

Chapter 4

Eloping

Mamalachgook did not resist. Rebecca could feel his left hand move across her shoulder blade to the middle of her back. His right hand cradled her head gently. He pressed her to him until her breasts touched her chest. As Mamalachgook stroked her back with his hand, she tingled as the blood rushed through her body. The pleasure of Mamalachgook's lips transformed her to a state of euphoria. Rebecca was aware of nothing else but Mamalachgook and the sweet sensation of pleasure, which pulsed through her. Hers was an experience like none she ever had felt before. Rebecca found her hands running up and down the hard muscles of Mamalachgook's back. She instinctively felt that this man had the power to protect her – to keep her safe.

As desire swelled within her, a sense of shame suddenly gripped her. What was she doing? What was it she wanted to do? The strange arousal of her private most being shocked her. She pushed herself away from Mamalachgook, panting heavily.

"I, I ... well it's the first time I," Rebecca tried to speak.

She looked at Mamalachgook. He looked as though he were flushed, in spite of the bronze tone of his body. Strangely enough, Rebecca noticed he was panting. *Did she have the same effect on him as he had on her?* The thought that she might have such power over him filled her with pride. Mamalachgook now held her by the hands. Her fingers could feel his calloused palms.

"I liked that very much," Mamalachgook spoke.

"As did I," Rebecca confessed. Mamalachgook said nothing more. Instead he began to pull Rebecca toward him again. She began to float toward him, mesmerized by those dark native eyes. The feeling of shame took over this time. She pulled away.

"No, Mamalachgook, it's not right," she protested.

"What's not right?" Mamalachgook responded.

"To kiss each other, to be intimate as we just were," Rebecca explained.

"Why?" The single word question stung Rebecca.

"My mother taught me it is not right to kiss a man unless I be betrothed to him."

"What does this 'betrothed' mean?" "It means that he has asked me to marry him and I have accepted. That we have entered an engagement period." Rebecca explained.

"You are right. You are promised to another." Mamalachgook answered, as he releases her hands and straightened up.

Still feeling the bliss of the past few moments, Rebecca blurted out: "But if I were to marry you..."

"What are you talking about? I cannot take you as a wife. I must take you to the sachem. Come, let's go." Mamalachgook responded gruffly taking Rebecca by the upper arm and shoving her in the direction of their destination.

Rebecca picked up her bundle and turned toward the trail. Mamalachgook's sudden roughness convinced her – *he wanted her*. Intuitively, Rebecca felt her destiny lay with this man. As she walked along the trail she began to visualize what a life with Mamalachgook might entail. *Could she marry him? How? Would it be an Indian ceremony or a proper church wedding? No, she couldn't marry him. He was a heathen. Surely, God would not bless the union of a Christian and a nonbeliever.*

Her thoughts then turned to what lay ahead. *What would become of her if Mamalachgook delivered her to the sachem? Would he torture her until she submitted to him? Then what? Would she be forced to bear his children?* Rebecca looked back at Mamalachgook. Right now, the view behind looked infinitely more desirable than what she envisioned ahead. The trail widened for a time and Mamalachgook came up abreast of her. Rebecca reached over and took his hand.

"Mamalachgook," she began.

"Yes?"

"Why don't we become betrothed?" Rebecca suggested.

"You mean that I should take you as my wife?"

Mamalachgook responded. Rebecca could feel the palm of his hand began to sweat. She squeezed it to reassure him.

"Well we would have to have a proper period of engagement," Rebecca continued.

Mamalachgook stared at her sternly but remained silent. Then he turned back and stared blankly down the trail as though wishing to ignore the words he'd just heard.

"Am I an unpleasant companion?" Rebecca probed.

"No."

"Ugly?"

"No."

"Do you like me?"

"Very much."

"Then why not ask me?"

"Ask you what?"

"If I will marry you?"

"Because I must do my duty to my sachem, or I cannot return to my people." Mamalachgook explained.

"We could go to Fort Pitt – just the two of us. After a proper engagement we could get married by a minister there."

Rebecca, although uncertain whether she should really marry Mamalachgook, hoped she could convince him to abandon the journey they now undertook. She decided to use her feminine wiles to help convince Mamalachgook. Stopping, she tugged on his hand. When Mamalachgook turned to face her, Rebecca threw both her arms around his neck and pulled him to her kissing him hard on the lips. As Rebecca released her grip, Mamalachgook staggered back and nearly fell. Then he put one hand to his head in a thoughtful gesture.

"I suppose I could ask the sachem if I could take you for my wife," he said.

"Would you?" Rebecca responded, then quickly kissed him again as though trying to seal that thought in his head.

"Alright, we shall return to the village." Mamalachgook answered.

The trip back to the village seemed to take no time at all. Along the way back, Mamalachgook talked of nature and hunting. He spoke the Lenape names for the plants and birds they encountered and Rebecca did her best to repeat the words after him. Mamalachgook laughed as Rebecca butchered his language; but seemed not at all offended.

The sun had disappeared into the trees by the time they came upon the camp. At the outskirts Rebecca could see the squaws busy with preparing the evening meal and a group of men were erecting a new hut. By the time they had gone twenty paces within the camp, however, they had drawn a crowd of curious spectators. Ahead, the Chief was coming out of his hut, apparently to see what the commotion was about. When the chief glanced their direction his face scowled and pace quickened. He made straight for Mamalachgook.

"Why have you returned with the woman?" he asked.

"I would like to take her as my own." Mamalachgook answered.

"And what do you propose to give me for her?" the chief asked.

"I have some 12 beaver skins from the hunt last winter," Mamalachgook answered.