

Jimmy Sweetheart

“ Well Eli, I guess this is it. My horses are packed and I’ve gotta git. I gotta tell you it’s been great these last two years living with you as my Squaw, but it’s time for me to go back to my people . I can’t live any longer as an Indian. You’ve got plenty of fur and buckskins for the winter and with your beauty, there’ll be half a dozen braves wanting you for a wife.” The man speaking was Beev Hunter , a former mountain man and very successful Beaver trapper. He was in the process of leaving his Cherokee wife as so many early frontier men had done before him. In the eyes of western society, a squaw man was looked down upon by every settler and soldier in the country. He knew that with his violent temperament, he’d shoot anyone making insulting comments about him.

He was well respected in most of Colorado for his fighting ability and had been wanted in the New Mexico territory for shooting and killing a man. He had left the Territory and disappeared after accumulating a small fortune trapping beaver. His real name was John Hunter, but he’d earned the nickname of Beev from those that knew of him and his tremendous success trapping beaver. For the past two years , he had been in hiding living on a Cherokee Reservation in Oklahoma. His beaver money was held for him in the El Paso National Bank. He had long since found out the shooting charges had been dropped against him. A young cowhand named Roscoe Barns claimed the notoriety

of shooting Bart Helms , the outlaw. Beev counted it great luck that someone would take that charge off of him. It was a great relief to know that he had been cleared. He could now show up in the New Mexico Territory without getting arrested.

As he looked at the girl he called Eli and saw the sadness in her look as he packed up, he wondered if she would break down in tears . But no, Indian girls didn't cry, there was just that far away look in her eyes as she said, " My Beev, I took you as my husband. You did not tell me you would leave when you no longer want me as your wife. I cut my hair off and scar my cheeks. It is my way of showing sorrow and losing my husband. No Brave will want the squaw of a white eyes. I must join the group of cut nose women. My husband there is much darkness in my heart today. This winter will be cold in my blankets and I have no Father to go to. When summer comes I will leave for the mountains and sing my death song. I am no longer a member of my Tribe." Beev exclaimed, "What the hell are you saying Eli? You are still a young girl! I'm sure some Brave would love to take you In." Eli replied, " No my husband , they cannot. It is the woman that ask for the husband in the Cherokee tribe. That I cannot do, you are my husband and I go to the mountains if you do not want me."

Beev was shocked! Yes he remembered, it was the way of the Cherokee she would die before taking another husband while he was still alive. Beev looked long at that sadness in Eli's eyes and knew that he couldn't leave her. She loved him beyond anything, even life itself. He realized his own love for her had been as a Squaw, not a real wife. He stepped down from his horse and said , "Eli, I need another horse. Who will trade with me?" Eli asked , " Why do

you need another horse, my husband; there is no need.”
Beev replied, “ I need one for you. We will use a travois to carry our load.’ Eli was speechless. She was going with him! He was not leaving her! Quickly smiling she said, “ Yellow Bear will trade. He has eight horses. I will trade for you. How many buckskins will I offer?” Beev said,” I’ve got twelve but a horse is only worth three.” Eli said, “My beads too I will offer for a good horse. His are all ugly, but the dark one is very best. I will trade for him.”

Beev was thinking while she was gone, “ I’ve never been afraid of what others think of me. Why did I act the idiot and consider leaving Eli. Sure I’m a Squaw Man , so what? That’s my business. I taught her to speak my English and it ain’t the best, but I know what she says and most times she knows what I say. Yeah, I was a fool even thinking of leaving her, there can never be another woman like her. She can shoot my rifle almost as good as I can and the only time we’ve been sick was when I tried to roast that wild pig. I thought he was done and I had to force her to eat some. No more javelinas for us. Boy was that a mistake . Indians just don’t like bacon either. Yeah, I’ve been too concerned what others would think of me as a Squaw Man, but I know how to fix that too. I know we’ll run into a Parson somewhere in the territory.”

Later Eli returned with that black horse and said, “ Beev ,my husband, I had to give my beads and one buckskin for the horse.” she was very pleased with her trade. Beev noticed that the horse was branded with the US seen on all Army horses and thought, “ Probably lost in a skirmish with the Indians. There’s probably half a dozen more on this Reservation branded just like him.” He said, ‘Eli you’re a great horse trader, that black is ugly as sin, but he sure has

a good build.' Eli replied, "my husband I don't know sin horse, but we call him sin, is good name." Beev laughed sayin , "Eli, you're something that in my stupidity, I almost threw away. " Eli replied, " I don't know stupidity my husband, what you throw away? I go look." Beev laughed and said, " No tomorrow we pack up Sin and go west to the big mountain. It will be a long trip, maybe six moons. We take skins . Leave wigwam I don't like Sin for the travois. I'll ride him and we'll take the pack horse for travois. You ride my red horse.' Eli said, ' I cannot ride horse my husband, I walk. Woman not to ride, it is this tribe, Cherokee law." Beev replied, ' Ok I'll go along with that until we get off the Reservation, but after that you ride with me. Cherokee law does not go with me to the mountains. I don't care who's law it is. You will ride. That's my law." Eli laughed saying " thank you my husband."

Two weeks later they were in New Mexico territory and stopped in the town of Lincoln to get supplies. Beev had long since given up the Indian travois and packed everything on horseback. Eli's horse carried his over stuffed saddlebags and blanket rolls. On the pack horse were foods and other items in panniers. Knowing the nature of white people and their resentment for Indians, Beev asked Eli to camp out near town as he went to the trading post. He left his rifle and most of their supplies with her. He knew that she was fully capable of defending herself if she were threatened.

At the post he was looking at boy's clothes for Eli when three troopers came in from the nearby Army Fort Stanton. He was surprised when they came directly over to him. The Sergeant in the group said, " Mister you just rode in on that black horse out there. We wanna talk to you." Beev replied , " Yeah came from the Oklahoma Cherokee reservation. Just

got in today. The black horse, I got from the sub-chief Yellow Bear. Traded for him. What's the matter?" One of the soldiers with him suddenly jerked out his pistol pointing it at Beev saying, " Mister ,you're a liar! Sarge take his gun! Fellows was just killed three days ago when this horse was stolen!" as quick as that Beev was arrested and marched out of the trading Post still protesting his innocence and saying, " Damn it, that can't be the same horse, we've been on the trail for two damn weeks and I've been riding that horse! Soldier, you've got your horses mixed up. This can't be the horse you're talkin about." The soldier said, " Sarge, there ain't two horses in the country as ugly as ol'Blackie there. Yeah, it's Fellows horse all right. This is the killer."

Beev exclaimed, " Sergeant , he's wrong and I've got my wife out at that willow spring waiting for me to get back from the post. Look, I didn't steal this horse and I can prove that I was in Oklahoma two weeks ago. You figure it out! There's no way I could get here in time to kill a man, and if I stole a horse marked like him, I damn sure wouldn't be parading around town with him." The Serg said, " Mister I might believe you, but it sure don't look good. Don't give us any trouble and when the Commander gets back , we'll see what he says. Pvt Simpson was in the same barracks with Fellows and would know his horse. We're gonna keep you locked up until we can get the Major's judgment ." Beev asked, " What about my wife, and how long until your Major gets back?" the Sarg replied, " Can't say, the Major has been out a week. I'll send a man out to bring your wife in."

Beev could see that he had little choice, arguing with these three was a waste of time. He was stuck! Finally saying " Sarge , if anything happens to my wife, I'm gonna take it very personal. Your Major better get here damn

quick. My wife's a pretty Cherokee girl and speaks a good deal of English. Her name is Elien . Pvt Simpson exclaimed " A damn Squaw man Sarge. You know they're as bad as these Apaches, probably working with them." Beev said, " Sarge, I hope you realize that your man just used a killing insult on me and my wife. Simpson I want you to know that I'm not a nice guy and I take it pretty hard what you just said. When I get outta here, I promise you we'll meet again." The Sarg said, " Shut up Simpson. What's your name Mister? I need to put it in the log." Beev answered, " Most folks know me as Beev Hunter." Simpson yelled , " The murderer , He's a killer Sarge! He's wanted for murder. Shot Bart Helms in the back! Man we caught a good one . There may be a reward." The Sarge looked at Beev as he said, "You better check that out Sarge , I was cleared of that charge a year ago. Roscoe Barns admitted to the killing." Sarge said, " Heard about it. Shut up Simpson."

Beev was worried, Eli would begin to worry about him not coming back. She would know that something bad had happened because she knew that he wouldn't leave his rifle and other guns. He had no idea that he had made trouble for her. Simpson had volunteered to go notify his wife that he was locked up, but she might not be welcome in Lincoln . Simpson saw an opportunity here to see what he might take that belonged to the killer Beev Hunter. In his mind, Beev was guilty of killing Fellows and would be put before a firing squad for murder. What he had at that willow spring would be his for the taking , including his wife. Simpson was making the biggest mistake of his life.

Elien was no ordinary Cherokee girl. Her name had been given her because she was much more intelligent than most of her Tribe. The name was highly respected by the elders

and Chiefs of the Indian nation. Beev had been amazed at how quickly she had learned his English so much faster than he learned her language. Beev was also amazed at how he came to be selected as her husband. Beev was an exceptional trapper and when he joined her group in Oklahoma as he hid from that murder charge in the territory, his first efforts brought masses of game for eating. Eli was interested in the big white hunter. He was very beautiful to her. She was proud of the fact that she interested him. How could she miss, Eli was a very beautiful girl and Beev had been running from the law for many months. She went out of her way to make sure that he saw her every day. Yes , she hadn't been named Elien for no good reason. Her thinking was also the reason she had not been interested in any of the young Braves in her Tribe. She viewed them all as child like.

When the big white man joined them and began bringing in game almost every day , she became interested in learning how he was so successful. Her position as a young girl made it impossible to contact him, but she knew the law of the Cherokee. A girl could choose her husband. It was the woman's choice . A Brave could not go to a father and offer horses and buckskins for a wife. The girl had to show willingness to be his wife by going to a man's Hogan or tent and take his horses to water and feed. If the man accepted her then they were married. Beev became interested in taking a Squaw and Eli was there every day. He had no idea how to approach her with his desire for her as a squaw wife. He watched other young braves bring offering to her Father's tent and purposely left their horse tied at their tents until dark as an open offer. He had no idea that Eli was

waiting for him to tie his horses at the lean-too he had built for himself to live in.

Beev was trying to think of what he might bring as an offer to her Father's tent. Coming upon the sign of a family of Black Minks, he knew what he would offer. It took weeks of frustration before he had trapped and cured the skins of three. Now it was time to make his offer. He took the three skins to her father's tent and lay this tribute at her doorway.

Chatter and laughter was everywhere he went that evening. He had learned a bit of their language and sign talk was something he knew that was universal in all Indian Tribes. Nothing happened and Beev was sure his attempts were wrong or rejected because he was a white man. He had no idea that Eli was waiting for him to tie his horses at his lean-too so she could confirm their marriage. Beev, though was very particular with his horses and always went out early to tether them on the best grass.

Finally Eli in frustration got tired of waiting for him and walked near to his lean-too one afternoon as he came in from trapping. Waiting until he had unsaddled, she boldly walked over taking the leads and tether ropes from his hand and led his horses to water . When she returned, she went to his lean-too and asked by sign if she could come in. Beev was surprised and didn't know what to do and motioned her to come in. Eli walked in , looked around at everything and without a word or sign, went back to her Father's tent. Beev was disappointed thinking she had refused him, but ten minutes later here came Eli carrying a bundle wrapped in a blanket. She immediately began moving things around and making a bed of her blankets. The wedding was over! It was

time for the marriage to begin. Beev didn't understand everything but he was happy with the results.

No, Simpson had no idea who he was dealing with. Eli saw the soldier riding into her campsite. He was riding Beev's horse Sin! Eli exclaimed "Where husband? You ride his horse!" Simpson said, "No Squaw he killed a soldier. Steals this horse. The army will kill him with a firing squad." Eli sharply said, "No! No, I trade for horse. Yellow Bear's horse on Reservation." Simpson said, "You're a lying Indian Squaw! You probably helped him. I'm taking his stuff. Where is his pack?" Eli said, "You not take my husband's pack. He will be back." Simpson laughed saying, "You Indians believe anything. He will be shot to hell! you won't see him again. Now I wanna see his stuff, there may be money or guns. I want'em." Eli said, "No, you go." Simpson said angrily, "Bitch get outta my way I'm taking anything I want!" Simpson went stomping to the pack laying near her campfire and like a mad idiot, he kicked Beev's lantern into the fire. Kerosene splashed up his pants leg! Fire came quickly after and Simpson stood screaming in pain as the fire burned away at his pants leg. Eli yelled at him, "Go to Spring! Go to spring!" Simpson ran to the spring jumping into the shallow water screaming in pain and finally having sense enough to roll in the water putting out the fire. The pain was so bad, he could only scream out, but as the cold water brought relief, he looked at Eli. She was holding a rifle pointed at his belly.

Minutes went by as Simpson painfully came out of the water and said, "Help me Squaw, help me. Take me back to the Fort. I need help." Eli looked hard at him and said, "You git back to Fort. Take my husband's horse. Let my husband free. I wait for him. you git!" Painfully and almost

feinting with the effort, Simpson climbed in the saddle and left. He rode back as carefully as possible with the burning pain causing him to scream many times. In his mind, he was gonna kill that damn Squaw! It was all her fault and he needed a story for the Sergeant as to how he got burned so badly. Blame it on the Squaw. She did it with lantern oil thrown at him. They needed to arrest her. Half way to the Fort he experienced more bad luck. The horse threw a shoe and stumbled going to his knees. Simpson hit the ground in screaming pain again. His leg looked awful with the pants leg half burned away and raw burned skin showing all the way up past his knee. When he entered the Fort crying for help , he was immediately taken to the medic's quarters. A soldier took the limping horse to the livery.

The Sarge was called to speak to Simpson and file a report because of his injuries sustained during the arrest and investigation of Beev Hunter for the murder of Pvt. Fellows while stealing a horse. He made it sound all official although he knew Simpson was probably lying about the Squaw. He would take no action against her. Hours later just before supper call, the Army Ferrier came to see him asking about the saddle and gear that belonged to the prisoner. There were two boxes of 44's in the saddle bags along with other personal items. The Ferrier asked, " What's all the commotion about and who's the prisoner ?" The Sarge responded, " Murderer Joe, we caught the killer of Pvt, Fellows. Simpson identified Fellow's horse and we arrested Hunter. He claims he's innocent ,but you know how that goes. How's the horse doing? I heard he tossed a shoe and fell." Joe said, he's doing well. I put a new set of shoes on him. Whose horse is it anyway?" Sarg said , " He's the horse Hunter was riding . I thought you knew that. " Joe said, "

Sarg I hate to tell you , but that's not any horse I ever worked on. This is not Fellow's horse." Sarge jumped to his feet saying , " Joe , are you sure? Simpson was Fellows buddy. Surely he knows the horse." Joe replied, first of all Sarg, I never let a horse wear his shoes down like the one he lost and this horse was shod with cold shoes like I've seen on a hundred Indian ponies. There's a lot of big black Mustangs that resemble him, but the most important thing is I just put hot shoes on Fellow's horse not two weeks ago. I've got it on my chart." Sarg exclaimed , " Damit all to hell, this'll cost me a stripe! I let that idiot Simpson get me in trouble again. Joe bring that horse around here quick and make sure everything of his is in order. I'll get Hunter released right away."

Ten minutes later the Sergeant was apologizing to Beev for the arrest and gross mistake they had made. Beev said, "I'm glad it's cleared up Sergeant, but you may have to go looking for me for killing a soldier. If I ever run into Simpson again , I'll kill him!" the Sergeant went overboard with his apology and telling Beev his horse had new shoes. Secretly he was praying that Simpson hadn't made a bigger mess for him with Beev's wife. He was glad to see Beev riding out the gates and heading for the Trading Post.

It was late that evening when Beev rode into his camp site he was shocked and surprised to see Eli's horse saddled and his rifle in the gun boot. It took half an hour for him to get the whole story from her and another half hour to get his story across to her. He thought later , " I shouldn't be surprised at Eli. She was planning on attempting a Jail Break for me. Some one would have been killed, but she would have been also. Here I thought about leaving her on the Reservation. I've sure been a fool. The best partner and

closest friend I'll ever have. She'll look good in these boys pants." He laughed, " If I can get her to wear'em."

There was no problem with the boy's outfit. Beev knew that she would be more comfortable riding horse back and Eli figured it out pretty quickly herself. Beev was thinking, ' Now she looks like a boy and it'll be a lot easier to travel with her as a boy and not an Indian.' She was upset at his cutting her hair but he told her that she would look more like his wife that way. She was willing to cut it all off! Travel was slow going in the heat so they traveled mostly at night. Daylight hours had Beev teaching Eli to use a pistol and she became very good at short range. She preferred a rifle and did most of the game shooting. She considered the pistol a toy and handled it like an expert. Beev cautioned her to be careful, that it would kill just as easy as her rifle, it was not a toy. Eli was playing with it one morning when a dove flew up and she quickly shot at it. Beev exclaimed , " Damnit Eli, I told you to be careful, our horses are over there. You can't just go shooting without knowing where you bullets are going if you miss your target." Eli said " Husband Beev, I not miss target." Sure enough the dove lay on the ground dead over twenty yards away. Beev under his breath said, " Damn!, that woman is dangerous. I don't think I could shoot like that." He knew for a fact that he couldn't.

Eli asked, " Husband Beev, where go now?" Beev said , Eli we're going to El Paso. I have much Wampum in the El Paso national bank. I need a bank draft that will be good in Arizona territory. We may stop there. Eli said, "Husband Beev you make much sunshine in my heart." Beev gave her a big hug knowing that Indians didn't hug, but he knew that her expression meant that she loved him very much. He said , " Eli, you're a real sweetheart, but I want you to quit saying

Husband Beev. Just say Beev. Can you do that for me?" Eli said , "Yes husband Beev, I can say Beev not husband. What is sweetheart mean?" Beev replied, " It's like me saying I have much sunshine in my heart for you." Eli hugged him. That was a surprise. He was thinking, " Here I've lived with this girl for over a year and just now realize what she means to me. What an idiot I've been."

They were half way to El Paso when their pack horse began limping badly. Beev stopped and made camp by a small creek. Eli was very concerned about the limp and said, "Beev, not my husband , what we do for horse?" Beev replied , " Eli, I've tried to tell you for days now. Just say my name is Beev. That not my husband ain't right. Look , I know you can understand , I am your husband ok. Eli replied, " my husband ok, what we do for horse?" Beev just shook his head saying, " Eli, you're messing with me ain't you? I know you can understand better than that. Damn it just call me what you want to." Eli laughed saying," I like Sweetheart for name. what we do for horse?" Beev said, " He's lame. Look here , a bad quarter crack. We leave him. Soon he won't walk . No, put your gun away. He'll stay here. Food, water and pretty soon his foot will heal. He'll join a wild bunch."

The next day Beev packed Eli's saddle horse with everything and put a larger blanket on his horse. He lifted her from the ground to ride behind him. She didn't weigh nothing anyway. Old Sin could easily carry both . Beev got off every hour or so and walked. They made good time, but it was almost two weeks before they saw El Paso on the sky line. Eli was disappointed that their trip was over. She loved the idea of riding behind Beev. He had told her that he'd get another horse for her before they left the town. She wasn't sure she liked the idea, but it was better for Sin.

Eli had never been in a town before and everything was amazing to her. Beev told her to just follow him and don't say anything. He went straight to the Bank and asked her to stand outside and hold the horses. he said, " Eli I know it's all new but don't be afraid, I'm going in there and I'll be right out. You've got your gun on . I don't think anyone will give you any trouble. You look like a boy of fifteen winters and most folks will leave you alone. Don't talk to anyone, just point at your throat like this and shake your head No." Beev had no idea he was headed into a desperate situation in the bank. Never once thinking of trouble, he stepped inside and right away a gun was jammed in his ribs as a rough looking black bearded man exclaimed, "Hold It Mister! Move over here. Don't make a move." His pistol was jerked from his holster and tossed away, as he took in what was going on. Two other men were holding gun's on the bank tellers as the pay drawers were emptied into a pair of saddlebags. Black beard said, " Just take it easy and no one'll get hurt."

Suddenly a teller yelled 'HoldUp" and then screamed, "Bank Robbery!"He was immediately shot by one of the robbers. Black beard yelled , "Damn Johnny Boy ! Get outta here!" Beev saw a chance and spun around to elbow black beard in the face. He missed as Black beard had moved. Then Beev caught a gunbarrel slammed down the side of his head. All three outlaws ran for the door as Beev grabbed his gun from the floor and with blood half blinding him, he ran for the door . As he reached the door he hit his blind side on the doorway and fell on the bank steps. As he crashed to the ground he threw a shot at the back of Black beard carrying the saddlebags . He thought that his bullet hit the man taking him down. He was aware of other gun fire, as he watched black beard rolling over in pain. Eli came running

to him and quickly ripped off a shirt sleeve binding his bleeding head. She was excited and the only English he heard was “ Sweetheart”. Folks came running from all over. The Bank Manager came out with a shotgun and stopped when he saw Beev sitting on the ground with blood all over him. The three Bank robbers lay on the ground. Black beard was dead and the other two wounded. The saddlebags lay still clutched in the hands of the dead black bearded outlaw. Johnny Boy and his partner were squirming in pain on the ground. Both had been shot in the legs. The bank manager, Frank Borden had sent for the Doc and was excitedly telling the town law man Sheriff Douglas, “ Dug, this man took'em all down. Look at that! Never seen the like of a gunfighter like him. Saved every dime of our money. Killed the leader, he's part of that Black Henry bunch down by Waco. Sheriff the man was half blinded with blood. Probably a good thing or those other two would be dead too.”

Beev was trying to settle Eli down and convince her that he would be Ok. The Doc was there asking questions and Beev signaled her to say nothing, but he was almost too late, Eli was in a state of shock and kept saying ‘Sweetheart, Sweetheart!’ Doc said, “ Can't talk boy? That's too bad. Looks like your Dad here stopped the bank robbery. Everything happened so fast , nobody tells the same story. Too bad you can't talk. I understand you were out there by the hitch rack and probably saw the whole thing. Boy I'll have to say your Dad is a hell of a gunfighter. He's gonna be Ok. I gotta put a couple of stitches in that cut but otherwise looks like it won't make him any uglier.” He turned to Beev and asked , “ Can you walk over to my office and we'll get you fixed up. Reckon you'll be the town hero for awhile.

Frank said to get you and your boy a room at the Town House, best in town; course it's the only one in town."

Later at the rooming house . Beev asked Eli what happened outside the Bank. She was in such a state of surprise at everything, having never seen a bed or water basin. It took Beev a while before he could get the story. Eli had been standing with the horses when a shot was fired in the bank. Scared and wondering what had happened, she was shocked to see men pouring, from the bank . Seeing him all bloody she thought they had shot him , because she saw him shoot at the bearded man. She grabbed her own gun and shot the bearded one and when the other two turned back, she feared they would shoot him, she shot them also. Eli said, "Sweetheart Beev, too shakey, to shoot good sorry." Beev hugged her saying "Eli, you probably saved my life. We're gonna stay here over night. Yeah, we'll sleep in that bed. The Doc said the Sheriff would bring us supper. You won't have to cook food. Tomorrow I'll go get that Wampum and we'll look for a pack horse. We might stay here tomorrow night and get out the next day.

Supper came like the Doc said, carried in by the Sheriff asking, " Mister what is your name and where are you from? One hell of a job you did on them outlaws. You know one of those you put down was Johnny Boy Riles, a fast draw gun slick from Del Rio. I think he'll have a long time to heal that broken leg in Jail if they don't hang him. he's the one that shot the teller Tom Burns. Lucky he didn't kill Tom or he'd be hanging from the livery stable loft rail right now." Beev replied, ".Beev Hunter's the name. Came over from the Oklahoma Territory. Don't wanna upset you sheriff, but I was hiding from the law there charged with shooting a man, until some kid confessed to the killing. I'm heading to Hungry

Valley up by White mountain in Arizona. Me and the kid, Jimmy are gonna set up a homestead there. I've got a pretty good nest egg in the bank here and just came to get a draft that I can use in Globe or Tucson. I reckon I walked into that bank at the wrong time."

Sheriff replied, " No Beev, I'd say you were right on time for the folks here in town. Doc say's your boy can't talk. Too bad I'd sure like to get the whole story. I might have some bad news for you though. White mountain is now part of the Apache Reservation. There won't be any homesteads going in there. One other thing that Black Henry gang ain't gonna take it sittin down with you killing one of their leaders. I'd say ,watch your back and get that boy a gun. He might need it."

Supper was good, Eli had never eaten like that before , but Beev tried to introduce her to all the new things she'd never seen before. Towns and white eye's things were all new to her. He said, "Eli take everything in and I'll try to tell you all about it, but not while we're in town. I wanna get out of here as fast as we can. These people all hate Indians and I might have to shoot a few. We'll grab my stuff and a pack horse, then we'll leave. I don't know where we go next. White Mountain is out. We can't fight Apaches. We'll keep going until something comes up, but we've gotta make the mountains , there's no other life for us." Beev was unaware that a third member of the gang Al Haynes, had been holding their horses and had seen the whole thing. He remained in town hoping to get a shot at Beev or the young boy that did all the shooting . Black Henry would really be upset with Haynes that he didn't get in the fight too . Haynes hung near the Rooming house hoping for a chance to kill, but luckily Beev and Eli left by the back door which was much

closer to the livery stable. Later Haynes realized they were gone and didn't know which way they went. Cursing his bad luck, he made plans on breaking Jail to get Johnny Boy and his friend Ed Blakin freed. Knowing they were injured , He stole the Delivery wagon from the Mercantile and parked it near the Jail, knowing there would be no one using it, he figured it wouldn't be missed until he could get outta town.

Waiting until suppertime when most folks would be eating, he went to see Sheriff Douglas at the Jail and called inside telling Douglas that he had seen the whole Bank robbery and wanted to make a statement but he couldn't write . Douglas met Haynes at the door, he wasn't taking any chances and had a gun in his hand as he said, " Mister,I don't know you. Whatta you know about the robbery? Come in here." Haynes replied, " Just rode in from Del Rio and saw the whole thing. I was standing by the livery stable, with my horse, when the shooting started. Yep, I saw that young boy shoot all three of the Bank robbers." Douglas exclaimed, " Mister , you're seeing things, that boy can't be more than fifteen, and just a minute. you came from Del Rio and you were at the livery stable. Mister , I don't know who you think you're talking to, but you'd have to be ten feet tall to see the front of the bank from there. Don't try anything, get your hands in the air ! I'm locking you up." Haynes spun around heading for the door and pulled his gun. Big mistake , Douglas shot him. Haynes didn't live long enough to tell his story.

Following the big commutation caused by Douglas killing Haynes, it became very clear that Haynes had planned a jail brake. Later Douglas related the story to the Doc,saying, " He was part of the Gang, but not a very smart one. claiming that young wild eyed boy had done all of the

shooting. That was just beyond belief. If he'd said anything else , I'd probably turned my back to him to get pen and paper. Lucky, I guess Doc, but that wild claim made me take a hard look at things and I know you can't see the door of the Bank from the livery stable unless you're in the hay loft. I'll almost bet that's where he was. I guess you can write off four of Black Henry's Gang. Maybe he'll steer clear of El Paso. I've heard somewhere that Henry was killed trying to rob a stage coach. Maybe this was a remnant of his Gang."

Doc replied, " Doug, don't discount his tale too much. All three robbers took bullets from the street and that's where the boy was." Douglas exclaimed, " Damn, I can't believe that! Gotta be another explanation." But he had a shocked look on his face as he said, " Damn you're right Doc that kid Jimmy had a belt gun." Doc said, " Dug , Hunter called him Sweetheart a couple of times. Wasn't there a Dave Sweetheart gun fighter killed up in Denver a couple of years back? This Jimmy must be related to him . It's a name you won't forget." Douglas said, " Doc, I think it's crazy. My God the kid couldn't be fifteen yet. I just cain't believe it Jimmy Sweetheart gunfighter. Doc we'll sure be hearing about him if what you say is true."

Beev would have laughed if he knew the Sheriff and Doc had made Eli into a killer gunfighter. He was glad to see the town disappear on the horizon. He was still in disbelief about the shooting at the Bank. His Eli was very dangerous with a pistol. She may have been shaking when the shooting was going on and her aim pretty poor, but he'd take that kinda help any time he could get it. He laughed thinking, " I better think twice about running out on her, she might just call me out if I do. No, I don't reckon that's ever gonna happen."

Later that evening at their camp fire, when Beev brought up the shooting . Eli said, ‘Sweetheart, my husband , I’m very afraid for you. I just shoot till no more bullets. Bank is not a good place for you my husband. We go Bank again, I bring rifle too.” Beev laughed saying, “ I hope we never have to shoot our way into a bank, Sweetheart, but if we do, you’ll need a rifle. We’ll stay clear of Banks for awhile. There’s none closer than Tucson that I’d be interested in. I Know you don’t know where we’re going, but Fort Bowie is due west of here. We’ll plan on getting supplies there.”

It seemed like forever getting to Fort Bowie. When they arrived Beev found that the news of the El Paso Bank robbery had come in a week before his arrival. Catching this news at the Sutter’s store, he made sure that no one heard his name. As it was he and Eli received a lot of looks as they resembled the Beeve and young boy that had stopped the bank robbery in El Paso. He was surprised to hear that Eli had been identified as Jimmie Sweetheart, a dangerous gunfighter from Dodge. Beeve laughed upon hearing this, but later that evening, he wouldn’t be laughing.

Two rough looking freighters brought a wagon load into the Sutter’s trading post where Beev and Eli were buying trail supplies. Their big news was the killing of Al Haynes by the sheriff of El Paso during a Jail break attempt The bad news was ,Haynes had identified the fifteen year old boy with Beev as Jimmy Sweetheart the deadly gunfighter that took down three of the Black Jack Henry Gang. Three of the Gang were now looking to kill Sweetheart and were trailing west toward Fort Bowie.

Beev was now worried sick. He and little Eli could easily be killed from ambush and every one knew he was

headed for Tucson. There was no thinking to do, he struck north for Fort Grant a weeks travel away. His plan was to get more supplies further west at Fort Thomas and then hit the Gila river north of Pheonix. They would skirt around wide of Grant and head straight west. Beev knew that word would get out quick which way they went, there were many riders and travelers out every day. He rode with eyes every where, fearful danger was maybe behind every patch of desert brush and in every washout that crossed their trail. In two days he became irritable and short with Eli. She recognized his bad attitude , but didn't realize what caused it. Finally her concern caused her to believe that Beev was gonna leave her. He was angry with her.

That evening she said, " Sweetheart my husband , I know not why you angry with me. I will leave if you like. All sunshine is gone from my heart. What you want me to do?"A startled Beev exclaimed, " Hell no! Eli, I'm not angry with you. There are killers maybe waiting ahead to kill us. I'm sorry, but I must be ready and I'm tired. My nerves are very bad. Do you understand. I've got to do something. No, no you are my wife. I don't know when or how they may try to shoot us. I don't know where they might be." Eli came to sit by Beev and said, " Sweetheart husband you bring big sunshine to my heart. How to find enemy , many tales around campfire in Indian camp. They say easy. Go to high hill at night find campfire." Beev grabbed her , hugged her tight kissing her saying, "Eli, you're wonderful. The answer is right there and I couldn't see it. We travel at night. It's a lot slower, but a lot safer too. We can spot a camp fire three miles away. We stay here tonight and let the horses feed well and tomorrow after dark we leave."Eli wished she had more stories to get sweetheart husband to grab her.

Weeks later they rode into Fort Thomas, Eli's hair was back to it's long length , but wearing boy's clothes still branded her the notorious gunfighter Jimmy Sweetheart. Her side arm was in plain sight as they entered the Thomas Trading Post. Beev had been tempted to ride wide of the fort but they were outta almost everything except money. They'd just have to chance going in and get out quickly. Taking caution , they checked their guns, Beev had no idea what they might find but they would be ready for trouble . He was no longer on trigger edge and a bundle of nerves from worry. He was now Beev Hunter the dangerous gun fighting trapper from Colorado points east and now itching to meet those that threatened Eli's life.

Eli was hidden behind him as he walked through the doorway. Three rough looking riders jumped to their feet as he entered. A big Red bearded one exclaimed, " Hold it right there mister!" Red beard was too late , Beev already had his gun out ready to kill. Red beard and his buddies threw hands in the air , as Red said, " Mister you're awfully damn touchie, I just wanted to ask a question. Have you seen anything of that back shooting snake Jimmy Sweetheart? My brother Johnny Boy lost his leg to that killer and two others died because of him. He's scared running and we're gonna hang him. Have you seen him?"

Beev had put one arm back to keep Eli behind him as he said, " Mister Red Beard, you're just letting things get away from you. I almost put a bullet in you . Tell me what this Jimmy Sweetheart looks like, I mighta seen him a time or two.' Beard replied saying " Small like fifteen or so, black hair , no beard. Claimed to be a fast gun hand, but always from behind. He's a back shooting cowardly murderer. We catch him, we hang him!" Beev said, " Mister Red, I don't

think you've got enough men. In El Paso I saw him at work. He put three men on the ground there in about half a minute. I sure wouldn't face him. He's mighty hard to beat. If he's around here anywhere, I'm gittin out. I suggest you three boys give it up and go home while you're still able and I'd recommend you shuck your guns. Lay'em on that table .” As they hesitated , he sharply said , “ Now!” cursing they did as he asked .

With their gun belts on the table he said, “Boy's I just saved your lives , all three of you. Let me introduce you to'Jimmy Sweetheart”. With that he moved aside so Eli could come forward . Eli , thinking they might be shooting already had her gun in hand. The three riders were shocked, “Here was the killer they were after and he could easily kill all three.” Pleading for their lives, they expected Eli to start shooting. Beev exclaimed , “ No Jimmy ! They were just leaving. No, leave those guns on the table. You won't be needin them. I strongly suggest you get on your horses and go back to Del Rio. There's a lot of burial ground in Arizona, but folks out here are particular and they do have a large coyote problem. Normally they'll use poison food, but maybe you get the message.” The three riders cursing them went to their horses and rode out east.

Eli was much relieved. Beev could feel her shaking and said, “Eli we'll just trade their guns for the supplies we need, keep the bullets and get away as soon as we can.” Beev knew he'd made a big mistake. The killers had rifles in their saddle boots and they were now in more danger than they had been. Shaking his head he said, “Eli sweetheart, we can never have a home if we can't get this El Paso killing behind us. Those three, tonight will follow to kill us. I made a mistake and it might cost us our lives, but we aren't gonna

run any more. We're gonna be seen heading north and they'll follow, only this time we're going after them. They wanna die out here I reckon. I'm gonna help them out." Eli said "Sweetheart , my husband, I will use rifle." Beev just nodded his head. He didn't hear her, but he found out two days later that he should have listened. Eli put the rifle and scabbard on her saddle.

Closely watching their back trail, Beev was sure he had seen dust . There was none . Riding on , he occasionally looked back but missed it every time. The three killers had no trouble seeing his horses dust and followed at a distance. Beev was all nerves. He felt the danger and couldn't get the feeling out of his mind. Finally looking ahead, he saw large group of desert willows in a narrow draw just north of him. He sent Eli on ahead and decided to hold up in the desert brush and wait to see if they were being followed. He didn't have to wait long, dust came up on his back trail almost immediately. It could be another traveler, but his feelings were it was the killers. He stepped down and suddenly discovered he had no rifle! He'd be a sitting duck with only a pistol. Cursing himself , he remember Eli saying she was taking the rifle.

The killers topped a small hill behind him and Beev had no choice but to run. Rifles were popping behind him as he jumped his horse outta the brush racing north to that grove of willows. He didn't make it. A bullet caught him in the left shoulder and off into the dirt he went. Sin, his horse fled after Eli and the stable mates. Rolling on the ground in pain, Beev scrambled for protection. The three killers were coming on strong , but held up as he threw a bullet their way from his belt gun. He knew they would stay outta pistol range and with no protection pepper his location with

bullets until one took him out. With the shoulder now giving him hell with pain, there was little he could do but wait for them to close in. Laying there in the dirt , he was cursing himself for being stupid. It would probably cost him his life and what about Eli. What would she do? He had to move , but that shoulder was killing him with pain.

He couldn't help crying out in pain as he tried to move into the brush. The killers were moving in. He couldn't see them , but fired at the brush movement hoping to keep them back. Suddenly he realized, he was empty, needing to reload. No!, he couldn't get the pistol open ; that left hand was of no use! Grabbing with his teeth he made a desperate effort to open the revolver. He couldn't do it. Gritting his teeth he took the pain and threw himself back further almost passing out in agony. He couldn't give up, but he was helpless now and the killers could easily kill him. He lay waiting in pain as he saw brush moving nearer and nearer. He lay as still as possible , but knew it was no use. Blood on the ground would easily show his position. He waited, once more trying to get his left arm around and get a hand on his pistol. In almost mortal agony he managed to break open the gun and scrambled to get shells in the chambers. He never made it. He had two shells out, laying on the ground as a blast of gunfire sounded all around him.

Beev had expected to feel the heavy bullets hitting him, but no. there was nothing , no sound at all and no more shooting. Once again , he tried to load the pistol and then heard the sweetest voice he'd ever hear saying, " Sweetheart my husband , where?" . She came to his call and Beev sharply said, " Eli get down ! The killers are out there." Eli replied, " No sweetheart my husband. I shoot." Eli had shot all three. Beev couldn't believe it, but asked Eli's help

to build a heavy compress for his shoulder, it was broken with a bullet hole in the back. Laying there in the dirt, he tried to figure what had to be done. He could do so very little himself. Eli would have to do it all.

It was hours later that Beev could get to his knees and found that only one of the killers had died there. All three horses were missing. He asked “ Eli, did you see them leave? They may be coming back. We’ve got to get outta here.” Eli said “ No sweetheart my husband. Will not come back. Will die.” Beev didn’t question her any further. Eli was deadly with a rifle. If she said they wouldn’t be back. They wouldn’t be back. He said, ‘ I can’t ride a horse and I have to get to a town to fix my shoulder. Put together a travois and take me south. Phoenix is there and there’ll be a doctor. Two days later Beev is developing a high fever and was afraid he’d not make it to the town.

Beev told Eli to wear her gun and if anyone asked her name , tell them Jimmy Sweetheart . Maybe folks would leave her alone. He wasn’t sure if he would make it ,but there was nothing he could do about it. If he died, she was on her own; But Eli insisted that the Great spirits would protect and heal him. For two days Eli traveled south without stopping and finally seeing a homesteader shack , she took the now unconscious Beev there to try and get help. They were on the north side of Phoenix near the Gila river.

The homestead was owned by the Phil Jenkins family and Jenkins wife Mabel, had some experience in mending gunshot wounds. It was some time later, that Beev would find that Jenkins was a wanted man outta New Mexico and there was a price on his head. For hours that evening, Mabel

worked on that shoulder finally getting the bullet out . Phil wanted to take Beev into town, but Mable said, “ Phil, that John’s a horse doctor. I know more about fixing bullet wounds than he ever will. Why don’t you ride in and get some medicines for me. You can get everything from ol’John. He keeps a cabinet of stuff , mostly for horses , but it’ll work just as good on people. We’ve got this bullet out and tomorrow well try to strap that shoulder in place. Oh , and stay clear of the saloon, without a bush on your face you’ll match your picture. You never should have shaved. You know what that might mean.’ Phil replied, “ Ma, we’re so far out here in the sticks , no one ever heard of me.” Mable replied, “ Just the same rub some dirt on your face and stay away from people. We don’t need another gun fight here in Phoenix, and keep your mouth shut about these two.”

It was early evening when Phil returned. He had all the meds Mable wanted and a full tin of opium for the pain. His big news was a shock to Beev. A big red bearded man had been brought to John at the Livery stable . Said his name was Buster Riles. He was shot in the belly. John couldn’t do nothing for him except give him opium. He had died that morning, but his story had everyone in Phoenix stirred up. He had been shot by Jimmy Sweetheart, the killer from El Paso and Dodge city. His two partners had been killed. Sweetheart was some where near Phoenix. Sheriff Haynes had hired on two more Deputies. Rumors were that Sweetheart had killed over ten men in gunfights. He was small, long black hair and deadly fast with a gun.

Phil asked, “ Mable what name did he give . I didn’t catch it this morning when they came in?” Mable replied, “ He’s Beev Hunter and his woman Eli . I thought at first she was a boy , maybe his son, but no, she’s Indian Cherokee.

They came all the way from Oklahoma.” Phil said , Oh a Squaw man is he? That won’t set too well with folks around Phoenix.” Mable said, “ Beev wants a white man wedding as soon as he can round up a preacher. He loves that girl very much .” Phil said “ She resembles that description of Jimmy Sweetheart. That’s quite a laugh don’t you think?” Mable laughed and replied , “Yeah Phil and no one would ever believe that Phil Jenkins was that outlaw Justin Yokes from Santa Fe. Now would they? I asked for her name and guess what she told me? It’s Jimmy Sweetheart! Phil, I’m honest. That’s what she told me. Beev later told me the whole story. Her real name is Eli, but she is very dangerous with a gun. You won’t believe their story.”

The following day, Beev was able to go through the whole trip explaining all that had happened. The one thing he said with warning, “ Eli is not afraid to fight and would die for me if she had to. I almost made the biggest mistake of my life back in Oklahoma. I never thought I could be so dumb. Eli, is the best partner and friend I ever had. Mable, you and Phil are the finest. Cain’t thank you enough. Well get on our way as soon as I can ride. Don’t wanna put you folks out. Eli and I can hang out in your barn for awhile if that’s Ok.’ Mable exclaimed, “ Hell no! you ain’t. you’re gonna stay right here in our bed . Phil and I can make it fine on the floor. You won’t be in no shape to ride for a month anyway. Beev, that shoulder blade was busted. They heal pretty quick , but not overnight. No, you hang out in bed for awhile and then maybe stay in the barn.”

A week had gone by when Mable said, “Beev , I’ve got it fixed for you and Eli to get married. That Bible thumper Crawford comes to Phoenix every month and Phil got him to swing by our place on his way in. If you wanna get hitched,

now's the time. What do you say ? Phil and I can sign the paper." Beev still healing thought it was a good thing. He and Phil had been talking and there were a number of abandoned homesteads around that he might be interested in. All he had to do was file on one like he and Mable had done, live there for five years and it was yours. There were a number; he could take his pick.

Beev had a talk with Eli. She didn't understand marriage thing saying, "Sweetheart my husband, we already Cherokee marry Eli and White eyes Beev. Beev explained he wanted a white eyes marriage. Eli said she do what he wanted. The wedding was planned. Mable wanted Eli to wear one of her dresses for the ceremony . Eli finally consented and when Crawford arrived. Beev went o get Eli and he was shocked beyond words. She was beautifully dressed in Mable's things, but bald as a turkey buzzard. All of her beautiful long black hair was gone. When Beev could breathe again , he suddenly remembered he had asked her to cut off her hair so she would look more like his wife; he sorrowfully remembered telling her that when he had her dress as a boy way back before El Paso. Huggin her in a strong embrace, he laughed and said, "Jimmy Sweetheart , let's go get married!"

The End

