THE MAGIC TRAIL

GRACE MOON

Title: The Magic Trail
Date of first publication: 1929
Author: Grace Moon (1877-1947)
Illustrator: Carl Moon (1878-1948)
Date first posted: May 4, 2026
Date last updated: May 4, 2026
Faded Page eBook #20260507

This eBook was produced by: Al Haines, Cindy Beyer, Stephen Hutcheson & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at https://www.pgdpcanada.net

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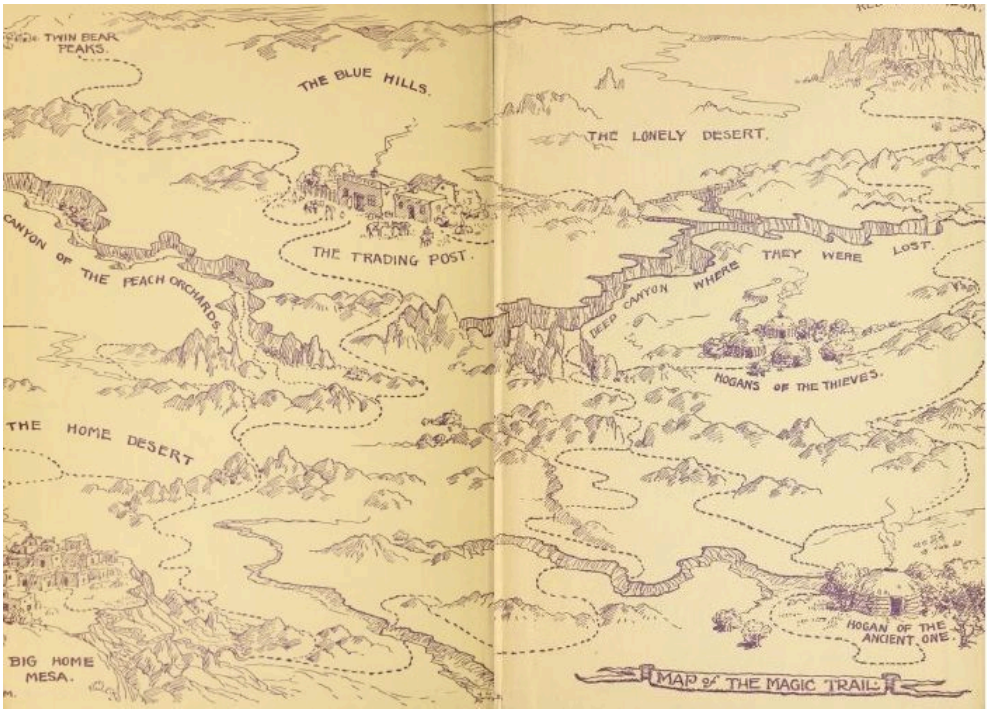
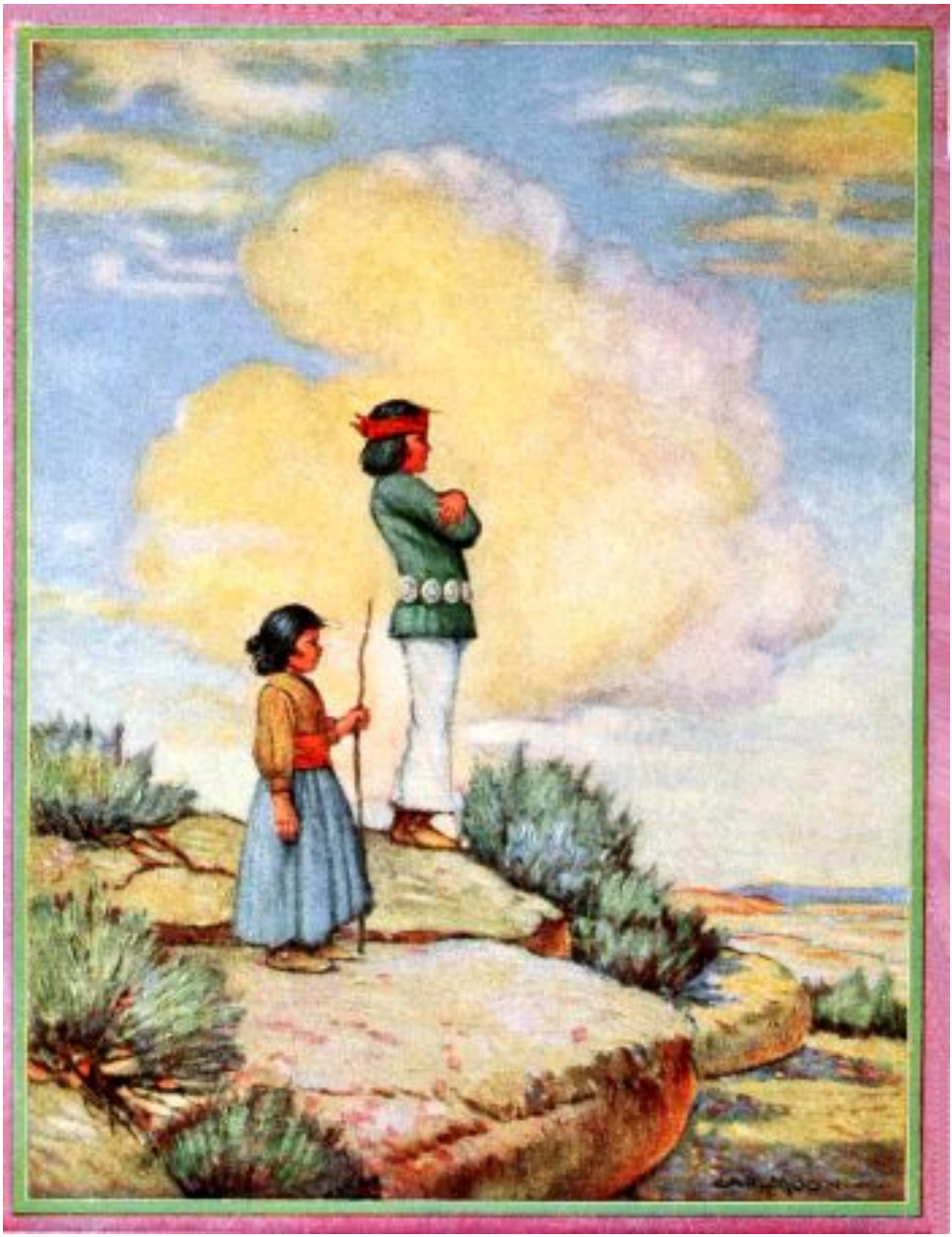

TWIN BEAR PEAKS.
THE BLUE HILLS.
THE LONELY DESERT.
CANYON OF THE PEACH ORCHARDS.
THE TRADING POST.
THEY WERE LOST.
DEEP CANYON WHERE
HOGANS OF THE THIEVES.
THE HOME DESERT
HOGAN OF THE ANCIENT ONE.
BIG HOME MESA.
MAP of THE MAGIC TRAIL

THE MAGIC TRAIL

BOOKS BY

GRACE AND CARL MOON

LOST INDIAN MAGIC
INDIAN LEGENDS IN RHYME
CHI-WEÉ
CHI-WEÉ AND LOKI
NADITA
THE RUNAWAY PAPOOSE
THE MAGIC TRAIL



Yazhe and Kawani look for the Magic Trail

THE MAGIC TRAIL

BY GRACE MOON

ILLUSTRATED BY CARL MOON

THE JUNIOR LITERARY GUILD

NEW YORK 1929

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES AT
THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS
GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

TO

ETTA PETTIGREW JOHNSON

Whose love and enthusiasm have
always been an inspiration to
me, I lovingly dedicate
this book.

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THE MAGIC TRAIL

THE MAGIC TRAIL

CHAPTER I

HOW IT BEGAN!

A trail leads over the desert wide,
Miles and miles to the other side—
O'er hills and rocks and shifting sand,
A magic trail, to a magic land!
And if you like adventures gay
You'll follow the little trail to-day
Away
and
away
and
away
and
away

AWANI did not know that adventure crept nearer and nearer to him this day. He would have laughed if anyone had said it. Kawani was Indian and all his life had taken the things of each day as they had come, without thinking beyond that.

To-day had begun just as other days for him, with the sun dancing on the walls of the stone houses of the high pueblo on the mesa top where he lived and the children and little dogs playing in the dust as always. He had walked out from the house of his mother and stood on the edge of the mesa near the little trail that went winding steeply down into the desert, and in his mind was little thought but of the good taste of the seed cake that he had just eaten.

Even when a big boy ran out of a doorway and called loud words to him Kawani did not at first think that more than a usual thing had happened. But at the words his face grew red and an anger flamed in his heart. He stood quickly up against a high rock and held out his fists in a way that anyone could understand. The big boy stopped in front of him, and he understood very well those fists—and hesitated.

"Not ever," cried Kawani, and he said it in answer to the words the boy had called to him. "Not *ever* was there a father good like my father was good!"

"Yah!" said the big boy, but he said it from a safe distance in front of those fists. "How can you know things about a father that you cannot remember?"

"My mother tells me. *She* can remember, and she tells me that he was good, so it is a thing that I know. If you say again that he was not good I will fight you!"

"Why did he go away, then?" insisted the big boy. "A good father stays home and brings food."

It was true. Kawani knew that it was true, and he thought hard what he should say in answer. He did not know why his father had gone away, but there must be always a good reason. This day and every day boys cried out to him about his father, and the things they said made an ache place to come in his heart. It was long ago—before he could remember—that his father had gone away, and no one knew why he had gone. Day after day his mother watched for his return, and even in the night darkness many times Kawani had seen her standing in the doorway, black against the stars, waiting—always waiting!

And now women passed by their house with strange looks in their eyes, and the men said nothing out loud, but the boys shouted things to Kawani that made him angry and hot and then they ran away before he could fight them. They said that his father was lazy; that he would not work for food, and that he had gone away to some place where he had only himself to feed.

Not always had the mother of Kawani lived on the mesa top where now they had their home. Once, long ago, she had lived with her own people, the Navajo, in a hogan in the desert—a hogan that smelled ever of fresh mesquite smoke—with soft blankets on the beaten-earth floor, and the bleating of many sheep coming in at the door. But she had married a man from the stone pueblo and had gone with him to live high on the rocky mesa, and there Kawani was born. He loved the stone houses with their flat roofs and many ladders leading up and down, and the melons and corn and fruits drying in the sun, and he loved the song of the women grinding corn, and the strings of meat and chili peppers hanging on the walls; but more than all else he loved the desert spread far below. The desert that seemed to stretch away to the very edges of the earth, with its queer twisted trees and low-growing brush, and its rolling, low hills and sandy washes and strange-shaped rocks and buttes and the sharp blue hills far away on the horizon. The desert called to Kawani all day and all night, and sometimes he

wondered if it had called so to his father until he had had to go. It was so strange about his father—always he had been kind and good and had worked as the other men had worked—until that one day when he had gone away down the trail without a word to anyone, and no one had seen or heard of him since that time. But still the mother waited, and Kawani felt very sure that he would come again.

Kawani was brown and straight as a little pine tree, with eyes that could laugh with the wind and shine with the sunlight, and black hair bound back from his forehead with a band of red. He was only twelve, but those twelve years of life on the mesa and in the desert and cañons had taught him many things. He knew when there was rain on the breath of the wind though the sky gave no smallest shadow of cloud, and he knew where lay hidden the best pastures for sheep. Many times he had kept sheep for his mother before the long, dry season had come, but now there were no sheep, and the pastures were gray with dust. He could read every smell of the desert and could tell the hour of the day by the shadow pools under the dusty sage. He knew the little animals that ran close to the ground and those that lived in the rocks of the cañons and how to trap them, and the call of the hawk and the high-flying eagle. He knew the time when the piñon nuts popped out of their little cones, and where to find water when the rain pools had gone. Things like these the white men do not know and cannot teach in their school places. Kawani knew that only life in the desert can know that crystal tang in the morning air that could make him throw back his head and laugh out loud to the shining sky, or bring that leap to his heart that came when the first gold from the sun shot over the far-distant hills and touched the mesa top, turning it into a magic thing.

All these thoughts had passed so quickly through the mind of Kawani that still the big boy stood in front of him and waited for an answer to the things he had said—and now Kawani gave that answer:

"When he comes back you will know why my father went away. He will come back very soon and will bring things better than all the things in this town. You shall see! Here there is *nothing* like those things he will bring!" He hoped fiercely that what he said was true, but the big boy did not hear his last words, for just at this moment three other boys shouted loudly to him from the top of the trail that led down the side of the mesa, and he ran quickly to them without so much as another look at Kawani, and the four of them were gone before he could draw a breath.

"I'm glad you did not have to fight him," said a small voice so close to his side that Kawani gave a little jump. "He was very big, and his fists

looked to be hard like stones, and besides, what he said was not a true thing. A father is good, always."

She was very small and very solemn looking. A mite of a girl who looked up at him with big black eyes that seemed almost as large as her face, and a mop of tangled black hair blowing every way in the wind. She wore a ragged little dress that reached almost to the ground, and a twinkle came into her eyes at his look of surprise, but her lips did not smile.

"I was behind that rock," she said, for she knew Kawani was wondering where she had been all this time. "I am very little, and no one saw me. But I think you are brave, and I know your father will come again."

Kawani stood up straight and looked down—very far down—at her.

"How do you know a thing like that?" he asked, and he could not help the sound in his voice that told he did not believe her words.

"I know very many things," she said solemnly, and she nodded her head and folded her arms like a little old woman, but there were sparkly, dancing lights in her eyes. "They call me Yazhe" (Little One) "and *outside* I am little but inside I am big—like the wind—and I can *do* things. And that is why I like you—I know how you can do things, too."

Kawani opened his eyes very wide at that.

"In what place do you live?" he asked. "I think never have I seen you before this time. And how can you know the things that I do?"

She laughed now at the look in his eyes.

"Here is where I live," and she stamped a little foot. "Here on this very mesa. Maybe you have not seen me, but I have seen you—more than *this* many times," and she held up the fingers of both hands.

"What house is your house?" he asked curiously, and she looked down quickly and pushed the dust of the street with the toe of her shoe and did not answer.

"I know," he said suddenly. "You are the one that lives in the witch house, and they say that your——"

"It is not true!" she interrupted fiercely. "It is not a true thing that they say. They make talk about my grandmother like they do about your father. It is not true talk—my grandmother is *not* a witch!"

It was Kawani who looked down now, and he was ashamed of what he had been about to say. It was true that the grandmother of Yazhe was called a witch, and she lived in a house on the very edge of the mesa, not close to the other houses. Queer things were told of her, and many believed them. How she knew much more than other people and could hear all that was said on

the mesa top, and how she could fly on the clouds when the moon was dark and could talk with the animal brothers of the desert. Kawani wanted very much to ask Yazhe about these things, but something would not let him say the words now.

"I know where your father has gone," said Yazhe suddenly, "and it is not a witch thing to know that. My grandmother has told me, and she has told me many things. It is on the Magic Trail that he has gone. Things happen on the Magic Trail, but always those that go come back. Some day *I* will go that trail and see what those happen things are."

Kawani stood very straight, and a tremble of excitement went through him.

"Did your grandmother see my father go?" he asked, and his voice was sharp with eagerness.

"Maybe she saw him," said Yazhe cautiously. "She has not told me that. But if I was a boy—a big almost man boy like you—I would go on that trail, too."

There was a strange look in the eyes of Kawani.

"Do you know where it is—that trail? I have not seen it. Can you show me the place?"

Yazhe was silent for a little.

"My grandmother tells like this you must go. In the night, before the very first dawnlight, you must make a prayer at the shrine place. With feathered prayer sticks you must make it—and then take in your hand two, maybe three, of the feathers and go to a high rock in the desert. When you see a very little pink where the sun will come you hold high the feathers and make again a prayer for the Good Spirit to show you where to go and then blow hard the little feathers with all the breath that is in you, and the ones that come down again will show to you the Magic Trail. Maybe it is not a see thing—not at the very first—but if you follow straight it will lead you. My grandmother tells that, and she knows because she has been on that trail."

She could fly on the clouds when the moon was dark.

"Ai-ee!" said the mother of Kawani when he told her in a little while the words of Yazhe. "You must not listen to Chindi talk. Magic is for the men of the Medicine Lodge—only in the Kiva do they talk like that. Your father

will come back"—she sighed when she said that—"he will come—but it will not be a magic thing."

But for Kawani the mesa was now a different place, and all things he saw gave him thoughts that he had not had before. Why had he never thought that he might go out into the desert to see for himself where his father had gone? And why had he thought that always he must stay in this one place, while out there, over the Magic Trail, things were happening—perhaps wonderful things? His eyes grew big in speculation as to what those things might be.

Men had come back from far-away places with great tales to tell—of curious animals and new tribes of men, of wonderful treasure and strange ceremonies—and those who came back were treated always with respect and given a place of honour in the Medicine Lodge.

The very toes of Kawani began to tingle with a desire to go. Here on the mesa top he was nothing, and his mother had less than all the other women. The blankets in their home were thin, and there was no wool to weave new ones nor any money to buy. And the dinner in the iron pot grew less each day. If he went away perhaps that dinner would be enough for his mother, and he would come back and bring her—oh, wonderful things he would bring her! But there came another thought—would she let him go?

He wanted very much to talk to someone about it, and just at the very moment the thought came into his mind he saw Yazhe running down the street. She called to him as soon as she was near, and there was a worry sound in her voice.

"My grandmother has gone away," she said breathlessly. "I do not know where she has gone, and there is no food in the house."

"She will come back," said Kawani. "Always they come back when it is the time for food."

"It is that time now," said Yazhe quickly. "For a long time inside of me there is a hungry place bigger than the outside part," and she stopped and smiled wistfully up at him.

"Come, my mother will have piki bread for you," said Kawani; "and maybe there will be peaches—it is the time of peaches."

Yazhe did not wait for him to say more but gave a little dancing skip and walked gladly at his side.

Never had Kawani seen such a happy look in the face of his mother as she gave him when he walked in at the door while Yazhe waited outside for what he would bring.

"I am glad you have come," cried his mother. "There is good news to tell. To-morrow I go to the orchards in Cañon Largito to pick peaches. For many days I will be gone, and they will pay me well. Perhaps weeks I will be away, but you will have food, my son. Nawa, our friend, will cook your food, and you will sleep here as always. You cannot come with me, as they have all the ones they need to pick peaches and will feed no more. Ai—but it gives me a happy feeling to think that now we will not be poor—not for a time."

Kawani looked at her strangely when she said these things. There were wild thoughts in his mind. With his mother away could he not go down that Magic Trail and return again before she came back—return with money so that never need they be poor again? It made him feel old like a man to think things like that, and when he brought seed cakes and a piece of dried meat to Yazhe her eyes grew big at the look in his face.

"Tell me," she said. "Tell me what has happened."

"Come down to the spring place," he answered in a low voice, "I will tell you there."

And when Yazhe heard what he had to say she danced on the tips of her toes for joy.

"Always if a good thing is to happen it is like that," she cried. "The Good Spirit makes everything to go right. Now you will go on that Magic Trail, and when you come back there will be many things to tell to me."

"And if your grandmother does not come back soon *you* will eat the food that Nawa will cook. I will tell her"; and Kawani felt that *he* could dance on his toes as Yazhe was doing, only he could not quite let himself do it. A man must be very strong and quiet, and others must not know that on the inside of him his heart is dancing. But suddenly he grew very grave as a thought came to his mind.

"Do you think—" he said slowly to Yazhe, and he frowned down at the rocks about the spring as he said it—"do you think that it would be a wrong thing to do—to go away when my mother does not know?"

Yazhe nodded quickly.

"I think—oh, yes—that would be a wrong thing. But now she will let you go, you will see—if you will make a promise to be back very soon—now that she will not be on that mesa, too. But tell me, Kawani, is there anywhere one that you know—where you can go to see, away from here—one who lives out there in the desert?"

"My uncle is Navajo and he has sheep in the desert—over there," and he waved his arm vaguely toward the far blue hills.

"That is where you can go," cried Yazhe, and her eyes grew big with excitement. "When you have gone on the Magic Trail you will go there, and your mother will let you do that. Always you can go to the place of your uncle—that is a thing that anyone knows."

"But it is far," said his mother later when Kawani spoke to her eagerly about it. "The house of my brother is a great way across the desert, and never have you been over in that part."

"But look how I am big," and Kawani stood straight and tall as he could make himself; "and Keeto, my pony, will take me there very safely. I am not afraid of the desert, and maybe—" he let his voice go so low that his mother had to lean forward to hear—"maybe I will see my father and tell him how we wait."

When he looked up at his mother he saw that her eyes were very dark with sparkly lights in them, and her voice was not steady and strong when she answered him.

"Be very sure to come back, my son," she said, and then she turned quickly and walked out of the room.

"I told you!" cried Yazhe, when he had said to her his mother's words. "I told you how she would say you could go—and now—it is for you to make those feathered prayer sticks."

"I have no feathers," said Kawani. "And why—I wonder—are always feathers on those prayer sticks?"

"My grandmother tells me that prayer thoughts go always to the Good Spirit, but the feathers are just to show to others that you make prayer. And I know the place, Kawani, where you can find those feathers—*many* feathers. It is the nest of an eagle, and if you will come I will show you."

Already she was running eagerly away toward the desert, around big rocks that stood at the foot of the trail, and Kawani followed her as fast as he could go, but always she ran faster than he and kept far ahead.

And that is the way the adventure began for Kawani—but not yet could he tell that it was adventure!

CHAPTER II

THE EAGLE'S NEST

Up in the rocky crags so high
The eagle builds his nest.
The cañons echo to his cry,
And round him golden arrows fly,
Shot from the golden west!

"HI!" CALLED Kawani after Yazhe as she ran. "You cannot take things from an eagle's nest. Eagles fight—that is a thing everyone knows."

"There is no eagle in this nest," laughed back Yazhe over her shoulder. "It is an old, old nest. For long I have known where it is. I think there are feathers, but there is no eagle in this nest. Look!" she cried after a little, and she was pointing up to a place on the rocky side of the mesa. "It is up there—that place that has the look of a big bush. It is very steep to get to it, but you can climb rocks—all boys can climb."

"Yes," said Kawani, and he was breathless from running, "I can climb anywhere if there is a place to put my feet"; and he went scrambling up the rocky wall without another word. It was even steeper than it looked from below, and he soon went more and more slowly. Yazhe was watching eagerly from below.

"You can climb very well," she cried. "I cannot climb so fast. Soon you will be there."

But he was not there very soon. After a little he came to a place where he could not seem to go any higher. Yazhe saw him stop, and held her breath to see what he would do, but this time she did not speak. He looked carefully at the face of the cliff and leaned back as far as he could to look up to the high place where he could just see the bunch of sticks and leaves that was the nest of the eagle. Then he put his feet very carefully on places that stuck out a little from the side of the cliff and pulled with one hand at a small twisted bush that grew in the rock. He found it strongly rooted, and before Yazhe knew what he was doing he swung down from the bush and found a new footing for his feet, then he went on again more quickly than before.

"Are there feathers?" cried Yazhe, and she was dancing on her tiptoes with excitement. Kawani had reached the eagle's nest and was looking carefully inside and reaching with his hands. He did not hear Yazhe and leaned far down over the nest. "Are there feathers, Kawani?" she called again, and then, even from where she was, she could see that his eyes were shining when he leaned over the rocky cliff to call to her.

"I have found a thing!" he cried. "Almost a magic thing, it is. Hold out your dress. Quick, Yazhe—hold it out and I will throw it!"

Wonderingly Yazhe did as he asked and held her little skirt to catch what he threw. AND THEN A THING HAPPENED!

Just as she felt that something small and hard fell into her dress a figure darted out from a rock and made a grab for it, pushing her down into the dust. It was a boy who had been watching from behind a rock.

"That is mine!" he cried, and caught the small object from her skirt, and then he was off through the sage like a rabbit. Yazhe cried out as loudly as she could, and Kawani came scrambling down from the cliff, almost falling in his haste, and completely forgetting about the feathers.

"He took it from me!" cried Yazhe, and she jumped up from the ground and started after the running boy. She could run as fast as he could, but he had a start that he had gained before she got to her feet.

Kawani reached the bottom of the cliff and came as quickly as possible, but he was so far behind the other two that he felt he never would catch up.

"Stop!" cried Yazhe. "That is not yours. You have the thing that belongs to Kawani." She could not say more than that, for it took all her breath to run so fast.

The boy looked back once in a while over his shoulder, and Yazhe did not like the look in his face, but he did not say any words, and he did not run any slower.

The ground was very rough just here, with great clumps of sage and large and small rocks of all kinds. There were holes, too, made by prairie dogs and other small animals, so that those who ran must dodge this way and that, as if they played at a game. But still the boy kept just about the same distance ahead, and Kawani could not catch up even to Yazhe.

"Do not stop," he called to her. "He must not have that thing." And just as he said that the strange boy slipped on a small stone that rolled under his foot, and he fell on one knee, and quick as a flash of light Yazhe was on top of him. The very force of her running against him plopped him down on his face, and she sat promptly on his head, not taking care to sit easily; but he pushed her off and was up almost instantly. Yazhe threw her arms around

him and held as tightly as possible, but he was strong and struck at her fiercely. They had not time for words, and the sound of their quick breathing could be plainly heard.

By this time Kawani had come very close, and he called out angrily when the boy struck at Yazhe.

"Hi!" he called. "You are an evil one to strike a girl. Stop! I will beat you if you do that!"

But Yazhe did not mind. She was very greatly excited and held so tightly to the boy that Kawani caught up to them, and then she let go and Kawani caught him by the arm.

"Give me that thing!" he cried. "It is mine—it is of my father!"

The boy did not answer, but struck at Kawani, and they went down in the dust locked together. He was a big boy and strong, and they fought together like two wild animals, and Yazhe could not tell for a little which would win.

Over and over they rolled in the dust, striking and kicking until they looked to be all arms and legs, and as they rolled near to her at one time Yazhe saw a small blue object fly into the air and fall a little distance away, and she picked it up, hardly thinking what she did.

The fight came quickly to an end when Kawani's head struck sharply on a small rock and he lay for a short moment dazed. The big boy jumped instantly to his feet and was off through the sage again, running like a cloud shadow when the wind is high.

Yazhe leaned over Kawani with a startled little cry in her throat, but he jumped up almost as quickly as the boy had done and looked after him with trouble in his eyes. He was breathless and tired from climbing and running and knew that he could not catch him now.

"Is this the thing that you found?" asked Yazhe suddenly, and held before him the little blue object she had picked up from the ground.

Kawani caught it eagerly and cried out with surprise as she explained how it was and when she had found it.

"Look!" said Kawani. "My mother has told me about this. My father had two like this and wore them in his ears. They are blue sky stones" (turquoise), "and see the little arrow he has drilled into it here. That arrow is for me—that is my name. The meaning of Kawani is 'Living Arrow.'"

"But how did it get into that nest of the eagle?" asked Yazhe with eyes wide with wonder.

"That is a thing we do not know. Maybe never will we know that. But sometime I will find the other one of these, and then I will know I have

found my father." And he tucked it carefully in a fold of his belt.

"Something tells me that you will find him—that father—on that Magic Trail," cried Yazhe. "Something tells me that. And now we have no feathers."

"I will get them," said Kawani. "There are many feathers in that nest there. That boy will not come back. By this time, I think, he has run almost to the other side of the world. Come, we will get the feathers now." And they started back toward the rocky cliff and the eagle's nest, and they laughed as they ran.

Kawani made tiny bows and arrows when he got his feathers, and he put an arrow in each bow and feathered it with down from the eagle's nest, and then he carefully put them in the shrine in the rocks where his mother made prayer to the Great Spirit, and then he waited for the night to come.

His mother went that day to the peach orchards in Cañon Largito. She rode away in a rickety wagon with others who were going to the same place, and they were all very happy to think that there was work to be done and that they would bring home money to buy many things that they needed. The mother of Kawani left many words for him to have care if he went out into the desert, to the hogan of his uncle, and to come back before the time was long. And she left food for him with Nawa, and he felt very queer when she rode away from him with a smile in her eyes that did not tell of the lonely little ache in her heart. But when he was left alone in his home Kawani felt an excitement that grew greater and greater as evening came.

He did not see Yazhe again after he had made the prayer sticks, and there was no one to whom he could talk about the Magic Trail; so only in his thoughts could he wonder things, and bigger and bigger grew those wonder thoughts as the sun went down.

He made a bundle of as much food as he thought he could carry—piki bread and dried meat and dried apricots and a few seed cakes his mother had made, and then he took a blanket and a jar for water that he would get at the spring, and when dark had come he started down the trail.

He felt strange and queer going down that trail in the dark. Not ever had he gone away at night without his mother, and it seemed as if he walked into a world that was new and different—a place where he had never been before. The rocks on the trail seemed to be things listening to him and waiting quietly until he had passed to turn and look at him.

There were very few lights in the pueblo, and he knew that soon all who lived there would be sleeping. Almost unconsciously he walked as silently as possible, holding his breath and listening for any sound that he could

hear. From far out over the desert came the howling and barking of coyotes, and somehow they made him feel even more lonely than before, and he hurried his steps down the trail, almost running as he neared the end.

The moon came up in a little while, big and red and full, and he was glad for the extra light it gave him.

The shrine where he had put his prayer sticks was near the spring, and he went there first, before he filled his jar with water, and gathered the soft little feathers in the palm of one hand.

When he had done that he felt that he could hardly breathe with the excitement that grew in him. Soon he would know where that Magic Trail began, and then he would follow—on and on—to things he did not know.

He filled the jar with water at the spring and walked the little way to the corral where his pony was kept. Keeto was a very nice pony, the colour of buckskin, and Kawani could not remember the time when he had not had him. He could run faster than most ponies, and Kawani was very proud to own him. The thought had never come into his mind to sell Keeto—he did not think of a pony as being a thing with a price in money. He was a friend and companion, and he loved him almost as dearly as he loved his mother. He did not feel so lonely now when he had one arm around Keeto, who seemed very surprised to see him at this time of night and made little welcome nicker sounds that said as plainly as a pony could talk, "I am glad that you are here, but I do not understand the reason."

Kawani put the blanket on Keeto and tied his food and water jar firmly with pieces of thong, though he frowned when he looked at the water in the jar and knew very well that it would soon splash out with the jumpy running of the pony. He wished now that he had brought a bottle, but he had not thought of that up on the mesa top and he would not go up that trail again, not for many bottles.

He wondered how much of the night had gone now and looked up at the moon to see if it had moved.

A strange sound in the rocks made him turn his head quickly and listen. It was as if someone moved softly, trying not to be heard. A rock clicked sharply as if it had been kicked by an unwary toe, and then all was quiet again. Kawani stood as still as a shadow and listened. There was no sound now, but he felt as if eyes watched him in the dark, and his heart began to beat more quickly.

"Who is that?" he called, but he did not make his voice very loud, and there was no answer. He did not call again, for the sound of his own voice in all that silence was a thing he did not like. He listened for what seemed a

very long time, but the sound did not come again, and then he began to look for the high rock from which he would blow his feathers.

There were many tall rocks out a little way from the mesa and he chose one that he knew he could climb. It had a flat top, and after hobbling Keeto at its foot he climbed to the top and sat down to wait for the hour just before the dawn.

The cry of the coyotes seemed to come nearer and nearer, and then just below the rock where he sat Kawani heard again the sharp sound of one stone falling against another and looking quickly down he saw a shadow moving.

He caught his breath and tried to see what it was that moved, but the moon did not give much light in between the rocks, and the thing seemed to have no shape that he had ever seen before. If it was an animal it was strange that Keeto gave no sign of fright, and it was strange that he did not give some call now that he always did when those he did not know came near.

"Kawani!" came a very small voice then from close beside the rock, "Kawani—it is Yazhe. I—I—have no fear—no fear at all—but—but—it is lonely here and dark."

Such a relief feeling came to Kawani that he felt very much like laughing. He did not know now what were the thoughts that had come into his mind when he had seen that shadow thing moving below him, but they had not been happy thoughts, and he was glad now that they were gone. Why had Yazhe come? But it did not matter. She would go back up the trail when dawn had come, and he would ride away on his pony as a brave should do—as always braves had done.

Yazhe scrambled up the rock while he was thinking these things, and then she sat down beside him as if this had been a thing all decided long beforehand, and it *was* very much nicer to have someone who knew what he had in mind to do.

"I want to go on that Magic Trail," said Yazhe, like a flash out of a blue sky. "That is why I have come. A big pony like your pony can carry a little one like me very nicely."

"No," said Kawani quickly. "You cannot go. Your grandmother would have worry thoughts and——"

"My grandmother has gone away," broke in Yazhe. "She does not come back, and I cannot live all alone—and besides I want to go on that Magic Trail. *Always* I have wanted that, and now I can go."

"You cannot go," insisted Kawani. "I cannot take a girl—a little girl like you. Girls cannot go places like—like *men* can go."

"*I* can," said Yazhe. "Maybe *other* little girls cannot go—but I am me, Yazhe—and you could not go if I did not tell you how to go. You will not mind—at all. If you do not look you will not know I am there. See how I can be quiet," and she sat for a moment without a sound; while Kawani wriggled uncomfortably trying to think of a thing to say at this very unexpected happening.

"And I can *do* things," went on Yazhe eagerly. "I told you how I can do things—and I eat very, very little. And there is a thing to tell you!" she added excitedly. "A big thing. A man came this day and told how there are to be races at the Trading Post at little Oaks—pony races, and for a prize a bag of money."

"Keeto can go fast," said Kawani suddenly. "He can go fast in a race. How much money did the man say?"

"Oh, many dollars." Yazhe threw open both hands. "More than *this* many—he said so. And I want to see those ponies when they race. Look how there is a little place over there in the sky where it is not so dark. Where have you the feathers, Kawani?"

Kawani felt his face go red and was glad it was dark so that Yazhe could not see.

"I—I will get them," he said almost under his breath, and climbed hastily down the rock to where Keeto was standing, for in the excitement he had forgotten the feathers and they were wrapped in a little bundle with the food on Keeto's back.

Yazhe did not smile, but when he came back on the rock again there was a little twinkle in her eyes that he could not see in the darkness.

"I think now is the time," she said quietly, and Kawani stood up straight on the rock with his face toward that little light place in the sky and raised his arms.

He felt very solemn now and the desert looked very big and very strange in the pale light that began to creep over it from the east.

Kawani blew the downy feathers with all the breath that was in him.

He tried to say words out loud, but the thought of Yazhe listening would not let him make more than whispering sounds. But the prayer thoughts were in his mind, and he asked very eagerly to be shown the way to the

Magic Trail—and then he opened his hand and blew the downy feathers with all the breath that was in him.

A gust of cool wind took the feathers and blew them lightly into the air—whirling higher and higher—and then they scattered and two or three floated softly down toward the ground.

Kawani turned and scrambled down the rock.

"Quick!" he called to Yazhe. "We must see where they go," and as quickly as he she followed down the side of the rock and ran to the place where the feathers were still blowing uncertainly near the ground.

Yazhe was dancing with excitement now.

"It is that way!" she cried, and her little face was a-sparkle with eagerness. "It is the way of the Trading Post. Oh, Kawani, we will see the ponies race."

Kawani waited only to see the feathers were truly safely on the ground, three of them, pointing in a very straight line just as Yazhe had said on the trail to Little Oaks Trading Post. Then he ran to Keeto and took the hobbles from his feet, and when he looked up from that Yazhe was sitting on the pony's back, very comfortably on the blanket he had fixed there. It did not seem possible to Kawani that she had had time to climb up there, and he had not heard a sound, but there she was, sitting as if always she had been there, and Kawani knew in that moment that it would not matter what he said or did, if he himself went on that Magic Trail Yazhe would go, too. So without another word he climbed up to Keeto's back, and Yazhe put her arms tight about his waist. Then, with a little clucking sound to the pony, they were off like the wind on that Magic Trail.

And Kawani heard behind him a little sound—a very funny little sound—like a chuckle. But he could not be sure it was that, and he did not turn to see.

CHAPTER III

THE RACE

I love the smell of the desert air,
The clear, cold air at dawn,
The tang of the sage and the mesquite smoke
When the mist of the night is gone.
I love the feel of the desert wind
And the whispery things it tells,
The rustle of leaves from the jack-oak trees
And the clatter of piñon bells.

THE pink place in the east grew larger very quickly and spread to the tops of little hills and flat-topped buttes, and then the well-known smiling face of the desert began to show itself and Kawani shouted aloud the joy that was in his heart to be flying over the Magic Trail on the back of Keeto, and he did not mind now that Yazhe was there, too. He would not be lonely now, and Yazhe was more like a boy than like a girl—except in looks.

Now there was a rosy glow on the dusty sage and on the twisted piñon trees and on the rocks and sand, and there were long blue shadows soft as smoke, and the air was like liquid crystal and tasted good to the mouth and nostrils. Yazhe laughed when there was nothing funny to see and even Keeto kicked up his heels and sent tiny pebbles and sand flying in clouds after them, just because it was good to be alive and to be on the Magic Trail in this desert of dawn.

And then they began to see other living things besides themselves: little gray rabbits that kicked up their heels and acted just as friskily as Keeto did; and coyotes, like shadows creeping from bush to bush; and in the distance, keeping timidly far away, they saw deer and antelope more than once. And as the sun grew warmer tiny lizards and horned toads came out and watched them with jewelled eyes as they rode swiftly past. It was a laughing world—a world of golden sand and turquoise sky. And Kawani and Yazhe thought joyously of the things that could happen in a world like this—and they were on their way to those things.

"Never have I been on a trail like this one," shouted Kawani. "See, Yazhe, how the desert is different. It is a right thing to call it a Magic Trail, and surely only good things can happen in this place."

But just then a thing happened that was not very good. They had seen for some time a horse and rider that came nearer and nearer on a trail that rode into theirs, and now he came so near that they could see who it was that rode, and it was the big boy who had tried to run away with the sky stone of Kawani. He made a face when he saw them and gave a big kick to his horse.

"Yah!" he called out. "You have a slow old horse that cannot run. If you go to those races they will make a laugh at you. See how my horse can beat that one." And he slapped his pony with his hand and made him to go faster than Keeto was going.

"Don't make Keeto to race with him," said Yazhe in a low voice in the ear of Kawani. "Do not look at him at all, and he will go away. He has bad looks, and I do not like him." But Kawani did not listen to her; he kicked Keeto with his heels, and they caught up with the big boy and went a little way ahead of him, and then they flew over the desert neck to neck, and even Yazhe felt the excitement of it. The big boy kept slapping his horse and kicking his ribs and shouting to him to make him go faster, but he could not go quite so fast as Keeto.

The air flew past their ears with a buzzing sound, and Yazhe twisted her hands into the belt of Kawani so that she would not fall off.

And CLIPPETY—CLIPPETY—CLIP, they went, over rocks and sand and sage —and then, suddenly—*down* went the horse of the strange boy, and over his head he shot and landed like a sack of corn right on the top of a big bunch of sage!

"Oh!" cried Yazhe. "Maybe he has a hurt"; and Kawani pulled Keeto quickly to a stop to see. The other pony had stepped into a prairie-dog hole, and it was a great wonder that his leg was not broken; but it was not, and he was as good as ever, and the boy was not hurt but he was very angry, and his face was as red as a chili pepper when he turned it to them.

"My horse would have beaten your horse if that hole had not been there," he said. "I will show you how he can beat you, if you go in those races. And I know how you are a thief to steal a thing that is mine. I will take that thing from you when I am ready to."

"I have nothing that is yours," cried Kawani, "and I am no thief. I will fight you now to show you I am no thief."

But the boy only gave a very ugly laugh and got on his pony and rode away on a side trail.

"I do not fight little-girl boys," he called back over his shoulder, and after that, for a while, Kawani did not think that desert was such a nice place. All the rosy light had gone from the hills, and the air was not so clear and good to taste.

"Big boys when they are afraid talk like that always," said Yazhe. "Many times I have heard them. That is fear talk, Kawani, and you are brave because you did not say ugly things. I know you could fight him and beat him—it would be an easy thing—and in the race you will show him how Keeto is fast."

Kawani did not answer, but he was glad Yazhe was here to say things like that—it helped very much.

Then others began to ride into the trail to the Trading Post—all sorts of people and ponies and wagons; and some called to them and made jokes and laughed a great deal.

"It must be that those races are going to be very big," said Yazhe, and red places came into her cheeks at the exciting thought. "I think maybe there will be many prizes and good things to eat. Always there are good things to eat when many people come."

"I am hungry now," said Kawani suddenly, and he reached for his little package of food.

"Um—m—m!" said Yazhe when he had given her some of the food. "When I am big I will make seed cakes like these."

The water had all splashed out of the jar as Kawani had thought it would do, but it did not matter, for just as they grew thirsty they came to a big wagon waiting by the side of the trail, and in it a very jolly woman was feeding a great many children, and as she saw Kawani and Yazhe she called to them and held up some piki bread and a jar of goat's milk.

"Hi!" she called. "Little ones cannot ride without food. Come here and I will play for a little that I am your mother. Come here and eat. See how we have food enough here for all the world."

They were very glad to stop, and when Yazhe got down from the back of the pony she felt as if she had no legs at all and walked in such a funny, wabbly way that all the children in the wagon laughed at her, and she could not help giggling herself, and when the woman gave her a piece of piki bread with a chunk of stewed rabbit wrapped up in it she felt as if she had known all of them all her life, and the jolly woman put an arm around her and gave her a big hug. Kawani, too, was grinning until his teeth shone white, and the woman made him very happy by pretending that she had thought he was only a boy when she first saw him, but now she could see

plainly that he was a man; and she gave him a man-size piece of rabbit to eat and a jar of milk as big as his head.

A little boy in the wagon held up a bow and arrows that he had made, and a little girl shyly uncovered a doll she held in her arms. It was made of a piece of yucca wood wrapped in a little rag, but it was very precious to her, and Yazhe nodded brightly when she saw it.

"That is a very nice doll," she said. "In my home place I have a doll, too."

"Where is your mother?" asked the woman suddenly. "How is it that you are here in this desert with your mother not here?"

"I have no mother," answered Yazhe quietly, "Not ever have I had a mother, but I have a grandmother—a very good grandmother—but she has gone to some place, and I do not like to be alone."

The woman caught her swiftly in her arms.

"I will be your mother," she said, and her eyes had wet drops in them. "Come to my home and be my little girl. There is a big hogan—over there where the foothills begin. See, how I have many little ones and much food and there are sheep for you to care for—and long wool to comb, and pretty dyes to mix. It is nice in the desert, and you will like it there."

But Yazhe went close to Kawani and caught hold of his arm.

"I am with him," she said in a low voice. "We—we will go to the Trading Post, and then maybe to other places."

"And after that?" questioned the woman. "After that will you come to my hogan in the desert?"

"After that," answered Kawani for Yazhe, "we will go back to the home mesa. Yazhe is now my little sister—I have no other little sister, and my mother will be glad. She will live in our house, and maybe that grandmother will come, too, and live in our house."

"That is well," nodded the woman, and she put her hand kindly on the head of Kawani. "That is well for her to have a big brother like you to have the care of her. But remember always that hogan in the desert has a door that is open for the both of you."

"I think you are good," said Yazhe, and she put her face against the woman's arm. "I like you, and sometime I will come, maybe, to that hogan to stay for a while."

The woman smiled and nodded, and all the children in the wagon had smiling looks for Yazhe and Kawani as they got on the pony again and rode away.

"We are coming near to the Traders' now," cried Kawani in a little while. "See how all the roads are black with people."

"It is like a big town walking," laughed Yazhe, "and the noise is like wind when it blows down a cañon."

Even Keeto pricked up his ears and seemed to like all the noise and excitement, and when they came to the Trading Post he nickered to other horses as if they were old friends.

Kawani had been before to this place with his mother, and he left Yazhe at the store while he looked for water to give to Keeto.

"The races will be in the morning," he told her. "I think maybe you will sleep here on my blanket. I will find a place on the porch, maybe. And here is food," and he gave into her hands the blanket and food that he had brought, and then he rode away on Keeto.

Yazhe put the things in a corner of the store and looked around curiously. There were many things she had never seen before. Piles of cloth stuff on big wooden benches and saddles and bridles and blankets hanging everywhere. Great sacks of grain and coffee and flour were on the floor and bright little boxes of things on shelves. Then, under a big glass place were silver bracelets and chains and belts and many blue sky stones, and there were good smells in the air—of bacon and coffee and ripe peaches and apricots. It was a wonderful place, and Yazhe felt that she never could see enough. Strange crowds of people came and went every minute, too. Men and women and children, mostly Indians, but a few white men among them, and they did not once look at Yazhe, and not once did she see a face that she knew.

Then she went outside the door to the wide wooden porch where there was even more noise and confusion than inside the store. Jingling horsemen rode up every moment—more and more of them—and big wagons with canvas-covered tops filled full with women and children. It made her just a very little homesick to see them, especially as it was getting near to the supper hour now, and Kawani had not come back.

He had been gone a very long time, she thought, and she stood on her tiptoes on the porch place and tried to see if he was coming in all that crowd of people; but she could not see him, and even when it grew very dark and the lamps were lighted in the store and she could see little camp fires twinkling everywhere out in the night and hear people talking and laughing as they ate the evening meal—even then he did not come.

Worry thoughts began then to come to Yazhe. What could keep Kawani so long away? She was afraid to leave the store and hunt for him for he

might come while she was gone. So she just waited there and looked with a big question in her eyes at everyone who came in. After a very long time there were not so many people in the store, and Yazhe knew that it must be late; and then the man who kept the store began to lock his windows, and she saw with a little feeling of panic that there was no one else in the whole place but the man and herself.

At first she thought she would ask him if she could sleep in her little corner, and then she saw, and it gave her a queer feeling to know that it was so, that the man did not know she was there. She was sitting on her blanket in a very dark little corner behind a big barrel of apples, and she was such a tiny spot in that place of shadows that he had not seen her at all. He locked all of the windows and turned out the lamps—all except one—and she was so glad that he left that one light, for it gave her a very shaky feeling to think of being there alone in that place in the black darkness.

Then the man went out through the door and locked it after him, and Yazhe sat as quiet as a little mouse and wondered and wondered why Kawani did not come.

The noise of people coming into the store awakened her suddenly, and she realized that she had been asleep and had slept all through the night.

The sun was shining like liquid gold outside, and Yazhe felt hungry as a bear. She ate some of her food and did not trouble to stay still now in her corner, for the store was crowded with people, just as it had been the day before, only now there was even more noise and excitement as the time for the races drew near.

Yazhe looked eagerly around for Kawani in the store and then out on the porch, and just as a very big fear thought began to grow bigger in her heart she saw him coming through the sunshine, and very suddenly it seemed that all the world was a new, happy place.

She ran to meet him through all the other people and called out as loudly as she could:

"Oh, how I am glad that you have come! I thought never you would come, Kawani!" But he did not look up and smile as she thought he would, and when he got to the porch he sat down as if he were very tired.

"Keeto is gone," he said in a dull voice—a voice that was not like Kawani. "I do not know where he has gone, and I do not know who took him."

"Oh," said Yazhe, and then she could not think of anything more to say. If Keeto was gone he could not be in the pony races, and how would they ever get home, back to the mesa again? Her eyes grew big and dark at the

thought, and then she noticed that everyone was running over to the place where the races were to be held.

"It is time," she said to Kawani. "Look how they are going to the races. We must go or we will not see them."

"I do not want to go," said Kawani, and Yazhe had not heard him talk like that before. "I am hungry and very tired, and not ever do I want to see a pony race. Where is that food? I am very hungry."

They went inside the store to the little corner where the blanket still lay, and now the place was empty again; even the storekeeper was not there to see that no one stole things.

Kawani ate as if he were almost starved.

"All night I have walked," he said. "When I took Keeto to get water I stood by him while he drank, and then suddenly someone, I could not see who it was, threw a rope over his head and rode away on another horse, pulling Keeto along with him. I followed quickly, but it was such a sudden thing that they had gone a little way before I knew what kind of a thing it was that happened. They went very fast, and I ran as quickly as I could and called to Keeto many times, but always they got farther and farther away. Out in the desert they went to a place that is strange to me, where there are many big rocks all looking alike; and it is easy to get lost there—and I did get lost. For many hours, I do not know how long, I wandered around in that place and called to Keeto, but he was gone. It was night then, and it has taken me all this time—until the day—to find the way back to here. That is why I am tired, and that is why I do not want to see that pony race."

"Oh," said Yazhe again, "that is a very bad thing. How I have a sorry feeling for you, Kawani. Now we will think of things to do. Keeto is a very good horse and he will not stay with other people. I know how he will come back to you. But that is a queer thing that they took him away."

"I think maybe it was that boy who always takes what is mine," said Kawani. "Maybe, but I do not know."

"Listen to the noise they make at the race place," cried Yazhe. "You stay here, where you can have a rest, Kawani, and I will go and see why it is that they make so much noise."

Kawani was very glad to sit down on the blanket, and Yazhe ran swiftly to where the biggest crowd of people was. There was much cheering, and she could tell from the cries that a race had been won.

"Was that the big race?" she asked a man on the edge of the crowd.

"Yes," he nodded. "Over there is the pony that won it—he is very fast—but there is a big prize—a bag of money. If you will run maybe you will see

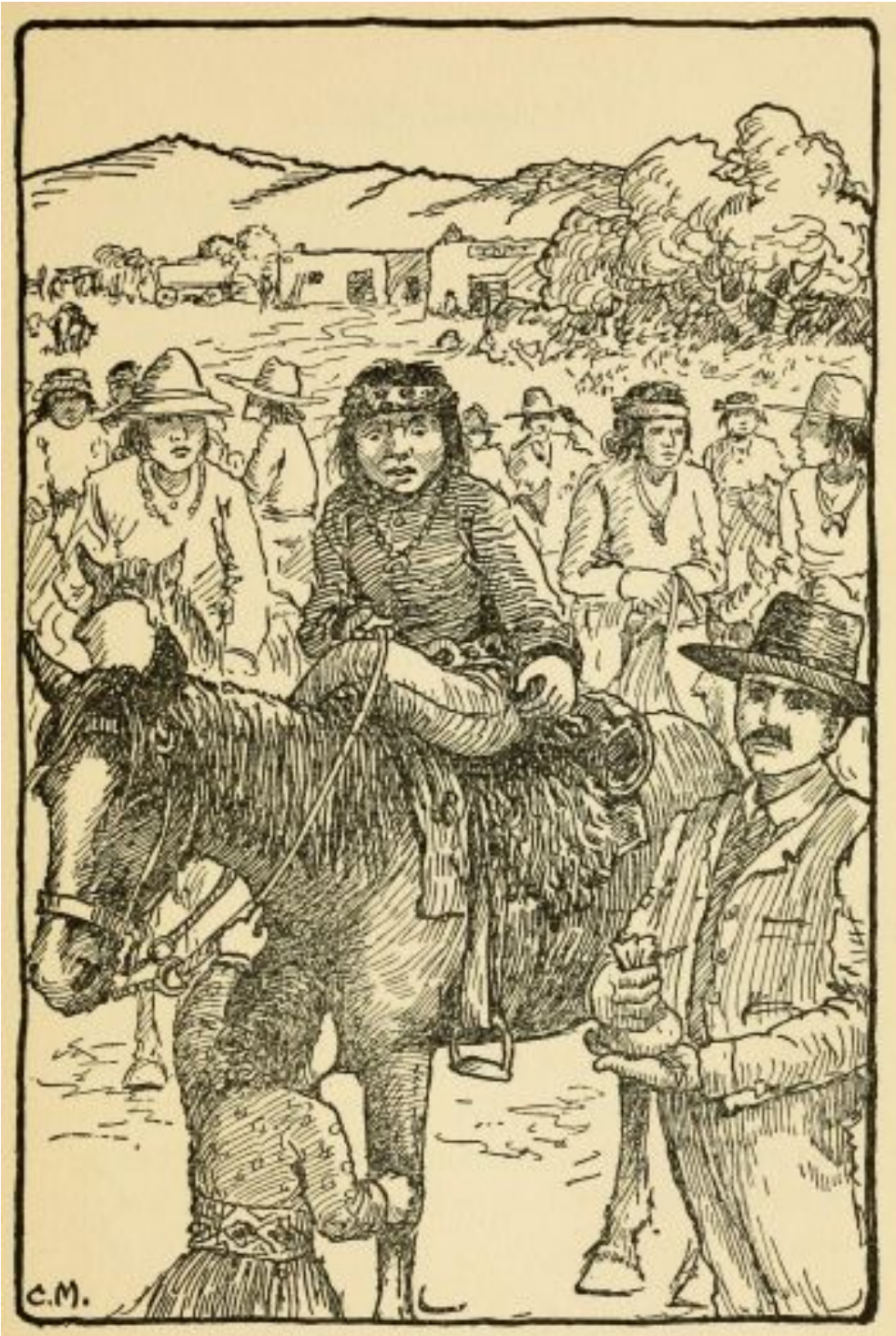
the Trader give it to the boy who rode the pony."

One look Yazhe gave to that pony and to the one who sat on his back, and then she felt as if her heart stood still. The pony was Keeto, and on his back sat the big boy who had tried before to steal the thing that was not his. She pushed her way fiercely through the crowd and reached the spot where the Trader stood just at the very moment that he held up the prize bag of money.

"No!" she cried almost breathlessly. "It is not for that boy! He did not win that prize! Do not give it to him!"

The Trader turned toward her with a look of such surprise that at another time she might have laughed, but this was not a time when she felt like laughing.

"That is a thief!" she cried again. "Do not give to him that money!"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"What do you mean?" asked the Trader. "Say plainly what it is you are talking about, child."

"Quick, give me that bag!" cried the big boy on the horse. "I have won the race and I must go!"

"Wait, I will tell you quickly," panted Yazhe. It was the excitement as well as the running that took her breath. "It is the pony that has won—but this boy did not win. This is not his pony—he is a thief! He stole that pony, and the prize is not for him!"

"You say a strange thing," said the Trader. "How will you prove that it is true?"

"The one who owns him is there—in that store, and he will show you how the pony is his."

"Bring him here, then," said the Trader, "and quickly. We cannot wait long for a thing like this."

"Kawani!" cried Yazhe, running to the store. "Kawani—come!"

The big boy was very angry when they got back and was trying to take the bag of money from the Trader, but he would not give it to him.

"Wait," the Trader said. "We're all fair and square here, and if this money is yours a little waiting won't take it away from you. We'll just hear what this is all about."

Kawani was very red in the face when he saw the big boy on Keeto, and it was hard for him to speak calmly to the Trader. But in a little he made it clear that the big boy had stolen his horse, and it was so plain that he spoke the truth that the Trader and all those who stood near believed what he said.

"Get down!" said the Trader then to the big boy, and his voice was very stern. "Get down from that horse and get away from this place as quickly as your legs can carry you! And you can bless your lucky stars that nothing worse is happening to you. You ought to be horsewhipped for this, but I'll let you off this time if you run for it. Only remember, if we ever catch you again at such tricks—it's jail for you. Do you understand? Now—GIT!"

And the big boy got hastily down from the horse, and when the Trader made a quick move toward him he jumped and then ran as fast as his legs could carry him until the dust of the desert hid him from sight.

"It's yours, son," said the Trader then, putting the bag of money into the hand of Kawani, "and that fellow has, maybe, paid you back a bit by riding your pony to win. You've got a good horse, but—" and he stopped then to smile and give a kindly pat to the black head of Yazhe—"but, believe me,

son, here is the pony who won you that race, and if you'll take my advice you'll surely divide the prize with her"; and then he walked away through the crowd to attend to other things.

But Yazhe felt that never in all the world had anyone been so happy as she was then when all the people nodded at her and gave her little pats upon the back.

"You are a good girl," said one man to her, "and I am glad you have won."

And still Kawani stood looking at the bag of prize money in his hand as if he saw a thing in a dream.

CHAPTER IV

AT THE TRADING POST

The Trader sells so many things,
From sacks of corn to silver rings,
And shoes and rugs and loaves of bread,
And bars of soap and blankets red,
And horse's straps and jingly bells—
All these the Trader sells—and sells—
And sells—and sells—and sells!

ALL that day at the Trading Post Kawani and Yazhe were treated as if they had done some wonderful thing. They were given every kind of food that they could eat, and one woman who had a little girl the same size as Yazhe gave her a fine, new dress. It had a velvet waist to it the colour of ripe plums, and a full brown skirt that came almost to the ground, and a bright green woven sash that wrapped around and around her waist and hung down with a wonderful yellow fringe.

"Wait!" cried another woman when she saw the dress, and she ran and got six little silver buttons and sewed them on the front of it, and another one brought a pair of brown buckskin shoes.

"Now," cried the last one, "you look to be Navajo. You must tie your hair—*so*—with a little knobby thing at the back of the neck. And maybe some day you will wear blue sky stones in the ears."

"*I* will get those," said Kawani quietly; "when I am big, I will buy many things for my mother and for Yazhe. Sky stones and—and other things."

The women laughed at that.

"Hi, listen to the man what he will buy! And you, Yazhe, will you learn how to boil a rabbit in the pot so that the meat will be tender and with a taste to be remembered a long time? If you do that you will be truly Navajo."

"But I am of the mesa," laughed Yazhe, "and already I can grind fine the corn and make a piki bread that is good."

"Ah, well," nodded the woman, "maybe it is good to be of the mesa. Me, I am Navajo, and I would not be happy to live up on a rock like an eagle. I

like always the smell of fresh mesquite smoke and the talking of sheep and the look of the red buttes through the door and sage everywhere."

"I like that, too," said Kawani eagerly. "My mother is Navajo. She lived like that one time."

"Ai," said the woman. "Then some day you will come back to the hogan to live. Not ever does the call of the desert go out of the heart when once it has come."

"I think that is a true thing," said Kawani later to Yazhe. "Always the desert is to me like a big mother lap, with the blue hills over there for the arms that hold you in."

"I would like a mother lap," said Yazhe wistfully. "I do not know if the desert feels like that. I do not know that feel."

"You will know when we go back," said Kawani quickly. "Always my mother has wanted a little girl like you, and if your grandmother will let you come and live in my house you can be my sister. I will be glad if you will be my sister."

"And are you glad now I have come?" she asked, and Kawani worked at his belt while he answered her.

"I did not know a girl could be nice like—like that. I think you are like a boy"; and it was the very nicest thing he could say about her and Yazhe knew it and was satisfied.

There were many more races that day besides the pony ones, and games of different kinds, and merry-making and feasting. When evening came Yazhe and Kawani found themselves sitting at the camp fire of the woman with the many children that they had met on the road. She was glad to see them again and told them to stay with her until the time when they would go back on that trail. And they were glad to stay, for she was kind and made them feel as if they were in a home place. Her husband was kind, too, and when night came and the shadows drew near to the camp fire he told the children to bring their blankets close and he would tell to them a story. Other children came from other camp fires to listen, and even those who were older came. And this is the tale that he told:

"Over there"—he waved an arm toward the west—"you have seen while it was day two hills that look much alike, Twin Bear Peaks they are called now, and it is the story of how they came to be in this place that I shall tell. It is a tale of very long ago—even the grandfathers of our people cannot remember how long ago it was, but it must be true, for there are the Peaks, and how would we know the tale if it was not so? At this time of which I speak our people lived far to the north of here, a place where it was cold for

much of the time, and there was need to build very warm houses and to have many clothes and much food. The Chief One was very wise and good, and his tribe was large and prosperous, and he had a daughter who was so beautiful that young men came from far away to try to win her for their bride. But only one young man could bring the smile to her eyes, and he was so poor and belonged to such a small tribe that he could not bring gifts for her and could not win her away from her father. So all he could do was to run long races and wrestle with men in the tribe to show how he was strong and bring in many deer and other game that he had killed with his bow and arrows and spear and lay them at the door of her hogan; and when the moon was bright in the sky he would stand where she could hear him and sing love songs in the night, songs that were so beautiful all the other maidens in the tribe would sigh loudly and brush carefully the hair and make themselves beautiful for him to see. But Ah-kee-tso, the young man, had eyes only for Natasa, the daughter of the Chief, and in secret she loved him dearly, but her father would not let her marry Ah-kee-tso, for he was poor and his tribe was poor.

"And then a very terrible thing happened for our people—almost it was the end of things for them and for the beautiful maiden. You shall see how nearly they came, all of them, to the long, silent trail!

"Still farther to the north, up near to the cold country where there are ice and snow all of the time, lived a mighty man witch, a Chindi, who had power over animals and who was feared wherever his name was heard. Tales were brought to this Chindi of the beautiful maiden, and he sent word quickly to the Chief that he desired her for his wife. And Tomaso, the Chief, began to tremble when he received that word, for he had great fear of this Chindi man, but he would not give to him his daughter. And the Chindi was angry when he heard that, and sat in his hogan a whole day and a night thinking what he should do, for the more he heard about this beautiful maiden the more he wished and was determined to have her in his hogan. Then he sent a messenger to Tomaso and this messenger was a great bear, for the Chindi knew that the Navajos will not kill a bear, and the messenger was to bring back the maiden to the Chindi even if the Chief said she could not go. For the bear had very great strength and could carry twenty maidens if there was the need.

"The people had great fear when they saw the bear coming, for he was larger than any bear they had ever seen, and they ran away and hid in their hogans—all but Ah-kee-tso, the young man. He stood up when he saw the bear coming, and with his own hands he fought him. For three days and three nights they fought until by that time the bear was so tired he could

hardly walk back to the North, where the Chindi was waiting, and tell him what had happened. And Ah-kee-tso was so tired that he lay on the ground where the bear had left him, and Natasa came with cool water and bathed his face. And the other people came back when they saw the bear was gone, and gave a great sigh of relief, and told Tomaso that it would be better if now he gave Natasa to Ah-kee-tso for wife, and then they could live in peace.

"But Tomaso did not have time to say yes or no to that for very quickly the Chindi sent again for the maiden, and this time he sent *two* bears, and they were each larger than the first one and very fierce. When the people saw them they threw up their hands and began to run, and the beautiful maiden ran with them, and also Ah-kee-tso, and this time they did not have time to hide in their hogans, for the bears were too close for that—they ran to the South—over hills and across dry washes and up through mountain passes, and down into the desert country. And always the bears followed after them for this time Ah-kee-tso did not stand up and fight them. He could stand up and fight one bear, but his strength was not so great he could fight two at the same time. And the people saw in the distance across the desert a great black place that looked to be the end of the world, a place where the desert dropped straight away into a nothing" (the Grand Cañon), "and they knew they could run no farther. They had run so fast that they were a great way ahead of the bears, and they had time to talk quickly together.

"Ah-kee-tso had eyes that were sharp, and he had seen a thing that the others had not seen. Up in the country from which the bears had come it was very cold and the coats of fur they wore on their backs were thick and heavy, and up there it was the winter season, and down in this desert the heat was of summer; so ever as they came the great bears grew hotter and hotter, and heavier and heavier grew the feel of those great fur coats, and a thought came into the mind of Ah-kee-tso, a thought that would save the people of the beautiful maiden if he could make it to be a true thing.

"He ran back to a place where the bears would pass, and he climbed to the top of a high rock and called to them in a loud voice:

"'The people are not running any more. They have met in council, and they say they cannot run any more. But you cannot take the beautiful maiden back to your master when you are so tired with running and so hot. It would be better if you rest a little while, and I will tell you of a place that is cool for that rest.'

"'If we rest the people will go away and we cannot get the beautiful maiden,' growled the bears. 'You speak a foolish thing.'

"'No, it is your words that are foolish. I speak wisdom. And I give you promise that the people will not go away. Even nearer will they come—I

give you promise of that.'

"'Where is this cool place, then, where we may rest?' and the bears were very glad to sit down for a moment, and the sound of their voices made a noise as if a storm were near.

"'Over there,' and Ah-kee-tso made a motion with his lips to show where the place was, 'over there by that shelf of rock are two caves, one for each one of you, and inside they are cool. I know because I myself have been there. If you will go inside and rest you will feel strong for the trip back to your North country.'

"And the bears looked inside the caves and felt how it was truly cool there, and they each went inside and lay down.

"'We must not sleep,' they growled to each other. 'We will only rest a little while, and then we will be fresh and strong again.'

"But no sooner had they put their heads down on the cool floors of the caves than they were sound asleep, and the noise that their snoring made could be heard far away. The big Chief Tomaso heard it, and when Ah-kee-tso told him what made the noise and what they were to do now he was very happy and told his people to move quickly and to do the things that Ah-kee-tso told them to do. And he told them first to roll great stones in front of the caves so that the openings were closed tight, and then they brought more and more stones and piled them up over the caves, and more and more, until where the caves had been were little hills; but still they did not stop bringing stones until the little hills were big peaks as you see them now, and even then that was not enough, so they made prayers to the Rain-god that he would send big black clouds, and when the bears waked up the clouds sent great lightnings and thunders to frighten them, so that they lay and trembled and shivered in their caves, afraid to move.

"But not yet was Ah-kee-tso through with the work he had to do. Still the big witch man was alive in the North country awaiting the return of his bear messengers and the beautiful maiden, and if they did not come back he would send still other messengers, maybe more terrible ones, and so Ah-kee-tso thought of another plan, and he told the people to build a Medicine Lodge at the foot of the Twin Bear Peaks. It was a big Medicine Lodge, built with great logs of wood and plastered with mud. It was round like a hogan with a smoke hole in the top and a door of wood that could be closed very tight and strong. And then he sent a messenger to the North. It was a coyote he sent, for a coyote can run very fast and is wise in desert ways. And he gave a message to the coyote to say to the man witch, and this was the message:

"'The beautiful maiden has fear to come with the bears you have sent. She has heard how you are very handsome and good to see, and she would like you to come so that she can see you. The bears will wait to guard you while you are here.'

"And when the Chindi heard that he was very proud. He put bear's grease on his hair, and painted his face with many colours, and chose his finest blanket to wear, and rode a swift horse day and night over hills and washes and down into the desert country until he came to the Twin Bear Peaks; and the coyote who had come with him cried:

"'She is waiting for you in there—in that big lodge,' and he pointed to the Medicine Lodge the people had built, and the Chindi got down from his horse and did not wait to knock at the door but walked straight into the lodge.

"Ah-kee-tso was waiting behind the open door, and the very minute the Chindi was inside he shut it quickly and put a great log across the outside. Then he climbed up to the top of the Medicine Lodge and dropped sacred meal down through the smoke hole, and the ashes of burnt puma hide, which everyone knows will kill a witch no matter how powerful he may be.

"And when the ashes fell inside the lodge there was a roar like the roar of a lion that shook the very hills, and the people trembled to think what had happened. But when Ah-kee-tso put his eye to the smoke hole he saw that the man witch was only a little smaller than he had been before and was not dead at all. So he threw down some more sacred meal and some more ashes of the puma hide, and this time there was a howl like the howl of a wolf, and when he looked through the smoke hole he saw that the Chindi was just half the size he had been at first, but not yet was he dead. And so Ah-kee-tso poured some more of the meal and puma ashes through the smoke hole, and this time the howl was like the howl of a coyote, and the Chindi was only as big as a wolf. And when he poured more meal and ashes into the lodge there was the cry of a fox, and after that he poured more, and there was only a squeak like the sound made by a field mouse, and after a little, when Ah-kee-tso looked down through the smoke hole he saw only a little pile of ashes on the floor of the Medicine Lodge where the Chindi had disappeared into nothing at all.

"*Ah-kee-tso poured more of the meal through the smoke hole*."

"And then how the people were happy! They made dances and feasting and singing for many days and many nights, and the Big Chief Tomaso gave the beautiful maiden to Ah-kee-tso to be his wife, and built him a hogan, the biggest and finest in all that land. And the people did not go North again, for they liked the desert more than they liked the North country. And when you see clouds low on the Twin Bear Peaks it is because the bears wake up and try to get out, and always the Rain-god frightens them back with lightnings and thunderings—and that is all of the tale. Your ears have heard it."

The camp fire was very low when the story was finished, and many eyes were heavy with sleep. So Yazhe and Kawani and all the others, when they had said thanks for the story, curled up tight in their blankets and went fast to sleep. It may be they dreamed of bears and Chindis that night, for there was thunder far away over Twin Bear Peaks.

CHAPTER V

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER

Maybe when I hear the call,
In the night, of little birds
Softly calling in the dark,
Maybe they are saying things
That I cannot understand,
Maybe they are telling me
Only not to be afraid.

IN THE morning, very early, Kawani walked over to where Yazhe was wrapped in her warm blanket and shook her gently awake.

"It is day," he said to her, "and we have a very long way to ride to that hogan of my uncle. I have asked things about it, and they tell me it is very far, as my mother has said, but maybe if we start now we will get there before the dark comes again."

Yazhe sat up and blinked.

"Almost I thought you were a bear. I had a dream about bears," she said. "I am ready"; and then she jumped up eagerly, but she did not make any loud noise so that the others who were still sleeping would not wake. "I will go when you want to go, Kawani. I like very much to do things."

He walked over to where he had left Keeto in a little corral with the other horses, and when he was gone Yazhe shook out her blanket and folded it flat so that it would make a comfortable place on the pony's back for her to sit on.

"Hi!" called Kawani back to her in a low voice. "Come quick, Yazhe"; and she ran to him with a big wonder look in her eyes.

"Look how Keeto is gone again," said Kawani with alarm. "Last night he was here, and now he is gone—and the other horses are here."

"I think that very same boy has been here another time," said Yazhe. "If we find him we will find Keeto."

"I think that, too, but how will we find him—and how can we go anywhere without Keeto?"

"We will not go without Keeto. One time I told you that he would come back, and see how he did; and now another time I tell you that we will find him. Always it is like that if you think of the right thing to do, and always there *is* a right thing to do."

"He went this way," said Kawani suddenly. For he had been looking in the soft earth about the front part of the corral. "There is the mark of his foot. I know the mark that Keeto makes. He went the way that they took him that other time, and I think I can find that place." He was off like a little dog on a scent trail, running away from the Trading Post toward a road that was not the road they would take to go to the hogan of that uncle. Yazhe called to him as loudly as she could, but he did not hear her, and so she followed as quickly as possible, but he had a big start ahead of her, and besides, she did not think she needed to run so fast as he did—if he found Keeto he would come back and get her, and so she ran more slowly and took time to look around her.

Right straight ahead of her were little rolling hills covered with sage and mesquite and here and there a twisted piñon tree; and through the middle of the hills ran a wash where water had been in the time of rains. Round the foot of each hill wound the wash, always at the lowest places, and the road ran right in the middle of the wash, so it was very easy to follow, and right here no one could get lost. But beyond the hills Yazhe could see two great red buttes, and below and around them rocks that rose in many shapes, like towers and trees and ships, and that was a place where it was very easy to get lost. And beyond the buttes, misty in the distance, was desert, and beyond that again sharp blue hills against the horizon. It seemed as if she could see all the world from here, but it was a lonely world where no living thing seemed to be, and it was a strange world where she had never been before. She hoped that Kawani would not go too far before he found Keeto. So far that they could not find the way back to the Trading Post. She could see him as he ran around the little hills, and then he would be out of sight for a while, and then she would see him again, but always farther and farther away. It must be that he could still see the marks that Keeto had left and was following them as fast as he could. But Yazhe stopped suddenly as a new thought came into her mind. What if Kawani *did* find the boy, could he take Keeto away from him? And maybe that boy would not be alone. Then she began to run a little faster after she thought that, and she picked up a big stone from the wash and weighed it thoughtfully in her hand.

It was a very foolish thing that they had done—she could see that now. They had told no one they were going away from the camp, and they had come before it was very light—the sun was just coming up now over those

distant hills—and those people in the camp who had been kind would think it a very strange thing that they had gone away with no little word of thanks, but they would not have worry thoughts, and they would not follow to help, for they would think that they had gone home on that other road—the road to the mesa.

Now Kawani was like a tiny speck in the distance, and Yazhe tried to run fast so that he would not get altogether out of sight. Now the little rolling hills and sage were gone and there were only rocks—great ones and small ones—and from here Yazhe could see more than two red buttes, others that she had not seen before seemed to be in every direction, and there was no wash to follow and not even a trail any more. But still there was Kawani, far ahead like an ant among the big red rocks—and then—a strange thing happened! Suddenly there were many little specks where only one had been, and then they all moved away together and there was nothing!

Yazhe rubbed her eyes and looked again. It was true! Nothing at all moved in all that place, and the whole world seemed like a big empty cup. She was frightened just a little bit, but the only thought that came into her mind was to get as quickly as possible to that place where Kawani had been and then maybe she could see from there the way he had gone.

She ran as fast as her little feet would take her, and her breath was almost gone when she reached the place. But when she was there she could tell plainly where these specks had gone. There was only one way that they *could* have gone. For every other way was plainly to be seen, and there was no living thing in sight; but this one way led into a cañon with steep sides—right into the heart of the great red buttes, and there was only one thing for Yazhe to do—only one thing she could do, for there was no trail back to the Trading Post now. So without stopping and without even thinking what might happen, but only of finding Kawani again, she ran toward the mouth of the cañon where it was shadowy and dark and where the sunlight had not yet come.

Kawani himself felt as if he lived in a dream thing. How could it happen that he was here on a strange horse riding behind a man he had never seen before, in a cañon whose sides were steep and full of cave places? He had been running fast down the way he was very sure Keeto had gone when suddenly, without any warning at all, a rope had shot from somewhere, looped itself about his arms and legs, and had thrown him sprawling on the ground. Then he had heard someone laugh. He knew it was the voice of the thief boy who had taken Keeto, and when he looked up there was the boy

and with him four men standing, and he did not like the look of any of them. The thief boy laughed again when he looked up.

"That is the one," he said in an ugly voice. "That is the one who took the bag of money that is mine. Look in his shirt and see if it is there." And one of the men looked and found the bag of prize money the Trader had given to Kawani, and he put it in his own shirt. There was a howl from all of the others when he did that, and they cried out to him that he should not have it all, but he only grinned and said:

"When we get to the camp place we will see how much money there is for each one. But there is no one can say 'mine' when I am here, remember that."

"Give me that bag!" cried Kawani, and he stood on his feet in spite of the rope around him, but his hands were tied behind him. "Give me that bag. It is mine, and I shall tell at the Trading Post how you are all thieves."

"Brother," said the man who had taken the bag, and he said it in a soft voice like the purring of a cat, "did you not hear what I said this very moment past—of *mine*? And what is this of telling tales at the Trading Post? We shall see what tales you will tell, brother. It would take a voice of very great power to speak from here to that Trading Post—and I think not very soon will you get nearer than this. I myself will have a care to see that you do not get nearer"; and he pulled Kawani along by the rope as if he were a rabbit for the pot, and the big boy laughed again, this time with great heartiness. But Kawani felt a hot feeling of rage come inside him when the man pulled him along and he could not speak again, for his voice choked in his throat when he tried.

Then they came to the horses, and the men got on theirs, and then Kawani saw that the thief boy rode on Keeto and led his own horse behind him, but they did not let Kawani ride on that extra horse, the man who had taken the bag made him ride behind him and held the rope that bound his hands. And they rode away up the strange cañon, the men laughing and talking as if nothing at all had happened.

There were side cañons running into the big one, and in a little while Kawani knew that it would be very hard to find the way out of a place like this. It would not be hard now, for there was soft sand on the floor of the cañon, and he thought he could follow the tracks of the horses, but when these were gone it would be very different, and it would be easy to go for many miles down cañons that did not lead out the way they had come in.

Then Kawani thought suddenly of Yazhe. What could happen to her? He hoped very hard that she had seen what had happened to him and had gone

back to the Trading Post to bring those who would help. But a big fear thought came into his heart that she was lost. How could a little girl of the mesa find her way in a country where even he felt lost? But he would find her. These men could not keep him long. There would be a way to get away from them, and then he would follow the trail back the way they had come until he found Yazhe. The thought of Keeto and of his bag of money grew very small when he thought of Yazhe, and more and more he knew that he must find her.

Kawani and the thief men.

After a little they turned a sharp corner of rock, and Kawani saw just ahead a little camp of hogans. There were three of them, and several women stood near them and watched with their hands shading their eyes as they rode up.

"Hi!" called the man on the horse with Kawani. "I have brought a boy to find wood for the fire. He is strong and can work, so now you will have more time to make supper in the big pot."

There was a cackle of laughter from the women at his words, and one of them called out:

"We cannot cook without food for the pot. What do you bring that is good?"

"Maybe the boy would be good in the pot," said the man.

"Ai-ee, he would be tough," the woman laughed, "and his taste would not be good—look how his looks are sour."

"Then we will have these, maybe," said another of the men, and he held up several rabbits that had been hidden by the folds of his blanket. And the very sight of them made Kawani as hungry as a bear, and he remembered suddenly that he had had no morning meal. But they did not give him rabbit for his breakfast. One of the women placed a piece of bread near him, very dry and old it was, and she laughed at his face when he looked at it.

"I have heard how you have tried to take what is ours," she said, "you who are rich from the mesa—when we are poor. Bread is too good for you—you should have no food at all."

"I have taken nothing that is not mine," said Kawani, and his face grew red at her words, "and that boy—" he motioned with his lips toward the thief boy—"he has taken my horse."

"Yah!" cried the boy in answer. "He is my horse, and already he has won a race for me."

"You do not know even his name," said Kawani in a fierce voice, "and you cannot make him come."

"But he has come," said the boy. "You saw how he came to this place"; and he put down his face and grinned close into the face of Kawani, and Kawani could do nothing, for his hands were still bound tight behind him and he could not loosen the rope, though he tried very hard.

All that day the men and women came and went, and they paid no attention to him at all. At first he tried to speak to them, to tell them what would happen when he got back to the Trading Post, but they only grinned at that if they let him see that they heard at all, and after awhile he did not try to speak any more, but only sat silent and watched the sun as it moved

across the strip of sky at the top of the cañon, and then the shadows as they crept down the rocky wall. Longer, and longer, and longer they grew, and then the top of the walls turned pink and then purple and then black with a silver edge, and Kawani knew that night had come, and his heart beat more quickly at the thought that it might be more possible to escape in the shelter of darkness.

CHAPTER VI

AN ESCAPE

Up and down the cañon walls
In daytime, golden sunlight falls,
But in the night, with silver rain
The moonlight paints them o'er again.

IT WAS late morning when Yazhe found herself in the shadows of the cañon. She had run very fast and was tired, but when she saw the tracks of the horses' hoofs fresh in the sand she forgot all about being tired and remembered only Kawani. Here was the proof that there were horses, many of them, and whoever rode them must have taken Kawani on the back of one of the horses. She stopped still when she thought of it, and her heart began to beat heavily. They might go many miles up this cañon with horses, and how could she hope to follow on foot? What would they do with Kawani, and why had they taken him with them? She could not answer these questions, and now she began to feel very hungry and very much alone. The cañon looked dark and unfriendly, and she did not want to go that way, but there was no trail back that she could see. She felt very sure that she could not find the way back to the Trading Post, and Kawani was ahead of her: he must be in this same dark cañon; and with that thought she did not feel quite so lonely.

She began to walk cautiously up the trail the horses had left, for who could tell where the camp of these thief people might be, and any minute she might go around a sharp bend in the cañon wall and walk right into it. But she walked and walked and walked and did not come to anything but blank gray walls. The sun came straight overhead and poured like golden rain down into the shadows and pushed them close up under the gray walls. It did not seem so bad in the cañon when the sun was shining, and Yazhe felt more at home and stopped on a friendly rock for a rest time, and then suddenly she fell fast asleep in that warm glow and slept until all the golden light had gone again and purple and blue shadows floated down from the top of the cliffs to the cañon floor.

Yazhe felt cold now and rubbed her little hands together and blew on them, and then she thought the easiest way to get warm would be to run, so she began to run up the cañon in the hoof marks that she could still see in the clean white sand. But she did not run very far, for when she went around a big rocky bend in the cañon wall the very thing she had thought about that morning happened—she ran almost into the camp of the men who had taken Kawani!

It was a very lucky thing she was wearing soft moccasins that made no sound, and it was very lucky that the place she came to was the back of a big hogan, for no one heard her and no one could see her in that shadowy place back of the hogan. But it had happened so suddenly that she felt her heart come right up into her throat and a big cry almost came jumping out of her mouth before she could stop it. But she did stop it, and she stopped herself and stood as still as a mouse against the hogan wall, hardly daring to breathe.

She did not see anyone at all, but she could hear men talking and knew that they were very near. Any minute someone might come around the back of the hogan and see her, but she was afraid to go back—she might make some sound; and besides, she must know if this was the place where Kawani was.

The men talked for a long, long time, and what they said had no interest for Yazhe. It was about game they had seen on the trails and a big chicken pull that was to be held some place; but never did they say one word about Kawani or about the Trading Post or about anyone or any place she knew. So that Yazhe was afraid the dark would come and find her still waiting here in this place without knowing whether Kawani was here or far away up the cañon. She tried to creep forward a little way and peek around the wall, and just as she did that a woman walked fast around from the front of the hogan and banged right into her. She gave a quick little cry, and one of the men called out to her, but the look on the face of Yazhe was so pleading when she put her finger quickly to her lip and shook her head that the woman answered the man in a way that was a great surprise to them both.

"It is nothing," she said. "I stepped on a sharp stone." And then she caught Yazhe by the arm and pulled her noiselessly away from the hogan, back a little bit down the cañon the way she had come.

"What is it?" she said then in a low voice. "Why are you here, little one, and are you alone?"

"Yes, I am alone now," said Yazhe, and she could not help it that her voice trembled and little bright drops came to her eyes. And then, because the look in the woman's face was kind, she told all her story, and the words

tumbled over each other in her eagerness. "And now I do not know where Kawani is," she said, "and if we do not get Keeto back we cannot go to the home place again. I do not know why they have taken Kawani. Always he is good, and never has he done harm to anyone."

The woman was silent a little when Yazhe had finished, but the kind look was still in her face, and she kept her eyes on Yazhe. Then she nodded as if she had been thinking.

"I do not like that boy who took your horse," she said. "Not ever have I liked him. He and those others have tried very hard to make my husband into a thief, but he is not a thief, and I will think of a way to get back your horse and to get Kawani away." Then she looked sharply at Yazhe. "Have you had food?" she asked, and even before Yazhe could speak she answered her own question, "You have a hungry look. Wait, I will bring food."

"Someone might come," said Yazhe quickly. "They would see me here."

"Come with me," said the woman. "I know a place where they will not see you." And she led the way back of some rocks and a little way up the cañon wall, and there, with its entrance nicely hidden by a little twisted juniper tree, was a small cave place. It was so small that even Yazhe could not go in without bending her head, but it was very comfortable inside. "I will bring a blanket," said the woman, "and food. No one will see you if you make no noise," and she was gone as silently as a shadow.

How suddenly things had changed for Yazhe. Now her heart beat very fast with hope and excitement, and she began to wonder what the woman would do to get Kawani and Keeto away. She forgot to be hungry, but she was glad when the woman brought food in a little while.

"I have given to Kawani food, too," said the woman breathlessly, as if she had been running. "He was very surprised when I took the rope from his hands and gave him good food. I did not tell him about you—there was not time for that; and besides, it would be better if he does not know—not yet. I cannot come here many times, they will see that I am gone and will maybe follow—almost they followed me this time. So I think now I will tell you the plan I have made in my mind, and if I do not come again you will know what to do. This is the plan: The horses are in a little corral on the other side of the camp, so you cannot come down this way—you would have to come through the camp and that would be bad—but if you go up the cañon and follow the star that is always in the north you will not get lost, and there is a road at the north end of the cañon that leads back the way you have come—do you understand that?"

"Oh, yes," nodded Yazhe. "That part I understand very well."

"Well," went on the woman, "when it is black dark you can come out of this place and hide behind the hogan where I saw you at the first. You can watch from there until the men have gone to sleep. I think they will sleep early, for before the light they will go on a long ride—many miles from here. When there is no one awake you must creep past the camp up to the corral place, and there you will find Kawani and Keeto—for I will speak to Kawani. You must be very quiet as you walk up the cañon, both of you and the horse, too. Then when the morning comes I will see that the others will not follow up that way. I will have a reason why Keeto is gone and Kawani, too. But I need not tell that now—only you must be quiet and you must do just the thing I have told you."

"I give you thanks," whispered Yazhe. "All my heart gives you thanks, and Kawani will do that, too."

"It is nothing," said the woman, and Yazhe was surprised to hear a little catch sound in her voice. "Always I have wanted a little girl like you," she added, and then suddenly she threw her arms tight around Yazhe and squeezed her close to her breast. Then just as suddenly she let her go and slipped out of the little cave as silently as she had gone that other time. And Yazhe ate the food she had left and found it very good. She wondered about the woman, but there were so many things to think about now, and night was creeping closer and closer.

The dark came almost suddenly like a curtain pulled over the top of the cañon, and Yazhe slipped out of her little cave place down to the hogan and waited behind it, almost holding her breath, for a long, long time, until there was no more talking of men. Then she crept very cautiously, step by step, around nearer to the front of the hogan where she could see where the men had been sitting near a fire out in the open. The men were gone, but she felt that she would have to wait until the fire died down to gray ashes, for anyone could see her clearly in its light.

The fire took a long time to die down, and Yazhe was afraid morning would come before she could move, but at last the whole place was gray and dark, and she crept out past the other two hogans. Just as she was opposite the last one a small round stick rolled under her foot, and she fell with a little thud.

Someone came quickly out of the door of the hogan and stooped over her, and Yazhe held her eyes tight shut. Oh, what a terrible thing to spoil all the plan of that woman like this! But it was the voice of the woman herself that spoke to her.

"I was watching," she said. "It is very bad to make noise, but if they call I will say I made it. Go quickly now, and good go with you, little one."

Words would not come to the mouth of Yazhe, but she pressed the hand of the woman close to her cheek and ran like a little whirlwind up to the corral place where she could hear the stamp of horses.

"Yazhe—Yazhe!" said the voice of Kawani in the darkness, and he was waiting for her already on the back of Keeto. He caught her hand and pulled her up behind him, and then they began to go very slowly up the cañon. Yazhe could feel that the heart of Kawani was beating very fast, just as hers was beating, and he whispered in Keeto's ear to go softly, and it must be that Keeto understood, for they made no more sound than cloud shadows racing across the desert—and after a little they began to go more quickly.

"Do not forget, Kawani," said Yazhe close to his ear. "Do not forget to look for that star of the north."

Kawani answered her quickly:

"Do you see a star, Yazhe? I cannot see one, not anywhere." And it was true, they could tell where the sky was for it was lighter right overhead, but there were no stars and no moon.

"It must be that there are clouds," said Yazhe. "Then we must go very straight or maybe we will get lost."

Suddenly Kawani made Keeto to stop, and he did it so quickly that Yazhe bumped hard against him.

"I must go back," he said.

"Oh, no, Kawani." She could not believe that he meant a thing like that.

"It is that bag of money. I must have that. I cannot go back to the home mesa without that money."

"You cannot get it," cried Yazhe almost out loud. "Oh, Kawani, do not go back. They will catch you, and the woman could not help you again."

"I must get it," said Kawani again. "It is a thing that you do not understand. When I find my father there must be money for him to bring back—that is why I want it. Listen, Yazhe, you must go on. I think you cannot get lost now on Keeto. Go until you find that road the woman talked about to the Trading Post. I will ride another horse from the corral, maybe, or I will walk. I will not get lost, and I think I will get there to the Trading Post maybe as soon as you do."

Already Kawani had climbed down from the back of Keeto as he said this, and Yazhe saw that he very surely meant the words that he said. But it was a hard thing to believe. Now, when they were almost safe, he was going back to the one place in all the world where there was greatest danger for him.

“I shall be very careful,” he said then. “I will not let them catch me again. That other time I did not know they were there, but this time I know, and it will be different—you shall see. But do not wait, Yazhe—it will help very much for me to know that you are safe. You know that way to the Trading Post, and I will come soon.” She saw it would do no good at all to say anything more, so she let Keeto walk forward quietly, and Kawani was very soon lost in the shadows of the dark cañon, running back silently the way they had come—back to the very place where danger lay.

CHAPTER VII

A RETURN TO DANGER

I hear sweet voices on the wind when it blows,
Telling many magic things that no one knows;
Whispering, whispering in my ear, soft and low,
Only things that I can hear—that I can know.

AT FIRST Kawani ran quickly back the trail that he and Yazhe had come. His soft moccasins of buckskin made no sound, and now there was light enough from the moon shining through thin clouds to let him see the way clearly. There was only one thought in his mind, and that was to get back the bag of prize money the man had taken from him. He could not go on to find his father without that money, and no fear of danger entered his thoughts at all. If the woman had helped him one time maybe she would do it again. But maybe he would not need to ask for help this time. He did not need to think about Yazhe: he knew that she was not lost and that Keeto would take her safely back to the Trading Post.

Now he was not far from the camp place, and he began to go more slowly. He had made no plan of what to do—he would just wait and see what happened. He did not think the man had divided the money yet—every time the others had asked for it he had given a reason for waiting a while. Kawani had heard that much while he sat with his hands tied. And he knew which was the hogan of the man—he had watched carefully that time while he sat in camp, and he had learned much that would help him now. He thought he would wait until he was sure no one was in that hogan of the man and then see if the bag was hidden in there—maybe he would do that, but not yet was he sure. The hogans were very close now, and he could see them plainly in the gray light. He could see the corral, too, and the horses moving dimly about.

The woman had told Kawani, as she had told Yazhe, that the men would ride away in the very early morning and that they would ride down the cañon as they had come, and not up this way, so he found a dark place

between two high rocks and stood close in the shadows where he could watch what happened and wait for the time when the men would go.

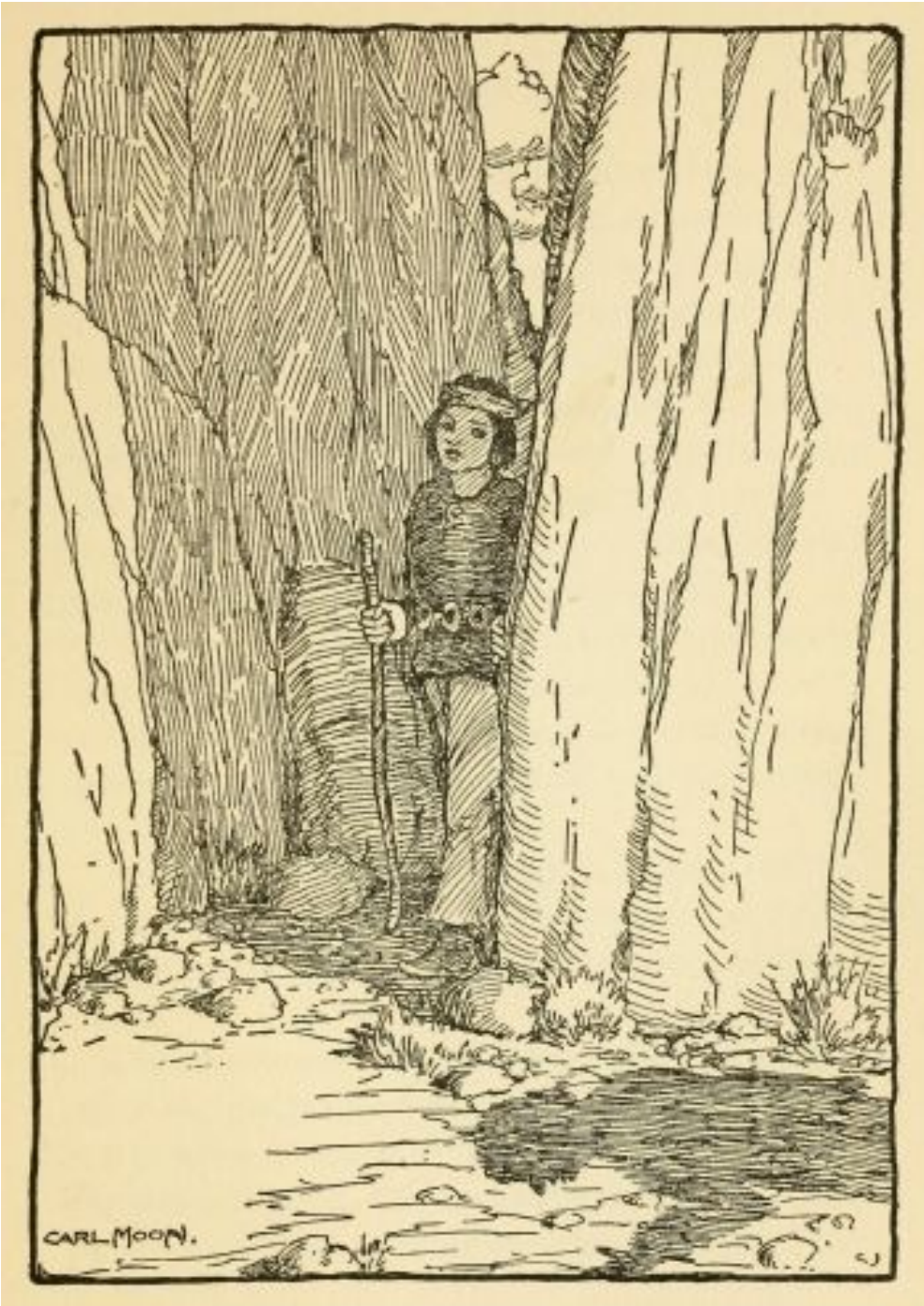
It was very quiet here, and very cold. The wind blew down the cañon with the feel of ice on its breath, and Kawani shivered and had to bite his tongue to keep his teeth from chattering. No sound yet came from the hogans, but in the corral the horses stamped their feet and made many noises to show that they did not like the cold. Kawani felt that he stood there for a very long time, and then there began to be little sounds in the hogans, even though the night seemed just as dark as before, and he knew they were getting ready to come out. Blue wisps of smoke curled up from the smoke holes, and the smell of cooking came plainly on the wind. And then he could hear talking and laughing, and the men walked out into the air stretching their arms and stamping their feet.

Very quickly one called out:

"Where is that boy?—he has gone!" and there was the sound of someone running to the corral.

"The horse, too—my horse is gone!" cried a voice that Kawani knew well now as the voice of the thief boy.

They all began to talk loudly then, and there was much noise until the woman who had helped them spoke. Her words were very clear, and she spoke with no fear at all in her voice:



Kawani could hear talking and laughing.

"He has gone," she said, "because I told him to go. We are no stealers of children. And he could not go without a horse, so he has taken his own horse."

There was anger at this, but the woman folded her arms and stood very quietly before them all.

"Not yet am I a thief," she said, and she said it loudly, "and not ever will I be a thief. You have the money that was his—that is enough."

"Where is that money?" they cried then, and the man who had taken the bag laughed aloud.

"The money is safe enough, and the woman is right, the boy would bring trouble maybe."

"Where is the money?" asked the others again, and there was an ugly tone in their voices that was new.

"It is safe enough, I tell you," cried the man. "It is there, in the hogan. Look you, woman, go in the hogan and look at the bag and tell them how it is safe."

The woman went into his hogan and came out in a little and nodded her head.

"It is here," she said. "He is a thief, but maybe he will not steal from other thieves." The man laughed even more loudly when she said that, and then they all got on their horses and began to ride swiftly down the cañon—all but one! Kawani saw that one pull his horse around fiercely and go tearing up the trail the way Yazhe had gone, and he knew the thief boy was going to try again to get Keeto back. But he was not afraid for Yazhe. She had been gone many hours now, and he was very sure no one could catch up to her before she reached the Trading Post the more surely as she was riding on Keeto, who was faster than any of the horses of these men.

Only the women were left in camp now, and Kawani waited until they would be far enough away from the hogan he wanted to enter for him to slip in unseen. But it seemed as if all the day they would stay only in that one place in front of the hogan. The other women were not pleasant like the one who had helped him, and they had unkind words for her that she had let him take the horse.

"Do not bother," said one of them. "Klogi will bring back the horse, and then maybe that boy will come back here to beg for food."

"If he does that," cried the friendly woman, "he will get it. Never will I let anyone come hungry to this place and go away still hungry. And I hope Klogi does not catch him. He is very far on the trail by this time, for he has been gone long, and he is a good boy."

"He is a good boy," mocked one of the others. "And are not all *our* boys good boys?"

"Very well you know that they are not good," answered the pleasant woman, "and this very next time when my husband comes back we will go to another place to live. We shall not live any longer among thieves."

They all spoke angrily for long after that, but Kawani did not listen to their words, for now they had gone over to the other side of the camp where there was a stretched hide of a buck to scrape, and now very cautiously he crept nearer to the hogan and into the door.

It was light now in the cañon but very dark yet in the hogan, and Kawani stood still for a moment when he was inside, for his eyes to get used to the darkness. The woman had found the bag so quickly that he knew it could not be hidden, and quickly he found it himself under the corner of a rug, as if it had been put there very hastily. He crept out of the hogan again and back to his rock, where he had waited so long. The bag seemed even heavier than it had been before, but he did not take the time to see whether the man had put more money with his own. It was made of soft buckskin and bound tightly with a thong at the mouth, so he thrust it hastily inside his shirt and began to creep away up the cañon again.

The women did not look up from their work of scraping the hide and were so busy talking that he did not take care not to make noise this time, but as soon as he was where they could not see him he ran like a deer up the cañon where he could see many marks of horses' hoofs in the sand. It must be that the men rode up this way often, for the prints were of horses that came and went, and many were fresh and many were old.

It was good to run after having stood still so long, and Kawani felt the warm blood come tingling back through all his body. He threw back his head and looked up at the strip of sky that was not cloudy now, but a clear, soft pink that turned quickly to blue. He ran so swiftly that he felt he was as fast as any horse and would be out of the cañon before the night came again, maybe before even the noon; and then his heart gave a jump, for he heard a sound up the cañon ahead of him.

Before he could think of a place to hide there was the quick thud of a horse's hoofs, and the thief boy shot into view from up the cañon and gave a sudden pull to his horse, stopping him just as he came to Kawani. It would be hard to say which one of the two was the more greatly surprised, but Kawani had known the thief boy was up the cañon, and the boy thought Kawani far away, riding swiftly on Keeto, so when he saw him there in the sand not far from the camp place and on foot his mouth dropped open with

surprise, and his eyes grew big, and for a little he could say nothing at all. Then he called out loudly:

"Where is that horse—where have you taken him?"

Kawani gave a little laugh.

"Maybe if you would go to the Trading Post you would find him," he said, "but not in this cañon."

"Who took him away?" asked the boy again, for he did not know that Yazhe had been here.

"It may be the wind took him," answered Kawani. He felt very good now, and he did not fear this boy at all. But the look grew ugly in the boy's face.

"Why do you wait around this camp?" he asked, and he got down from his horse and walked close to Kawani with his fists doubled up.

"I think maybe I have waited here to answer all these things that you ask," said Kawani, and he put his own face closer to the boy, and his fists were just as ready as those of the boy, and quickly they sprang at each other and fought fiercely for a moment—but only for a moment. For an unexpected thing happened then. The buckskin bag that Kawani had put so hurriedly into his shirt dropped out with a thud in the sand, and they both saw it at the very same moment.

"Hi!" cried the boy excitedly. "That is why you have come back to this camp place, and I am glad that I have come, too."

They fought fiercely for a moment.

"Do not touch that bag!" shouted Kawani. "It is mine!" And then they both grabbed it and both caught hold of it with one hand and fought at each other with the other—and then another thing happened! For just by chance they each had caught the bag by the place where it was tied, and now the thong came loose, and suddenly the bag popped open and all that was in it spilled to the sand of the cañon floor. And before they could reach for it each saw what had been in the bag, and they did not trouble to try to pick it up, for the bag had been filled with small bits of STONE AND PEBBLES FROM THE CAÑON SAND, and they stared down at it and then into each other's face with eyes that would hardly believe this thing. The boy was the first to speak, and he made his eyes narrow and looked back toward the camp as he said the word. Kawani could tell that he spoke to himself and not for others to hear:

"He thought to fool us. And that woman said he would not steal from thieves. He will say now that the woman took it and the woman will say that some thief has come. But I will get it back." He seemed to have forgotten about Kawani and ran to his horse and climbed on his back, and then he looked back just as he started down the cañon toward the camp. It was as if he remembered something. "That blue stone that you found is mine—a man gave it to me—right here in this very place he gave it to me. And sometime I will come and take it from you—and that horse, too. Maybe the wind took him this time, but next time it will be Klogi who will take him," and the little stones and sand flew from his horse's hoofs as he rode swiftly away.

Kawani tried to run after him and to shout a question he wanted much to ask, but the boy was gone quickly from sight, and Kawani stood then with a wonder in his eyes. If it was true what he had said, if a man had given him that blue stone, was it his father who had done it? Maybe it was not true—boys who would steal maybe would not tell true things—but if it was true, then his father had been here, in this very place. The thoughts that came to him were big with wonder.

CHAPTER VIII

LOST!

With the wind in my face
And a song in my heart,
With my pony beneath me—the desert to ride!
What do I care
For the things of the town,
Or the things of the whole world beside?

KAWANI walked slowly back to the place in the sand where the pebbles and little buckskin bag still lay. Very confusing thoughts were going round and round in his mind. Should he follow that thief boy and ask him more about the man who had given him the blue stone—if what he said was true? But he felt very sure that the boy had gone on to find the man who still had the money—the money that was *his*—Kawani's—and it would do him no good to follow now. No one would give him money or anything else but, perhaps, ugly words and maybe tie him up again with a rope. No, it would not help to go back again. It would be a foolish thing to do now, a second time. There was only one thing to do, and that was to try to find the road back to the Trading Post and see if there was not some way to earn more money. Perhaps there would be more races and another bag of money for a prize—and Keeto was still his pony.

So again he turned up the cañon, but this time he did not run so swiftly. Somehow the gladness would not come back to his heart, and his feet felt as if they were as heavy as stones. And then again he heard a sound! This time it was a small sound like a far-away voice that called to him! And he stopped still and held his breath to listen. It came again—a little nearer this time—and then! *Yazhe* rode quickly to him from a side cañon hidden so well by great tall towers of red stone that he would never have guessed it was there!

She was trembling a little as she came, but there was a smile on her lips when she saw the look of more than surprise in his eyes.

"You thought that I would not wait," she said, "but I could not go, Kawani—without you I could not go. When I saw this place I thought it would be a good place to wait. That thief boy passed by very close when he

went up the cañon a little time ago and when he came back down again, but he did not see me. How did he pass you, Kawani, and not see you? Did you hide, too? I told Keeto not to make any noise, and he was quiet as a shadow. Are you glad I have waited, Kawani, and did you get the bag with the money?"

"I am glad you are here," said Kawani, and he climbed eagerly to the back of Keeto again. "I am glad you are here, but it would have given me a big fear to know it, and I did not get the money. I think we will ride again on that Magic Trail until we get some money."

"Oh, I have a sorry feeling that you did not get it," said Yazhe, "but I am glad you have come. It was cold, and I do not like the dark when I am alone."

"We will go away from here," and Kawani gave a little shiver; "I do not like this cañon. Always there is a feeling that those men will ride from some place and take Keeto again." He kicked his heels gently into Keeto's sides, and they went flying up the cañon on the very wings of the morning.

"I like this now," cried Yazhe. "Always I like to go fast, and look, Kawani, how it has rained here in the night and how there are no more marks of horses' feet."

It was true. The clouds they had seen in the sky over the cañon in the night had brought rain here. Not a heavy rain, but enough to leave the sand white and clean, and now there were no more marks of horses' feet to follow. But Kawani did not mind that.

"There is only one way to go," he said. "We cannot get lost now. We will be out of this cañon before you can make a wriggle with your nose."

But he did not notice a thing that Yazhe saw almost from the beginning. There was not only one cañon, there were many cañons, just like big cracks in dry mud that has been very wet—they ran into one another and across, and it was the very easiest place in all the world to get lost and stay lost a long time. For every cañon looked as much like the others as two hairs from the tail of a dog. But Kawani and Yazhe had ridden for a long, long time before they knew that they were lost, and then they knew it because they came to a high wall at the very end of the cañon, and there was no way out.

"This is a queer thing," said Kawani. "Look how it is all shut here. All cañons must have a way out."

"But the way out of this one is the way that we have come," cried Yazhe. "We must go back, Kawani. It is good that we can still see the marks that Keeto has left, and it is good that woman gave me some food. Here is some for you," and she put some dry goat's meat in his hand and a piece of bread.

Kawani stopped Keeto when he saw the food and got down to the ground. Yazhe watched him curiously.

"It is water that we need," he said then. "This place is damp with rain, and we will find water very near to the top," and he dug a little hole in the sand quickly with his hands, and it was a true thing he had said, for water was there.

"You will have to come and dip it up with your hands," he cried to Yazhe, "for I have no jar." So she slid down off Keeto's back, and made her hand into a little cup, and dipped down into the water; and they had a very cosy meal there in the cañon, with the noon sun peeking over the top of the rocky wall. And the bread and goat's meat tasted very good when they were washed down with the cool rain water. And no worry thoughts came to them yet, for they did not think they were badly lost, and they thought yet that they would reach the Trading Post before the dark.

When they had eaten they made the water hole larger and led Keeto to it for a good drink. He had eaten much dry grass before he left the corral, but he was ready now for some more food, and Kawani was sorry there was none to give him.

"But it will be soon," he whispered in Keeto's ear. "Very soon I will give you a meal big enough for all the time you have not had any"; and then they got on the pony again and went riding back, following the trail they had come. When they came to a new cañon where there were no marks in the sand they turned up that way.

"You see," cried Kawani, "how it was easy to find. Now we will be there soon"; but that cañon ended in a wall, too, and another one after that did the very same thing, and by then the shadows were beginning to creep down the walls again, and now Kawani was not quite so sure that they would reach the Trading Post before night came.

When they came to another place that was like a pocket in the rocky cañon wall, with no way out but the one they had come, Kawani climbed down again from Keeto and began to look around for dry bits of wood. Yazhe watched him for a moment, and then she climbed down, too. The shadows were heavy now, and they could see little stars coming out in the sky.

"I think we will stay here until it is light again," said Kawani, and he frowned as he said it. "It will be easier to find the way out in the day. I will build a fire now so we will be warm."

But Keeto would not stand still. He put his nose in the air and made strange snorting sounds and moved about uneasily. Even when Kawani

hobbled his front feet with a thong he hopped toward the rocky wall and put up his nose and sniffed loudly. Kawani was busy making the fire, and Yazhe watched him with fascinated eyes as he piled up the driest little sticks and leaves he could find and made sparks with his fire sticks in them, and blew carefully until the red flames jumped up, snapping and popping in a merry way. So they were not either one of them watching Keeto, and when they looked up in a little while and could not see him anywhere they both gave cries of surprise.

"Keeto is gone," they cried, and ran up and down the cañon calling him to come back. But he did not come back, and when they listened they could hear no sound from him or from anything else but the little fire that cracked and snapped in such a pleasant way.

"He would not go down the cañon," said Kawani, "he would not do a foolish thing like that. Only one place would he go, and that would be to a place where he could smell food—grass, maybe. But where could that be in a place like this? There is no grass here."

"He could not climb the wall," said Yazhe, "and he cannot fly like an eagle. Maybe it is a magic thing. Maybe things like that happen on the Magic Trail."

"We can follow the marks that he has left," cried Kawani suddenly, and he picked up a piece of wood from the fire, a piece that was burning at one end. He had found mesquite and juniper trees in the cañon and their branches were dry and made fine wood for the fire.

"Come with me, Yazhe, I do not want to leave you here," and Yazhe followed eagerly while Kawani looked in the sand for the hoof marks left by Keeto. There were many of them going in every direction, but one place they found where the marks went right up to a slanting rocky place at the side of the cañon, and they could not see any coming away from there.

"Keeto is gone," they cried.

"He did not make marks on the rocks," said Yazhe, "but he must have gone here." They climbed up the rocky slant of rock right up to the wall of the cañon, and then they saw something that they could not see until they came straight up to it—it was a crack in the rocky wall—a very narrow crack, but wide enough for a horse to go through. It was a slanting crack that went back like the leaves of a book go, so that if you looked straight at it you could not see it, but through it Kawani thought he could smell the smell of the desert. He put up his nose and sniffed as Keeto had done.

"Can you smell it, Yazhe?" he cried. "The wind that comes from sage at night?"

Yazhe was not sure that she could smell anything but burning mesquite, but when they had followed the crack for a little way and then back again, very much like going around a leaf in a book, they came out into the open air and very plainly then came the smell of dewy sage.

Tall rocks were around them, but beyond the rocks the land dropped down suddenly into wide spaces, and they knew that the desert was there. Keeto was there, too, on an edge of rock, sniffing eagerly at the air, but he could not go down into the desert because of his hobbles, and Kawani was glad to find him again.

"We will have to wait until it is light before we can go down there," he said. "Look how it is dark in these rocks, and we could not find the way." But already Yazhe had climbed down a little way and brought some grass and little herbs for Keeto to eat.

Kawani looked in every direction that he could see out over that big space of country, and then he shook his head with a little puzzled frown.

"It is desert," he said, "but it is not the desert that I know. Everything is different. I think we will not find that Trading Post when it is day."

"No," said Yazhe, but there was excitement in her voice. "I think this is another part of that Magic Trail. Maybe no other people have ever been here. I am glad, and I have a feel—a very big feel—that good things are coming. Can you feel that, Kawani?"

His eyes grew bright at the sound in her voice, and he led Keeto back through the crack in the rock.

"Maybe good things will come to-morrow," he said, "but to-night comes a warm sleep by that fire, and that is good, too. For two whole nights I have had no sleep time at all."

"Oh," cried Yazhe, and at the very thought she gave a big yawn, "I think, too, that is good, and maybe we will dream of the to-morrow things."

But Kawani did not sleep right away. First he made a place for Yazhe, soft with mesquite boughs, and on top of that he put the blanket. For himself there was no blanket, but he did not mind that, as many times he had slept without a blanket and sometimes without even a fire.

And this time Keeto did not run away but watched with open eyes long after Yazhe and Kawani were sound asleep—it may be that he, too, dreamed of those to-morrow things.

CHAPTER IX

THE ANCIENT ONE

Under the edge of the morning sky
I see the blink of a sleepy star,
And over the desert I hear the cry
Of one little bird, so clear and far!

IF KEETO had not been there Kawani and Yazhe might have slept until the sun awakened them the next morning, but Keeto could not wait, for he had tasted some of that good grass from the valley outside of the cañon, and he was hungry for more. So he stamped with his feet and pushed at Kawani with his nose and wakened him before the very tiniest dawn light had crept over the rocky wall. It was still very cold, and Kawani made a fresh fire as quickly as possible, so that when he called to Yazhe and she sat up rubbing her eyes she thought it was still night.

"What is it?" she asked quickly. "What has happened, Kawani?" and then, before he could answer, she sniffed at the air and jumped up and ran to the fire and began to rub her hands. "I can smell the dawn now," she said. "I did not know it had come yet, but I am glad. Look how Keeto can hardly wait—I am like that, too. I want to see that new desert and other new things."

"We will have to find food, too," said Kawani in a quiet voice. "We have no more food. Keeto can eat grass, but me, I like piki bread better."

Yazhe laughed. Not ever had she been without food for very long, so she did not bother about it now.

"Maybe we will find piñon nuts," she said, "and the little animals in the desert find food. Maybe what they eat is good."

"*They* are good to eat," said Kawani, "if we can catch them. Now you must take a very big drink of water before we go, Yazhe—maybe we will not come to water soon."

But they could not think of food for very long when they looked down on that desert again. It was very, very beautiful from the high rocks where they stood, and very big. The sun was just coming up like a ball of gold over

the edge of distant buttes far to one side and touched rocks and sage and rolling tumbleweeds with living glory. Even Yazhe could not think of words to say for a little while as she looked at that wonderful sight. Then she drew a very long breath.

"I feel like an eagle in his nest," she said, "a very little eagle, a little eagle without wings to fly with."

"But Keeto will be our wings," laughed Kawani. "See how he is eager to go down. I cannot see a trail, but I think he will know how to find one." And when they were on the pony's back he did not try to lead him but let him choose his own path among the rocks, and Keeto did not go as if it were a new trail. He put his nose down to the rocks as if he could smell something good and went carefully but quickly in the direction of the lower country. Sometimes he gave little jumps from rock to rock—and when he did that Yazhe could not keep from crying out—and another time he doubled up his hind legs and slid down a slanting place, but he did not stumble once or stop; and before the sun was very high in the sky they had reached the edge of the desert and could look far back at the towering red rocks of the place from which they had come. They were hungry and thirsty now, both of them, but they did not say it aloud, for they knew it might be long before they could find any food.

There were no signs of people in this desert—no hogans or little fields—and it began to seem very strange and lonely. Keeto did not go straight out into the desert, but turned to one side and began to follow along the edge of the hills. Kawani let him go as he would.

"It may be that he knows some place to go," said Yazhe. "Every trail is not a *see* trail." And in a little while it looked very much as if Keeto had known where to go, for quite a way ahead of them at the edge of a rocky place they saw someone standing. At first they could not tell whether it was a man or a woman.

"Oh, go fast!" cried Yazhe. "I cannot wait to see if it is someone who will help us." As they came nearer they could see that it was a woman, very tall and strong looking but with snow-white hair. "A grandmother," said Yazhe. "Just like my own grandmother, only this one is big, and mine is very little, almost little like me."

The woman had a stick in her hand and seemed to be poking among the stones. She did not look up as they came near, and they could hear her muttering aloud to herself.

"She is looking for a thing," said Yazhe, almost in a whisper, to Kawani. "If you can find it for her then she will have a kind feeling for you." Kawani

slipped down from the horse and walked up to the woman.

"If you will tell what that thing is that you have lost——" he said to her, and he did not get any further than that, for she made a quick grab and caught him by the shoulder.

"Hi!" she cried. "I have caught you now. Not another time shall you get away from me. Come back now and gather wood for the fire and *two* beatings will you get in the place of one."

"Let me go!" cried Kawani. "I have done nothing at all. Let me go!" and he tried to pull away from her hold, but she was very strong and held him in such a way that he could not struggle loose. And then she began quickly to walk away, dragging him after her. She talked so constantly to herself that it seemed she did not hear or pay any attention to what he said, and she did not look once toward Yazhe sitting on Keeto.

"Hi!" she cried. "I have caught you now."

Yazhe had watched what had happened with such great surprise that she had no words to say but now she called out to Kawani:

"Do not let her carry you away. Grandmothers are not strong like men."

"*This* one is strong," cried Kawani almost fiercely, and with all his strength he pulled again, but she gave him a big jerk the way she was going, and he slid along the ground after her as if he were a boy made of rags. Yazhe did not want to laugh—not ever would she do a thing that would hurt the feelings of Kawani—but this was a thing she could not help—to see the look in his face made a little giggle come up into her throat, but she jumped with surprise when she heard a laugh come from the rocks not far from the place where the old woman had been when they saw her first. It was a giggly laugh, too, the kind you cannot help, and when she looked quickly that way she saw a tousled black head and then the body of a boy about the size of Kawani climbing out of the rocks. He was doubled up with laughing, but he ran as quickly as he could toward the old woman.

"Hi!" he called as he ran, and at the sound of his voice the woman stopped suddenly. She seemed to be puzzled. "If you will make me a promise not to whip me I will tell you a thing that is funny," said the boy, and the woman stood very still as if she listened. Then she turned to Kawani.

"How is this, that you are in two pieces?" she asked, and she said it so seriously that even Kawani could not help the grin that came to his face. "One piece is there and one is here," and she shook him as she said it. "Answer and tell me how is this?" and she turned one ear to him and waited for him to speak.

"How can I know what you mean?" said Kawani, and as he spoke she leaned nearer to him and seemed to be more puzzled than before. But her hand did not hold him so tight, and with a quick pull he was loose. Just then the other boy came close to Kawani and spoke in his ear.

"She cannot see very well," he said, "and when I ran away because she wanted to whip me you came, and she thought that you were me. But I could not let her whip you—you have done nothing. Maybe now she will forget to whip anyone."

The old woman leaned on her stick and turned her head first one way and then the other.

"Who is here?" she cried. "Why do I hear so much talk and no one talks to me?"

"*I* am here, Grandmother," called Yazhe then. She had ridden close on Keeto and now slipped down from his back. She had a sorry feeling for this old woman who could not see, but she did not come so close that she could

be caught as Kawani had been. “I am only a very little girl, and Kawani is here, and we are very hungry and lost—maybe you can tell us where we can get food.”

The old woman did not look at her but began to walk quickly away, tapping with her stick on the stones.

“Come,” was all she said, but the others needed no more than that and followed her quickly.

The strange boy was grinning as he came, and looked first at Kawani and then at Yazhe in a very friendly way.

“Now I will not be whipped,” he said. “She will forget. When she is very much alone she whips me often, because there are not other things to do, but many times I run away and she cannot find me in the rocks.”

There was a hogan so much the colour of the ground and rocks that from a little distance away it could not be seen at all, and this was where the old woman lived. She went straight to a fire near the hogan, and Yazhe saw that a large earthen pot was in the hot ashes of the fire, and her little nose told her quickly what was in that pot. It was a stew of rabbit meat and chili peppers and beans, and when the old woman had given them all big pieces of bread and a small bowl of the stew for each one they remembered only that she was a maker of very good stews and forgot altogether that there were times when she was a beater of children—and for a while they said nothing at all, any of them. Even the old woman seemed hungry and ate enough for two ordinary people, and after she had eaten she talked very much to herself and seemed so satisfied with what she said that she did not speak often to others. But there were things that Yazhe wanted much to ask her.

“We are lost,” she said when she had eaten so much of the stew that she could not swallow one bite more. “We are very much lost in this place. Do you know where is that road to the Trading Post?”

“Eh?” asked the old woman. “What is that?” and even the boy leaned forward to listen. “A post—I know what is that, and traders go on little mules with packs on their back to sell things—but a trader is not a post. I may be very old, but that is a thing I know.”

“It is a store,” grinned Kawani, “a place where a trader sells things.”

“*What* is a store?” cried the old woman, and banged her stick on the ground. “A post is not a store—it is not even a little piece of a store—you cannot say things like that to fool an old woman. Even *he* knows that,” and she pointed her stick in the direction of the boy. The boy shook his head at them.

“There is no store near here,” he said.

"Is *anything* near here?" asked Kawani. "Are you alone in all this desert?"

"What talk is that," said the old woman, "when all the world lives in this place? There is so much noise this very minute that I can hardly make you to hear. Over that way"—she waved an arm—"there is a hogan in the hills, and over that way"—she waved her stick in the other direction—"there is a pueblo that is thick with people."

"Yes," nodded the boy, "she is right. I cannot show you the way, I have not been there often, but my father will be back in a little—he is there now—and will show you the way."

A thought came suddenly to Kawani, and he leaned forward eagerly toward the boy.

"Have you been in this place a long time?" he asked. "Did a man come here one time, a man with one blue stone in his ear—like this?" and he showed to the boy the blue stone with an arrow on it that he now wore about his neck.

"Eh!" cried the old woman again, and she leaned forward as if she could see. "A man with a blue stone in his ear? That is my son, he wears a blue stone in his ear—you shall see!"

The eyes of Kawani sparkled.

"*One* stone?" he cried. "Does he wear only one—with an arrow on it?"

The old woman cackled like a chicken.

"His ears are not big like my hand," she cried. "One stone he wears, that is enough."

"What is he like, your father?" asked Kawani eagerly of the boy. "And is it true what she says?"

"He will be here in a little," said the boy. "His hair is long and goes over his ears—it may be he wears only one blue stone. I think I do not know, but he will come soon—you can see then."

The old woman leaned against the hogan wall then and went fast asleep, and Yazhe and Kawani watched with eager eyes for the man who would come. The boy went away to put rabbit traps in the sage. He asked if Kawani would come, too, but Kawani had fear that the man might come while he was away, and he was too anxious to see him to have that happen.

The afternoon seemed very long, and the old woman snored loudly.

But "Pat—pat—pat!" came a sound after a while, and Kawani sat up quickly and listened. He had been almost asleep like the grandmother, and Yazhe blinked her eyes so rapidly when he looked at her that he knew she

had been as nearly asleep as he had been. They could see nothing at all of the thing that made the noise, but in a very little they knew that it came from the other side of the hogan; and then a small, stiff-legged burro came quickly into sight with a man sitting on his back. The burro stopped in front of the hogan as if he were very used to doing that, and the man slid down. It must have been a great relief to that burro for the man to get off his back, for to Yazhe he looked to be as big as the hogan. He was so fat that she rubbed her eyes after she had looked at him the first time to see if they had told her a true thing. His head was round and his face was round and his body was round, and his eyes were so far back in little folds of fat that they were almost hidden altogether, but they twinkled so brightly that he seemed always to be smiling.

"Hi!" he called out as he got down from his burro. "Here I am come back, and is there no welcome for me?"

The old woman awakened with a jump and got up and ran over to the pot.

"There is food," she said. "Always there is food," and the fat man laughed aloud at her words, and rubbed his hands together.

"Good," he chuckled. "Always food is welcome. And who is this?"

He stood in front of Yazhe and Kawani with his legs braced far apart and smiled at them so broadly that they each smiled back into his face.

"We have come from over there," said Kawani, waving his arm toward the high cliffs, "but now we are lost."

"Hi!" said the man, and he laughed again as he said it. "How can you be lost when you are here?"

"But we live very far away," said Yazhe seriously, "and we do not know how to get back again."

The man put up his hand and scratched his head thoughtfully.

"What is that place you have come from?" he asked.

"It is the big mesa over in the desert on the other side of the cañons. There are no trails to go back, and we do not know the way," said Kawani. The man opened his eyes suddenly as wide as he could get them, and he grew very excited.

"I know that mesa," he cried. "Never have I been there, but I have a sister who has gone there, a very long time ago. Not always have I lived in this desert. One time I lived in that desert on the other side of the cañon, and my sister lived in a hogan near by until that time when she went to the mesa to live."

"What is the name of your sister?" asked Kawani, and he held his breath to hear what the man would say.

"Her name is Tanita," he said, and when he said that Kawani gave a little shout and jumped into the air.

"Ai!" cried Kawani. "That is the name of my mother. It must be that you are that brother of my mother, and all this time I have thought that you lived very far from here!"

The man opened his mouth, but for a moment he could not speak, and he looked fatter than ever, almost for a little as if he would blow up like a balloon, and he was a purply red in the face. Yazhe watched him with wide and fascinated eyes.

"Ai—ai!" said the man then. "But this is a queer thing, and now you will have to tell me everything—every one thing—from the very start. Why you are here, and where you will go—and forget nothing." And so Kawani told him from the very time they started from the mesa, and when he got out of breath Yazhe would say eagerly the things that he forgot, and the uncle still let his mouth stay open with surprise, and the old grandmother came close, and when she had heard all they had to say something seemed to happen to her. She was like another one altogether. Her head went up like a little bird, and pink spots came into her cheeks, and almost she danced on her toes like a little one.

"Now I am grandmother to two—to *three* little ones," she cried. "That is good—that is very good! And that is why the voice of Kawani was like the voice of the other one. Now I will make much stew in the pot, and there will be those to eat. Ai—I have food *now* for you to eat." And she ran into the hogan and brought more bread and little cakes and dried fruit and nuts for them to eat, but they could not eat more after that good stew, and then she brought silver bracelets and put them on the wrists of Yazhe and put her hands on her hair and on her face and all over her little dress, and on Kawani, too, and talked so fast that they could not tell all that she said.

The uncle laughed to see the grandmother like that.

"She is very happy," he said. "Always she likes many little ones. And now you will stay here and keep her happy all the time. I do not know the way back to your mesa, so maybe you will not go back there again."

"We will ask in the pueblo," said Kawani quickly. It gave him a bad feeling to think that they might have to stay in this place. He did not like the hands of the grandmother feeling at his face, and he remembered that she beat the other boy—that boy who was his cousin.

"Maybe you will ask in that pueblo," said the uncle. "Sometime, when we go there, you will ask, but now you will stay. I think your grandmother will not let you go now."

"Hi!" called the grandmother when she heard him say that, and she grabbed with one hand tight to the shirt of Kawani and with the other to the little dress of Yazhe. "We will be very happy here. Always there are things to do, and the hands of three are much better than the hands of one. But look, you have not seen the blue stone of my son," she said suddenly. "That was a thing that you wanted very much. Show them," she called to her son. "They have asked to see those blue stones that you wear in the ears."

"Oh, no," laughed Kawani, "it is my father who wears that blue stone, only *one* blue stone, and this is my uncle."

"What is that!" said the uncle. "There was a man who was here—very well I remember that—with only one blue stone in the ear. I do not remember the looks of that man, but I remember that I saw the blue stone, and it is not long ago. It was here, in this very hogan—ai, but who was that man?" and he scratched his head and frowned in thought. And then he looked up quickly.

"But why is it that your father goes so far away from his home place—a man whose home is good?"

"When I find him I will know that," said Kawani, and there was a sound in his voice that made Yazhe speak quickly.

"We *will* find him," she said eagerly. "Always I have told you that inside of me I know that, and it is a true thing—you shall see."

The fat uncle nodded when she said that and patted her head with a kindly hand.

"It is good for him to have a little sister like you," he said. "And I think always you speak true things. Out in the desert where it is very quiet we learn many things, and one thing is that little voice inside that speaks. I have heard it, and it is good to listen."

The grandmother nodded her head at everything that was said, but not once did she let go her hold of the shirt of Kawani and the dress of Yazhe, so that they could hardly move at all, and Kawani began to plan in his mind how they could get away. More and more was he anxious to get to that pueblo where he could ask the way back to the Trading Post. Always the thought was in his mind that if he could reach that Trading Post maybe there would be more money for him and maybe there he could find someone who had seen his father.

The boy came back after a time from laying rabbit traps, and he was very much surprised and very glad to learn that it was his cousin who was there, but when he saw that his grandmother had it in her mind to keep both of them there always, and that even now they were almost dancing with a great impatience to get away, a grin came on his face, and Kawani knew when he saw it that he would help them. He made a little motion to Kawani that said as plainly as words, "Watch, now, what I will do, and be ready," and Kawani watched while the grandmother and uncle talked of many things to which Yazhe and Kawani listened very little. The cousin gathered some little sticks very carefully and went over to the fire, where the dinner pot still sat in the ashes. He blew the ashes into red-hot coals and pushed the little sticks under the pot until, very quickly, there was a hot fire and the stew began to bubble and boil and make much noise of cooking. For a little the grandmother did not notice, and then she put her nose in the air and sniffed.

"What is that I smell?" she cried. "Ai-ee, it will burn!" and she jumped up and ran to the fire. And Yazhe and Kawani were waiting for just that very thing! They ran to where Keeto was standing and scrambled to his back, while Kawani called to his uncle words that tumbled over each other, they came so quickly from his mouth.

"We will go now to that mesa," he cried, "and afterward, maybe, we will come back here. But if you will show us the trail we will ask in the pueblo how to go back the way we have come."

The uncle was almost too greatly surprised to speak at all. He stood in the place where they had left him and made his eyes so big and round that he had the look of a very fat owl. But he pointed out the trail to Kawani, a very dim trail in the sage—and then the grandmother came running.

"Wait!" she cried. "You must not go. There are many things to say and to do, and I have things to give you. You must not go—wait until I come close and tell you. You must not go—wait until I come close and tell you." But already Keeto had started into a swinging lope out over that dim trail, and Kawani called back:

"In a little while we will be back, when we have found about that trail."

"And I give you thanks for that good stew," cried Yazhe. "My own grandmother cannot make better stew than that." And the grandmother and uncle stood where they had left them, and back of them stood the cousin with a grin on his face as wide as a slice from a melon. And Kawani gave a little kick of the heels to Keeto and drew a long breath. A new excitement was growing already in his heart.

“You see,” he cried to Yazhe, “how we are yet on that Magic Trail. Did you hear him how he said my father has been in that very hogan? Did you hear that? Maybe he has been here, too.”

“Yes,” nodded Yazhe. “Always I have told you how this is that Magic Trail.”

And Kawani threw back his shoulders and a shine of happiness came into his face.

CHAPTER X

A STRANGE HAPPENING

What is it makes the clouds fly past
Like little ships with sails that gleam,
And whirls the shining leaves so fast
They look like bright things in a dream?
It is the wind—and I can hear
His whistle sounding, high and clear!
It is the wind—and I can feel
His cooling breath around me steal!

IN SOME ways this new desert was very like the home desert. There were the sage, and the queer little low trees, and the sandy washes, and the red buttes and big rocks of many shapes, but the blue hills were farther away, and a something else about it was strange.

"I know what it is," cried Kawani then, so suddenly that Yazhe gave a little jump. "There is no home mesa! And no little trails that I know."

"And no sheep," cried Yazhe. "Look how there are no sheep, Kawani, and only one hogan have we seen in all this place."

"But the smells are the very same," went on Kawani. "I can smell sage and the smoke of mesquite."

"And look how there are little rabbits, the very same as the rabbits of the home desert," said Yazhe. "And the sky is the same. It looks now like feathers that have been blown about when many chickens are being made ready for a feast."

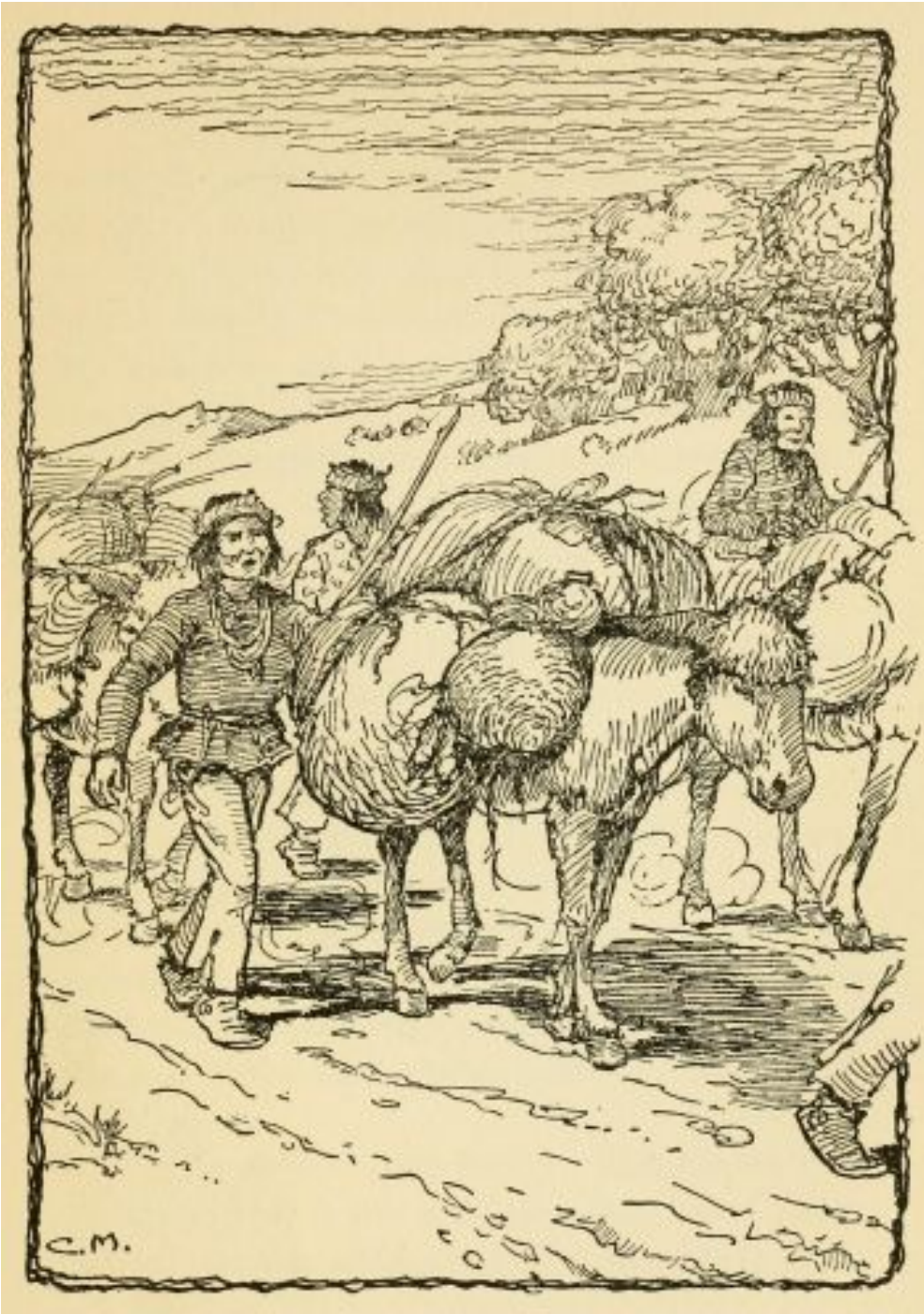
"And when you talk of rabbits and feast times," cried Kawani, "already I grow hungry again, and that, too, is not a strange thing."

"Wait!" cried Yazhe. "Do not talk now—there is someone who comes. Look how there is dust over there, rising in the air"; and they were quiet then, and made Keeto go more slowly until they could see who were the ones who came.

After a little while they could see horses in the sage, and burros with bundles on their backs, and there were men and one woman. As they came

nearer voices could be heard talking all at once as if they quarrelled.

"I think they are traders," said Kawani in a low voice. "Only traders travel with many bundles like that. They will tell us where the town is, maybe."



"*Only traders travel with many bundles like that*."

But the traders right at first did not seem to want to tell them anything at all. They rode their horses out into the sage away from the trail and were going to pass without a word, and then Yazhe heard them say something quickly, and the woman pulled her horse around and rode straight toward them. She had a large carrying basket in her arms, and she rode very close to Keeto, and before Kawani knew what she was going to do she put the basket across his arms and rode away quickly, calling back to him.

"I cannot be a thief. Take it back to that pueblo. And if they try to follow us tell them that we have taken nothing." And then they all made their horses to go very fast and were soon out of sight.

"What is it?" cried Yazhe. "What did the woman give to you, Kawani?"

"Look at it!" said Kawani, and he was so surprised that words would hardly come. "It is a basket with cloth in it, and it is very heavy. How can I carry a thing like this and make Keeto to go in the trail?"

"Let me see it!" cried Yazhe. "Why did she give it to you? I think this is a funny thing! But"—and her voice changed suddenly—"she said a thing about a thief, so this must be something a thief has taken, and maybe if we will take it back they will be glad."

Kawani looked down at the big basket and could not find words to answer, and even Keeto stopped in the trail and looked back over his shoulder to ask in horse talk what it was all about! Kawani did not like the thought of carrying this thing at all, but just then they heard a "Tap—tap—tap" on the trail back of them and the voice of a man calling to his little burro:

"Go faster, lazy one, or never will we catch them."

"It is my uncle," said Kawani, and they stood still to wait for him.

There was a big look of relief on the face of the uncle when he saw them.

"Ai, but I have come fast," he cried, and he wiped his face with the sleeve of his shirt. "Here, look what I have brought! So quickly you went away that there was not time to give it to you. You will need food, always there is the need of food," and he held out a little bundle he had made, of meat and bread.

"Oh, how I am glad for that!" cried Yazhe. "Already I am hungry."

"But look what I must carry," said Kawani, and he told then how the woman of the traders had given him this thing.

"What is it?" cried his uncle, and again his eyes were like black buttons in his face. "Give it to me. Ai, how it is heavy! Tell me again what that woman said." And when Kawani had told him again he took the bundle on

his own burro. “I will take it,” he said. “Soon I will go to the pueblo and I will take it back, but you cannot carry a thing so heavy. And there are two of you on that horse. I will take it to the hogan, and it will be safe there for one day or maybe two.”

Kawani was very glad to have him take the basket, and he was glad, too, for the food, and they gave many thanks to the uncle, who turned his burro around and rode back the way he had come.

“The traders passed me, too,” he called back, “but they did not come close and did not give me a thing—but anyway I have that thing now,” and he smiled as he said it and waved one hand to them.

Kawani stretched his arms when his uncle was out of sight.

“I feel like a thing with wings,” he said. “I did not know before how good it is not to carry things.”

“Look how there are rabbits!” cried Yazhe.

“Never have I seen so many rabbits in one place.”

Kawani looked, too, and quickly he grew excited as he saw the little gray creatures popping in and out of the sage.

“I could catch some,” he cried. “If you will help me, Yazhe, we will catch some to eat.”

They tied the thong of Keeto to a little piñon tree, and Kawani picked up some big stones from the ground.

“You go over that way,” he called to Yazhe and waved with his arm in the direction for her to go, “and flap your dress and make them go into the sage. Then I will come and throw stones.”

But it was not so easy as it sounded. The little rabbits were quick as flashes of light and popped into one place and out again almost before Yazhe could see them at all. She ran and waved her skirts and shouted, but always that only seemed to make the rabbits go faster, and after a while Kawani caught up to her, and he was out of breath from running.

“You run too fast,” he panted. “I cannot catch up to them. Not one has been near enough for me to throw a stone. If you will go very slow and go back of the place where they are and then send them to the place where I am waiting, that will be better.”

But it seemed as if the rabbits knew the very thing that Yazhe was planning to do, and when she saw three or four in a bunch of sage and crept carefully behind it and then flapped her little skirts and clapped her hands and danced on her tiptoes, every little rabbit shot out in a different direction, and not one to the place where Kawani was waiting. It was much fun,

though, and Yazhe thought how nice it was to run through the sage like this when for so long she had been riding on Keeto. It made her feel good to stretch her legs and jump and clap her hands and laugh at the funny little gray tails of the rabbits popping in and out of the sage, and to hear Kawani shout as he ran from bush to bush. But they did not catch any rabbits, not one, and after a long time Kawani came running to her, and his face was red and hot from running.

"We cannot catch them," he said. "Maybe in that pueblo they will have rabbit sticks—with a rabbit stick I could catch them very easily—many times I have done it. We will go back, now, and get Keeto."

They had run quite a way from where they had left the pony, and it took them a long time to find the place, and when they found it Keeto was not there!

"Oh," cried Yazhe, "he has gone again. Always he has gone. And this time I think that thief boy is not here."

"But maybe this is not the place," said Kawani, and he looked around very carefully to be sure. But there were the marks in the trail, and there was the piñon tree where they had tied him, and a little twig was broken off in that very place.

"Maybe the thong came loose from the tree," said Yazhe, "and he went away to hunt for us."

Kawani shook his head.

"He would not do that"; just the same they looked all around that place, in the sage and both ways on the trail, and Kawani climbed on a high rock that was near and looked as far as he could see, but there was no Keeto anywhere at all.

"Now we will have to walk," said Yazhe. "Maybe it is not far to that pueblo."

But when the dark came they did not yet see the pueblo and they lost the trail and wandered in the sage without any thought of which way to go.

"We will have to stay in one place all night," said Kawani. "Maybe when it is light we can see better how to go. It is very good my uncle brought this food, for now we will not be hungry, and it is not such a very bad thing to sleep in the sage."

"I am very glad I am not in this place alone," shivered Yazhe. "I would not like to be alone when it is dark, in a place where it is strange. Already I can hear things in the night."

Kawani stood up and listened, too. It was true that there were sounds. He could hear them far away, but he could not tell what they were. They did not

seem to be animal sounds, but they gave him a strange feeling, and he took his fire sticks and made a fire as quickly as possible. It was not so bad with the cheery little blaze crackling in the place they had found where there were small trees all around them, and they ate the food his uncle had brought and made a pretend that they were on the home mesa with only familiar things near.

But those far-away sounds did not stop, and sometimes they seemed to come near and sounded like voices that called. And then, very suddenly, a man rode into the light of their fire and sat for a moment on his horse, blinking his eyes as if smoke had got into them. He looked closely at Kawani and then at Yazhe and then into the sage about them, as if he searched for something else. Kawani stood up and made himself as big as he could in the firelight.

"What is it that you want?" he asked the man in a voice that sounded to Yazhe very big and strong, but the man grinned at him until his teeth were a white line in his face.

"I think you haven't it here," he said then in a serious voice, "unless you have a bag that I cannot see. I look for a baby. The baby of the chief one of our town is gone, and we look everywhere and cannot find it."

"Oh," said Yazhe with a little pity sound in her voice, "that is a bad thing."

"Yes," nodded the man, "it is a very bad thing. The mother cries all the time, and now we do not know where to look for him. We have looked in all the places near to our pueblo, but a baby cannot go very far when it is a baby that cannot walk very well."

"They can crawl," said Yazhe eagerly. "A baby can crawl almost anywhere. I have seen how they can."

"Yes," said the man again, "but we have looked everywhere that a baby can crawl, and now we think that someone has taken this one away. Have you come very far this day, and have you seen a baby?"

"We have come far," said Kawani, "on my horse that is gone now. I think there are surely thieves near this place—horse thieves and those who steal babies. No, we have not seen a baby. Have you, maybe, seen a horse?"

"I have not seen him," said the man, and as he said it he pulled his own horse away from the fire and made him ride away again through the sage.

"I think if I will find one, I will find the other, too. A thief who steals babies will steal horses," he called back, and was gone like a shadow into the night. But Yazhe was looking at Kawani with big eyes. He had been thinking only of Keeto when the man rode away, but now, when he looked

into the eyes of Yazhe, a very different thought came to him, and he knew it was the same thing that was in the mind of Yazhe. That basket! It was very heavy, a baby was heavy like that!

"Do you think it was a baby?" asked Yazhe with eyes that grew very big and black with thought. "Would a woman do that—steal a baby?"

"Maybe so," said Kawani; "but if it was a baby my uncle will know in a little while, and he will be very careful and will bring it back to the pueblo."

"How will he know?" asked Yazhe. "He will not look in a basket that is not his."

"Hi!" said Kawani in great scorn. "Do you think a baby can go all the time without making a cry? Babies cry always—when they are hungry they cry, and always they are hungry."

"I wish very much it had cried when we had it," said Yazhe wistfully. "More than anything I like a baby, and I know how to have the care of them."

"My grandmother will know that, too—if that was a baby in that basket. Maybe only cloth was there."

And Yazhe kept quiet after that, but as she watched the fire little pictures came into her mind of how nice it would have been to have that baby in her arms. There was a soft cuddly feel to a baby that was very comfortable, and maybe that old grandmother had forgotten how to have the care of one. It had been long since the time when there was a baby in that hogan.

"I forgot to ask that man the way to get to that pueblo," said Kawani suddenly. "I forgot everything when he was here only to ask about Keeto."

"We will find it when it is light," said Yazhe. "I think it must be that we are not very far away. And when it is light we will go there and tell them about the trader woman, and they can come with us back to the hogan of your uncle, and we will get that baby and maybe Keeto, too."

But not always do things go just the way we expect them to—and that to-morrow was like that, it had an unexpected thing! You shall see!


ARL MOON.

CHAPTER XI

THE RED ROCK MESA

Ho, for a ride on a sunny day,
Over the sage and sand,
Over the desert and far away
To the edge of the farthest land.
To the place where the sun goes down in the west
And the sky lies close to the hills to rest.

IT WAS a little rabbit that awoke Yazhe in the first gray light of morning. It hopped out of a sage bush right into her lap, and she gave a screech that made Kawani jump high in the air, wide awake instantly, and frightened the rabbit so that he ran like a flash of light back into the sage.

"What is it?" cried Kawani. "What has hurt you, Yazhe?" but she was laughing so hard when she saw what it had been that she could not speak for a moment, and that frightened Kawani even more. He came over close and shook her by the shoulder. "What is it?" he said. "Speak to me, Yazhe."

"Only—only a little rabbit," she laughed, "but I am glad he made me to wake up. We can go now," and she stopped laughing when she thought of other things. "That mother will be looking still for that baby. We must go and tell her where it is."

"Where we *think* maybe it is," said Kawani. "Yes, we will do that, but first we must find the *way* to go."

"No, first of anything at all we must eat something," said Yazhe. "I am empty like—like——"

"Like *me*!" cried Kawani. "Not anything is more empty than that, and here is the food."

He gave her almost all that had been left of the package given him by his uncle. It was good meat and bread, but there was no water to drink with it, and Kawani did not like to think what it would mean if they did not find that pueblo soon. But they found it even sooner than they thought. A very little while after they had left the camp place Yazhe called out:

"What is that big round rock?" and Kawani gave a little jump, for he had not been looking the way that she had been looking, and then he stared for a moment without answering.

He had never seen a rock like that before. It stood right up in the desert away from the other hills and rocks and seemed to be very steep on all sides, and it was as red as the sunset sky. It was of a great size, almost as large as the home mesa, but there did not seem to be any way to get to the top. They had come in sight of it suddenly around a little hill, and it almost took the breath away to come on it like that so unexpectedly.

"Let us go close," said Yazhe. "Maybe it is a magic thing and will be gone when we get near."

But it was not gone when they got so close that they could look straight up its steep, sheer walls—and even when they were that near they could not see any way to get up, but when they walked around to the other side they saw a trail rising steeply up—very much like the trail at home.

"I can see houses up there," cried Kawani. "Now I know that this is that pueblo," and they both began to climb the trail.

It was very steep but they did not mind that, for all their lives they had been used to climbing and had gone up many steep trails. But they did not go nearly so fast when they were almost at the top as they had gone at the bottom, and two children who were coming down watched them with curious eyes. Kawani spoke to them.

"We want to go to the house of the chief one," he said breathlessly. "Show us the way to that house." And the children turned around without a word and led the way back up to the top of the mesa.

The town was very small, not half the size of their own home place, and it looked to be poor. There were not many strings of meat and chili peppers drying in the sun, and the ears of corn on the housetops were very small and meagre looking. Even the people who came out to watch them did not look fat and jolly like the home people, but somehow had a hungry look.

"It gives me a sorry feeling to see them," whispered Yazhe into the ear of Kawani, and he nodded, for he, too, had that very same feeling. The children stopped at the open door of a house, and a woman with red around her eyes came eagerly out.

"What is it?" she cried. "Have you found my baby?"

Kawani swallowed a lump place in his throat, and then he told the woman all that had happened the day before: about how the trader woman had given him the basket, and how he had let his uncle take it to his hogan; and when he said that the woman cried to him:

"Why did you not bring my baby here? Now he is so far away!"

A crowd of people had gathered near while Kawani was speaking and they listened carefully to what he said, and when the woman cried out like that one said:

"That is a foolish thing to say. This boy did not know the baby was in that basket, and now we know where he is. That is a thing to be happy about —now we will go and get him, and there will be nothing to be sorry about any more." And the mother pushed her way through the crowd to the top of the trail.

"Come," she cried, "that is true. Show us the way to that hogan. We will get him now!"

A woman came close to Kawani.

"There is a prize," she said. "Yesterday they said it—for the one who will find the baby there is to be a prize." And then a man called out:

"It must be that it was your horse that I found, boy! He was loose in the sage, standing, and I looked and saw no one, so I brought him here. He is down below in that corral."

"You see," said Yazhe, and a pink glow came into her cheeks, "you see, Kawani, how all will come right!"

"Come," said Kawani. He could think of nothing but Keeto waiting down there in that corral.

And they all went down the trail again, led by the mother of the baby. Everyone wanted to talk to Kawani and to Yazhe and to ask them many questions, but the trail was very narrow and steep, and there was not time for many words; and when they were at the bottom sure enough there was Keeto waiting in the little corral, and it was very hard to say which one was the happier—Kawani to see Keeto or Keeto to see Kawani—and Yazhe danced about them both with happiness in her eyes.

"Come," said the mother again. Already she was on a horse, so Yazhe and Kawani climbed once more on the back of Keeto and turned his nose on the trail back the way they had come so little while before. And everyone who had a horse scrambled to his back and followed after, and the trail was full of those who came.

Not yet had the early feel gone out of the desert air. The early morning smells are good, and the dawn air of the desert is like the honey of wild bees and all the world seemed glad to be awake to it. Keeto liked it, too, and sniffed at the air and tossed his head until his mane snapped like little whips. The sage was gold now, and old Father Sun was peeking over the highest eastern hills and laughing at the shadows that stretched long and pale across

the rolling desert. Yazhe laughed, too, and was glad to be here and glad that the mother was going to have her baby again, and that Keeto had come back. Kawani heard her laugh, and he gave a little slap to Keeto to make him go faster. Inside of him was laughing, too, with happiness, but the outside of him did not even smile, for he felt that a man would not smile at a time like this, and very much he wanted to be like a man.

"Where is that hogan?" called the woman after a while, and Kawani shouted back to her:

"We will not come to it yet. We will be there before very long."

And then they rode on again without speaking. And the little rabbits in the sage jumped away as they had done that other time, and Yazhe wished very much that she could get down and chase them with Kawani. The woman had said that there was to be a prize for the one who found that baby. Very much she wondered what that prize would be, and then came another thought, and it was a thought that brought a puzzled feeling. Who was it that had found the baby? That was a big thought, and she opened her eyes wide when it came into her mind. Was it the trader woman who had found him—or Kawani—or his uncle? Or had anybody at all found him yet?

The way back to that hogan seemed very much longer than she remembered it, and to the mother it seemed a very, very long way. Many times she asked if they were not near it, and she wanted to go very fast on the trail. Some of the people were not used to riding, and they went up and down on the horses like sacks of corn, but they were so anxious to see the mother find her baby again that they did not mind. After a long while Yazhe saw the hogan and called out to the others, but everyone had seen it at the very same time, and there was the old grandmother at the door standing with her head held high to hear what came. The uncle of Kawani came quickly to the door, too, to see so many people, and his mouth was round with surprise.

"Where is he?" cried the mother, and she was down from her horse and at the doorway as quickly as her horse could stop. "Where is my little baby?"

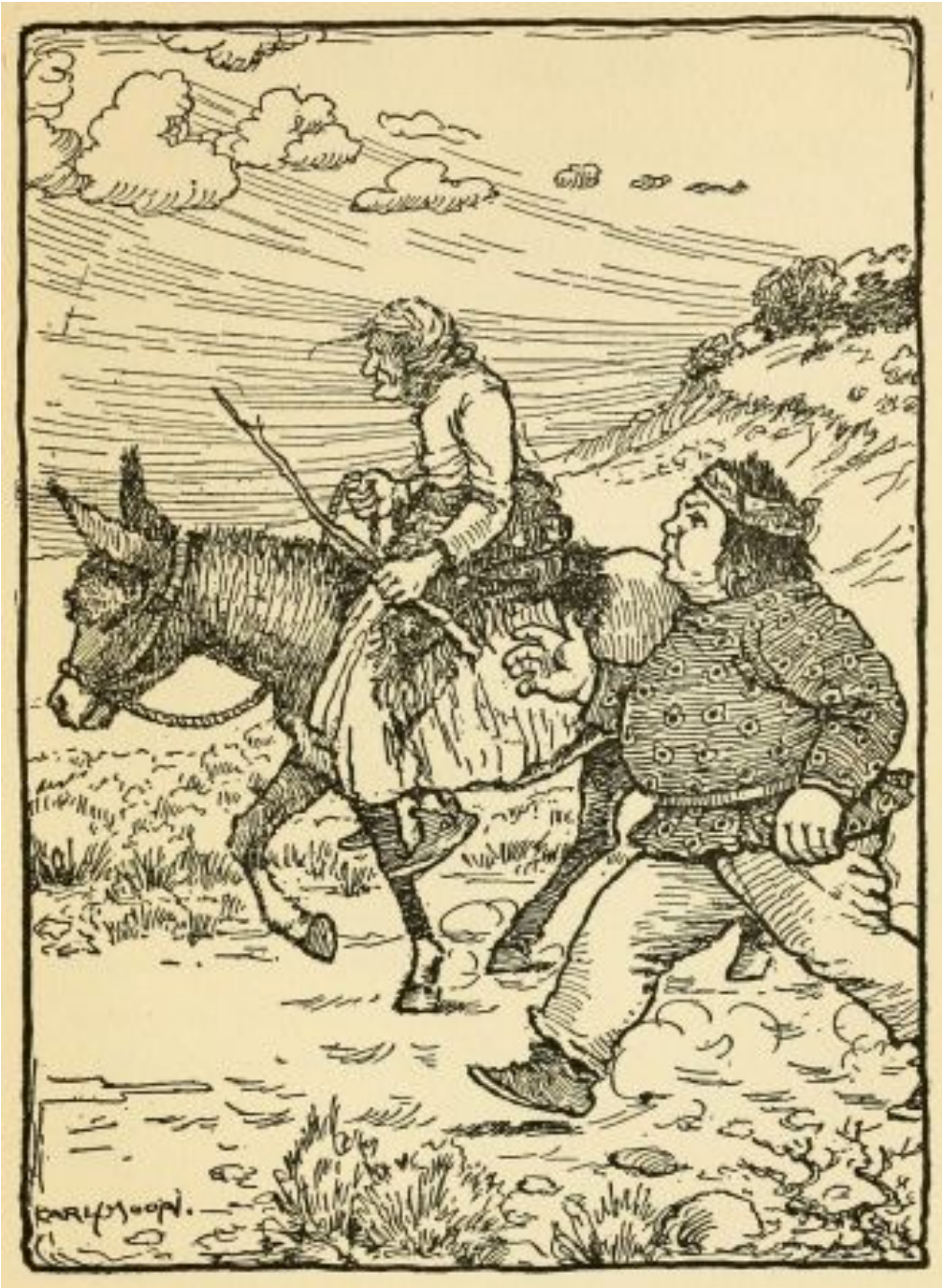
"How is this?" said the uncle of Kawani. "Why do you come here for your baby?"

"But this boy has said you took him," cried the mother again. "This boy said you would keep him safe."

"I did not know that it was a baby," said the man. "When I took that basket I thought only that it was cloth stuff, but when I came near to my hogan there was a cry, and almost I dropped it with surprise. But there very surely was a baby, and I brought it here to this mother of mine who knows

well the care of babies. All night it slept here, and she gave it goat's milk when it was hungry. This day I thought to take it back to the pueblo, but a man came—a very good man who is a friend of mine came, and he told me how he would ride to that pueblo and would take the baby, and I was glad because of the long ride, and yesterday I was there."

"But where is he now?" cried the mother again. "This very minute we have come over that trail from the pueblo, and there was no man and my baby was not there. Where has he gone?"



Walking was the thing he hated most.

The uncle of Kawani scratched his head with one hand, and he looked all around at the others who stood there, and a wonder was in his face.

"This is a strange thing," he said. "You can look and see how he is not here, and with my own eyes I saw him go away on that trail to the pueblo, and if he is not there now you do very well to ask, 'Where is he?' It is a thing I cannot answer. But wait, I will get my burro and I will come with you and help you to look for him."

"I will come, too," cried the old grandmother. "I will ride on that burro, and you can walk—for he does not go very fast." The uncle groaned, for he was very fat, and walking was the thing he hated most, and when he looked at that burro it seemed as if he could see a twinkle in his eyes, but he could not be sure of that, and his face grew red at the thought of the long dusty trail ahead; but he took a big breath and started out. And the cousin came, too; and in the eyes of all was a wonder about this new thing that had happened now.

The mother did not speak more words, but she got on her horse again, and they all turned back into the trail that went to the pueblo.

"Are you very sure that man did not go the other way?" Kawani asked of his uncle.

"Am I sure that the sky is up and the sage down?" was the answer that came, and Kawani did not ask any more questions. The sun was hot now, and those who had ridden very little on horses were not so glad they had come.

The dust rose in clouds over the sage, but they did not go very fast, for always they were looking to see if anywhere there was a man with a baby. Why had he not gone straight to the pueblo? And why, if he *was* on the way back to the pueblo, had they not seen him as they came out? And then a new thought came suddenly to Yazhe. *Now* if they did find the man, who would be the one who had found the baby? That prize looked to be a thing very far off, and maybe they would have to break it in many pieces, but all the time she was thinking that, the eyes of Yazhe were searching in the sage, as were the eyes of the others—but for a long time they saw nothing at all that looked like a man or like a baby.

CHAPTER XII

THE SONG IN THE SAGE

Over the top of the desert hill
The desert wind blows free,
With dark and the night the wind blows chill,
And it screams and howls as a night wind will,
But up with the dawn its voice grows mild,
And it sings as sweet as a little child,
It sings a song to me.

IF ANYONE had been thinking of funny things it would have looked funny to see those people straggling through the sage: those who were very uncomfortable on the backs of horses, and those who were very uncomfortable on their own feet in the dust. But no one had thoughts of funny things, and no one looked to see the others, and the thoughts of all were very serious; but quickly everything was changed when Yazhe threw up her head very suddenly and cried out to stop the horses.

"I hear a thing!" she cried. "Listen—what is that?" And all the horses stopped as still as if they were made of stone, and every ear was turned to the direction from which Yazhe was listening.

"It is a man," said the mother of the baby, and she was very greatly excited. "It is a man singing."

But quicker than anyone else Yazhe had slipped down from Keeto and was running through the sage. She saw a hogan in the rocks before her, and it was the very colour of the ground itself—that was why they had not seen it before—and it was from that hogan that the sound came.

Quickly Yazhe was at the door and looked in, and she looked straight into the eyes of a man who sat on the floor and rocked back and forth with something in his arms. They were very kindly eyes that looked into hers, with a smile in them that was good to see, and his face was kind, too, and had a look of gentleness almost like a woman's face. He shook his head when he looked at her, and Yazhe knew he meant that she was to make no noise, but he did not stop the song that he was singing. It was very strange, but she had heard that song before. She did not know where, but a long-ago

memory waked up in her mind and nodded to her. The words were like this —and she held her breath to hear:

"Shoo—shoo—little wind come—
Blow to rock my little one.
Blow the sorry thoughts away,
Blow the waking thoughts away,
Blow the dreams to sleepy eyes,
Bring the dark for sleepy eyes—
Little wind come!"

And then she looked down to see what was in those arms of the man, but she did not need to look, for she knew very well what was there; but if she had needed to know, that voice at the doorway just behind her would have told.

"My baby!" cried the mother. "Give to me my baby!" and she pushed past Yazhe and ran to the man and caught the baby into her arms. The man for just a moment did not like that.

"You will wake it," he said, and still he spoke softly as he sang. "All this time I have sung, and now you make loud noises—he will wake."

"It does not matter," said the mother, and now she was laughing and crying all at the same time. "It does not matter if he wakes. Plenty of time he will have to sleep. But now I want to see his eyes and to hear his voice, even if it is to cry."

"Ah," said the man, and he opened his eyes very wide at that. "That is a strange way to talk."

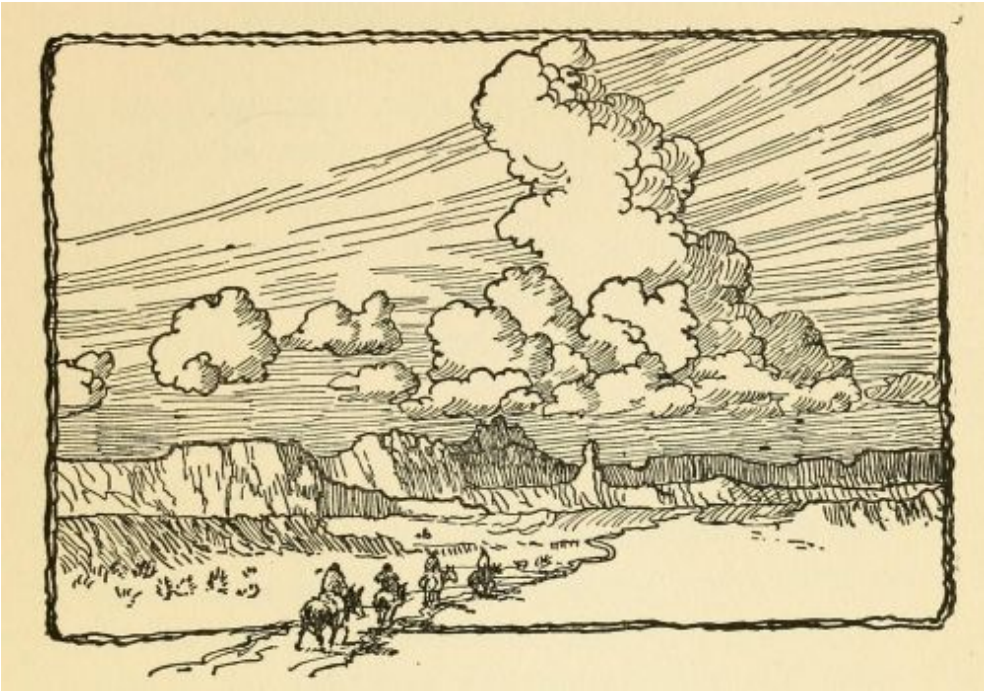
"He has been lost," explained Yazhe happily. "For a long time she has thought she would not see him again," and the man nodded in quick understanding.

"I brought him here because he cried," he said, "and there was milk in a jar. But now you will take him away."

"Yes, yes," cried the mother, "I will take him now, and all of you will come to the pueblo and we will make a big feast. This is a happy time, and we will bake things and make a dance for thanks."

They were all glad to hear that, and Yazhe remembered suddenly that she was very, very hungry. So they got on their horses again, and one of them, who had ridden too much, was glad to give his horse to the uncle of Kawani.

"I will walk for a while," he said. "My legs are tired of being on that horse," but the horse was not so glad when he felt how heavy was that uncle.



They rode fast now,
and there was much
laughing and singing.

But they rode fast now that they did not have to look in the sage, and there was much laughing and singing. The mother rode with her baby tight in one arm, and she laughed and sang with the others. Even the man of the hogan came, too, on a little burro that was his, and he smiled a great deal, and when Yazhe looked at him he said:

"Not many feast times come to this place, and I am very glad that one will come now. I think, maybe, there will be rabbit stew, for always we have rabbits."

"I like rabbit stew," laughed Yazhe, but then she rubbed the front of her little dress thoughtfully. "I am glad those women put these buttons on very tight," she said, "I would not like to lose nice silver buttons like these." And then they went up the steep trail to the mesa top, and the children and those others who had been left behind crowded curiously about them and asked questions about that baby and patted him on the cheeks. He was a very nice baby, with fat round cheeks and round black eyes and a mop of very black hair, and around his wrists and ankles were funny little rolls of flesh like pink bracelets. Yazhe could hardly take her eyes away from him, and it was easy to see how a mother would have sorry thoughts to lose a baby like that.

But now there were many other things to see than the baby. Just as soon as the women heard about the feast that was to be they began to grind meal and to bake little seed cakes and to make stews in many iron pots and grind the chili peppers for sauce. And the little girls began to shake out their best clothes and to brush their hair until it was as shiny as water in sunlight, and such a sound of shaking and grinding as there soon was. And the young men tuned up their voices to sing, and even the little dogs seemed to know that something very unusual was about to happen, and yelped and barked as loud as the loudest.

"Maybe there will be races," said one boy to Kawani. "I like races, and I can run fast."

"What kind of races?" asked Kawani.

"Come down the trail and I will show you," cried the boy eagerly. "It is better to show than to tell."

"I will come, too," said Yazhe, with very bright eyes. "Kawani will tell how I can run, too."

"And I will come!" cried other children standing near, and in a little there was a crowd of them who ran down the trail and out into the edge of the desert to a place that was smooth, with no stones to stumble over.

"Take off your moccasins," cried the boy. "Everyone who would like to run in this race must take off his moccasins."

"That is funny," said Kawani. "Never have I seen a race that was run without moccasins."

"Now you will see one!" cried all of the boys together, and they made a hurry to take the buckskin moccasins from their feet, and Kawani kicked off his, but Yazhe waited until she saw what they would do.

"This is why," said the first boy. "You race with a little stick—a throw stick. Look—like this!" and he put the small stick on the ground and very carefully but quickly picked it up with the big toe and the one next it of his right foot and threw it far out into the desert, then he ran to the place where the stick was and did the same thing over again, throwing the stick farther and farther away but never touching it with his hands. The other boys did the same thing with other sticks.

"The boy who comes back first with his stick is the one who wins!" shouted one of the boys. "Watch and see who it will be." And Kawani watched very closely. This was a different kind of a race than any he had seen before, and when he tried to pick up a stick with his toes he could not do it quickly as the others had done. Yazhe shook her head very hard.

"Never could I run in a race like that," she said. "I think that stick would make a tickle feel on my foot, and besides, I would not like the feel of stones and things. I do not like it without moccasins."

Kawani put on his own moccasins slowly.

"I hope all of the races are not like that one," he said. "I could not win that kind of a race ever."

The boys came back kicking their sticks, and the one who had first spoken was ahead of the others.

"I will show you another game that we might play," he said breathlessly. "Can you shoot arrows?"

"Hi!" laughed Kawani. "Nobody in our pueblo can shoot them better than I can. That is a thing that I can do."

"Do you shoot them through hoops?" asked the boy, and he saw by the look in the face of Kawani that he did not do that. "Wait, then, I will bring bows and arrows and hoops, and you can see," and he ran back up the trail even though he was still panting from his race.

In a little while he was back again and handed a number of hoops to one of the boys.

"Now, watch," he cried to Kawani, "and see if you can do this!" and Kawani stood close to see what he did.

One boy rolled the hoops, made of willow wands, to another boy one after the other as fast as they could go; and then the boy who had first spoken shot arrows through the hoops. Every time an arrow went straight through the middle of a hoop it counted one mark, and the boy who could make the most marks was the winner of the game. Kawani watched the boy, and his eyes flashed.

"I can do that!" he cried in a little. And when the boy had given him a bow and arrows he proved that he had said true. Every time the hoop went past him he shot an arrow straight through the middle and missed only one time. Yazhe danced on her tiptoes when she saw how he could do it, and the boy opened his eyes so wide in surprise that they looked as if they would pop right out of his head.

"Hi!" called a voice behind them. "You will be a very fine hunter when you grow up. Never have I seen a boy shoot so well," and they turned quickly to see the man who had sung to the baby, and his eyes were shining. "Give me the bow," he said, "and we will see if I, too, can shoot," and the boy made the hoops to go slow at first, because he thought maybe the man would miss. But he did not miss! He went straight through every one, and he called to the boy to go faster and still faster, and even then he did not miss.

When he had shot all the arrows he turned to Kawani, and there was a happy look in his eyes.

"You see that is a thing that is not forgotten. There is a tale about that—about how to shoot every arrow so that it will not miss. If you will come, all of you, I will tell it to you"; and the children very quickly and very eagerly gathered around him, and while they heard those on the mesa top preparing for the feast time and good smells came floating down to make them hungry, they listened to this tale told to them by the kindly old man of the hogan—and maybe it is a true tale—who knows?

CHAPTER XIII

A TALE OF ARROWS

Sing a song of the firelight glow
At the end of a happy day,
With the voices of women singing low,
And flickering shadows that come and go,
As thoughts grow hazy and sleepy and slow,
And drift in dreams away!

"THE time when all this happened," began the Arrow-man, "was long ago, when I was very young. Maybe things were not then as they are now, or maybe it is because we do not look for things to be like that—I do not know—but this is how it happened. One day when I was walking through the woods very far from this desert I heard a voice talking strangely, and when I stopped to listen the words came very clearly. The voice was down near to the ground, and this is what it said: 'Ai, if only I could get out of here—if only I could get out of this place and go back to my family. Ai, but this is a bad thing to happen to me'; and when I looked very carefully to find where that voice came from I saw a little coyote flat on the ground fastened under a small tree that had fallen on him, blown down by the wind. He could not move at all, and if I had not come he would have died in that place. I lifted the tree from him, but he did not run away as I thought he would do. He first slicked down his fur very carefully and looked all over himself to see if there was a hurt place on him, and then he blinked his eyes at me and said, 'Blue Feather,' for that was the name I was called in those days, 'Blue Feather, you have done for me a very friendly thing, and I give you thanks, and more than that, I will do as much for you when you have need of me'; and when he had said that he was off like an arrow of light through the trees, and I did not see him again for many moons. But the time came when I was very glad to see him—you shall see!

"The summer time when it is warm everywhere came and went, and then came the time of cold—and never has there been such cold in any land that I have known. All the little streams were frozen ice, and there was snow, very deep on everything. The air was a thing that cracked like piki bread that has

been baked too long, and the breath froze on my face. All day I had looked in the woods for food, but there was nothing there. The birds and little animals had gone, and never have I heard such silence! And then, very suddenly, I knew that I was lost!

"*All day I had looked in the woods for food.*"

"The woods were strange woods, and fresh snow came down and covered all the trails, and all the time colder and colder it grew. My feet and my hands were like great pieces of snow, and then came a feeling for sleep. My mind told me that it would be very bad to sleep, but I could not walk any more, and sat down under a big tree to rest. 'Hi!' said a voice to me when I had been there a very little while, 'why are you in this place, Blue Feather? This is not a place to sit down when the cold grows ever greater.' I opened my eyes wide to see who spoke, and it was Little Brother Coyote who had been caught under that tree that other time. 'I am lost,' I told him then, 'and it is so cold I think I will rest here for a while. After a while I will look again for that trail.' 'Hi!' he cried again. 'Get up, Blue Feather! It is very bad to sit still when the cold is so great. Get up and stamp your feet and come with me.' 'Where do you go?' I asked him then. 'To the council of all the animals. There is to be a big council, and the place is not far from here.' 'Who are the animals that will be there?' I asked, and he said, 'The Bobcat will be there, and the Wolf and my brother coyotes,' and as he said the names he ticked them off, each one on his paws, 'and the little Brothers Rabbit and the Eagle and the Panther and old Father Bear, and all of the birds and the Horned-toad, and, let me see'—he scratched his head when he said that—'maybe there will be others, but I cannot think of them now.' 'Ouw!' I cried. 'Very much better it would be for me to stay here and be cold. If I go there those animals will maybe eat me up. I think I will not go.' But Brother Coyote caught me by the arm and pulled me up. 'They will not eat you,' he cried. 'I give you promise of that. Come, you cannot stay in this place. Come now so we will be early, and maybe I can hide you.'

"So I went with him through the snow, and always it grew colder and more snow fell. 'Here it is,' he whispered when we came near to some big rocks. 'Be very quiet now and they will not know that you are here.' And we went into a great hole in the rocks that led into a big cave in the side of a hill. It was darker in the cave than it was outside, but after a little it seemed to grow lighter and lighter and I could see very plainly. Brother Coyote ran to a place I could not see as quickly, as we were inside, and he brought back a little pot with grease in it. The grease had the smell of pine trees and other plants of the forest, and he rubbed it on me. 'So they will not smell you,' he whispered. And then I looked about the cave. There was a big fire in the middle of it, and it was very cosy and warm in there. And there were soft rugs on the floor, and a very big pot was cooking on the fire. The smell from that pot——"

"*Aouw!*" called out one little boy. "Do not tell us of the smell from that pot—or of what was in it. Already I grow so hungry I could eat these

sticks!"

The Arrow-man grinned.

"That is the way I felt when the smell came to me," he said. "But I did not eat sticks. Not any of the other animals had come yet, and the Coyote went up to that pot and dished out some of the good-smelling stuff into little cups——"

"*Aouw!*" cried the boy again. "I can smell it now!"

"But it was better than that smell!" said the Arrow-man, and he smacked his lips. "It was better than anything you can think of, and when we had eaten all we could eat there was a scratching noise at the door of the cave. Brother Coyote made a jump for a place on the blanket, and he told me how to stoop down behind him where it was dark, so no one would see me. And then the noise at the door was much louder, and old Father Bear came into the cave, puffing and growling and slapping at his ears. He shook the snow from his blanket, and unwound a long scarf that was tied about his neck, and coughed very hard until all the cold was out of his throat. Then he sat down by the fire and warmed his hands and looked around the cave to see if the others were there.

"'How is it that the council is not here?' he cried in his big growly voice. 'Always I am the first.'

"'It is very cold,' said Brother Coyote in a squeaky voice, 'and I am here, Father Bear. Maybe you did not see me because it is dark.'

"'I see you very well,' snapped Father Bear again, which was not a true thing, for when he had first come in he had seen nothing at all. There was more noise then at the door, a very small noise, and little Brother Rabbit came in very timidly, wiping the snow from his whiskers, and he shook first one foot and then the other in front of the fire; and then he saw Father Bear sitting there glaring at him, and he crept away to a corner, making himself as little as he could in the shadows.

"The Wolf came after that, and the Panther and the Fox, all close together and all shivering with the cold. Brother Coyote put fresh sticks of wood on the fire, but he was very careful when he did it not to step away from the place where I sat behind him. More and more animals came after that, and all the birds and the very little creatures that live under the sage. And such a noise of growling and twittering and coughing and sneezing they made. The Bobcat was the very worst of all: he would take out a very big red handkerchief and blow his nose until the walls of the cave would shake and every animal would jump from his seat. Every time he would do that until Father Bear frowned as black as a thunder cloud and called to him:

"'If one more time you do that, Brother Bobcat, I myself will throw you out into the snow'; and after that all of them were more quiet. And when they had come and had all eaten of the stew in the big pot Father Bear lighted a big pipe and blew smoke up in the air and down and to the four ways.

"'Now,' he cried, 'the council is open, Brothers, and we can talk of the things that have brought us here'; and he passed the pipe around for the others to smoke, and very soon the cave was blue and dark with smoke, and only the one red eye of the fire winking through the gloom, and I knew that it did not matter now how Brother Coyote moved, for no one would see me.

"'This is the council of better ways,' cried Brother Wolf then, in a very big voice. 'We meet here, Brothers, to tell of how we have found a better way to do a thing than ever it was done before. And first of all Brother Bobcat will tell us what he brings to this council.'

"The Bobcat grew purple in the face at being spoken to so unexpectedly, and he took out his big red handkerchief and drew a big breath; but Father Bear shouted to him in a loud voice before he could blow his nose, and he let out his breath and put the handkerchief back in his pocket. He smoothed his hair with one hand and looked into the fire.

"'I have found a very fine way to make the hair to shine like silk,' he said in a voice that was very hoarse, and he coughed behind his hand.

"'How is that?' growled Father Bear, and *his* voice was almost a roar. 'How is that fine way?'

"The Bobcat sat down low on the blanket, and his voice was very small now.

"'It is a grease,' he said, and all the animals looked at him very hard, but hardest of all was the look of Father Bear.

"'What is that grease?' he roared, and this time his voice made even the smoke to curl up in little waves to the top of the cave.

"'It is—it——' and Brother Bobcat coughed behind his hand again, very loud and long, and then he took out his red handkerchief.

"'Is that grease *BEAR* grease?' cried Father Bear, and the Bobcat did not know what to answer, for it *was* Bear Grease, but he was afraid to say that, and Father Bear looked at him as if he would bore a hole right through him, but Brother Coyote called out then, for he was sorry for the Bobcat:

"'I have found a very good way to mark a trail place through the woods.'

"'How is that?' cried all the animals together, and they were glad to make Father Bear look away from the Bobcat, who crept quietly back into

the shadows of the cave and curled up and went to sleep. 'How is that a good way to mark a trail?'

"Brother Coyote stammered when he saw everybody looking at him at once, and now he began to feel more sorry for himself than for Brother Bobcat.

"'Ma—maybe,' he said, 'it would not do for another one,' and he looked at Father Bear from the corner of his eye, 'but—but it was good for me.'

"'Will we have to wait all of the day to hear it?' cried Father Bear. 'Tell us quickly what it is you have to say.'

"'I—I thought,' said Brother Coyote, and he was now so afraid of Father Bear that his paws made a little clicking sound on the floor, they trembled so —'I thought about a stone.'

"'What has that to do about a trail place?' roared Father Bear, and Brother Coyote almost shouted the rest of what he had to say.

"'I tied a stone to the end of my tail, and as I ran it marked the trail.' The mouth of Father Bear dropped wide open.

"'*Never* have I heard a council like this one,' he cried. 'In all this place there is no one who can say a thing that is worth the words that say it. How could *I* make a trail like that when I have no tail to bother with? Is there in this place no one who can say a thing for this council that we have not heard before and that is worth the hearing?'

"The timid little Rabbit sneezed once, and then he crept forward into the light of the fire.

"'If you will make a place out in the snow where we can shoot,' he said in a very small voice, 'I will show you a thing and I will tell you a thing!'

"Father Bear looked at him, and his eyes opened wide, but he did not say the thing that was in his mind to say.

"'Bring bows and arrows,' he cried, 'and make a smooth place in the snow, and we will see what is this thing that Brother Rabbit will show to us.'

"And Brother Rabbit looked very confused and sneezed several times, but the others did as Father Bear said, and in a little they all went out to the smooth place in the snow they had made and I watched what they did through a place in the rocks.

"They put a mark on a tree and then Brother Rabbit told all of them to take a turn with the bow and arrows and try to hit that mark on the tree. The panther tried first, and he could not so much as hit the tree with his arrows, so they laughed at him and gave the bow into the hands of the Bobcat, who was still very sleepy. He shot one arrow that almost hit Father Bear and then

he crept quickly back into the cave and went to sleep again. Father Bear did not shoot, because he said he was so much better than all the rest that he did not want to make them feel how very bad they were, and so then it came the time for Brother Rabbit to take his turn, and all the others laughed when he sneezed again and stood up in the snow with the bow in his hands. But when he began to shoot they did not laugh, for every arrow that he shot went straight to the mark, and it went so fast that not one of them could see it go. There it was in the bow and—*twang!* there it was in the mark on the tree! But so quick that even the eye of the eagle could not follow it—and his eye is quicker than most things. Many times Brother Rabbit did that until all the arrows were gone, and the other animals cried out loud with the wonder of it. Even Father Bear forgot to growl and shouted to him:

"'Tell us how that is done, Brother Rabbit'; and Brother Rabbit worked his whiskers and scratched his nose and said in his very little voice:

"'If you will come in by the fire again I will tell you of this thing—how I have learned to shoot arrows like that'; and they followed him into the cave again, and I crept back into a shadowy place and listened to the words that he said.

"'Always,' said Brother Rabbit, 'it was in my mind to shoot like that. When I was very little I would stand for many hours each day and send the arrows to the mark, but they would miss many times, and sometimes they would go so slow that they would drop by the way. So I began to study other things that were fast to see if I could learn the way they had. And this I found—that of all living things the swallow is the swiftest. He flies so fast through the air that almost you can see him in two places at the one time. So I thought maybe it is the feathers of the swallow that make him to go so fast, and if I can get some of those feathers to put on my arrows I can shoot as fast as that. So I asked him one time for some feathers, but he put his head on one side and laughed at me. "Hi!" he cried. "What would you do with feathers, Brother Rabbit? Will you have them for wings so that you can hop higher in the sage? Or will you put them in your tail to make you beautiful?"

"'"No," I said, "but they are very beautiful, and I would like to put some of my arrows to make them shine in the sunlight. Never have I seen such beautiful feathers!" and when I said that he was very glad and proud and thought a moment with his head on one side. Then he said:

"'"I have some feathers in an old nest, some that I will not use again, and I will bring those, Brother Rabbit." And he brought me enough for three arrows—and after that, sure enough, my arrows were swift and sure as the swallow flies. And I have told you the reason.'

"And when Brother Rabbit had finished talking many of the animals had gone to sleep by the fire, and maybe I, too, went to sleep, for when I opened my eyes suddenly there was only Brother Coyote in the cave, and the light of a new day was coming in at the door. This day was not cold like the other had been, and Brother Coyote showed me the trail that I had lost. So when I came back to my own people I did what Brother Rabbit had done and put the feathers of swallow tails on my arrows and that is why they have gone so true and swiftly as you have seen."

"Is that why?" asked one of the boys. "But that is a very strange thing, for the arrows that you shot have no swallow's feathers on them."

"Eh?" asked the Arrow-man. "Is that a true thing that you say?" and he scratched his head for a moment as if in thought. "Ah, well, it is because I have shot so many of those others that now they all go like that—the very same way," and his eyes were full of twinkly lights; and then he sniffed, with his nose high in the air: "What is that I smell?" he cried. "Very *much* it has the smell of rabbit stew!" And that was the end of the tale!

CHAPTER XIV

THE ROPE THAT BROKE

Little clouds go sailing by
In the sky,
Many birds are flying too
In the blue,
Tumbleweeds and golden sand,
Dancing gaily hand in hand,
Sunshine bright in desert-land,
Dancing too!

YAZHE was the first to reach the top of the mesa trail. It was not that she tried so hard to run fast, it was only that she thought of that rabbit stew and forgot that the trail was in between. But very close behind her came the Arrow-man and Kawani and the other boys, and when they reached the top they were very glad they had come, for there, sure enough, was a real feast spread out before them!

A smooth place not very far from the edge of the big rock had been chosen for the place for the feast, and when it had been made very clean a long strip of blanket had been spread on the ground, and on the blanket was spread the feast. *Such* a feast!

First of all there was rabbit stew (and Yazhe smacked her lips when she saw that!), and then came roast chicken, and deer meat, and corn mush, and squash baked golden brown in the big round ovens, and beans with a sauce of chili peppers, and piki bread, and seed cakes, and dried apricots and peaches, and great slices of melon! Never had Yazhe seen a feast that made such a happy feeling come in the inside of her! And they did not have to wait at all, for the mother of the baby gave first to the Arrow-man and then to Kawani and Yazhe, and to the uncle of Kawani and to his grandmother—for they were the ones who had helped to bring back the baby—she gave them all they could eat; and then to all the others; and every little while Yazhe looked carefully down at her buttons to be sure they were all there—and she was glad for the strong thread the women had used!

And then, just as the feast was almost finished and the blankets began to have much the look as if a storm had passed over them—a thing happened! At first it seemed to be a very bad thing, but afterward—well, you shall see!

The mother of that baby was very busy with the feast things, and everyone was talking and laughing and making much noise, and for one small minute there was no one who watched the baby, and a baby can do much in one small minute, even if it is only a crawly baby and cannot walk on its feet! This baby went wriggling over to the very edge of that rocky mesa, and over the edge it saw a bright little plant with a red flower—a very pretty flower—and it gave a happy little gurgle and reached for the flower—and then—right in that tiny speck of time the Arrow-man saw what was happening and he made a spring, like a jump of a wildcat, and caught the baby with his hand! And then, like a tree in a very strong wind, he wavered out over the edge of that mesa and back again—and out again—and then, with a rattle of little stones, he went down over that edge holding the baby as high as he could! Down—down—where there was no trail!

With a cry that had no words in it all of those who sat at the feast ran to the edge of the rock and looked over!

But in true life very strange things often happen, and this was one of those strange things!

A little way down the side of the mesa, almost covered with dusty bushes, was a small shelf of rock. It did not look to those who watched over the top of the rock to be large enough to hold anything. But it did hold the Arrow-man, and the baby, too, and there was room for more.

Kawani had jumped to the edge of the mesa and was watching from above with the others, and when he saw what happened, and that the little shelf of rock did not fall, he cried out quickly for a rope!

"Bring me a rope that is strong," he cried, "and I will make a try to get them up again!"

There was much hurrying about and shouting then, but it was Yazhe who found the rope hung on a big peg on a wall. When Kawani saw it he shook his head.

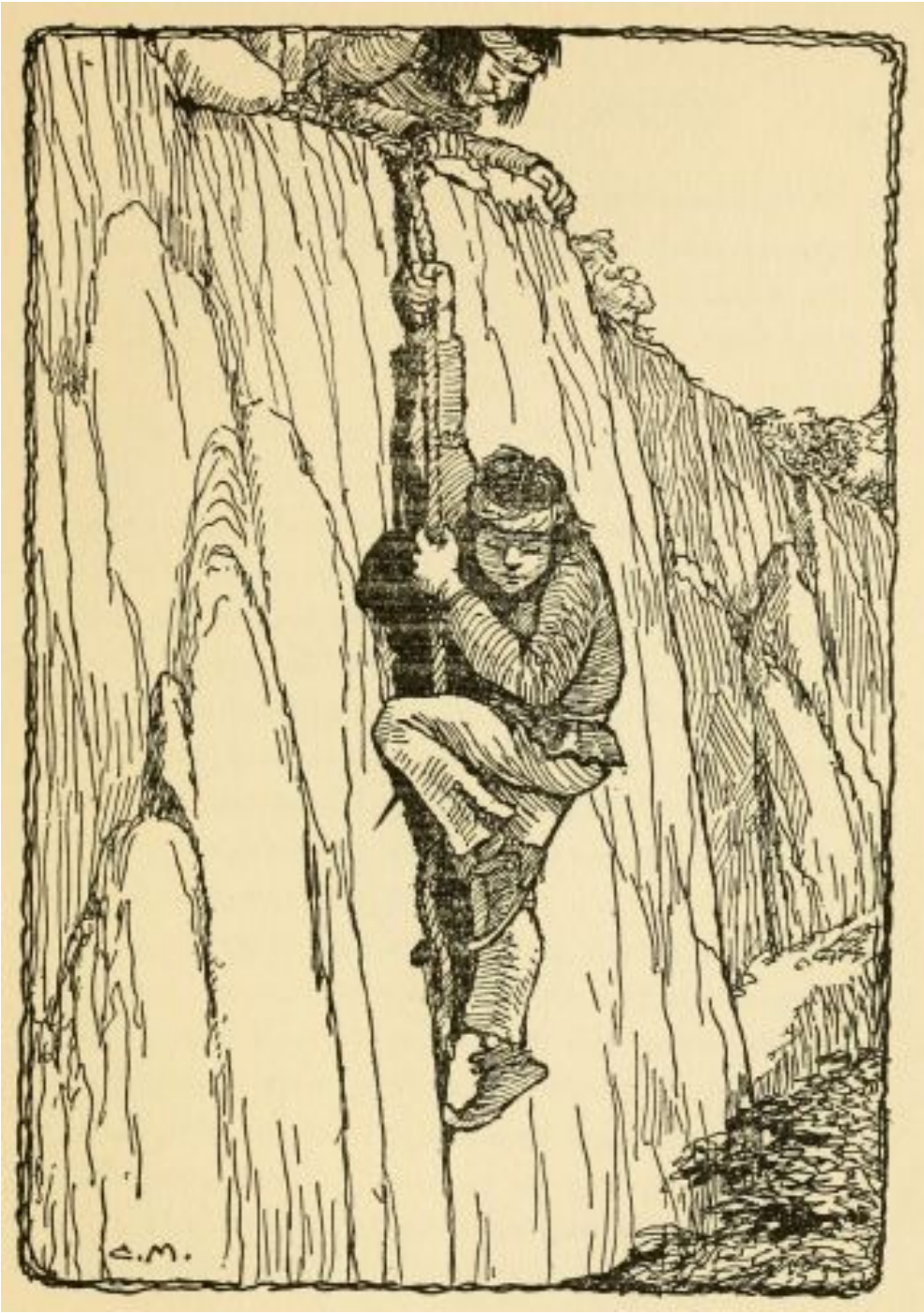
"Look how that rope is not strong!" he cried. "It will surely break." But there was no more to be found anywhere, and he fastened it to a post of a doorway and looked over the edge of the rock again.

"The Arrow-man does not move," cried one woman then. "I think his head was hit against the rock and that baby will crawl away!"

"Quick, get him!" cried the mother, in a voice high over all the others. "He will fall again—my baby will fall!"

And Kawani did not wait for more than that. He put some knots in the rope as fast as he could, and then he took hold of it and went over the edge of the mesa down to that shelf of rock.

Even the mother of the baby held her breath when she saw him do that. But it did no good for anyone to hold his breath, for the rope did just as Kawani said it would do, and when he put his full weight upon it, it broke with a loud snap—and he fell, with a little thump, on top of the Arrow-man and caught hold of the baby just in time to keep it from crawling off the little shelf of rock!



The rope broke with a loud snap.

The people on top of the mesa gave a cry when the rope broke. This was a very terrible day—one bad thing happened right after the other—but Yazhe did not waste one minute thinking about that. She was hunting in every house for strong things to tie together to make another rope thing to use for Kawani. It was bad to have the Arrow-man down in a place like that, and it was very bad for that baby—but Kawani! When she thought of Kawani down there her heart came straight up into her throat and she could hardly breathe!

Kawani did not think it was a very good thing either. But he had not had much time to think of anything. When he landed on the rocky shelf the first thing to do was to hold tight to that baby and the next was to see how the Arrow-man was hurt and to help him if he could. It was as the woman had said: his head had struck against a stone, but there did not seem to be any bad place, and Kawani thought he would be very quickly well again. But that would not get them up to the top of the mesa, and there was no rope!

Those faces looking down at him from up there looked very queer and far away to Kawani, and he did not look up a second time. The voices, too, that shouted things to him did not sound like real voices, but like dream things, and they did not say anything that would help.

The little shelf of rock was very narrow, and Kawani wondered how long he could stay there when the Arrow-man should be awake again. The baby fretted in his arms and tried to get down, and then Kawani turned his face to the big wall of rock and the bushes growing closely against it, and suddenly his heart gave a big jump and began to beat as if it had wings!

There was a hole in the rock—a place that looked black through the bushes—and he pushed with his arm to see how far in it went. He almost fell forward into a big, dark place. It was a cave, and he could not tell how big it was! But it did not take very long to put the baby in that place and to pull the Arrow-man in, too, very carefully by his feet through the bushes, and to make a soft place, with a little bush, for his head to lie on. The baby began very quickly to crawl about in shadowy places that Kawani could not see, and the people up on top of the mesa shouted that a magic thing had happened and wondered much what that thing could be. When one moment there were three on the little shelf of rock and then there were none! And they leaned far out over the edge of the mesa, so far that there was danger of others falling, but they did not fall; and Yazhe worked so hard with the strips of blankets and thong things that she grew red in the face and breathed as if she had been running fast.

But now Kawani had another thing to think about—a very new and strange thing. The Arrow-man had opened his eyes and looked straight into the eyes of Kawani with the smile that was always there, but the words that he spoke made Kawani jump to his feet and look at him as if he had heard a thing that could not be true.

"Tanita!" called the Arrow-man in a very low voice. "Tanita—where is Tanita?" And Tanita was the name of the mother of Kawani, and it was the name of no other woman! So that is why Kawani felt that he did not hear true.

"Why do you call for Tanita?" he asked the Arrow-man in a voice that had a tremble in it. "Why do you call for Tanita?"

The man looked at him with a surprise in his eyes.

"Tanita is my wife," he said. "Always I call for Tanita." And then Kawani did a thing that others would not understand. He leaned down over the Arrow-man and with shaking fingers, but very carefully and gently, he pushed back the hair from each of his ears. And in one ear—and *only* in one—there was a stone, blue as the sky, and with the mark of an arrow on it—the very double of the stone Kawani had found. And when he saw that, for a little Kawani forgot about the baby and about the cave place and about the danger that was there—only one thing could he remember, and that thing was that after all this time he had found his father! Not yet did he know why that father had left his home place and why he lived so far away now with these strange people, but soon he would know that, too. In a little the Arrow-man sat up and looked around him with eyes that were full of a surprise, and again he called for Tanita.

"She is not here," said Kawani gently, "but in a little while we will go and find her. Tell me, what are the things that you remember?"

The Arrow-man put his hand to his head as if very hard he tried to think.

"Down the trail," he said slowly. "Yes, it was down the trail that I went—and then, I think a thing hit my head. Of that I am not sure, but here there is a little hurt place," and he put his hand to the place where his head had struck the rock. It was very plain to Kawani now that his father remembered only the time he had been on the home mesa. Something had happened then—it did not greatly matter now what that thing had been—but all the time in between, that time when his mother had waited, was forgotten. Maybe it would come back, but now he had thoughts only of the home things and of Tanita. It was a good thing—and a little it was bad, too, for Kawani could not think how he could make him to know that the little one he had left on that mesa was now a big one—was Kawani, who stood and looked at him.

But in a little while maybe he could tell him that, too—when he remembered more things—and then everything would be right.

But now suddenly he remembered that baby and that those on the mesa top would have worry thoughts if they did not hear that they were safe. It was dark in this place, only a little light came through the bushes at the opening of the cave, and nowhere could he see the baby, but he heard a shuffling sound over to one side, and when he took a step that way a big puff of cold wind blew into his face. He stopped still as if he had heard a strange sound, and then he ran back to the Arrow-man.

"Come!" he cried, and there was a great excitement in his voice. "There is another way out of this place. Come, and we will find it!" And the Arrow-man got up without a word of question and followed him.

CHAPTER XV

TRAIL'S END

What do you see in the sunset glow
That fades in the golden west?
I see the end of a little trail
And a day that goes to rest.

KAWANI followed that little crawly sound back into the shadows of the cave and in a short time he reached down and picked up the warm bundle that was the baby. And his father followed him closely with a hand that touched his arm in the dark and made a strange feeling come to Kawani—a feeling that it was he who was the big man and his father a little one who looked to him for help.

It grew blacker and blacker as they went farther back into the cave, but still Kawani felt that cold air blowing, and he went toward it. He held one hand in front of him and for a while walked very slowly, feeling always with his hand as he went. There were times when he came against cold rock and now he knew that the way was very narrow, with walls close on either side; but still it went on, and in a while it began to slant up.

Suddenly the voice of the Arrow-man spoke to him in the silence, and it sounded very loud in that narrow place, and there was a something different in the sound of it.

"That is a queer thing," said the voice. "Look how I remember now that you are the boy who came looking for that baby. And where is that little girl—that Yazhe?"

"She is up on the mesa," said Kawani, and his heart was beating fast. "Maybe you remember another thing, too—how you fell down on a rock when you tried to catch that baby?"

"Hi!" shouted his father in a voice that made even the baby jump in the arms of Kawani. "I remember that I tried to catch that baby—and where is that baby?"

"He is here," said Kawani, and he put the baby into the arms of the Arrow-man, and there was a song feeling in his heart. "Now everything will

be all right," sang that feeling. "Now he will remember all things, and the in-between places I will tell him."

His father hugged the baby tight.

"I am glad," he said. And then a light began to show in the dark place where they were, and Kawani walked faster when he saw it.

And then, after a little, he began to run until he came to another hole that led out of the side of the rock. But when he looked out of this hole he found it was over the trail—up in the wall above it. There was a rock that stuck out of the wall just below the hole and hid it from the trail, and on the top of the rock was a ladder of rope very neatly made into a little pile. When he looked closely Kawani saw a thong that was tied to the ladder and hung down the rock behind a bush where it could not be seen from below. That was for the one on the trail who knew about the cave so that he could pull on the thong and bring down the ladder of rope. The eyes of Kawani sparkled when he saw that thong, but he did not say anything now, and his father went down the ladder when he held it for him as if this were a thing he had always known about and had done every day of his life.

"We will go up the trail very carefully," whispered Kawani in the ear of his father when they were both down from the ladder, "and we will make a surprise thing for those who wait up there." And even the baby did not make a sound until they got very near to the place where the others were still bending over the edge of the cliff. But the mother of the baby turned around when they were near—a thing made her turn—and she gave such a scream when she saw them there that Kawani had a fear that all the others would yet go down over the edge of the mesa. But they looked when she cried out, and in the faces of all of them was a fear look more than a surprise—until the Arrow-man put the baby into the arms of the mother; and then they knew that they saw real people and not dream shadows that walk.

After that there was so much of talking and laughing and glad sounds that for a little Kawani could not make them hear the thing that he would ask.

"Where is Yazhe?" he called out then. "I do not see Yazhe here," and he gave a little cry when they told him that she had made a strong rope thing with pieces of blanket and thong, and when she did not see anyone down on that little shelf of rock she had gone over herself to see what had happened down there, and right now she was down in the cave place where they had been.

Kawani did not wait when they said that, but ran back down the trail to the place of the rope ladder, and others followed after him, and he climbed

up into the cave place calling to Yazhe as he ran. He did not know why he felt such an excitement, but there was a feeling that he must reach her quickly. And when he had run a way through that dark passage Yazhe heard him calling, and she called back to him:

"Where are you, Kawani? Come quickly and tell me if you are safe!"

"I am very safe," he answered, and then he came into the cave place again and after the dark of the passage it seemed very light, much lighter than it had seemed that other time. He stopped short when he got in that place, and his eyes grew big almost as melons, but it was not because Yazhe was standing there—it was something else that made him look like that. Yazhe looked where he was looking, and then her eyes, too, grew big and shiny.

"What is it?" she cried. "What are all those things, Kawani?"

He walked over to the side of the cave and touched with his fingers great piles of cloth stuff and blankets and baskets and little bags that clinked as he touched them. He opened one of the bags, and it was full of silver pieces of money, and another one had chains and bracelets, and another was full to the very top with blue sky stones.

"It cannot be that these things belong to the people of the mesa," said Kawani in a low voice. "If that was so they would know there was a way to come into this cave from the trail, and they would have come."

"*Is* there a way like that?" cried Yazhe, and every part of her was dancing now. "Oh, but how I am glad that you are safe, Kawani."

"Yes, there is a way like that," said Kawani, "and I have found my father."

Yazhe looked at him as if she did not believe the words that he said. "I think, too, many things happen, all at the one time," she cried, "but how could you find your father here?"

"I have found him," said Kawani again, and it made him laugh to see the look in her face. "It is the Arrow-man," and there was such a happy sound in his voice that Yazhe knew now that he told her a true thing. "And maybe," he cried, "maybe they will give us some of these things in this cave so that when we go back to those boys on the mesa they will believe the things that I said, how that my father would bring good things when he came back."

And more than that—when the people on the mesa top heard about those things in the cave place they said that all of them were for Kawani, for never would they have found them at all if he had not gone there.

"A little of that is true," said Kawani when they said that, "but it is not all true. First the baby came down, and then the Arrow-man, and then I

came, and after me came Yazhe—so *all* of us have found it!"

"And some will go to each one of you, then," said the chief one, who had not spoken before. "And now I remember how it must be that this is here. I remember a trader who came from the north, and it was said that he stole many things, and there were those who saw him near to here in the desert when he did not come to the pueblo. And then one time he did not come again at all, and after that there was a tale of how he had been killed in a fight. I think these are the things that belonged to him."

"I think that, too," cried another man. "I remember that trader, and now I am very glad that good people will have these things and not a thief."

And everyone was glad, and all over again they felt that they should have a feast—only no one could eat any more—and the mother of the baby hugged Yazhe and Kawani and put the hand of the Arrow-man close to her cheek.

"You are good people," she cried, "and I am glad you have come, and I have a sorry feeling that you must go now"; but she understood very well how the mother of Kawani would be glad to have him come back, and how she would be happy, more than words could tell, to have the Arrow-man come back, too, and how the grandmother of Yazhe would be watching all the time for her to come from across the desert—yes, she understood all that especially well—and she hugged that baby tight to her breast as she thought it.

And so, with some of the fine cloth stuff from the cave, the Arrow-man bought a horse for him to ride back to that home mesa, and now he was very glad to know that Kawani was his own son, and it was hard for him to wait to see again those others on the mesa top who did not yet know that he was coming. And even Keeto gave little sounds that Kawani knew were home sounds, and all of them wanted very much to start back on the home trail.

"I will tell you how to go," said the Chief One, and he pointed to the little hills they were to follow, and then he got two fat burros and loaded them with much of the stuff from that cave—but not with all of it: the Arrow-man and Kawani would not let him give all of it. They put it into two piles, one to take with them and the other for the people of Red Rock Mesa, and the people were very happy when they saw that pile, for they were poor.

When the burros were loaded the Arrow-man got on his horse, and Kawani and Yazhe on Keeto, and the uncle of Kawani and his cousin rode on a horse of a man of the pueblo, and his grandmother on the burro; so they made a very grand party as they rode off with the two fat burros following after and all the people calling out good things to them. They carried much

food, too, and bottles of water, and the feet of the horses made dancing sounds on the ground in time to much jingling and clinking of chains and straps!

"I feel like a Chief One!" cried Kawani, "like the Chief One of all the world. And now I will tell things to those boys when I get back!"

"I think they will not want to fight you now," said Yazhe. "Now they will want to be your friend and to hear about things and to see all that you have brought."

"I like better to be a friend than a fighter," nodded Kawani.

"Hi!" laughed the Arrow-man, who had heard what they said, "that is a true thing. Always it is better to be a friend. A friend will make you strong, but a fighter has fear always living in him, and fear is a thing to make you weak."

The uncle and grandmother and cousin of Kawani left them when they came to the hogan in the desert, and then, after that, they felt as if they were truly on that home trail. But it was yet very far from the mesa—not yet had they come to the Trading Post; and when they came near to that place Yazhe saw a woman and man riding on a horse, and when they came very close to them Yazhe called out in an excited voice:

"Look—look—who is that woman?" And Kawani saw, too, that it was someone he had seen before—and then the woman cried out to Yazhe, and there was a happy sound in her voice:

"Hi, little one—look how I do not live any more with thief men. And there are no more thief men in that cañon. The big White Father in Washington has sent men to take them away, and now you can go anywhere in peace!" And Kawani knew then that it was the woman who had helped them in the cañon.

And after that they met many people from the big mesa, and always everyone looked at them with round eyes to see how they rode like chief ones and with so much fine stuff on the burros.

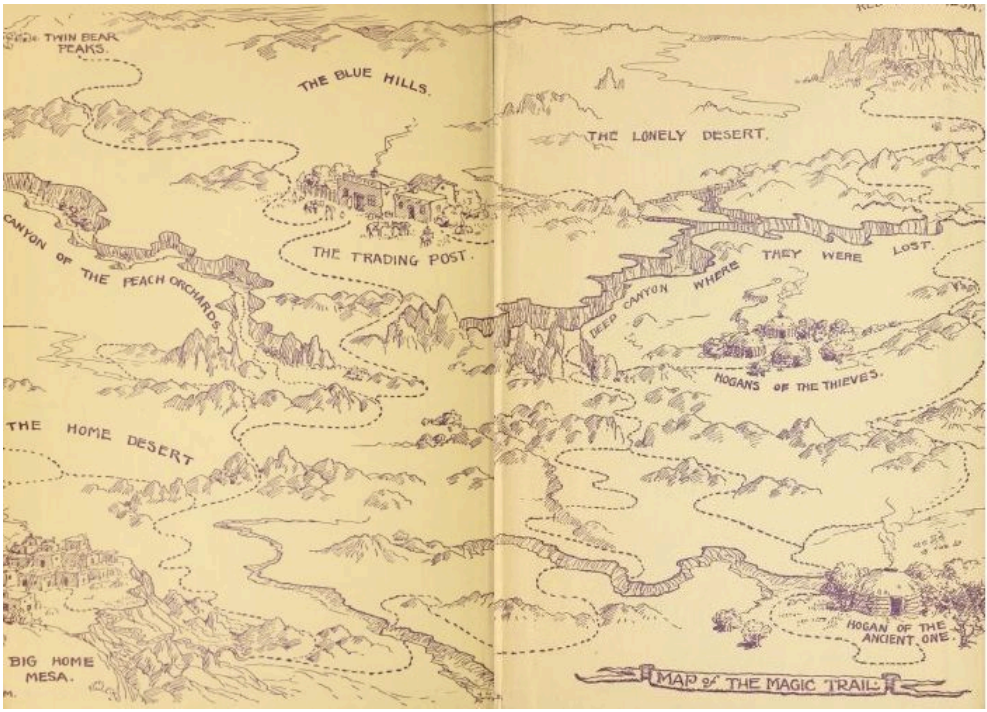
"Do you know what we bring back?" cried Kawani suddenly to Yazhe, and his eyes were shining. "Do you know what it is that we bring back from that Magic Trail?"

"Yes," nodded Yazhe, and more than ever she looked like a very little old woman when she said it—and very wise she looked. "I know what we bring, and it is not on those burros."

Kawani laughed aloud.

"Always you know what I would say before I say it," he said. "It is happiness we bring back—and always that is a magic thing!"

This e-book is dedicated to the memory of
Stephen Hutcheson.


TWIN BEAR PEAKS.
THE BLUE HILLS.
THE LONELY DESERT.
CANYON OF THE PEACH ORCHARDS.
THE TRADING POST.
THEY WERE LOST.
DEEP CANYON WHERE
HOGANS OF THE THIEVES.
THE HOME DESERT
HOGAN OF THE ANCIENT ONE.
BIG HOME MESA.
MAP of THE MAGIC TRAIL

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Some illustrations were moved to facilitate page layout.

[The end of *The Magic Trail*, by Grace Moon.]