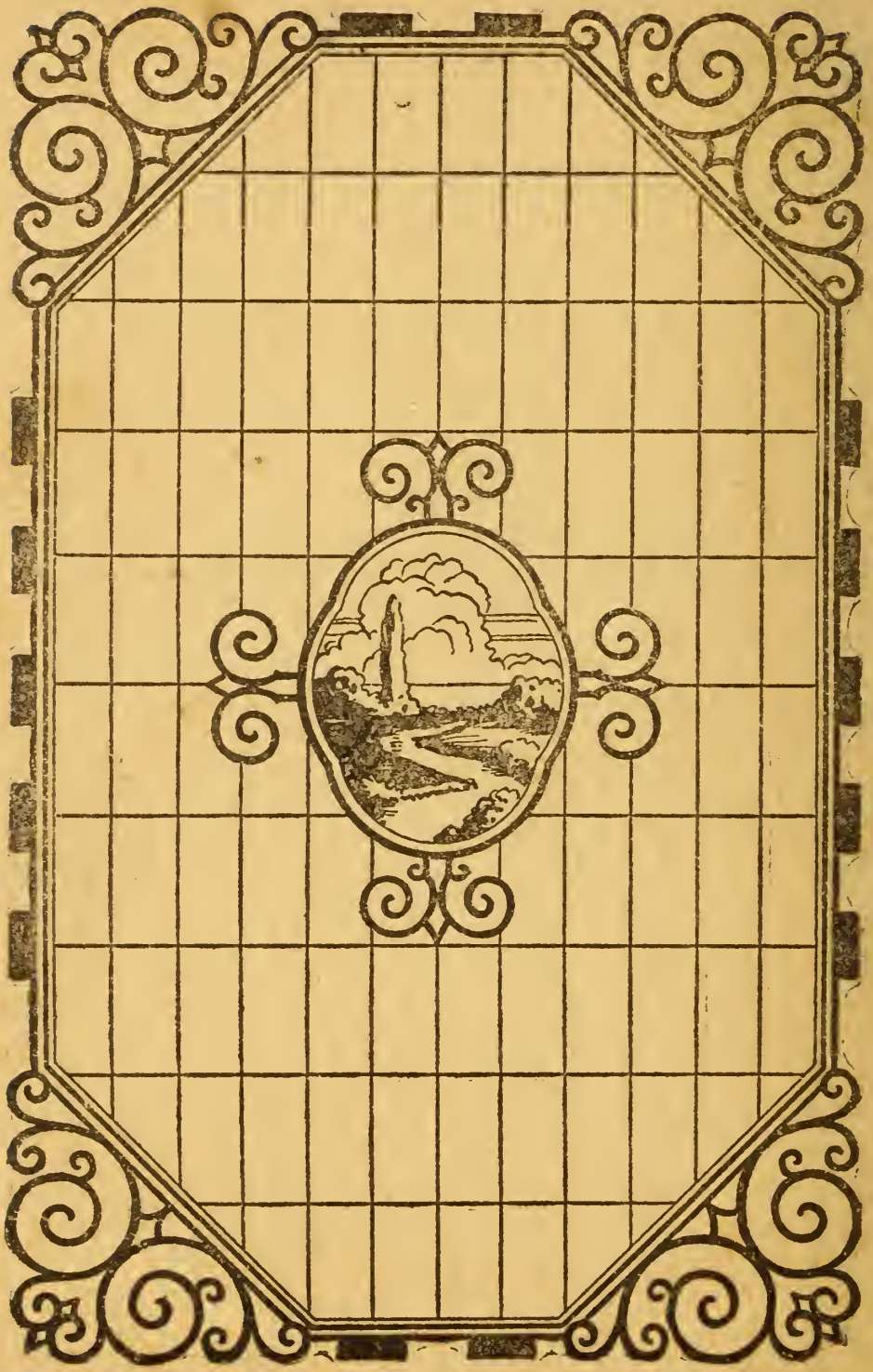


# SWIFT FAWN



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Swift Fawn



MARY H. WADE



SHE DIPPED THE SURPRISED BABY ONCE, TWICE,  
MANY TIMES IN THE COLD STREAM.

# SWIFT FAWN

## THE SURPRISE

**W**HITE MINK was cooking supper at the fireplace in the middle of the lodge. Other young women were also busy in the work, for the night was setting in and the hunting party was expected to return shortly. Two of the squaws were tending the buffalo ribs, roasting in the hot embers; others were preparing pemmican and cutting up chunks of marrow fat.

While the younger women were moving about, the old grandmothers squatted back in dim corners, weaving baskets, sorting porcupine quills for the next day's embroidery, and keeping the babies out of their mothers' way. Now and then the head of some bright-eyed boy or girl would pop through the door of the lodge to see what was going on inside, or to sniff the savory odor of the roasting meat.

It was a big family for one household; but then, it was a big lodge—at least forty feet from side to side, so that many people could

live together under one roof in comfort and happiness.

More than once White Mink stopped to smile sadly at her sister's girl-baby as it tumbled about on a near-by mat of rushes. She had a son of her own, a strong, lively boy of ten years named Big Moose; but she was not happy, for only a short time ago she had lost her little year-old daughter. Her heart still ached for the touch of baby fingers around her throat, and the laughter of a little one that was her very, very own.

She sighed more as she thought: "I fear the Great Spirit will not give me another daughter."

White Mink looked quite beautiful in the firelight,—at least so an Indian would think. Her long, dark hair was parted in the middle above her forehead and hung in two long braids down her back. The parting itself was filled with bright, red paint. White Mink's eyes were of a soft hazel and her skin, though tanned by her living much in the fresh air, was only slightly red. She was slim and graceful, and the pride of the young brave, her husband.



Hark! The chatter of the women and children suddenly stopped as the galloping of horses could now be heard,—the hunting party was returning.

The younger squaws dropped their work and hurried out to meet the braves, and receive into their care the game brought home from the hunt.

White Mink, stopping to tend the fire, was the last to leave the lodge. She had scarcely passed through the door, when her husband, Three Bears, stood before her. He held a bundle in his arms. With a tender look in his keen eyes, he said, "See!"

The stars twinkled merrily as White Mink bent over the bundle, and saw that it was—a little white baby.

Surprise and delight spoke in the woman's face as Three Bears placed the bundle in her arms.

How did the white child come to be brought home by Three Bears? White Mink did not ask her husband, for that was not the way a squaw should conduct herself. Whenever he should get ready to tell her, he would do so. It was enough to satisfy her that this little one was to be her own to feed, and put

to sleep, and teach the ways of her people, and love. The child belonged to the race hated by the red men, but it was so young and helpless, that would be quickly forgotten.

Now, as White Mink came back into the lodge, the old women got up from their corners, and gathered around her curiously. A minute afterwards the hunters entered, followed by the rest of the women and children. The noise awakened the baby, and the opening blue eyes filled with fright at sight of the many strange faces close by. The little lips quivered and a pitiful cry came from the tiny throat.

White Mink drew the child close to her breast. "Not yet," she whispered to Big Moose, who had pressed close to her to see as much as possible of the newcomer. "Not yet, Big Moose. Be patient."

"You shall be my own," she said—"my own Swift Fawn, to take the place of the little daughter taken from me. The Great Spirit has sent you."

## THE EARLY BATH

“Swift Fawn, now sleep,  
By White Mink’s side sleep.”

**S**OFTLY the Indian woman sang her lullaby to the baby. The journey over the prairie had been long, oh, very long; the bed of buffalo skins was restful to the tired little body, and the heavy curtains shut out the flickering fire-light and the people gathered around it. Moreover, the tender touch of White Mink’s hand was soothing to the child nestling beside her. The frightened cry soon stopped; the heavy eyes closed, and Swift Fawn sank down, down to the Land of Nod. For hours afterwards the men of the lodge told stories, and the women and children laughed and chattered, but the little stranger knew nothing more of the life around her till the sun, peeping into the roof-opening above the fireplace, cast a ray of light through the parting of the curtains.

At this first sign of morning, White Mink instantly left her bed and began to move softly

about the lodge. So did the other women and the girl-children of the household. All were preparing for the morning bath without which they could not start the day rightly.

“Come, my little one, you too shall join us,” White Mink said, as she bent over Swift Fawn with open arms.

The baby’s eyes filled with tears and the tiny lips puckered.

“Hush! hush!” whispered White Mink, for the men were not yet stirring and their morning nap must not be disturbed.

Seizing Swift Fawn, and wrapping her in an otter skin, the woman hurried out of the house and joined the rest of the party who were already on their way to the river.

The air was crisp and cool, and the bathing beach was a good half-mile above the village. But the women walked fast, while the little girls ran in and out among them, chasing each other and playing tricks upon one another as they moved along. Everybody seemed to be so happy that Swift Fawn began to feel happy too. And when the children danced about her saying, “Good morning, good morning, little stranger,” she began to crow, and at last actually laughed with them.

In a few minutes the river was reached. Two of the women, who had been chosen to act as sentinels, took a stand on a stretch of high land back from the shore. They had bows and arrows ready with which to protect the bathers in case any mischievous boys should dare to venture near.

The rest of the party now threw off their skin robes and mocassins; one by one they ran down the beach and into the water. How cold it was! At first it made the teeth chatter, but after one or two plunges every one was ready for a frolic in the swift current. Some of the party began to swim; two of the women gave lessons to their little daughters in making proper strokes; the smaller children played pranks with each other in the shallow water close to shore. The air was filled with merry calls and shouts.

At first White Mink stood by, watching the others and tending Swift Fawn whom she still held tenderly. But, after a while, she went down to the water's edge. Reaching over, she dipped the surprised baby once, twice, many times, in the cold stream.

Oo! at each plunge Swift Fawn caught her breath. She would have cried out if this strange

new mother had given her time. But the bath was ended before she had a chance to realize that she had reason to fear. And now she found herself wrapped once more in the skin robe and lying in a sunny spot high up on the shining sand of the beach. Here she was left to kick her feet and tumble about as much as she wished while White Mink took her own bath.

## GETTING BREAKFAST

**C**OME, come!" called one of the women, after the frolic on the beach had lasted for some time. "The sun is not standing still. Let us go to our work."

At this reminder the merry band started homeward, still laughing and chatting gaily. As they reached the village Swift Fawn, peeping from White Mink's back over her shoulder, saw what resembled a colony of immense beehives. These were the dome-shaped lodges of the Mandans, and quite different from those of other tribes.

These lodges looked like mounds of earth, and were packed so closely together there was barely room enough to walk between them. Here and there smoke was rising from holes in the roofs, for the women who were too old or feeble to take the early bath were doubtless starting the fires to be ready for the returning housekeepers. There were no windows in the lodges. The only light must come through the roof-openings.

As White Mink, with Swift Fawn on her back, entered her own home, the men and boys were just leaving for their own bath, as there was no hurry of work for them. Except when they went hunting, there was little for them to do through the long day except to play games and tell stories.

It was so bright and pleasant outdoors that Swift Fawn began to cry on being carried into the dark lodge. Moreover, she was hungry.

“What is the best food for my little one?” considered White Mink as she looked thoughtfully at the child.

“Make her a broth from the wild rice,” suggested an old squaw.

White Mink nodded. “Good!” she said. “But there must be something at once to stop that cry. Ah! it shall be a bit of pemmican, which the child can suck. That will please her, I know.”

Laying Swift Fawn on a mat woven out of rushes, she brought the pemmican to the baby, and joined the other women in the morning’s work.

After some wild rice had been placed in a pot of water and set to simmer in the hot coals, a large kettle of buffalo meat was hung over the



fire. It must be ready to serve any one who should enter the lodge hungry.

There was no regular breakfast for the big household. Whenever the men wished, food must be ready for them. After they were satisfied the women and children could take their turn; but it would be strange for any Mandan to eat more than twice in a day. Once during the morning and again at night,—surely that was often enough for those who would keep strong and healthy.

As White Mink moved softly about over the earthen floor worn smooth and shining by the tread of many mocassined feet, Swift Fawn kicked about on her mat while her eyes gradually became used to the dim light. There was plenty to interest her. Sometimes she watched White Mink and the other women at their work. Sometimes her eyes chased the shadows on the timbers forming the framework of the lodge. Again, she looked at the curtains of buffalo skin that shut off the beds set up around the sides of the lodge. These skins had been beautifully dressed and the edges were cut in a deep fringe. Some of them were embroidered with porcupine quills in pretty patterns. On others were painted queer pictures which told

the stories of hunts and battles, and of the different things that had happened to the tribe.

When Swift Fawn grew older she was able to count these curtains. There were as many as the fingers on her hands. And between them were big posts into which pegs had been fastened. On these pegs hung many queer and fearful looking objects. There were warriors' shields on which were embossed strange figures representing the guardian spirits of the family. There were bows and arrows, quivers, war-clubs, tobacco pouches, magnificent head-dresses trimmed with hawk and eagle feathers which the men wore at feasts and on other great occasions.

Now and then the baby would reach out to lay her tiny hand on some pot or dish which one of the housekeepers had brought out to use in her cooking. Surely there was enough to keep any baby's mind happy and busy. Once in a while, however, she set up a loud cry. This was when a wolfish-looking dog entered the lodge, and coming close to her side, looked down at her with his sharp eyes and sniffed at her. Then White Mink would turn upon him crying, "Out, where you belong," and the dog would slink away.

## HOW THE DAYS PASSED

**S**WIFT Fawn grew fast, and before many weeks passed by she was the pet of the whole household. Even the boys were kind to her. As for Big Moose, whenever he was in the lodge he spent many a half-hour amusing his foster-sister. Sometimes he played wild Indian music on his flute, watching for a smile to appear on the little one's face. Often, when he came home after hunting small game with his father, he would place one of the birds which had been shot in Swift Fawn's hands and watch her as she moved her tiny fingers over the feathers curiously.

“By and by,” thought the boy, “I will take her with me as I creep through the long grass and brush in search of birds' eggs.”

So the moons went by—as the red people counted time—and Swift Fawn grew up out of babyhood into a healthy, happy little girl. She now followed White Mink in her work, and took part in the games of the children around her. There was nothing she enjoyed

so much as a paddle on the river with her foster-father and Big Moose, but such treats came seldom. At such times fresh discoveries were sure to be made. Perhaps it was a bed of flowers, unlike any Swift Fawn had seen before, growing on the river bank. Perhaps it was the song of a strange bird. Best of all was the sight of some wild creature of the prairie, perhaps with its little ones frolicking about it without sense of coming danger.

One morning Three Bears and the two children had been silently floating with the current for some time when Swift Fawn suddenly noticed that Big Moose was reaching down for his bow.

“What do you see, Big Moose?” she whispered. His answer was a scowl at her breaking the silence.

The next instant an arrow sped from his bow into a thicket growing close to the water’s edge. There was a rustle of leaves, and the brush swayed to and fro. Then came stillness.

“You have done well, my son. I saw the creature fall with the death wound in its throat,” said Three Bears, speaking at last. “Quick now! to your paddle.”



“WHAT DO YOU SEE, BIG MOOSE?”

A minute afterwards the canoe had been brought up to the shore. Springing out, Big Moose was quickly lost to sight in the thicket. When he again appeared, he was holding the dead body of a baby deer.

“Oh-h!” cried Swift Fawn pityingly. At this Three Bears scowled harder than his son had done before; the girl was too tender-hearted to suit even the Mandans, the gentlest of all Indians.

“We must have meat,” the brave said chidingly, “and the flesh of the young deer will furnish a good meal. Make your heart stronger, Swift Fawn.”

The little girl looked upon her foster-father as wise in all things. Consequently, when he chided her, she felt sure she deserved it.

“I must not be so foolish,” she said to herself. But as she looked at the baby deer, she could not help thinking of the free and happy life that Big Moose’s arrow had ended.

“Swift Fawn,” she whispered, “a little while ago, you were like me, your namesake, and now you are dead.” But she did not let her foster-father and brother hear her.

As the three made their way homeward, Three Bears told of what he had seen the day

before. He had ridden far out on the prairie with other hunters searching for wild horses. They had traveled many miles inland from the river. Not a tree was in sight, nor the home of any people, nor a trace of the horses they wished to capture—only the tall grass of the prairie in every direction. “I was riding ahead of the others,” Three Bears said to his young listeners. “I noticed that the grass beyond me was cut close to the ground which looked almost like a desert. And then I saw that small mounds of earth had been thrown up—they were near together and more than could be counted by the wisest red man.”

“Like our own village, except that the mounds were so tiny and in such great number,” said Swift Fawn thoughtfully. “Who could have made them?”

“I know,” said Big Moose, turning eagerly towards his father. “You found the home of those troublesome little creatures, the prairie dogs. Where they live, neither horse nor buffalo finds a grazing place that is worth their lingering.”

“So it was, my son,” replied Three Bears. “And as I neared the mounds, I could see the owners, each one sitting up on his hind legs on

the roof of his home, and with head turned towards me. Then, on the instant, sounded angry barks from every throat. The noise was enough to make one's hands cover the ears. I held in my horse and drew my bow. Ugh! with the speed of the lightning each creature fled into his burrow. And in each opening I could see a sharp-pointed nose and two ears. The prairie dogs were still on the look-out."

"Did you stop to have sport with your enemy?" asked Big Moose with laughing eyes.

"It was not worth while. But we could not keep on our way, for a horse might easily break his leg among those mounds. But we had to travel much out of our course; the mounds spread over a bigger stretch of the prairie than my sight could reach."

Nothing more was said for a while. Then Big Moose broke out, "When I become a man I want to kill the fiercest of all prey—the grizzly bear."

At the words the boy drew himself up proudly.

"And if you succeed, then a necklace that all others will envy will be yours." Three Bears smiled as he spoke.



“I have seen only two such necklaces—yours and one other,” said Big Moose thoughtfully. “A necklace made of the grizzly’s teeth! It speaks to all of the brave spirit of the one who earned it.”

Swift Fawn, sitting close to her foster-father, looked admiringly, now at him and then at Big Moose as they talked of the hunt and afterwards of enemies among the tribes of the red men whom Three Bears had fought with. She felt sure that Big Moose would some day be as great a brave as his father.

Onward sped the boat, and all too soon the little girl found herself back in the village where she must spend the rest of the day in helping White Mink in the cornfield.

“It is a noble thing to be a boy,” she often said to herself. “Boys grow up into men and win glory. They do not have the tiresome tasks of girls.”

## THE RESCUE

**S**WIFT Fawn sat on the lodge roof one morning, sorting porcupine quills. She was fast learning to embroider with them and had already made moccasins for Three Bears and Big Moose, of which she was quite proud. The pattern on each pair was neatly worked with colored quills. Her foster-cousin, Red Wing, squatted near her making a reed basket. Swift Fawn's pet dog lay between the children.

“Look over on yonder roof,” said Red Wing in a low tone. There are those two lovers we saw on the river bank in the moonlight last evening. See them smile at each other. The maiden casts her eyes down. Her lover must be saying tender words to her even now in broad day.”

“Let them smile. I like better to watch that group of boys over there by the council house,” replied Swift Fawn. “Don't you see they are practising for a mock battle?”

“Yes—yes—and now they are thrusting at each other with their wooden knives. It is well that the boys can’t work much harm with the knives, for they are not sharp enough.”

“How fearful those tufts of grass on the boys’ heads look!” Swift Fawn laughed as she spoke. “They pretend that each tuft is a scalp. Of course, the best fighters will carry off the most scalps. Oh, and now I see Big Moose is there. Did you see him make that thrust?”

“Swift Fawn! Swift Fawn!” called a voice from the doorway of the lodge.

“Yes, mother.” The little girl at once slid down the side wall and ran towards White Mink. The woman held out a basket.

“Fill this with buffalo berries,” she said. “When you bring them, you and Big Moose shall have the berry pudding you like so well.”

Swift Fawn smiled with delight. “Can Red Wing go with me?” she asked. “It is a long way to go alone.”

“Ugh! Red Wing’s mother wishes her basket finished. Besides, you will pick faster with no one beside you to talk with.”

Swift Fawn, with no thought of teasing because such a thing was impossible for a well-behaved Indian child, started off to do her

foster-mother's bidding. The sun was hot and when she had left the lodges behind her and ran along through the thick grass, she could hear the buzzing of bees among the flowers. Once, a surprised rabbit darted across her path; often she heard the scuttling through the grass of other small creatures. But she did not stop till she reached a clump of bushes where she knew the berries would be plentiful. Then she set to work and picked busily for nearly two hours. Her basket was nearly full when she heard a rustle in the bushes behind her.

"Can it be," thought the child, "that an unfriendly Indian is lurking there? Perhaps it is one of our enemies, the Dahcotas!"

Whenever fear entered Swift Fawn's mind it always took the shape of an Indian enemy. In her fright the child dropped her basket and ran down the knoll on whose top the bushes were growing. They rustled no longer, but Swift Fawn felt that some one or something was following her. With beating heart she turned to look behind her. That very moment the something glided past her— so close that it touched her bare ankles, and curving about, raised itself up before her. It was an immense

snake, one of the most dangerous kind found on the prairies, and its bite meant death.

Swift Fawn stood motionless. Why she could not flee she did not understand. She could only look into the cruel eyes of the snake fixed upon her own. Higher rose its head, with the eyes still upon the frightened girl. They seemed to flash fire that burnt into her brain.

What next? Swift Fawn knew well, yet with those eyes still upon her she could not move.

One moment more, and the poisonous fangs would have entered the child's flesh when, suddenly, a big stone came flying through the air, striking the snake's coiled body with great force. Bruised by the blow and startled at the suddenness of the attack, it slunk off through the grass.

"Just in time!"

It was the voice of Big Moose who now came running to Swift Fawn's side. The Indian lad's face was full of sympathy.

"I came near being too late," he added.

Swift Fawn turned her head so that Big Moose should not see her eyes, for now that the danger was over they had filled with tears.

“Where-did-you-come-from?” she stammered at last.

Big Moose had been off with his father hunting wild horses. When he reached home his mother told him where his foster-sister had gone and he had decided to surprise her. He had said to himself, “I will give her a little scare.” He had reached the brush and was about to jump out in front of Swift Fawn just as she ran down the slope.

All the rest had happened in a few seconds, while he himself was looking about for a big stone. But the time had seemed nearly endless to the frightened girl.

“Oh dear, my berries! I have left them behind,” she suddenly cried. “What will mother say? And besides, we shall now have no pudding?”

The word pudding interested Big Moose.

“I will get some of the boys to go back with me. We can have sport routing the enemy,” he said consolingly.

“Big Moose is the best brother in the world,” thought Swift Fawn as the two sped along the homeward path. When they reached the lodge White Mink was standing in the doorway watching for her little berry picker.



THE SERPENT GAVE A LONG, WICKED HISS.

## THE YOUNG HUNTER

**S**WIFT FAWN sat cross-legged in the sunlight outside the lodge watching her foster-mother. The woman was embroidering a pair of leggings for her husband. She would finish her work by adding a fringe of hair cut from the scalps of enemies which Three Bears had taken at great risk to his life. He was rightly held to be one of the bravest warriors of the tribe.

Swift Fawn was thinking of her father's brave deeds now.

"Though he is not a chief, he is called often to the councils," she said, speaking half to herself.

"And well he may be," White Mink returned with pride. "He is wise as few others. Ah! it pleases me to look upon him when he wraps his grandest robe about him, covers his hair with his horned head-dress and walks forth to the council house."

"It almost makes me tremble to see him then," said the little girl. "He looks so fearful,



it scarcely seems as if he could be my father, and the horns reach up from their bed of ermine just as they grow on the head of a buffalo."

White Mink looked kindly at the child who did not dream she was not the Indian woman's own little daughter.

"You must not speak that word, tremble," she said softly. "It is a bad word. When you look on your father in his council robes, think only how noble he appears, and of the honor he has won."

"Why is there always ermine in such a head-dress?" asked the child.

Before White Mink could answer, she continued: "Why, of course I know. It is because the ermine is so scarce in the land. Its fur is therefore the most precious. Only a great brave can wear it."

"You have spoken rightly. But here comes Big Moose. He is after his bow and arrows."

"I have just seen two hawks fishing for food in the river," said the boy. He had slipped into the lodge and now stood beside his mother, weapons in hand, before she had scarcely finished speaking.

"Take my arrow case and follow me," he commanded Swift Fawn.

The little girl had been well named. She was one of the swiftest runners among all the children; no boy could beat her springing to her feet. She took the outstretched quiver and followed Big Moose.

Without a sound the two sped along the well-beaten trail leading to the river. As Big Moose ran, his eyes were bent towards the sky. It might be that the hawks had already caught enough fish and, resting among the brush on the river bank, had eaten their fill and flown away. Would he be too late? Had they already flown far? He wondered, as he watched for their possible flight.

Softly the children moved as all Indians are taught to do. But now, almost with held breath, and more slowly so that the air might not be greatly disturbed, they moved as they neared the river.

Hark! Big Moose's quick ears detected the rustling of wings in a tree close by. A bird was, without doubt, preparing for flight.

"Lie low," the boy's hand signaled to his companion, and Swift Fawn was instantly lost to sight in the deep grass.

The next instant a large black hawk had risen in the air; the same moment an arrow



"THE HAWK IS MINE."

sped from Big Moose's bow. There was a whir of wings, followed by the fall to the earth of the longed-for prey.

"The hawk is mine!" cried the young hunter.

At the sound of the fall Swift Fawn had sprung to the side of her foster-brother who, not satisfied, was now searching the sky to discover whether the bird's companion was in sight. But it must have fled before his return.

"Our father will be pleased," said the little girl as Big Moose, hopeless of gaining any other prey, went to pick up the hawk he had killed. "He wished for more hawk feathers because he has just broken two of those in his head-dress."

"These are long ones," said the boy, examining his prey. "A handsomer hawk I never saw. When these feathers wave above our father's head, he will be noble to look upon."

"Sometime," said Swift Fawn wistfully, "when you are a man, perhaps you will bring home a war eagle's feathers. Only our chief and a few other men in the village wear eagles' feathers."

"The hardest of all birds to bring down—they soar high; and besides, they seldom are seen near the home of men."



"BIG MOOSE, I BEG YOU TO JOIN THE  
RAIN-MAKERS."

## THE RAIN MAKERS

**W**HITE MINK looked sad. So did the rest of the women gathered about her in the lodge. So did Swift Fawn and the other little girls. Some of the women were actually crying.

“No Green Corn Festival this year!” sobbed one.

“No Green Corn Festival,” repeated the others, many of them choking between the words.

The children who were not already weeping now burst into tears. Swift Fawn shook with grief. Of all the good times in the year, none was so joyous as the Green Corn Festival which followed the gathering in of the harvest. At that time everyone ate his fill of the fresh, delicious grain. Feast followed feast. Then, too, there were dances by the men and dances by the women; games and story telling and pranks played on each other by old and young. No work then, only happy faces and merry words.

And now it looked as if there could not be a festival at all because of the long, long drought, and the drying up of the grain before it could ripen.

Swift Fawn, for the first time, had her own little patch of corn this summer. Patiently she had worked, often with aching back and blistered hands. She had herself dug up the ground with a hoe her mother had made her out of an elk's shoulder blade, and planted the grain with loving care. How eagerly she had watched for the shoots to burst through the soil. At first, she could see the stalks growing higher and higher with each day's sun. Then the rains fell often, and there were heavy dews to give their help. But, after a while, the rains came no longer, and the sun's rays became cruelly hot as they beat down through the clear, dry air. The stalks began to lose the freshness of their color. Each new morning Swift Fawn sped to her cornfield only to find more and more yellow where only green should be seen. Day after day there was no speck of cloud in all the vast blue sky.

As with Swift Fawn's little patch, so it was with all the others in the village. The women were now hopeless. There would be little corn

for the people to eat through the long months of winter; no happy autumn festival unless—yes, there was one hope left.

“We have begged our lords again and again to pray for the rain,” sadly spoke one old squaw when there was a lull in the weeping. “They only say, ‘be patient, be patient. The Great Spirit may already be about to send the rain, and we must not be over anxious.’”

“But still the signs are lacking,” broke in White Mink, “and the corn is now withered almost beyond help.”

“We must not stop in our begging, however,” said another of the younger women. “We must tire the men by our tears and cries till they seek the medicine men and all send up their voices to the Great Father.”

The women rose to take up the work of the day, and the children left the lodge to seek shady places for play. Swift Fawn did not join them, but walked slowly down towards the center of the village where she had seen Big Moose watching his father and some other braves play the moccasin game.

“Everyone helps,” thought the little girl. “As soon as Big Moose leaves the game I will



ask him to pray for my corn. Boys must be able to help as well as men."

It happened that Big Moose was already on his way home. As Swift Fawn came towards him he noticed that her eyes were swollen from crying. Like all Indians, he hated women's tears, but his heart was ever tender towards his pretty little foster-sister.

She ran up to him now, but did not get courage to tell what she wished till the two had returned to the lodge. Then, drawing him over to one corner, she whispered brokenly, "Big Moose, I beg you to join the rain makers."

"I am only a boy," he replied with a half laugh. "I can not help much. But"—he stopped for a moment and looked at Swift Fawn kindly—"I will do my best. And now I will tell you something to make you happy."

"Only one thing could do that,—the coming of rain," the little girl said sadly.

"But there has been a council among the chiefs and medicine men. Tomorrow the medicine men will gather in the council-house with all their mysteries about them. A fire will be kindled; the wild sage and other sweet-smelling herbs will be burnt, that the savory

odors may rise to the Great Spirit. Surely he will be pleased to grant their prayers."

Swift Fawn's face lighted. "Our mother has just gone to look once more at her cornfield. I must run to tell her the good news," she cried, and went flying out of the lodge and along the path like the swift wind of autumn.

Early the next morning the medicine men gathered in the council-house to work their charms. A dozen or so of the most promising youths in the village had been chosen to assist them. While the rest remained inside singing, burning sweet herbs, and praying, one of the young men took his place on the lodge roof. There, from dawn to sunset, he stood counting over his mystery beads and calling to the Great Spirit for the needed rain. A crowd of men and women, boys and girls, were gathered below him around the lodge, each one praying that the youth's cries might reach up through the heavens to the ears of the Great Father.

Night came, and not a cloud had appeared in the sky. The young man came down from his post, ashamed, and hating to meet the eyes of the people. Henceforth, he felt, he would be looked upon as fit only for the com-

pany of women and dogs. He had failed to bring rain!

“The youth’s medicine was not good,” Three Bears said to another brave, as he turned homeward.

Swift Fawn, following with White Mink, heard the words. “Can that young man never become a medicine man nor hold any high place, no matter how wise he may afterwards show himself?” the little girl whispered.

“Never,” was the answer. “He has been given a test and he has failed.”

The next morning’s sun rose bright and hot, and the sky was still cloudless. This morning it fell to the lot of The Arrow to take his place on the roof of the council-house and send up loud prayers, while the medicine men and their helpers continued their charms inside. The Arrow was a noble-looking youth, and was greatly admired by the maidens of the tribe. He wore on his head the skin of a raven, the bird that soars above the clouds. On his arm he bore a shield with pictures of chains of lightning burned into its surface. Hour after hour he now cried out to the winds to help him; he called on the spirits of darkness and light to send rain to the grieving Mandans.

Swift Fawn pressed forward in the crowd of villagers gathered about the lodge as on the day before. Sometimes she held her breath at the noble words of the youth. Surely he would not cry in vain!

The middle of the afternoon was reached, with never a change in the sky. Then from the west, a breeze stirred the hot air. And lo! in the sky the faintest haze appeared.

“It comes! it comes!” cried one of the watchers to another. “The Arrow has broken the spell. The rain is on its way to visit our harvest fields.”

Before night the breeze had become wind; black clouds darkened the sky, and before another morning dawned, the hoped-for rain was falling.

No one in the village was happier than Swift Fawn as she joined in the shouts of gladness that went up from the people. And no one was more pleased than she when wreaths were placed upon The Arrow's head and eagles' feathers were presented to him. Henceforth he would take his place among the medicine men and be one of the most honored of the tribe.

## THE DANDY.

**I**T WAS a cool evening in autumn. The whole household were gathered around the fireside, telling stories, singing songs, and playing pranks on each other. When, from time to time, some brave "poked fun" at one of his friends, the company joined in a hearty laugh that filled the lodge. Everyone there was ready to enjoy the smallest joke.

Now and then the fathers patted their babies, and the young lovers, squatting in dark corners, caressed their sweethearts.

Swift Fawn, with Red Wing beside her, was for a long time content to listen to the talk of the grown-ups. She was a timid child, notwithstanding White Mink's training; so now she gave close attention when Three Bears happened to speak of the safety of the village from attack.

"We need fear no enemy here," he was saying. "Our home was carefully chosen by our fathers. The river, turning sharply, shuts us in on two sides. And on the third and last side,

we are well protected by the wall of timber three times the height of our tallest men."

"Yet we must ever be watchful of the wall," remarked one of the old men. "Timber sometimes rots, and then becomes useless, like ourselves when many years have passed over our heads." The old man ended with a sigh.

"After the buffalo hunts are over, we must look to the timber, to see if the picket needs to be made new anywhere," said another brave. "There must be no place through which even one of the enemy can creep upon us unawares."

The talk drifted to the game which the hunters were about to seek, to get in the winter's supply of meat. Swift Fawn and Red Wing began to whisper together.

"I saw Sly Beaver walking past the lodge this morning," Swift Fawn told her friend. "He wore chains and was newly painted, for no purpose except to show himself. I do not care for him; he is a dandy and will never bring honor to our people."

"I saw him too. My big sister and I were on our way to gather late squashes."

"Your sister seems to like Sly Beaver. I have seen her talking with him on the lodge-

roof in the evening.” Swift Fawn spoke scornfully.

“Yes-s.” The answer came regretfully. “This morning her eyes showed her liking. She looked up at the dandy with admiring eyes. Ugh! I think it shameful for any youth to spend his time greasing his body and painting his face, and then strutting about decorated with his finest ornaments when he should be hunting or joining in the games and councils of the braves.”

“Fine dress has its place, so my mother has told me. Only the men who have won it by noble deeds should care for it.” Swift Fawn’s voice was growing sleepy. “Let’s go to bed,” she added.

A few minutes afterwards the two little girls were singing themselves to the Land of Nod.

## THE BUFFALO HUNT

**S**WIFT FAWN and Red Wing were playing with their dolls outside the lodge. Swift Fawn loved her doll; she had made it herself out of a bone from an antelope. The head was the knobby end of the bone, on which the little girl had painted eyes and mouth with berry juice; a big blot of the paint was put on to represent the nose. This rough doll-baby was dressed in a long robe of elk skin.

“What can we give our children to eat?” asked Red Wing.

“I’ll ask mother for a bit from a boiled beaver’s tail. I like beavers’ tails, don’t you?”

“I think they are even nicer than fresh buffalo tongue.” Red Wing smacked her lips at the thought of both dainties.

The dolls’ meal was finished and Swift Fawn was making believe that her own doll was naughty and must be punished, when Red Wing broke in: “Look, there come the young braves who went out to sight buffaloes.”

They came fast as if with good news.



The little girls jumped up and joined a crowd of other children who were running towards the council-house, around which most of the men in the village were gathered,—some playing games, others looking on, or talking together and smoking.

Red Wing had guessed rightly. An immense herd of buffaloes were feeding on the prairie scarcely thirty miles away. The hunters must prepare at once to overtake them. Bows must be examined, arrows and lances sharpened; and the horses trained for buffalo hunting must be brought in from pasture to be in readiness for an early start on the morrow. There would be plenty of exciting work for the men when once they reached the hunting grounds. And after that, the women must take their turn, dressing and drying the flesh, cleaning the bones, and tanning the skins, for every part of the animal could be used for some purpose.

Before the sun rose next morning the party started out. Swift Fawn and her mother watched them out of sight, for among them was Big Moose. It was to be his first real buffalo hunt. He was now such a big, strong youth and his arrow was wont to fly to its mark so



**"SHE LOOKED UP AT THE DANDY WITH ADMIRING EYES."**

truly that Three Bears had given the promise: "Next time, Big Moose, you shall be one of us."

His mother was proud and glad, yet a little anxious this morning. So was Swift Fawn.

After the hunters rode away the little girl went about her work as usual, and when it was done she tried to amuse herself with her doll. But the day seemed very long, and when at last, the sun set and long shadows fell across the village, she went up on the lodge roof with her mother and other women of the household. All eyes were turned towards the north, where the hunters had bent their way that morning.

Darkness was creeping fast over the prairie when the sound of many hoofs could be heard in the distance. Shortly afterwards the hunting party entered the village, tired and blood-stained; many of them were bruised and had torn leggings.

Swift Fawn and her foster-mother quickly singled out the youth about whom they had been anxiously thinking all day. Ah! there he was, riding his horse like a young chief. He looked as if fresh for a hunt, not worn out at the end of one.

"My brave, handsome brother!" thought Swift Fawn. "I had no need to fear for him."

Some of the horses moved more slowly than the rest, for they were bringing home the spoils of the chase which had been loaded on low, roughly-made carts.

That evening there was great rejoicing in the village. When the men had eaten they gathered in groups around their fires to go over the story of the day. After leaving the village that morning they had traveled as fast as their fleet horses could carry them in the direction agreed upon. There was never a stop till they neared a small bluff which shut out the plain beyond from sight.

“Slow,” signaled the leader, for it was only a short distance beyond the bluff that the herd had been sighted the day before. The earth must not now be jarred by the tramp of horses lest the buffaloes be startled.

The leader of the party, and the first to reach the bluff, got down from his horse and crept softly up the slope to the summit. A goodly sight was before him—scarcely a half-mile away was a herd of buffaloes. The prairie was so blackened by their presence that there must have been several hundreds of the animals. The hunter’s keen eyes perceived even

at that distance that the buffaloes were grazing quietly, with no fear of enemies.

By this time others of the party had followed their leader, Three Bears and his son among them.

“Toss the feather,” ordered the leader, turning to Big Moose who lost no time in obeying. Graceful as a bird himself as he stood alert on the summit of the bluff, he wafted a feather into the air to discover the course of the wind.

The leader, watching closely, said, “We can move directly forwards, and the herd will not scent us.”

“Big Moose, eager and excited, attended carefully while the leader now gave directions as to the way in which the chase must be carried on. Even the waiting horses seemed to understand what was to happen, for they pricked up their ears and pawed the earth impatiently.

With bow in hand and arrow-case within easy reach, the hunters remounted their restless steeds and the party moved slowly down the slope and over the plain towards their prey.

Big Moose had to strain to hold in his horse. He felt the animal's body tremble with ex-

citement. Its ears were held high; its eyes bulged its breath came hard and fast.

Big Moose himself kept his eyes fastened on the leader. The instant the herd discovered the approach—then the signal to charge would be given.

Ah! the moment has come. The buffaloes have become roused. They are wheeling about in one great, moving mass. And now the horses are flying over the prairie like a sudden hurricane; the air is filled with the dust of pounding hoofs.

Each man for himself now! Big Moose no longer thinks—he simply feels—as he dashes into the angry herd plunging wildly about him in all directions. He must choose some particular one among them, a fat cow if possible, and his arrows must be sent with the speed of the wind. They will, if he aims rightly, enter the cow's heart or throat. His eyes are keen, his hand steady, as he finds his mark and comes close. Leaning low on his horse's side, he sends an arrow with force—tremendous force, greater than he would have dreamed possible.

And lo, he has won! The buffalo leaps into the air, then falls to the ground with a fierce,

angry snort. Blood pours from her mouth. One long, hard gasp, and her life is over.

But Big Moose is himself in danger, for he finds himself in the midst of a pack of enraged animals. Before he can catch at any opening for his horse, it is lifted on the horns of a large bull, and the youth is thrown to the ground half-stunned. Buffaloes, buffaloes everywhere! The furious creatures are closing in upon him.

Even at this fearful moment, the youth thinks clearly; in the small space now remaining, he sets an arrow in his bow and speeds it into the heart of a frightful-looking bull that rises up in front of him with open mouth, and shaking his long mane with fury.

The shot tells, as does a spear thrust into the next buffalo now advancing upon him. But still others are closing in—too many for any single hunter—when suddenly they scatter to right and left as Three Bears with several others of the party dash in among them.

They have come just in time—Big Moose stands before them, safe and unharmed, to be spoken of at every fireside in the evening as the hero of the day.

When Swift Fawn had heard the story of Big Moose's bravery she drew a long sigh of



THE FURIOUS CREATURE CAME CHARGING UPON HIM.



gladness and relief. How proud and happy he looked as he stood there in the firelight! How noble, in fact, were all the hunters to Swift Fawn's thinking.

"I am glad that I am a child of the Mandans," she said to herself. "They were not only the first people on the earth, but they must be the best."

## THE DISCOVERY

**L**ITTLE one, come to my side." As White Mink spoke, her beautiful eyes were full of tender love.

Swift Fawn was alone with her in the lodge. The men had left early on another buffalo hunt; the children were outdoors playing; while the women, save White Mink, were busy drying buffalo meat, procured in the last hunt, in the sunlight.

At her foster-mother's words Swift Fawn looked up from her corner. She was working in the last reed of a pretty red and white basket. One minute more and it would be finished.

"Quick, my loved one," said White Mink impatiently.

The little girl delayed no longer; springing to her feet she ran over to the woman.

"I have something to tell you." White Mink's voice was sad, and the words seemed to come hard.

Swift Fawn felt a sudden sense of coming trouble. She did not speak but her eyes said: "What is it? Tell me quickly."

"Last night, my precious Swift Fawn," the woman continued in a low, solemn voice, "I had a dream which the Great Spirit must have sent me. I saw a beautiful fawn enter the lodge. Swiftly it came to the bedside where I lay. It stopped for a moment beside me. Then it moved on, circling the lodge and passing out into the night."

"I will not leave you; no, never," broke in the little girl, nestling close to White Mink's side. "Do not think it, mother. And where could I go! There is no place save this home you and I have always known."

"Ah! but the Great Spirit may will it so, my child and then—"

White Mink's voice broke as the most tender white mother's would have done at the thought of losing her little one.

"But I have not told you all," she continued after a moment. "When, in my dream, the fawn stopped at my bedside, it turned its eyes complainingly from me to the place beneath where I have kept a certain basket hidden from your eyes. Here it is."

White Mink drew towards her a basket which Swift Fawn had never seen before. Opening it, the woman slowly drew out a pair of baby's socks. Bright silken threads were woven daintily through soft wool.

White Mink next spread before the child's wondering eyes a baby's dress of delicate cambric, tucked and embroidered with flowers.

"Yes, I understand, my child. You have always wondered that you were so fair, more so than the fairest among our people. And I have told you, when you spoke of it, to remember that the Mandans differ, one from another. Look! With the coat of tan given you by the summer sunshine, you are not far different from me."

The woman's voice was wistful.

"Where-did-they-come-from?" stammered Swift Fawn. Never among the red people had she seen garments such as these.

"They are yours, my dear one. When you came to me you wore them. Perhaps twelve moons had then passed over your head. You are not of the Mandans except as our love has made you ours. You are a child of the white race."

Swift Fawn gasped. Her heart beat fast. A queer lump seemed to fill her throat. She looked with blinking eyes at her hands; then at her feet which were bare.

“And so—and so— my Swift Fawn,” she continued, “you have grown up as mine—my very, very own. Three Bears discovered you, a little foundling, on the great prairie and brought you to me.”

“I tell you all this now because of my dream. I had to tell you. And I give this into your keeping.”

The woman handed one of the socks to Swift Fawn.

“Keep it with you always. It is to help you. So something within has said to me.” With these words White Mink touched her heart.

“Now go to play, my little one, I have spoken.”

Never, thought the child, had White Mink looked so beautiful as now.

“Mother,” she said. That was all. But she laid her cheek for a moment against that of the red woman’s. Then she went out, dazed, into the sunlight, to think over what she had just heard.

