cause a whole landslide to start. You don’t have to be strong. You just have to know what you are doing.

“And so,” Mrs. Ward continued. “You were a student at the university. Did you go on to do something good for the world?”

“I think I did,” I said.

“Glad to hear it,” she answered. She looked tired as she gathered dishes from empty tables. Then she came over to me and said, “You still willing to help me clean the place up a little tomorrow?”

“Most certainly,” I said.

“Even the chamber pots?”

“Even those,” I smiled.

“I was joking about the chamber pots. But I won’t charge you for staying here. It’s the least I can do for the man who might very well have saved my life almost thirty years ago. I hope I’ve used those years well. Nobody listens to me anymore except my grandchildren. And even they don’t know what to make of me.” Then she thought a moment. “You. You’re an educated man.”

“I am.”

“Well, then, maybe they will listen to you. Go tell them that we must always follow the path of peace.”

Chapter 5

It is now 1825, long since that day I was at Mrs. Ward's orphanage. I have heard that she has just died.

Yes, perhaps those days, when the Cherokees listened to their women, are gone, as Mrs. Ward said. But what I learned from the Cherokees has, I believe, changed the world forever, so long as the American experiment is not destroyed by foreign tyranny or by the domestic moneyed interests, who are as great a threat to democracy as any foreign power.

During my service to the United States of America, I spent a considerable amount of time in Europe—first as Ambassador to France, then as President Washington's Secretary of State, which is what I was when I stopped at Mrs. Ward's inn. Then as Vice President, then as President.

Oh, yes, the high culture of Europe. Let me tell you about the high culture of Europe! While I was in Europe, I met a great many people—kings, queens, nobility, ministers of state. Many people must be very envious of me. But the best people I have ever known about, though I did not know them well, were the leaders of the Indian nations, especially the Cherokees.

One may think that our conquest of the Indians of our eastern coastlands proves the superiority of our culture. But it proves only that we have guns and plows.

Allow me to contrast the state of nature, as seen in the Indians before we shattered their societies, with the state of high and effete civilization, as I observed it in Europe. My claim is simply this: that civilization, without the bracing wind of democracy, has caused our human race to breed itself into barnyard animals.

I mean this literally. Take any race of animals, confine them in idleness and inactivity, whether in a sty, a stable, or a stateroom; pamper them with high diet, gratify all their sexual appetites, immerse them in sensualities, and banish whatever might lead them to use their minds, and in a few generations, they become all body and no mind.

This occurs by the very law by which we breed livestock animals for our own purposes. If this process worked to transform the mighty auroch into the stupid cow, then it has also transformed noble and wild humans into creatures who can do no more than eat, procreate, and defecate. Humans and animals are no different in this respect. This is the very manner in which, over centuries, the great civilizations of Europe and Asia have bred their kings and their nobility.

A corollary to this proposal is that democracy is necessary for the mental and even physical health of a nation. Nobles breed with ladies, kings breed with queens, thus concentrating their weaknesses and stupidity as an infernal brandy might be distilled from an indifferent wine. It is necessary to allow every man to rise as far as he can by his own merit and hard work, a selection process as it were, or else the government of a nation will be a slimy scum rather than a competent and able class.

We will always have a rich upper class, but let its membrane be porous: let the stupid and defective among the rich diffuse away, and let the competent and motivated among the poor

enter in. Nature has given us many able men—and women—as well as many defective ones. But the oppressive régimes of king and nobility have concentrated the defective ones in their upper classes.

I have every confidence that America, by giving every man the vote and the opportunity to be voted for, will thereby assure its position of leadership in the world. For, after we have had a chance to grow, how can nations dominated by degenerate kings possibly compete with a nation led by its best men? Think about it. One will see that no other conclusion is possible.

Despite the fact that this conclusion should be self-evident, a claim I made for the natural rights of man in the Declaration of Independence, I will now, as do the great scientists, which includes Dr. Franklin, of precious memory, present evidence to support my claim. In what I am about to say, please remember that I have met most of the people I will now tell you about.

First, the much-revered Sun King of France, Louis the sixteenth, was a fool.

Second, the King of Spain was a fool.

Third, the King of Naples was a fool.

Fourth, so was the King of Sardinia. Not only were all four of them part of the kingly class bred by generations of stupidity, but they were all members of the same Bourbon family.

Fifth, the Queen of Portugal, of the Braganza family (as prominent in Portugal as the Bourbons were in France, the Italian cities, and Spain) not only acted like a fool but was born an idiot.

Sixth, the same was true of the King of Denmark.

Seventh, the King of Prussia, successor to the great Frederick, was a mere hog in body as well as in mind.

Eighth, Gustavus Adolphus, the great hero of Sweden, was really crazy.

Ninth, so was Franz Josef of Austria.

Tenth and finally, we cannot forget the king who lost the American colonies, George, the third of that name, king of England. He was so crazy his own caretakers had to keep him in a strait waistcoat and monitor the color of his urine. If his urine was purple, it was going to be a bad day.

As one considers these ten data, as it were, one must remember that these are just the ones that were active, as it were, recently. Historical records will easily show that the kings, queens, and nobles of the past were no better. The best example is probably King Harry, the eighth of that name, who was as close to a hog as any man, rich or poor, one could ever hope to find. He knew nothing about how to walk among men; he charged his way through them, exactly like an unfettered hog. When the Pope would not grant his divorce, he started a new church. Whenever anything did not work out as he expected, he beheaded one of his wives. He would eat, I heard, twenty-seven capons at a single meal. I imagine he needed a whole army just to haul away his privy box. King Harry was *so fat* that Dr. Newton, although he lived a century later, should have taken his mass into account to calculate the orbit of the Earth...but I digress. The point of my argument is simply this, that these royal animals had become mindless and impotent, and so will every hereditary monarchy be after a few generations.

And so endeth the book of Kings, from all of whom the Lord deliver us.

Such a thing could never happen in a tribe of wild Indians. No wonder they look so much healthier than we are, both in mind and in body—that is, except for the ones whom we have broken into abject submission and poverty. Not one of the kings or nobles, not one, could compare to Ostenaco, nor could any of the queens or the ladies compare to Nancy Ward.

And the Cherokees have embraced the attainments of our civilization, after adapting them to their own preferences. Some of the Cherokees have good cabins, enclosed fields, and large herds of cattle and hogs. They spin and weave their own cotton cloth for clothes. They have smiths and others of the most necessary tradesmen. Many of them now read and write. They are beginning to institute a representative form of government, like ours. By what right do we declare them to be savages and thereby take their land from them?

Yet it is I who has been partly responsible for the decline of the wild Indian. That was not my intention, but it was an inevitable result of my policies.

My recipe for the health of the United States of America was to create a nation of yeoman farmers and craftsmen. The farmers each raise their own food—the abler ones more, and the less able ones less. With their surplus, they support the necessary trades, such as carpenters, blacksmiths, and, I like to think, architects and surveyors such as I once was. They pay taxes but only enough so that federal, state, and local governments can preserve domestic tranquility and provide for the common defense and general welfare, as my friend James Madison wrote in the Preamble of our Constitution. And each of them votes for his representatives to said governments. I was especially pleased that our Constitution provides a way for citizens to vote for Electors, whose wisdom they can trust, and who can leave partisanship aside and debate among themselves to choose the leaders of our country. With such a sublime system in place, I foresee a time when political struggles—such as the kinds that engulfed not just me but my presidential predecessors Washington and Adams—will be forgotten. Just as I consider the Virginia Declaration of Rights to be my most lasting work, I consider the Electoral College will be the most lasting work of James Madison. This system is what the Cherokees use to select their leaders; and if they can do it, I believe we can also, since I believe white men, despite any appearance to the contrary, are not inferior to the red men.

Every man on his farm. No huge estates to be inherited over the generations. Well, that is my ideal; none of us who founded the United States actually reached this ideal. Washington had his Mount Vernon, and I have Monticello. But I believe that, in time, these will disappear. In the far distant future, dare I imagine, our nation might be like the Cherokee Nation used to be, in which all land is held in common, and no wealth is inherited.

Meanwhile, every man on his own farm. This means, of course, the new Americans need farmland, and the only way to get it for them is from the land in which the Indians live. Indians can be yeoman farmers too. They do raise corn and other crops, of course, but they demand large tracts of land in which to hunt deer. If they lived as we do, then their entire population could subsist on much less and, and they could share it with our farmers without conflict. And, thus, I

see that farms are spreading over the mountains, turning the wild forest into a domestic landscape. And some of those farms are Cherokee farms.

I am, however, a little uncomfortable with what I have started. We are destroying a grand work of nature, a work that the Indians did not destroy. I refer to the great trees of the forest. I am aware of how many board feet of lumber a large tree contains; I have done the calculations myself. One of my most vivid memories is of a horseback trip I took into the mountains with Madison. I have so many pleasant memories with this man. We laughed so hard at one another's jokes that, one evening at Monticello, James tipped back from the dining table and his chair fell backward. Ordinarily not much of a problem, except he fell against the window and crashed through it into the bushes. Only the fact that he was a small man in a big coat saved him from lacerations. That's why I had the Chinese lattice work installed on those windows. Anyway, one of the trees we saw on our trip was a yellow poplar whose trunk had a diameter of sixteen feet! These giants are almost impossible to cut down, but there are plenty of Americans who can barely restrain their enthusiasm to do so.

These great trees are daily falling victim to the cupidity of the landowners or at least to the necessity for a farmer to clear his fields. In a similar fashion, I regret to say, the great cultures of the Cherokee and other Indian peoples are falling. They are becoming part of a patchwork quilt that is of my making. Ostenaco, please forgive me. Nancy Ward, please forgive me. I would not have caused this to happen if I thought your people could survive in any other way.

I believe in the potential equality of the different races of humankind. Of course, every culture of man has those who are weak and those who are strong, those who are intelligent and those who are fools. But we must be all of one kind. How else to explain those fine people who are of mixed ancestry? Those men and women of mixed parentage are not patchworks of incompatible parts, but, if anything, they display the superiorities of each heritage. One of my slaves—her name is Sally—is a quadroon, meaning that one of her grandmothers was a slave. She is the most utterly beautiful woman you could hope to see, and as industrious and intelligent as any white woman. Why, if you saw her on the street, dressed in the finery that I provide for my daughter, you would assume she was white. Her children are octaroons and have red hair and hazel eyes. Although they have three generations of white blood, they too are slaves. The First Families of Virginia pride themselves on pure white blood, but what more is this than just for them to enforce, if only partially, the very practices that have made European kings and nobles into swine? And if a mixed African ancestry is not inferior to a pure white ancestry, then neither is a mixed Cherokee ancestry. General Martin's wife—one of them, that is—was half Cherokee. She was Nancy Ward's daughter.

I look forward to the day when all of us plantation owners can turn our slaves into free fellow citizens. You may assume this is the delusion of an old man. I would free my slaves tomorrow if I could legally afford to do so. But it is illegal for me to release them unless I can provide for them financially. One could say that us slave owners are trapped into this practice, which I denounced when in the Continental Congress in 1776 and for which I was rightly criticized as a hypocrite.

What we need in our future is a true resolution of this problem. The three-fifths compromise we worked out in the Constitution is only a temporary crutch. Many of my fellow planters are quite satisfied to use their slaves as beasts of burden, and someday they will violently object to the liberation of slaves, even if it can be done without social disruption.

What we need in our future is a hero who will liberate both the slave and the slave owner. This liberator will lead our society to, at least in this regard, resemble the traditional society of the Cherokees.

Part Thirteen: Nancy Ward

Chapter 1

One cold winter day in early 1792 a man brought five orphans with him in a wagon. The man, who appeared to be Cherokee, huddled inside deerskin robes, and the children wore only buckskin shirts and dresses. They hid down under hay in the wagon. It was a dark day, and I was in no mood to ask questions. I brought them all inside and let the other women take the children away. The man quietly confirmed that the children were orphans. The man was tall and looked as though he had once been strong, though now he limped.

One of the children was white.

When we were alone, and I watched the children retreat down the hall, the man said, "Nanyehi."

I whirled at him in astonishment. "No one has called me that in a long time," I said. "My name is now Nancy Ward."

A scarf covered his mouth, but I saw the pock marks on his forehead.

"Tsiyu Gansini!" I almost screamed. I had never before seen him without war paint.

"Please speak quietly," he said in Cherokee.

"Explain this to me," I said, using the old language.

"May I sit down?" he asked.

I quickly pushed a chair toward him and looked around to make sure no one was watching or listening. He slowly lowered himself into the chair. I sat beside him.

"I can see that your body is no longer fit for your warrior spirit," I said. It was a sad thing to see.

"That does not matter," he said. "What matters is that our little remnant band of warriors, and the few women with us, cannot provide for all the children. You may expect more of our orphans to come."

"You know I could not refuse them, Tsiyu Gansini, nor could I turn you away."

"You will not tell the Yonega about me?"

"Don't forget, I am still ghigau, and am still your cousin."

He unraveled the scarf from around his face. I was aghast at how old, tired, and hungry he looked. "Our situation is not good," he said. "We win a few raids, but every year, every month, we retreat a little more."

"Why do you not stop fighting?"

"We are not yet conquered." I detected just a hint of the old fierceness in his words.

"Not quite yet. But it will happen, Tsiyu Gansini."

"If I am captured, I will be executed, Nanyehi."

"But must you continue a war, in which warriors both red and white, and families both red and white, die—just to save your own life? A warrior gives his life for his people. He does not take his people's lives..."

"You do not need to say these things to me, Nanyehi. I did not come to hear one of your great speeches."

"Nor do I wish to hear one of yours."

"I believe I could not say anything you do not already know. I am going to die soon, Nanyehi. But when I do, I will be one of the last of the Ani-Yunwiya."

"You might be right about that." I think I surprised him by saying that.

I was about to offer him some food and drink, and even a free room in the lodge, which had no boarders that day. Only the orphanage was full. Of course, I expect he would have insisted on sleeping out in the cabin with the slaves. My slave cabins are built well, and he would have been comfortable.

At that moment one of the women ran in. "There are American soldiers outside," she said breathlessly.

This was at the best of times an uncomfortable situation. The Revolutionary War soldiers had been paid in continentals, a currency that was now virtually worthless. While I felt sorry for those soldiers, I did not appreciate the way they would sometimes stalk into my inn and expect everything to be given to them. One of the Amendments in their Bill of Rights even forbids it. At least with regard to American citizens. Which I am not. But with The Canoe in my premises, the arrival of soldiers was an emergency.

"There's a closet at the end of the hall," I told my cousin. "Hide there. When the soldiers have left, I will take you to my house. You will be safe there."

He left just in time. Two soldiers entered the room. One was an officer.

"You are the proprietress?" asked the officer.

"I am Ghigau of the Cherokee people, and also the owner of this inn," I said, shooting him the coldest stare I could.

"We know who you are," the officer said. "And since you are the Peace leader of your people, I am sure you will cooperate with us in this matter. Some people have come down this road from the direction of the Chickamauga villages, the villages that do not recognize your words of peace."

"You do not need to tell me that some people do not agree with me," I said, even more coldly.

"Have you seen them?"

"People? What kind of people?"

"Well, what other kind of people could there be from the Chickamaugas? Warriors, of course, intent on raiding white farms."

The Yonega had farmsteads mixed in with ours. And they no longer even needed a squaw wife to own land, so long as they purchased it from the tribe.

I was prepared to lie all the way to the white man's hell to protect my cousin. I am still amazed that I could answer truthfully.

“Warriors? There are no such people here,” I said. There were only orphans and a weak man who still thought he could drive the whites back across the great water. I volunteered no information about them.

“We want to look around a bit,” said the officer.

“I assume you have a warrant,” I said.

The officer started to laugh.

“Did the United States not recently adopt a constitution?” I asked.

The officer stopped laughing, surprised that a squaw would know such a thing.

“Yes, but...”

“And does this constitution not require such a warrant?”

“Well, Mrs. Ward, you have been informed just enough about our constitution to misunderstand it. You refer to the fourth amendment. But it applies only to United States citizens, one of which you are not.”

“So, if you were to ride your horse up into Canada,” I said, approaching him and piercing him with my eyes, “you would feel free to barge into a house and demand to look around?”

“Well, no...”

“Or England? Or France?”

“No, of course not. But they are nations.”

“We are the Cherokee Nation.”

“Nation? A confused band of people? In America, we have certain standards for nationhood. Do you have a constitution?”

“No.”

“Or an elected governing body?”

“No.”

“Or a Supreme Court?”

“No. But do not be surprised if, before very long, we do. You talk as if we are savages, officer...” He did not tell me his name. Perhaps he thought I should not know too much about his visit. “But look around you! Our houses, our farms, are very much like yours. Where are the savages you seem to think we are?”

“In the Chickamauga towns,” said the officer. “And, we have reason to believe, hiding here in your *very* civilized and *very* elegant inn.”

“You will come back with a warrant. You will treat us as a nation. This is, in fact, what President George Washington does.”

He had nothing to say to this.

“President Washington,” I continued, “has invited leaders of our Nation to a peace conference. He will treat us with respect. If your president does this, can you do less? And if so, by what authority? It is your Senate that has the right to ratify treaties, I have been told. They are not a part of your military, but are elected by the people, as your president is.”

I was quite aware that the white settlers disliked, and in some cases detested, President Washington. The settlers wanted to take Cherokee land whenever they wanted, while the federal government insisted that all frontier arrangements be made by treaty. The local whites openly complained that one King George had been replaced by another. The argument that I had just made would not have worked well with the settlers coming in from Georgia and the Carolinas, or pouring into the territories of Kentucky and Tennessee, but both I and the officer knew George Washington was his commander in chief.

The officer knew I had won the argument. He dropped his challenge and said, "And so I assume that you, Mrs. Ward, being a...whatever you said you were, I assume you will be a party to this peace conference?"

He knew the peace conference would just be a show, a ceremony for taking away more of our lands, whether farmed and civilized or not.

"No," I said. "There is no great need for me to go. Your General Martin can speak for your side of the question, and my daughter, Mrs. Martin, can speak for ours."

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Elizabeth Martin."

"And I will bet that you—what did you say your name was?—will not be a party at that conference. If you are lucky, you might be able to watch it." When I smiled, the conversation was over. The soldiers turned to leave, not daring to wish me well.

When the soldiers were gone, I walked swiftly and quietly to the closet where The Canoe was hiding.

"My hatchet was ready," he told me.

"Ready to bring on your own death, and mine?" I asked.

"I said only that it was ready."

"You must stay here long enough to eat and rest. Since they suspect that you are here, or at least someone from your band of warriors, you should hide in my house. There are plenty of places. I have a pantry and a closet. You could even hide under my bed, but you would have to share that space with my elegant new porcelain chamber pot."

"I've been in worse places than in the company of a chamber pot."

I smiled. "And then we must figure out how to get you back home."

"Home is here, Nanyehi, and back in Chota."

Beloved and vanished Chota.

"Well, then back to your camp. I am good at helping prisoners escape. Don't you remember a certain Mr. Isaac Thomas? And if I would do this for my lover, will I not do it for the son of my beloved dead uncle? I will do it," I said, "out of mercy for you."

"No speeches, remember, Nanyehi?"

"No speeches. So, which is it? Pantry or closet or chamber pot?"

"The pantry will do."

"All the easier to find food, which you need to eat, and which you need to take. I just happen to have some kanuchi. Not as good as Tame Doe's, but it will remind you of the good times of the past. And choose what you want to take with you."

"How much?"

"You will see some empty boxes in the back of the pantry. You may fill them and close them up. Tomorrow, you will slip behind these boxes in the wagon that you brought."

The next morning, I sat with my cousin in the slave cabin, and we ate some cornbread and bacon.

"Do you have any ghigau in Chickamauga?" I asked him.

"No, Nanyehi. You are the last one. And remember," he said, putting down his cornbread and looking into my eyes, "this means you are still a warrior."

"We agreed to not have any speeches," I said. "But I think we do need to have this conversation. Tsiyu Gansini, as I have said to my people for all these decades, the white man's heart beats the same as ours, and the same sky covers us."

"Everybody knows what you believe," he said. "But you are wrong. The white men are evil."

"Even your friends MacDonald and Cameron?"

"Very well, I see your point. Most whites are evil."

"You also see my point, that judgment must be made upon individual people, not upon the color of their skin or upon their ancestry."

"This is a war," he said. "I wish I had time for fair trials. But, you have not responded to my point. I said you are still a warrior. What, exactly, are you fighting against? Or for?"

I had to think about that. "I am fighting against whatever is destroying our people. Right now, my way of doing this is to help these orphan children."

"So, you do not fight against soldiers. Someday, I admit, the white soldiers will win. What, then, will you fight for?" he asked.

"Our land," I said. "I will continue to tell our people to not sell our land."

"Very good, Nanyehi. Your weapons are words. And what else will you fight?"

Again, I had to think. "Once the wars are over, the settlers and plantation owners will take over. They will enslave us, just as they have the black people. But the whites are slaves also."

"Explain this to me, Nanyehi."

"Nearly every white person I have met is enslaved to creditors. Banks. Everything they do is to scrape together enough money to keep paying back their debts, with interest. Only they die without ever having finished. I hear this from many white visitors who come to my inn."

"There, Nanyehi, is your fight. To liberate our people, as well as the white people, from being enslaved to banks and to the other great corporations that rule the whites. Don't you see? The first whites who came to this continent represented private interests, European investors. They were privateers with royal charters, not royal armies. Those came later. And even now, this new American government is in debt for the costs of their war of independence. The moneyed incorporations rule them and will soon rule us."

"I can't do anything about it," I said.

"That does not sound like Nanyehi the ghigau who fought at Taliwa."

“No, it doesn’t. Do you have any suggestions?”

“In the old days, our people held all land in common. We had very few possessions of our own. This is still the way we live in Chickamauga. The more that you can help people, red and white, to be independent of the corporations that want to enslave them, the more permanent good you can do. You are a warrior against the big corporations that are the enablers of white man’s greed. And *this* war, I believe, will continue forever into the future.”

“So, you mean that, by working for peace, for charity, I am waging a war against the forces of evil?”

“Yes, Nanyehi.”

And that is how I came to understand that I was a warrior just as much as my cousin. He used bullets, I used words. By helping my people, I was preventing them from being the victims of the white man. I may not succeed any more than he. But we will both have the honor of warriors, for all generations.

“I just have one more question,” I said. “Who is the white child?”

“The daughter of John MacDonald. She is not an orphan, but MacDonald feels she is in danger at Chickamauga.”

“Who is her mother?”

Tsiyu Gansini, The Canoe, smiled. “Thank you for reminding me. I have a message I am supposed to deliver to you. If you ever see someone named, what did she call him, William Bartman, something like that, to tell him that Tsisqua says hello and may the Spirit bless him.”

I had my granddaughter write a letter to Dr. Bartram, but I do not know if he ever received it.

Later that morning, Dragging Canoe, the gallant warrior, the scourge of the frontier, was hiding in a crate behind boxes of food in a wagon that began the long, slow journey to Chickamauga.

Chapter 2

That wagon that arrived at my orphanage in 1791 was the first of several loads of orphans we received from the Chickamaugas, but it was the last time I saw Tsiyu Gansini. A little over a year later, in 1792, he planned another raid. He and his soldiers danced all night and drank black tea and had visions. My cousin never did anything meekly. Dancing vigorously all night is not a very good idea for a man of sixty. The next morning he was dead. He was despised by the Americans, but respected. Governor Blount of Virginia said, upon hearing of The Canoe's death, "He stood second to none in his nation." Maybe, by dying in dignity, Tsuyi Gansini was indeed the last of the Ani-Yunwiya.

I had great hopes for the success of the peace delegation and its visit with President Washington. Most of the great chiefs are dead, except Hanging Maw, in whom I had full confidence. On June 12, 1793, the delegation was at Hanging Maw's house, preparing to leave for Philadelphia. Without warning, some white men attacked the house. Their leader was an army captain, John Beard, but they acted without the army's permission. The white men shot and severely wounded my beloved daughter, Elizabeth. Her body never recovered; her spirit died.

Beard was court-martialed but the local people pressured the army into exonerating him because, after all, neither my daughter nor the Cherokees who lost their lives were, in their eyes, human. The delegation never left for Philadelphia.

My war is over.

Epilogue: Elizabeth Hilderbrand Pettit

A lot of good it has done us.

It is 1834. My great-grandmother, Nancy Ward, died twelve years ago. We always called her Ulisi, Grandma. My real grandmother, Betsy Martin, was shot by a white man. She survived but died before her mother. So Ulisi had to take her place in our lives. I have fond memories of her. She was a great woman. They say that when she died, a light floated up from her body into the sky.

But she was wrong.

Her cry was all for peace. And her sigh was all for peace. She practiced peacemaking by means of sex. She was the squaw wife of my Irish great-grandfather, who had a white family. Not only that, but twice—once in 1776 and again in 1780—my grandmother told a white man of an impending Cherokee attack. Both times, it was the same white man, her lover Isaac Thomas. With him was Ellis Harlan, who became the third husband of Nancy's Cherokee daughter Ka-ti, who started calling herself Catherine. And my grandmother Betsy was the squaw wife of General Joseph Martin, who had a white family in Virginia.

These marriages were for economic and political advantage, especially my grandmother's. My grandfather, Joseph Martin, was the Indian agent for the state of Virginia. His position literally saved Nancy Ward's life on at least one occasion, when she fled to the agency at Long Island after the white soldiers destroyed her town, Chota. Beloved and vanished Chota. She had cows, which she gave to the white army. Some of my fellow Cherokees still consider her a traitor, but it saved her life and allowed her granddaughter, my mother, to grow up unharmed during a time of war. It also made our family rich, by Cherokee standards anyway. I admit that these marriages also helped to promote peace. Who knows how much more slaughter and destruction there might have been in our nation, had these women not been intimate with the English and Americans?

My family continued to marry the whites. My mother, Nancy Martin, married Michael Hilderbrand, the son of the man who built the first flour mill in Cherokee country. Another granddaughter of Nancy Ward, Nancy Harlan, married my father's brother, Peter Hilderbrand. Both of these marriages also brought great financial benefits to our family. And I cannot doubt that Nancy Ward's hand was involved in these arrangements.

Uncle Peter and Aunt Nancy are one of the richest couples in the Cherokee Nation. They have a big house on the Ocoee River, made of beautiful, sawed timber, including baseboards of fine walnut wood two and a half feet wide. He does a brisk business supplying the travelers on the portage from the Ocoee River in the north to the Conasauga in the south.

Because he has married into the Wolf Clan, Uncle Peter (despite being German) is Cherokee, and his advice is taken seriously by the Council. He is a nice man. Even though he has a big house, he prefers to live in a little log cabin that he built out back. He has large cornfields, but he has never sold any corn. He uses it to feed his slaves, and he often gives corn away to hungry people in our nation.

Times are changing for our people. In 1826, we adopted a system of writing invented by Sequoyah. He did not simply use the English alphabet to spell out the sounds of our language but invented entirely new symbols for our unique syllables. This is something no other tribe has done.

That was also the year we began printing our tribal newspaper, another unique accomplishment of our tribe. When Rev. Worcester set up the printing press, he substituted some of the English characters for Sequoyah's symbols, simply for the sake of convenience. The bits came with the press, so why not use them? They are just different enough to confuse the Americans. Our tribal name, Tsalagi, looks like CWY to them.

Our newspaper, the *Cherokee Phoenix*, is published out of our capital, a resurrection of old Chota. We call it New Echota, in the northern part of the land claimed by the state of Georgia. Our tribal leaders, like Major Ridge, Stand Watie, and his brother Buck Watie, who changed his name to Elias Boudinot, are proud of what they consider a rebirth of our tribe, like the phoenix bird.

Then in 1827 we adopted a constitution similar to that of the United States. Surely, our leaders say, now that we have farms just like Americans, slaves just like Americans, livestock just like Americans, a written language just like Americans, a newspaper just like Americans, and a constitution just like Americans, certainly they will accept us as their civilized equals? I believe this has always been our family's vision. And it was mine as well.

I know that it will not work. The whites look right at us, see how civilized we are, and still call us savages. Even skin color will not influence their judgment; I am only one-eighth of Cherokee blood and could pass for a white woman if I chose to move into Georgia or the Carolinas. They see our farmland and want it for themselves. They see our gold mine in Dahlonega and want it. I truly grieve if there are any other Indian nations like ours whose land has deposits of gold. I believe the Americans will take the land from each of these tribes, just as they will take ours.

And in 1830, the United States Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. It was the crowning achievement of President Andrew Jackson, who would not have even survived the War of 1812 had not our warriors joined with his soldiers in a battle against the Creeks. Jackson was lying stomach-down on a horizontal tree trunk, vomiting and with diarrhea, while our warriors fought his battle for him. I have often wondered what would have happened if our warriors had killed Jackson instead of saving his miserable life. Probably nothing. Some other white man would have done the same as he. We would still have had an Indian Removal Act.

Nancy Ward had been dead for eight years when Congress passed the Act. It would have broken her heart to see this happen. In the four years since the Act, many Cherokees have already emigrated to Arkansas Territory, what the old people still call the Darkening Land. Some of them, such as the rich Hicks family, moved as early as 1817.

The rest of us have remained where we are, waiting for the outcome of the Supreme Court case. Our lawyers, led by our new young chief John Ross—who, like me, is only one-

eighth Cherokee—are arguing before Chief Justice Marshall that the government of the United states has no authority to force our removal.

In the end, however this case turns out, it will make no difference. When have the Americans ever done the right thing toward our people? They always insist on just a little more land, except on those occasions when they insist on a lot more. It will be only a matter of time before the Americans have all of our land.

This is what Nancy Ward warned us would happen. She tried so hard. But her compromises did not work. She might as well have joined Dragging Canoe and fought to the bitter end, for all the difference it made. At least Dragging Canoe had dignity. Of course, had it not been for the way the whites oppressed us, there would have been no reason for Ulisi to compromise. So, ultimately, it was the fault of the whites. We are a conquered people.

There is another way in which the Americans have conquered us. We women used to have an important voice in all the decisions of our Nation. But now we are as powerless in our society as American women are in theirs. Inheritance of possessions, what few we had, and of children, used to be through the clans—that is, through the women. But since 1825 we have had male inheritance. We have democracy, but only men can vote. If women are the chattel of men, and Cherokees the conquered people of the whites, then what are we Cherokee women? Much good our consorting with the whites has done us.

My great-grandmother was a squaw wife, and so was my grandmother. And in 1829 I became one also.

James Pettit seemed like a decent white man. I accepted his offer of marriage. We had a nice farm in McMinn County, Tennessee. He went on long trips, but then every trip is a long one. Then one day, while he was gone, one of his friends came to tell me something. One of the Harlan boys.

“I don’t mean to cause you no trouble,” he said. “But I think there’s something you ought to know.”

I braced myself for bad news.

Young Mr. Harlan scratched his whiskery jaw and could not look me in the eye. “You know how Jimmie is gone so much of the time?”

I knew right then what he was going to tell me, aside from the details. James Pettit had a white wife and family in Mississippi.

I did not have to confront James with the news. I went straight to our local elder and told him. As it happened, the Cherokee Council had recently passed a law prohibiting bigamy. Its main intent was to prevent Cherokee men from having multiple wives, as they had in the old days, but the law applied equally to everyone living in the Nation. The elder took the news to the Cherokee Council, down in New Echota. When James got back from one of his unexplained journeys, the men from the local farms met him and told him that his wife was suing him in the Supreme Court of the Cherokee Nation.

He tried to deny the facts, but there was an affidavit from Mississippi. He tried to plead ignorance. I agreed that he was, indeed, ignorant but that this was irrelevant to the case. I was the first, and remain the only, woman to have sued her husband in the Cherokee Supreme Court.

I won. The farm and all its improvements are now mine. I showed them who was a squaw! And it is a good farm. I am set up well, to all appearances, for comfort, though not wealth, for the rest of my life. Andrew is six years old. Yes, I named him after Andrew Jackson, who in 1828 still looked as if he might be a friend of the Cherokee people. What was I thinking? James and I had a girl we named Minerva, who is now four years old. And even now, once in a while, James comes around to speak endearingly to me. He gets no further than the gate.

I have no homeland. The Americans talk about what they call Manifest Destiny. Their preachers claimed that God revealed all truth in the Bible, and then they started saying that God had revealed, or manifested, a new truth that was not anywhere in the Bible: that the destiny of the United States, God's chosen nation, was for its territory to stretch across the continent, even to the shores of an ocean I will never see in the west. How many other Indian nations there must be who will be chewed up by the Americans? By American law, I have no Cherokee homeland, nor am I a citizen of their homeland.

Little Minerva runs around all the time, not unlike Nancy Ward back when she was a little girl called Nanyehi. Only instead of running around in the woods and following the nunnehi and the animals and the birds, Minerva's world is farms and wagons and white trade goods and white cities not far away from here, where white people, that is, people just slightly whiter than I, swarm like grasshoppers or hornets.

Nancy Ward became a ghigau, a warrior woman, and lived a life of bravery. But little Minerva will not have a chance to become a ghigau. Nancy Ward was our last ghigau. We will, I fear, have to walk a long road westward, taking only what we can carry or, if lucky, put in a wagon. And when we get to the new land, we will find other Cherokees, like the Hicks family, who have already gone and taken the best land for themselves. If I am wise like Nancy Ward, I will see to it that Minerva marries into one of the rich families that already have land west of Arkansas. But we will be lucky if we simply survive the journey. For me and my children, heroism will consist merely of survival.

One evening recently I was walking back from checking on the cows and pigs. A yellow full moon floated like a scalped head in the blue sky. It had been raining, but the clouds had cleared. I looked into the woodlot and saw what I thought was a dog. It was white and seemed to glow. A wolf? It was all alone. Don't wolves run in packs? As a member of the Wolf Clan, I wanted it to be a wolf, but it was probably only someone's old dog. The look in its eyes was sad, its fur bedraggled. It slunk into the bushes and was gone.

Author's notes on *Nancy's War*

I grew up hearing about my Cherokee ancestry and my descent from Nancy Ward, but I knew almost nothing about it. It was not until I saw an early performance of the musical *Nanyehi, Beloved Woman of the Cherokee*, by Becky Hobbs and Nick Sweet, that I experienced the full impact of the story of Nancy Ward. Nothing that I have written here would have even crossed my mind had I not seen this musical. In turn, Becky relied extensively on the historical and genealogical research conducted by David Keith Hampton. I have also relied on David Hampton's work in all three of the novels in this series. My work was entirely inspired by them, and to them I dedicate these novels.

Most of the events are historical, including the names of the principal characters. Even most of the words of the speeches by Nancy Ward and by Tsiyu Gansini are from history. I made up a few things such as the soldiers searching Nancy Ward's orphanage. But she really had an orphanage. I made up the part about Tsiyu Gansini holding a knife to her throat, but I did not invent the conflict.

Nancy Ward was my sixth-great-grandmother.

Much of the plot comes from the book by Pat Alderman, *Nancy Ward, Dragging Canoe*, which David Keith Hampton tells me is fairly reliable. I took almost nothing from the vapid novel *Wild Rose of Cherokee* (subtitled *Pocahontas of the West*), by E. Sterling King, and even less from the fantasies of Sam J. Slade in *As Long as the Rivers Shall Run*. In both novels, the racist authors were not even able to make Nancy Ward a full-blood; they pretended she must be the half-blood daughter of a Cherokee woman and a white man.

The Cherokee held all land in common, recognizing ownership only of buildings, tools, etc. Their communism, unlike that of Marx or Lenin or Mao, actually worked.

There are numerous places in this novel where, if it is ever made into a movie, would benefit greatly from *Nanyehi*, the musical written by Becky Hobbs and Nick Sweet. The main places are the following:

- Nancy Ward in the moonlight outside of her orphanage: *Pale Moon*.
- Tsiyu Gansini confronting the white man farming Cherokee land: *This Land is Not Our Land* .("This land is not our land, it's only ours to use, it don't belong to me, it don't belong to you").
- Tsiyu Gansini's passionate speech calling for a united Native war against white settlers and the American government ("There's no white life worth a-savin"): *There Will Be Blood*.
- At the end, of course: *Let There Be Peace*.

Here are numerous other notes on this novel:

- My cry is all for peace: Nancy Ward's most famous quote.
- Chattel is not slavery. But it does mean that the person does not have economic control over any of his or her possessions. This legal custom continued at least in Oklahoma into the twentieth century. My Cherokee mother told me my father actually owned all of her assets.
- White hunger to own and consume land: I am reminded of the words from the musical *Nanyehi*, in which Tsiyu Gansini sings, regarding the whites, "You have a hunger that will not die, You must take everything, I don't know why."

- Ancient Ones: now called the Mississippian culture or the mound builders, who had a few large cities in places such as Cahokia (Illinois), Spiro (Oklahoma), and Etowah Mound (near Cartersville, Georgia). It was not clear to later tribes, such as the Cherokees, why the Ancient Ones had vanished. It was probably because their empires, like all empires, collapsed.
- Huge nuts: Huguenots.
- Flowers that looked like bells: genus *Halesia*.
- When I saw Hispanic laborers in a vegetable field near the border with Mexico, I saw men running to the overseer to have their baskets weighed.
- In the absence of reliable information, I may not have been accurate about Attakullakulla's costume.
- Little rings in the rocks: crinoid fossils.

Tsisqua: Little bird or animal

Saloli: squirrels

Talala: woodpecker

Tsigwogwo: robin

- The Battle of Taliwa, in Cherokee tradition, occurred pretty much as I have described it.
- The red stone was from Pipestone, Minnesota, which was famous among many tribes in the trading network that encompassed much of the continent.
- A time to build... Ecclesiastes.
- Cold blue wind: in Cherokee symbology, each of the four winds has a color.
- Richard Byrd story (Part 6) is true, and the Francis Marion quote is verbatim. And Cherokee script, developed later by Sequoyah, does not have capital letters.

Tsiyu Gansini (Part 7):

- The vine is *Rhamnus caroliniana*, the rattan vine. Other vines do this, too. Vine branches wave in the wind and grow around whatever they encounter, which might be other branches from the same vine. It is no miracle, and may not even be an adaptation, for them to grow together.
- The Bible passages are from Ecclesiastes.
- Some historical details are from the books *Emissaries of Peace: The 1762 Cherokee and British Delegations*; *The Memoirs of Lt. Henry Timberlake*; and *Culture, Crisis & Conflict: Cherokee British Relations 1756-1765*, all published by the Museum of the Cherokee Indian Press.
- The Tsiyu Gansini speech is very close to the original.
- Appropriate music for this section: *There Will Be Blood*, from the above-cited musical *Nanyehi*.
- Starting with the oldest: Jesus and the woman who was to be stoned.

Lydia Bean (Part 8):

- Rescue from burning at the stake: This sounds like a cheap plot, but it really happened.
- Redness only she could see: infra-red radiation.
- Appropriate music: *We All Want the Same Thing*, from the musical *Nanyehi*.

William Bartram (Part 9):

- William Bartram was a famous botanist who traveled in what is now the southeastern United States. This story, however, did not really happen. There was no such place as Green Hollow. He

really did find one population of *Franklinia*, just before it became extinct, but he did not find a second one.

- Whites really do produce a rank body odor absent from Asians and Native Americans.
- Actually a few American plants have begun to spread through Europe, most famously black locust tree *Robinia pseudoacacia* and the Virginia creeper vine *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*.

The events in part 10 really happened, though I invented the Stanhope character. Nancy Martin was my ancestor.

Part 10: Nancy Ward and the moon. *Pale Moon*, in the musical *Nanyehi*. A quote from Ecclesiastes again.

Part 11: The meetings between Thomas Jefferson and Nancy Ward are fictitious, but Jefferson really did hear Ostenaco's oration. And many of Jefferson's words, including his descriptions of pitiful European nobles and royalty ("Take any race of animals..."), come from a letter he wrote in 1810 to Governor John Langdon. He really did use the word priestcraft. I just made up the reference to King Harry. But Jefferson really did write, "and so endeth the book of Kings..."

Part 12: The secret meeting between Nancy Ward and Tsiyu Gansini is fictitious, as was her hiding him. But the Cherokees really did have, within three decades, a constitution and a supreme court. The peace conference with George Washington did not occur, because the Cherokee delegation was attacked by a white militia, as described, and its leader (Hanging Maw) was killed. My ancestor, Betsy Ward Martin, was injured but not killed. The white army instigator was put on trial and acquitted.

Epilogue: The outline of the story is true. My third great grandmother, Elizabeth Hilderbrand Pettit, was the first and only woman to sue her husband for bigamy in the Cherokee Supreme Court, in 1829 (as described in Theda Perdue's *Cherokee Women*). She won, but seven years later was on the Trail of Tears, leaving her home and property behind. The Cherokee Supreme Court ceased to exist until it was re-formed in Oklahoma much later. She took her daughter Minerva, my great-great-grandmother, with her on the Trail. She is the main character of the next novel, *Elizabeth's Exile*.

Other tribes who lost their land due to gold besides the Cherokees at Dahlonega: California tribes in the Gold Rush; Lakota for Black Hills gold; and today, Amazonian tribes.

About the author

Stan Rice is the internationally celebrated author of six books of popular science. He got his Ph.D. in plant ecology at the University of Illinois in 1987, and held several academic positions until he retired from Southeastern Oklahoma State University as Professor Emeritus of Biological Science. His writings are acclaimed for their insight and humor, especially the Creationist Funhouse series in the magazine *Skeptical Inquirer*. His science and religion blogs and his YouTube channel (StanEvolve, in which he is Charles Darwin) have collectively had a million and a half views. You can connect to his publications, including novels and stories, at his author website <https://stanleyrice.org/>.



No part of this book has been produced by or with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence. Everything is based on the author's direct knowledge, insights, and experiences.