

Summary of : Injun Boy A Gunfighter and Indian boy meet in Jail and form a partnership that leads to deception for escaping Jail and avoiding hanging. The adventure leads to a surprising conclusion in the town of the Bridal Chamber Gold Mine. Western action, adventure, and humor.

Injun Boy

“You an Injun,Boy?” these words spoken to a teen age boy with long black hair sitting dejectedly in the corner of a hot Jail cell in the town of Marana, Arizona territory. The young boy raised his face to expose a pair of pale gray eyes and a strong narrow face. His resentful answer , “ Damn Right , I’m an indian . mother was white, but whites don’t like me!” The question came from an older man seated on the lower cell bunk. The older man said, “ Well Injun, don’t get your feathers all wet! Whites don’t like me neither. They think I killed a man. They’re right, I killed the Bastard all right. I’d kill him again if I had the chance. Shot my Dog! Ol’Rascal never done nothing to nobody. Hell, He was a little feller. Not much bigger than my boots. I’m no gunfighter, but when that fancy Mex Don Fredo was showing off, and used Rascal for target practice, I called the Bastard out and shot him.”

“ He thought he was some kinda fancy with a pistol, but he ain’t never come up against a fanning gun and I’m as good as most. Died in his tracks, hardly cleared leather. Folks say I never give him a chance. Well, they were wrong and they were right . He was packing a long barreled 44 and it would be tomorrow before he got it out of his holster. I told him he was gonna die. I didn’t care whether he drew or not. He drew. He died! Now I’m in trouble. His friends and family want to hang me. What they got you in here for?”

The boy stood up and said, "I was caught stealing food at the Big Store. I was hungry. "Ain't had nothing much to eat for days. Wasn't much; just a can of beans, but they locked me up. Sheriff gimme some grits and corn dodgers this morning; said they was gonna make me clean out the Livery stable before they turned me loose. Wish I hadn't stopped here. These folks hate Indians and especially half breeds. Sheriff said I had to get outta town soon as I got outta jail or some one might take a shot at me. Mister, I don't have nothing but a blanket pack and I don't know where to go. My Mom died on the way here." The older man could see tears filling the boy's eyes, but he jerked his head around and refused to cry!

The man said, " Injun, you listen to me . Looks like we both got it pretty tough, but, maybe we can help each other. I can tell you where to go. I gotta camp site in a dry wash about two miles south and east a couple hundred feet off the road. There's a wagon there with all my stuff in it. There's grub, blankets and just everything I own. If I don't git back there pretty quick, some thief'll clean me out. You go there and hang out a couple of days until I can find a way to get outta here. You can kinda look out for my stuff while I'm in here. There's a bald faced gray mustang in the yard back of the jail that belongs to me . I'll tell the Sheriff to let you have him. If they hang me, I won't need a horse." The young boy stared at the older man like he was crazy. He couldn't believe what he'd just heard.

" But Mister." He said, " If they hang you, what do you want me to do?" The older man replied " Christ Almighty Injun, what were you gonna do with the damn beans you stole? Gonna eat'em right? Hell boy, grow up; you're old enough to handle a horse and wagon. You take'em to where you're not treated like a damn case of Small Pox and learn to make yourself a living."

" That's what a man's gotta do if he wants to live. Look, my name is Lyman Cox. A lotta folks in Arizona have heard of me. I've had to kill a

few that called me Lying Cox. Anyone that asks. Tell 'em you're my Grandson and the wagon belongs to me. They'll leave you alone. What's your name Injun?" " Well Sir it's Chitto, my Mom's name was Audry Taylor. I never had a Father". " That's a good name, Chitto" replied Cox, " It means brave in Injun lingo."

Long into the evening the two exchanged life stories as Chitto told of his fourteen years of Indian Village life and learning bird calls for hunting. He was proud to demonstrate them for Mister Cox. He had earned his name as a good hunter always bringing in game birds and meat for the tribe. He told of the hard work and living conditions that had finally killed his Mother.

Chitto knew little of his mom's life or family. She had been abducted as a teenage girl and had no idea of her family's location, or if they were still alive. She had insisted that he would learn to talk like a white man. Cox , on the other hand, told stories of the civil war battles he'd been in, wild gold mining through out the southwest, gunfights and a little horse stealing. Mostly, he talked about his dog, because Rascal had been with him a long time and was his only family.

The following day, Chitto worked most of the morning cleaning the Livery stable. The sheriff brought water , beans and corn dodgers for a meal and told Chitto he was free to go. Cox shook his hand through the bars and said, " Good luck to you Chitto. I hope to see you in a few days, but if things go bad for me , you know what you gotta do. Believe me ,Boy I haven't got a living soul that I know any better than you and looks to me like you could use a little help. I've already told the sheriff to let you have the horse. He's an easy rider and works the little wagon really well."

Chitto anxiously replied, "Mister Cox, ain't there something you can do to make them let you out. I'll take good care of your wagon and horse and stay outta town." Cox said , " Chitto cut all that damn Injun

hair off and get one of my old hats outta that wagon. Boy, if you don't look and act like a damn fool Injun folks'll think you're white as they are. Ain't never been a full injun with gray eyes like yours. You try it and just see if I ain't right. Oh , and tell folks your name is Charley Taylor, my Grandson."

The sheriff came in to see what was holding up Chitto. He quickly grabbed his pack , said " Bye " and hustled out the door. Remembering what Cox had told him, he pushed his hair back and tried to arrange his shirt and pants so he looked like town kids. He quickly headed south leading the gray horse. No one stopped him or even paid him any attention. Breathing a sigh of relief, Chitto cleared the last town buildings and headed south on the road into the desert. Having lived as an Indian all of his life, following tracks and locating Cox's wagon was easy. He was thrilled with his tracking, when he found it.

It was just as Cox described. He very carefully looked through the wagon for food . There was plenty. In one box he found a short barreled pistol, fully loaded. Chitto had used a rifle , but knew very little about pistols. He carefully placed it back in a rolled up work shirt. A rifle he found under the wagon seat. He was thinking, " Maybe if I could get this pistol to Mister Cox before they hang him." Chitto staked the horse out to graze, stowed his pack in the wagon, rolled out his blanket for sleeping and started a camp fire. All the while he was trying to think of a way he could get the pistol to Mister Cox.

That evening Chitto cut his hair and got out a hat like Cox said. He couldn't tell what he looked like , but without a headband and Indian moccasins , he was sure that he looked a whole lot like a town boy. He wished there was some way he could find out what was happening in town. Maybe they'd let Cox outta jail. He sure hoped so. Mister Cox had been better to him than anyone he'd ever met. He decided to try a walk back into town and look around some. If Cox needed his help to get outta jail, maybe he could find a way.

The next morning , the road into town was full of wagons and riders. Chitto had no knowledge that it was Saturday and everyone came in to trade and buy for the week. No one paid him any attention. Chitto was able to walk around and study the Jail. He was very careful to watch for the sheriff and not get caught in town. There was a tall tree growing by the south wall. Cox was in one of the cells on the north end.

Chitto began to form a plan. Slowly walking across the street from the Jail, he noticed the barred windows were too high in the cells for passing a gun through and the Sheriff's bungalow was on the north side. Chitto stayed around town till afternoon, finally returning to his camp.

After dark Chitto returned to town, immediately going to the Jail and watching for the Sheriff. The town was noisy and people moved around on both sides of the street. Once again , Chitto was able to go every where without concern. Going to the south side of the Jail , he tried to determine how difficult it might be to try and climb that tree to the roof top. It looked pretty easy for a fourteen year old boy. He had decided to go back to camp when he saw the Sheriff leave his Bungalow and walk across the street to the noisy saloons. This was his chance!

He moved around to the north side and gathering a hand full of small pebbles he threw these at the cell window. Shortly from inside he heard Cox saying, "Damn! What the hell?" Chitto did a quail call and suddenly in a low voice Cox asked , " Damn , is that you Chitto?" Chitto replied " Yes Mister Cox . I found wagon and your guns. Should I bring you pistol?" Cox said, " Damn window is too high Chitto" Chitto replied, " Not from roof Mister Cox"

Cox exclaimed "I'll be damned! Smart thinking Chitto, but wait a few days . They may let me out. Boy don't get caught trying to help me

. They'll lock you up for life. You better git .” Chitto softly replied, “ I'll bring pistol and leave it on roof.” Cox said, “ No,Chitto, don't be seen near this Jail. Do like I say . Wait a few days , they might let me out.” Chitto said , “I go” and slowly moved back around the jail and disappeared into the darkness.

Cox was thinking, “ Damn, that boy is smart. That's good thinking. Passing that gun to me from the roof. I hope that I don't have to use one to get outta here. Maybe I shouldn't have been too quick to tell him no. I might really regret that.” Chitto was thinking just the opposite, “ Mister Cox is afraid for me being put in Jail , but if they want to kill him. I bring the gun at night and hide it on roof. Easy to get and no one see me carry it to Jail.”

The following afternoon the whole Fredo family and twenty ranch hands came to town. They were angry and wanted the Sheriff to give them the killer Cox. They had ropes and most brandished rifles. Chitto was afraid as he walked through the streets. There was a high level of noise and excitement everywhere. Twice he was asked who he was and both times he gave his Mother's name as Taylor. He was becoming more and more afraid for Mister Cox.

There was angry talk everywhere. He hurried back to his camp site and got his blanket back pack hiding the pistol in it. Chitto had seen that the Sheriff was trying to calm down the town and threat of hanging from his Jail office. He was with a number of the business owners standing outside. Some with him were carrying rifles. Chitto was scared as night approached . The sheriff inside would hear him if he got on the roof. He had to think of some other way to help Mister Cox.

Cox had not made a bad judgment when he called Chitto smart. The boy was thinking like an Indian. There was a large pile of tumbleweeds and brush just outside of the town buildings. Chitto ran back to Camp

to get the can of lantern oil. A good desert breeze would come up at sundown and if he could set fire to that pile, it would carry the smoke right down the center of town. Many times as a youngster , Chitto had seen the tribe hunters set fires to scare game into a blind canyons for killing. The threat of fire should scare the town people and give him a chance to get the gun to Mister Cox.

He was more than right! Smoke billowing down Main street had everyone out running. The threat of fire was more dangerous than an Indian attack. Even the Fredo Family and hands were racing to get their horses from the livery yard. Any thought of a hanging for that evening was over. Chitto dropped his pack by the tree at the Jail and easily scrambled up to the roof. His surprise was almost overwhelming. The young boy was really scared!

The roof was flat and there was a trap door opening to a set of stairs going down into the Jail. The door was wide open with a hanging lamp lighting up the stairway. Chitto had no knowledge that this was a normal flat topped building designed to protect from Indian attack. This jail was built like many other buildings in town. Flames from the edge of town were lighting up everything. Going to the set of stairs , Chitto could easily see Mister Cox and the empty Jail office from the top of the stairs. There was no one left in the Jail except him.

Low and cautiously , Chitto uttered a quail call and instantly Cox said, “ That you Chitto? Damn boy , am I glad to see you. They were gonna turn me over to that bunch. Come on down here! They’re all gone. The keys to this cell are hanging by the door there. I’m gonna get outta here.” Quickly, Chitto passed the keys to Cox and within minutes they were both up the steps and on the roof.

Cox taking his gun from Chitto, shoved it in his belt and laughingly said, “ Gimme a hand Chitto. We’re gonna close this door and it’ll lock from inside. I locked the cell and hung the keys back by the door. Lets

shimmy down that tree and try not to break any limbs.” One minute later they were both on the ground and using Chitto’s blanket pack, Cox brushed away all sign of boot prints from the base of the tree.

Later , back in camp: Cox could hardly believe the cunning action of Chitto. He said, “ Chitto , I said you were smart. But Boy you saved my life. That was a brave thing you did tonight. You’re a great partner Boy. Thank you.” Chitto replied, “ No Mister Cox, You are great friend. I am nothing with out you. You give me everything. Indians have saying. All you own goes with you when you die. You die, I lose everything.”

Cox exclaimed, “ Chitto, that’s a great custom, but it’s an Injun custom. You’re a white boy, I’m looking at you as my partner and we’ve got to get the Hell outta here! That Sheriff is really gonna have a tough job explaining the disappearance of his prisoner from a locked cell and Jail building. That Don Fredo family is gonna be smoking mad and scouring the country looking for me.”

Later that night, Cox with Chitto headed north away from the town and the Fredo Ranch . At daybreak, he was securely hidden in a tree grove a half mile off the road. This was going to be his daily routine until they were a good hundred miles north and west of Marana. Cox had correctly guessed the actions of the Fredo family. They wanted to hang the sheriff, claiming he had released the killer Cox.

Towns people all came to the Sheriff’s defense and the Fredo’s sent riders racing down the roads in all directions looking for the escaped Cox. Early in the afternoon, tracks of a one horse wagon were found heading north. The Fredo family sent a four man posse to catch and hang Cox.

That evening Cox said to Chitto, “ Injun, we gotta some how hide our wagon tracks. That Fredo family has a big Ranch crew and half

of'em are probably Mex Apache. They won't have any trouble finding where we turned off the trail. We may have to do a little shooting if they find us. We'll probably be OK for tonight, but they'll be getting close tomorrow and maybe find where we stay overnight. I don't wanna shoot anymore of the Fredo bunch, but I ain't gonna hang. Injun, if we get into a fight, I want you to take your pack and get shet of me and this wagon. You being Injun , you can disappear in the brush. I'll give'em hell, but ain't no sense in you getting killed."

Chitto replied, " No Mister Cox, I use rifle. I'm very good at shooting Antelope." Cox replied , "Damnit Injun, I want you in the brush! These ain't Antelope. These folks will be shooting back and you could get killed! There just ain't no way to take this wagon down that dirt road without leavin tracks." Chitto thought for a moment and replied, " Maybe we use Indian old bear story." Cox spun his head around saying, " What the hell you talking about?"

Chitto said, " Old Indians tell of big grandfather bear, too old to run away . Makes easy trail for young hunters to follow, then comes back off trail and hides for hunter to come along. Kills young hunter , good eating." Cox shook his head looked at Chitto for a long pause and then exclaimed, "Damn Chitto that's an old Grizzly bear trick . You just might have the answer. Damnit , you know something Chitto."

" You're making an Indian outta me. I was trying to figure how to hide our tracks on the way back, but I think I got it. There's a real bushy knoll about eight miles west of the road near a place called Castle Canyon. We'll make Castle tonight and stay there most of tomorrow. Tomorrow night we'll travel up the road about ten miles to a turn off that heads kinda north east. We'll take that road making sure our tracks are plain and we'll go about a mile , then brush out our tracks leaving the road, turnaround, come back on the same road dragging some brush; that'll wipe out our return tracks. We'll follow the road for about a mile and turn off going cross country to that knoll.

We'll just sit tight there for a few days while the Fredo's comb the country north looking for us."

Chitto said, " Mister Cox you are smart like bear. Fredo's will be very mad when they find they have lost road sign riding horses over brush marks." Cox laughed saying, " I told you boy, you're making a damn Indian outta me. It's no wonder that Colonel Craig never caught up with those Apaches up near Salvation peak. Said he won the battle, but I betcha it was just a lotta Bear sign that he took home from the battle!"

Two days later and Cox was laughing, saying, " Chitto , Boy that was a smart move. I can't see the road with this long glass, but I can sure see the dust clouds above the brush. That Fredo bunch must be running their horses to death trying to find us. I'll bet they're beginning to think I'm some kind of a witch or something. I've disappeared on them twice now and Chitto, both times it's been your doing. We'll give 'em a couple more days and then head west a while before we go north." Chitto replied, " You smart Mister Cox. They go north. Pretty soon find Yavapia Apache Indians. They hate Mexicans! Big fight!"

Once again Cox laughed saying, " Hadn't thought of that Chitto, but you're right. That Fredo bunch just might not make it home. They won't want anymore of Lyman Cox. We'll still dry camp without fire and keep a night lookout though. That's why I had ol'Rascal, my dog. He never let anything come around without waking me. That bunch could get lost and stumble onto us. I'd have to do some serious shooting if that happens." Chitto said , " Not to worry Mister Cox, I sleep easy. Any noise , I wake!"

Chitto was wrong. The hard run and stress of the past week had taken it's toll of the young Indian. His body was exhausted and he fell into a deep sleep. The little gray mustang was tethered in a small clearing fifty feet from the wagon. Unknowing to Cox and Chitto his

sign along their back trail had attracted a roaming mountain lion. The lion approached and was ready to make a charge when he neared the wagon picking up strong human scent causing him to spin about. This luckily alerted the Mustang and he immediately hit the end of his tether rope in an attempt to get away.

The sound of his action alerted both Chitto and Cox. Chitto reacted with the quickness bred in Indians grabbing his rifle, but it was Cox drawing and firing at the moving shadow of the lion that saved the Mustang from injury or death. His quick shot wounded the lion causing him to immediately take to the brush getting away. Chitto ran after him ,but there was no chance to shoot. He ran to the Mustang , calming him and returning him to the wagon.

Cox asked, “ Chitto did you hear that lion come in? He almost got our horse. I think I hit him, but not good enough.” Chitto replied “ I’m sorry Mister Cox. I fell asleep. I will stand up. I cannot sleep standing.” Cox said , “ Son , don’t worry yourself. You probably wouldn’t see or hear a lion anyway. We can’t do a thing till morning and I’m sure that lion is a mile away by now. You go ahead and get some rest. We’re gonna have to pull out as soon as daylight. That shot might bring us trouble. We’d best get outta here.”

Chitto was still feeling bad about going to sleep and said, “ No Mister Cox. I will not be able to sleep any more tonight, I am too worried.” Cox said, “ OK son, I ain’t as young as I used to be and I know you feel bad, but everything came out all right. Just wake me if you hear any sound coming from over by the trail and get me up at first light in the east.”

At first light, Chitto woke Cox and said , “ Mister Cox, no sound from Trail, but I hear brush noise over where lion ran.” Cox replied, “ Chitto, maybe I wounded him pretty good. Let me check my rifle and we’ll have a look see. Them mountain cats make real good eating.

Gotta be careful though. Normally cats'll run from man smell, but a cornered and wounded cat will fight worse than a badger. Let me take the lead. I've hunted these cats before."

A thick grove of scrub oak and Manzanita made progress almost impossible and Cox had turned to tell Chitto to go back. Suddenly, the lion erupted from the brush attacking Cox from behind! Teeth tore his shoulder as terrible claws ripped into his back! Chitto saw the lion behind Cox and jammed his rifle into the lion's face as it bit into Cox's shoulder. Luckily, he was able to shoot without hitting Cox. The lion dropped, dying as it hit the ground. Chitto grabbed Cox's rifle and helped him back to the wagon. Cox was cursing his stupidity as he tried to deal with the pain.

Chitto helped him remove his shirt and Cox said, " Damn fool thing to do Chitto. I knew the cat was pretty close. Shoulda just left him alone to die on his own, but I was thinking about grub. We're about out. Now I ain't worth a damn. I ain't bleeding that bad, but I gotta do something about those teeth holes in my shoulder and what does my back look like. It hurts like hell!"

Chitto said, " Mister Cox , you need to fix. There are three big open cuts. We need medicine plants to make mud pack." Cox said, " No Chitto! I don't want no Indian Medicine man hoo-doo fixes, I want you to get me that lamp oil we've got and bring me that wagon box by the seat. I'm gonna show you how to sew me up. Get those coals going in our camp fire first . I want you to pull a few long hairs outta Mustang's tail and boil the hell outta them. Leave me a rifle handy in case we get more visitors. Oh, and take a minute and cut that Cats throat . After cutting me up, I'll enjoy a good piece of his meat."

It was late afternoon when Chitto had finished with Cox and the cat. Cox was saying, " Hell of a thing, Chitto, you did a good job sewing me together. I was a little worried about that Mex bunch

finding us. I guess we're stuck here for a couple of days now. I don't wanna fire going too much during the day to smoke that cat meat, but tonight we can work a good bit of it. I can't lay down so I'll watch the fire tonight. Tomorrow we'll get things together for moving out early the next morning."

Chitto said, " Mister Cox you are very brave warrior. That sewing hurt very bad. Some Indian Braves cannot take bad pain. They cannot cry out, but pass out like big sleep. You Mister Cox are very strong. I wish to be like you. Where do we go from here?" Cox replied, " Son, you are very brave and strong already. Also you are very smart. Where we go from here? I had thought to go north, but west may be much better. The Hassayampa River is just west a ways and there is a small settlement there. I may need a Doctor for these cat wounds. I've never been there but the settlement is named for the Bridal Chamber Gold Mine. It's a big producer and they'll have a doctor of some kind. Even a horse doctor will have healing salves and powders."

Four days of travel and they arrived at the Mining settlement of Bridal Chamber. It had been a horrible trip for Cox and when they stopped in the Main street near the Mercantile store, he practically fell from the wagon getting down. The wounds on his back had healed, but the teeth marks in his left shoulder had infected causing him to run a very high fever and the resulting dizziness almost caused him to fall.

As he stumbled forward, Chitto jumped from the wagon to help him, but he was too late. A tall Indian woman, coming from the store grabbed Cox and helped him to sit down on a stack of firewood piled by the door way. Chitto said his "Thank you" and then said, "Mister Cox is very sick." The woman replied, " I think drunk. Too much firewater." Chitto said, "No, No! A mountain lion attack. His shoulder is very bad. He need Doctor. Where is Doctor?"

The woman said, “ Come, I show you.” and she took Cox by his right arm lifting him to his feet. Chitto was amazed at this woman’s strength. She practically carried Cox across the street to a building bearing a sign that read Bridal Chamber Mining Company. Once inside, the woman led Cox to an open door and said, “Doctor Colder. Good medicine man.” Chitto then explained to Colder the wounds and what they had done.

The Doctor looked at the Indian woman and said, “Gali. Help me get his shirt off and we’ll see what can be done.” The Doctor then explained, “ Mister , you were lucky, This is Galilahi. She’s my helper. Strong for a woman. She’s known around town as a good woman and not to be messed with. These teeth marks are fairly deep and they’ve closed over. Mister I’m gonna have to lance both of them. We’ve got to get that infection out. I’m sorry, but you’re in for a rough time. They’ve got to drain. That means hot packs, a lot of them. Think you can take the pain?

Cox replied, “Doc. Anything is better than the way I feel . Go ahead, cut away. Chitto , can help you. He’s a very smart boy” The Doc said, “ No, Gali is the best of help. She’ll get me my things and some boiling water going.” Cox looked at Gali saying , “ Thank you Miss for your help.” Gali stopped and gave Cox a long look of surprise saying, “Doctor Colder, this man very sick!” Chitto had followed them inside and said. “ Mister Cox, I bring the wagon to this side of street.” The Doc looked up saying , “ Park it next to the back son , your Father may be here for a day or two.” Neither Chitto or Cox corrected him.

Chitto came back later as they were cutting Cox’s shoulder and was shocked when Cox passed out from the pain. The Doc said, “ It’s Ok son, your father is a strong man, but he is sick with fever. I think he’ll be much better tomorrow. What’s his name , by the way?” Chitto replied , “ Mister Cox says to call him Lyman Cox. Some people call

him names, but Mister Cox says not too many. He is very good with gun. He shoot running mountain lion.”

Doc had misunderstood Chitto, but spoke up saying, “ A Lawman, Huh? We could sure use one in this Town. There’s fifty gold miners working the Bridal Chamber and there’s fifty low life Gamblers and cheats here to take their money. I wonder if he’d be interested in the Marshall’s job?” Gali exclaimed, “ He is Lawman ? Yes? Lawman Cox, is good name. I like Lawman Cox.” Chitto spoke up saying, “ Yes, Mister Cox is very good man. He is very good for me.”

Doc said, “ Chitto, I can see that you are very concerned for your Father. Is your Mother with you?” Chitto replied , “ No she very sick. Dead.” Doc said, “ Sorry to hear that. We’ll, keep your Father here for two days so go ahead and tether your horse out back, there’s plenty of dry grass. You can stay in your wagon. Gali will take care of your Father.” Gali said, “Yes, Chitto. I take care , Lawman Cox. You no worry.”

Chitto was worried thinking, “ Mister Cox looked like he might be dying like his Mother had died. He was very white in the face” Chitto knew that he could do nothing. He took care of Mustang and put their guns in the wagon box. Later he sat on the wagon seat with tears in his eyes as he asked the Great Spirit to heal Mister Cox; the man he now knew as his Father. Gali found him sitting there. She had brought him a bowl of stew.

She said, “ Chitto, do not worry for your Father. He is sleeping good. Where do you go?” Chitto thanked her for the food and then related to her that he was raised Apache. Mister Cox had taken him as his partner like son saying, “ Yes, he is my Father. I would have no other. I ask the Great Spirit to help him. I do not know where we go, but I will go with him.” Gali replied in halting English and sign language. She could converse with Chitto much easier saying, “ Yes,

Lawman Cox is a very good man. He is beautiful of face and has a big heart."

She went on to tell Chitto that she was a giant among the Cherokee women and had been captured by the Shawnee Plains Indians and used as a slave for twelve moons before escaping and joining an Apache tribe of Yavapia Indians. The sub chief Buffalo Calf had tried to take her as a blanket woman and she left the tribe near Castle Rock following the small stream to where it met the Hassayampa river. She had come upon the Town downstream and because she was taller than most men and stronger, the Mercantile Owner , Madam Oggs had put her to work. It was there she met Doctor Colder and he needed strong help working on miners injured in the mine. She was killing and butchering animals for sale. Something most women would not do. Gali laughed and said, "The Doctor said I was just what he needed. Someone not afraid of blood and big enough to carry dead miners around. I have a room in back of this building where I live. I can be here for Lawman Cox and help you ."

The following morning, Cox found out that he was now called Lawman Cox and when Doc Colder asked him about being a Lawman, Cox laughed and replied, " Doctor, I've had my share of dealings with Sheriffs and Marshalls, but most of my work helping the Law was as a Deputy. I've jailed a few and been there myself some. Yeah, if I get over this infection, I'll give some thought to the Marshall job. I need to do something for Chitto. He's the kind of a boy that deserves a man's help. I guess banging heads and locking up drunks can't be too bad a job." Doc said, " We sure need someone. Gali is a striking woman and some of these Miners are the worst when it comes to insulting women, especially Indian girls."

That evening Cox asked Chitto about the Lawman name and had a good laugh when he explained it. Cox said, " Son, maybe it's a good thing. I needed to sit down somewhere and this Bridal town looks good

as any. There's some good country around here and there sure ain't no lack of water. Plenty of game and wild horses. I'll just bet Chitto, that with your brains for fixing things, you could easy become a trapper and wild horse tamer. Son, there's money to be had right here and with this Gold Mine, plenty of it. I'm getting a little long in the tooth for all that horse breaking stuff, and I'm thinking real serious about taking on this Marshall job." Chitto replied, putting his hand out for a white man hand shake **" Mister Cox, I have taken you as my Father. It is Indian way. I follow you and do as you say."**

A week had gone by and although Chitto and Gali had repeatedly placed hot pads on Cox's shoulder, one of the infections kept coming back. The Doc said, " Cox you're a stubborn man. Some would have died with that infection and most would have been healed by now. For whatever reason there's a persistent spot there that just defies my medicine and treatment."

" All I can say is keep up the hot pad treatment and hopefully the infection will die. I hate to think we may have to lance it again." Cox said, " Doc I can tolerate the little pain it causes, Chitto and I'll keep working on it. What about that Marshall job? I'm thinking that I might try it. " The Doc was pleased and after meeting with the Business owners , Lawman Cox was the new Marshall of Bridal Chamber.

As he accepted the job Cox asked , " How did this Gold Mine town get the name Bridal Chamber?" Madam Ogg's answered his question saying, " Mister Cox, I've been here since the beginning when my husband , George was killed by Indians. The original mine owner told me that when they sunk the main shaft following a gold bearing white quartz vein, It split into three major veins all laced with beautiful free gold streamers ."

" A large chamber had to be dug in order to mine all three veins and once open , the whole ceiling , walls and floor were beautiful breath

taking white quartz laced with seams of pure gold. For a time, the owner refused to allow further mining in that chamber, but the miners themselves when stopping there, were continually chopping away with their hammers to steal the visible surface gold. As a result the walls collapsed dropping the ceiling. The owner was furious and mined out the whole thing. There has never been another chamber like that. Right now it would be appropriate to call it the Hole in the Wall Mine.”

Cox said his thanks and then said, “ I was curious because I’ve heard counting miners there’s over two hundred in this town. I’d say the Town was really miss named because there’s only about a dozen families living here that are married man and wife.” Doc Colder spoke up laughing and saying, “ Marshall Cox, with so few couples ,maybe you can understand our need for a little law around here. Our Boot Hill is full of mining accidents, drunken fights and shootings over women. We’d only need two grave sites if we only buried those dying from natural causes.”

Cox replied, “ Doc, I think I see what you mean. There’s four cells in that Jail and none of them look like they’ve been occupied lately. What happened to your last Town Marshall?” Madam Oggs answered, “ The fat blowhard got ran outta town. He weren’t no lawman. All he ever done was eat. He was sure good at that. Them miners and gamblers kept him well fed so he never bothered them. I told all the business folk that payin him was bout like wastin good corn on a tit-less sow hog. I quit putting in; he moved out, and good riddance!”

Cox said, “ Madam Oggs, right now I’m not a good eater ,but pretty soon I’m gonna try out your table in the Mercantile.” The Madam replied, “ I’ll fix you a good meal but I lost my best cook, Gali. She went to work for the Doc.” Cox thanked everyone promising to do what he could to keep the peace and he and Chitto headed for the Jail.

That evening both he and Chitto were exhausted from cleaning and moving in . The stable out back would just have to wait. It was about suppertime when Gali shows up with a big pot of stew. She said, “ Lawman Cox, you and boy eat, then put hot pad on shoulder.” Cox stood up saying, “ Lady Gali, you’re mighty welcome to a couple of tired, hungry, and dirty men. I was just dreading getting a bite together, but I do have coffee made. Here, we’ll get out a couple of bowls and you join us.”

It was after dark when Gali left, but Cox insisted on walking her back to her room. Chitto went along and on the way back Cox decided to walk through town to start his job as Marshall. Every one welcomed him and everything was quiet in the four Saloons in town. He said to Chitto, “ Saturday and payday will get here soon enough and that’s great . It’ll take a few days for us to get those cells ready. A quiet week will be fine with me and I just wish this damn shoulder would clear up. I need to do something nice for Gali. She sure is a good cook. “ Chitto said, “Yes mister Cox. I think she like you very much.”

Later that evening, Cox said, “Chitto, I know you like a rifle, but it’ll worry folks to see you carrying one through town. There’s a couple of short guns at the jail and I want you to learn to use one of those, so this week we’re gonna do a little shooting. It won’t hurt you to know how to defend yourself and I can sure teach you that. Tomorrow we’ll walk out to the town dump and shoot a few rats. Things will be sleepy and quiet here in town. Cox was wrong!

The sun was high when Cox decided to earn his keep and walk around town. He kinda had a mission and led his gray Mustang to the livery stable. Ol’Mustang needed shoeing so Cox made his rounds leading the horse. There were two horses tied at the Mercantile hitch rail and he casually examined each and took notice of the fact that both rifle scabbards were empty. Why would the riders take their rifles

into the store? An immediate cold feeling swamped Cox! He could almost feel the bullet from a rifle aimed his way.

He could see nothing and as casual as possible , he walked on past cutting into the ally past the store. Quickly he made his way to the back door and peered inside. Two men stood over Madam Oggs with rifles. Madam was on her knees unlocking the Safe and Cox waited for the safe to swing open as he carefully tested the door to be unlocked. He hoped the robbers would be fully occupied with the safe opening and he could get inside behind them. Slowly and agonizingly Madam turned the dial as the one robber became impatient cursing her to hurry up. Madam Oggs was not scared as she said, “ Damnit! Maybe you outta try this with a gun at your back!”

The robber cursed and grabbed her shoulder throwing her backwards as the safe door swung open. Both robbers squatted grabbing for the safe contents as Cox came into the back room. Madam was scrambling outta the way as Cox loudly shouted, “Hold it ! Right where you are . Drop the guns! One wrong move and you’re dead.” Both Robbers dropped their rifles as Madam came to her feet. She pulled a sawed off from under her counter and leveled it at the two robbers.

One robber said, “ Don’t shoot mister, I give up!” Cox said , “Put everything back in the safe and be quick about it. The other man began to throw things back in when suddenly the robber that spoke yelled , “ No Pete!”. The robber Pete swung around with a pistol in his hands. Cox fired twice at Pete and both shots were killing, but weren’t necessary. Madam had pulled both triggers of that sawed off and double ought buck shot at that range would kill any man . It did! Both robbers died within minutes. Cox was appalled at the carnage in the store and sickened to think that one man had died unnecessarily. Madam seemed shaken but calmer than he was.

She said , “ Thank you Mister Cox. I didn’t have a rats chance of coming outta this alive. That was Peter Herbert that you killed and Sam Hanks was his partner. They’ve been killing and robbing for two years up and down the Santa Fe, they usually don’t leave their victims alive. That Herbert was a slick one. That was my pistol in the safe that he grabbed to shoot you.” People were pouring in the store and soon Cox and Madam had to quit explaining and got help moving the bodies outside.

Before nightfall , everyone in town had seen the bodies and heard Madam’s tale of Cox heroic fight with the robbers. The town of Bridal Chamber now had a dangerous and deadly gunfighter for a Marshall. Cox was not happy with all the notoriety. He had seen it all before. A reputation as a gunfighter was an invitation for trouble. That evening , he told Chitto and Gali that he was sickened by the killing even after hearing of Herbert and Hanks reputation for murdering their victims..

He said, “ If it’s me or mine, I’ll kill to protect, but I still don’t like it. Right now it’s my job and I’ll do as I have to. Tomorrow Chitto, we’ ll get in a little pistol work and shoot those rats I promised you.” Gali spoke up saying, “ Lawman Cox, I will shoot too. I come with you?” Cox looked at her and said, “ Lady Gali, I wanted to do something for you to thank you for helping fix my shoulder. Tomorrow I’ll show both of you how to shoot pistols.”

Gali and Chitto both broke into big happy smiles as Cox went out to make his night rounds. That night everything stopped when Cox went into a Saloon. Everyone wanted to see this new Marshall and watch what he did. Cox expected the attention. He’d been the object of gun fighting curiosity before. The Elk Horn saloon was owned by the bartender, Max Barton; one of the group that had hired him. Recognizing Max , he went to the Bar and ordered a small whiskey.

Max said , “Marshall. Tonight your moneys no good here. Your drink’s on me. That was a hell of a job you did at Madam’s today. Too bad you didn’t get the other partner, that renegade Silvertip with those two. He’s a murdering thief worse than Herbert.” Cox replied, “ I didn’t know any of them, but I have heard of Silvertip. He wiped out a family near Gila Creek. Folks claim he shot the parents and burned down the cabin. Couple of young ones died in the fire.”

Max replied, “ Yeah, heard that story too, but the law out here is pretty thin and he’s still around making trouble. The Marshall from Phoenix says they don’t have anything on him and can’t arrest him on here say. If he comes to our town, you can bet there’ll be a lotta folks that’ll back you up.” Cox replied , “ Yeah, Thanks Max. I’ve been treated real friendly since that gun fight.”

Later that evening after walking Gali home, he mentioned to Chitto,his talk with the Bartender and the warning about the killer, Silvertip. Chitto looking alarmed said, “ Mister Cox, I have seen the man called Silvertip many times since I was very young. He is known to the Apaches as Lone Bear. He lives with the Coyotero Apaches sometimes. A very big man with long black hair and beard. The ends of his hair is grey like Grizzly bear. He is very big and great warrior. No Brave will fight Lone Bear.” Cox replied, “ Well, we don’t have to worry about him coming to Bridal Chamber until he gets here, if he ever does. Tomorrow we’re gonna do that pistol work I promised you. Right now gimme a hand with a hot pad. This damn shoulder is flaring up again.”

The next afternoon was a great time for Chitto and Gali. They both learned how to handle a pistol and Chitto was a natural shooter. Gali was hesitant, but soon became a descent shot killing a few rats. Cox was deeply disappointed in his own shooting, his aim was as good as ever, but he couldn’t fan the gun in his right hand. That left shoulder wouldn’t let him use it as he wanted and meant he’d have to depend on

his drawing speed if he got in a gunfight. This was something he had not done in a long time. He'd have to do as he did at the Mercantile. Depend on his right hand for shooting. He was thinking, " Hopefully I won't have to do any shooting until that arm gets better." They had about run outta rats to shoot when Chitto asked him to teach him the fanning method of gun fighting.

Handing Chitto his gun , he said, "This is a short barreled single action forty four with a raised hammer arm. Draw and squeeze the trigger as you clear the holster and like a finger point it at your target sweeping the left hand back over the hammer pulling the hammer back and firing the pistol. It must be a clean action without moving the pistol. Quick sweeping with the left hand will very rapidly fire the pistol. It's very effective inside ten feet. For longer shooting, a quick draw and fast thumb action is necessary. Always practice with an empty gun until you know it like feeding your face." Chitto took the gun with almost a hesitation. He said, " Mister Cox, I will practice with your gun like you say . Empty." Cox said, " One other thing Chitto, I am not Mister Cox. I claim you as my family, my son, Chitto Cox." Chitto replied , " Thank you my Father. I am proud to be your son."

The remainder of the afternoon, Chitto and Gali practiced their shooting with help from Cox. He was saying, "Chitto you and Gali are plenty good enough with a pistol to defend yourself . We've shot up a box of shells, so no more rat killing for awhile." On the walk back to town Chitto kept up the fanning practice and Cox laughed saying, " Chitto , you're getting good enough that I wouldn't want to face you in a gun fight." Chitto said, " Not to worry my Father, I can never be as fast as you when you shot the Mountain lion." Gali said, " Thank you Lawman Cox, now I get pistol and I walk street alone." Cox replied, " No Gali, I'll walk you home. My shoulder still needs hot pads and you don't have to walk alone." Chitto laughed at the big smile on Gali's face. Chitto was thinking, " Maybe my Father don't understand that

Gali wears a feather for him. He better run fast. She is big strong Cherokee woman."

Two weeks had gone by without any major incident , but that shoulder of Cox had to be lanced again. Doc Colder was concerned because it was not responding to his medicine. The shoulder was getting stiff and very painful for Cox. Finally the Doc made him wear a sling for his left arm. It eased the pain some what. Gali and Chitto were becoming very concerned and both of them followed him on his nightly walks through town. Unknown to Cox, Chitto and Gali had formed a strong friendship continuing their gun practice. Gali had bought a pistol from Madam Oggs with a large box of shells and the rats at the dump were becoming hard to find. She carried the gun with her at all times. Chitto did the same. Everyone in town knew that Cox now did his rounds with two extra guns by his side.

The wound on Cox's shoulder required another doctor visit. Doc Colder said , "Marshall there's just nothing more that I can do. This is the third lancing and I know you, your boy, and Gali have kept the hot pads on the wound every day, but it's just not doing the job. I've heard of introducing maggots to consume the infection, but I'm unfamiliar with the process. Additionally, I could try an acid treatment, but it may damage the shoulder's movement."

" The only other treatment would be constant almost unbearable heat to keep blood coming to the area. I'm sorry. I wish there was more I could do." Gali spoke up saying, "Apache fire Water! Lawman Cox, we go to Apache Fire Water!" Cox looked at Chitto asking, " What's Gali talking about? Whiskey won't do me any good."

Chitto spoke at length to Gali, then said, "My Father, she says, Castle Rock creek comes from secret Apache magic waters. Very hot water , Apache Fire Water, comes from ground." Doc Colder, broke in saying, " Damn, that's the secret Mineral Hot Springs the Indians all

talk about! Marshall, that just might do it . Hot mineral water for an hour a day would work wonders on that shoulder.” Cox said, “ Doc tell your town Council that I’m gonna be gone for a week or better. If I have to face another shoot out with this shoulder, you’re gonna have to get a new Marshall.”Gali said with a big smile, “Good! Lawman Cox , we go to Apache Fire Water tomorrow!”

The following afternoon, after a morning of travel, Cox parked the wagon in a tree grove near Castle Canyon. The creek was nearby , but there was no sign of a hot spring anywhere . Gali said , “ Lawman Cox, you follow.” She crossed the creek heading into thick brush at the base of a huge rock formation Chitto and Cox followed. They climbed a hidden path way through a clef in the Rock formation. Gali knew her way and they suddenly stepped out on the brink of three huge steaming pools of water.

Gali said , “ Lawman Cox, this Apache Fire Water not for drunk. For sick. Very hot ,burn.” Gali pointed to the third pool and Cox got the message. That one wouldn’t be boiling hot. Cox was thinking, “ Might as well try it out. “ He was not prepared for the heat of that water. He got out more than he got in. Chitto and Gali were laughing at him, but finally he was accustomed to the heat and began to enjoy the healing effect.

This began an all day routine and within three days he could feel the pain leaving his shoulder. Gali and Chitto began going back to their Indian ways gathering nuts and berries along with small game for eating. Cox was not looking forward to going back to Town and the Marshall’s job. At the end of a week, he felt almost well. There was no pain in the shoulder. Gali was saying , “ Lawman Cox I very happy for you. “ He said, Gali , you are a wonderful lady. I can’t thank you enough .”

Cox gave her a big hug and then said,“ Chitto, when we came up the lower canyon, there was a valley going off to the north and up into the mountains. It’s only a half a day outta town and I’m thinking of quitting the Marshall job. Maybe settling down and building a cabin there. We could train a few horses and shoot game for the Miners. How would that suit you?” Chitto replied, “ Father Cox, you are Father to me. I go where you go. I have nothing without you.”

Ten days had passed all too quickly for Cox and he was dreading the thought of going back to work as a Marshall. Returning to town, he was stopped by Madam Oggs before he reached the Jail. She said, “ Oh Marshall, I’m glad to see you back! There’s been quite a bit of excitement while you were gone. The killer renegade Silvertip came to town to kill you. He got drunk and started a fight at the Elk Horn and Max shot him. Two Miners jumped in shooting also. The man is in your Jail right now. Doc Colder is there with him. I don’t see how he could be alive. The man’s got four bullets in him.”

Cox hurried to the Jail to see the infamous and dangerous renegade killer Silvertip. After conferring with Colder, he decided that Silvertip was of little threat to anyone. The man was dying. Doc said, “ Marshall, I’m glad to see you back in town. Your presence as Marshall, has sure had a positive effect on Law and Order around here. The Business owners and families here have really taken over.”

“ Anyone wanting to start trouble in town will instantly meet a gun barrel This renegade Silvertip sure came to the wrong town to make trouble. He’s in one of your cells back there , but you won’t have to lock him up. He ain’t going anywhere unless it’s Boot Hill. A little soup and water is about all he can eat and that probably won’t be for long. I’m surprised that he’s still alive.”

Cox thanked him and had him look at his shoulder. The Doc was well pleased with the healing, saying, “ Marshall, there’s no sign of

redness or infection. Looks like you'll be back to a hundred percent right away. I'm glad you're back in town. I miss my assistant Gali. She always does all the heavy work for me." Cox replied, " I don't mean to cause you any hardship Doc , but I and Gali may be making plans." The Doc laughed as he walked out saying , " Good luck Marshall. I wish you the best."

Entering the cell, Cox was shocked at the large pale almost lifeless man on the cell cot. The man was almost without a voice and refused Cox's offer for food or water. The one thing that immediately grabbed his attention were the intense boring eyes of the renegade. They were pale gray! The spittin image of Chitto's! " Could this be the Father that Chitto never knew. Could this white renegade killer be one of the band that captured Audrey Taylor, and forcibly took her fathering her baby Chitto?"

Cox tried desperately to get any answer to his questions, but Silvertip was too far gone to give any clear answers. Later Cox was thinking, " Maybe it was fortunate that Silvertip died that night without revealing that he was Chitto's Father. Chitto had enough tragedy in his young life without the possible knowledge that he was the son of a murdering renegade." Cox decided to never bring up his suspicions to Chitto. He was thinking, " Chitto is my son now and I want him to be proud of his Father. I'm gonna build us a real home".

The following week was to bring about a huge change in Cox's life. He resigned his job as Marshal and bought tools for building a cabin. Later that evening, at supper with Gali and Chitto, he said to Chitto, " Son. We're gonna go build that cabin I talked about. I'm gonna stay right here and make us a home in that Castle Canyon. I need to speak to Gali, maybe you can help me."

Chitto spoke to Gali and said, " Father Cox, Gali is happy for you to stay here." Chitto laughed and said, " She says that she speaks for

you.” Cox replied, “ Chitto you tell her for me that I find that she looks like her name Galiahi beautiful. I would take her as my wife if she would want to stay with me?”

After listening to Chitto and Gali chattering back and forth, Cox was surprised to see Gali shake her head , “No” but then she spoke saying, “Is Cherokee way ,Lawman Cox. Man does not take woman. Cherokee Woman takes man. I Cherokee woman, Lawman Cox. You like woman, yes? At his “Yes” nod. She said, “I woman. I take you. We make home for your son.” Cox laughed and looked at Chitto saying, “ Son, what can I do? I can’t shoot her and she’s bigger than me.”

The End