

## **KATY DEPOT**

Silke led *Lakna'*, her line-back dun gelding, down the cleated ramp from the stock car of the east bound Santa Fe train from Gainesville. Riley was right behind her with Duke, his blood bay, almost black, gelding.

Red Wolf waited for them at the bottom of the ramp with the railroad hostler.

“Unnn...Train on time,” said Red Wolf.

“Let’s water the boys an’ then go over an’ take a gander at that express car,” commented Silke.

“I’ll take ‘em to water, ma’am. Won’t be no trouble...no trouble atall,” offered the young, cotton-headed, KATY employee.”

“Much obliged,” replied Silke as she flipped him a Morgan silver dollar.

He snatched the coin in the air. “Wow, thankee, ma’am,” the hostler said as he grabbed the two horses reins and led them toward a water trough next to one of the pens.

Red Wolf nodded at her, turned and headed down the tracks to the yard where the wrecked car had been dragged. They trailed along behind him with Bear Dog padding at Silke’s side.

## **SILKE JUSTICE**

The three noticed a young girl in a faded calico dress standing beside what was left of the car as they walked up.

Silke and Riley exchanged glances as they watched her shoulders shake, and then she bent down and laid some handmade paper flowers on the bent frame of the express car.

Silke approached the nine year old girl and gently placed her arm around her shoulder. "What's wrong, honey?"

The blond-headed child turned her tear streaked face up to Silke. "I...had to make flowers out of...of paper...There's just not..." her voice broke as she choked back a sob that racked her frail little body. "...not 'ny real ones this time of...of year," her voice broke as she sniffed and wiped her arm across her running nose.

Silke pulled a clean handkerchief from her possibles bag and handed it to her.

Bear Dog laid down beside the child, with his muzzle between his paws

The little girl wiped her eyes and then blew her nose, looked up again as the tears continued to roll from her big blue eyes and nodded her thanks.

Ken Farmer

“Were you related to one of the men who were in this car?”

Her face scrunched up with emotion as she choked back another sob. “Uh-huh...My...my daddy...my daddy...my daddy....” She broke down again. The tears were coming from her very soul.

She almost collapsed to her knees, but Silke caught her, knelt down and gathered the devastated child to her bosom.

The girl’s tears came afresh, shaking her entire body with sobs as Silke held her tight. Bear Dog placed his muzzle across her little foot and looked up at her.

“I’m so sorry, honey...Let it go...Let it all go,” Silke whispered to her as tears ran down her face as well.

She held her for over five minutes until the little girl couldn’t cry any more. The handkerchief Silke had given her was soaked.

“What’s your name, honey?” Silke asked.

She took a breath. “Elizabeth, but...but my daddy...my daddy called me...’Lizabeth.”

“Was your daddy the express agent?”

## **SILKE JUSTICE**

Lizabeth nodded. "He had been with the railroad since 'fore I was born." She sniffed again. Bear Dog nuzzled her hand and licked it.

Riley stepped over and offered her a dry hanky.

She looked up at the handsome ranger, nodded and tried to smile.

"I...I wanted to bring him real flowers...but..." The tears began to flow again.

Silke eased the girl back at arms length and two sets of blue eyes looked at each other. "Lizabeth, I promise we'll find the men who did this...Hear me? I promise."

"Are you marshals?"

"No, honey, my name is Silke, Silke Justice. I'm a Pinkerton detective working for the railroad...this is Texas Ranger Riley Boston an' that's Lighthorse Red Wolf over there." She pointed at the Chickasaw law officer standing off to the side in respect.

Lizabeth turned back to Silke. "Why did they kill...kill my daddy?...Why?...Why? He never hurt nobody," her voice broke again.

"Because they are evil men, Lizabeth...They're just plain evil."

Ken Farmer

“Mama...Mama says she doesn’t know what we’re gonna do now.” She caught her breath and sobbed again.

Silke and Riley exchanged glances, knowing what each was thinking.

She pulled Lizabeth close to her again and hugged her tight. “Honey, tell her not to worry. God will provide...I promise you. Tell her that, will you?”

She sniffed again and nodded.

“Where is your mama?” Silke asked.

“She’s to home...Cain’t get out of bed...I had to come see papa.” Another sob escaped her chest. “We live just a couple blocks thataway.” She nodded toward the east.

Silke reached in her possibles bag and took out five gold double eagles and started to hand them to her.

Riley touched her shoulder and gave her five more from his pocket.

Silke smiled, wiped the tears from her own eyes, and nodded. She turned back to Lizabeth and handed her the two hundred dollars in gold coins. “Here, baby, you take this to your mama and tell her there will be more coming...You do that, hear?”

## **SILKE JUSTICE**

Lizabeth looked at the ten double eagles, she had to hold with both hands, with a puzzled expression. “I don’t understand.”

Bear Dog nuzzled her again and she knelt down and hugged the black pup. He licked her face, bringing a little smile.

Silke also smiled and kissed the child on the forehead. “You put that money in your pocket and trust in the Lord, honey...He will provide.”

§§§