

Katie did not know exactly when the thought first popped into her mind that she did not belong here, but once it did, it refused to relinquish its hold. There was much about this life that bothered her. The village was always moving, with long strings of travois and pack horses raising dust on the plains, fostering dreams of staying put in one place long enough to call it home. And everyone in the Oglala camp was a relative of marriage. These were Black Moon's people, not hers. She thought she had found a relative of birth when she'd been summoned to St. Louis by an aunt she hadn't known she had. For a while, the charged atmosphere of the city had distracted her, until her aunt died and she returned to the wild country around the Platte, and to Black Moon. But he had an extended family of aunts, uncles and cousins. *Tiyospaye*, the Lakota called it. She longed for a *tiyospaye* of her own, an extended family with whom she could be outspoken and impudent and even a little silly without receiving stares from dark, admonishing eyes.

Yet, every time she dared to think about leaving and returning to the world she left behind, she had merely to watch Black Moon gallop his pony to the top of a rise and sit there astride its bare back with the wind tossing his long black hair about his face, his proud, unflinching profile etched against the panorama. Each night spent in his arms beneath the buffalo robes aroused a passion in her as strong and powerful as if it were the first time, when he had taken her beneath the shaggy leaf trees and made her his own. Night after night when he spilled his hot seed into her, she prayed for a new life to grow within to help ease the pain of the little one they lost.

He was like no man she had ever met. He was neither the tallest nor the strongest of the Lakota fighting men, but his courage and bravery were unmatched. While others boasted of their victories, he barely talked about his exploits, even to her. He did not adorn himself with feathers or paint. No scalp locks hung from his hide shirt. In battle he rode his favorite bay gelding, not because it was beautiful and powerful like some war horses, but because it was fast and had endurance.

He was volatile and warlike, focusing his vengeance against the white men who stole Lakota land. And yet, for all his hatred of the *wasichus*, it had been his destiny to love a white trader's daughter. As it was her destiny to fall in love with the Lakota warrior who became her savior, her friend, her lover, her husband...her world.

What would Tom McCabe think if he could see her now, dressed in tanned elk skin, her long red hair braided and bound in rawhide, her skin almost as brown as the people she lived among, sitting astride her spotted Indian pony, watching from afar the white world she had forsaken for the man she loved?

She wished her father was there to give her advice on how to live as a white woman among the Indians and about the hard times ahead, with the army making increasing demands on the Sioux and the Sioux not willing to give up an inch of land without a fight.

Ever since the Sand Creek atrocity two years ago when the Colorado Territory militia had fired upon a peaceful Cheyenne village, the Sioux were fighting hard to protect their land and people. And now, Black Moon was riding with Crazy Horse, and Katie's fears mounted—for him, for herself, and for the uncertain future.