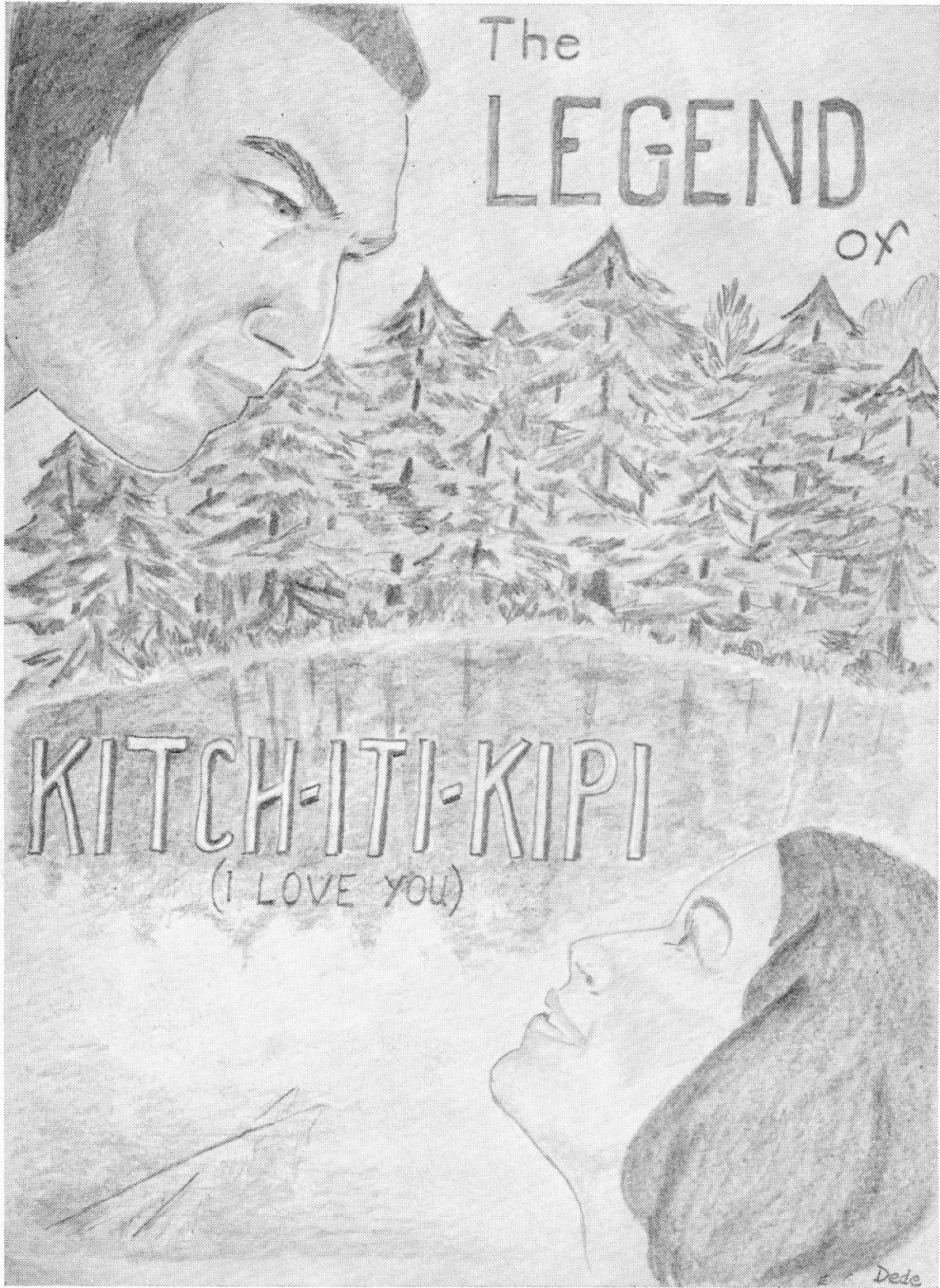


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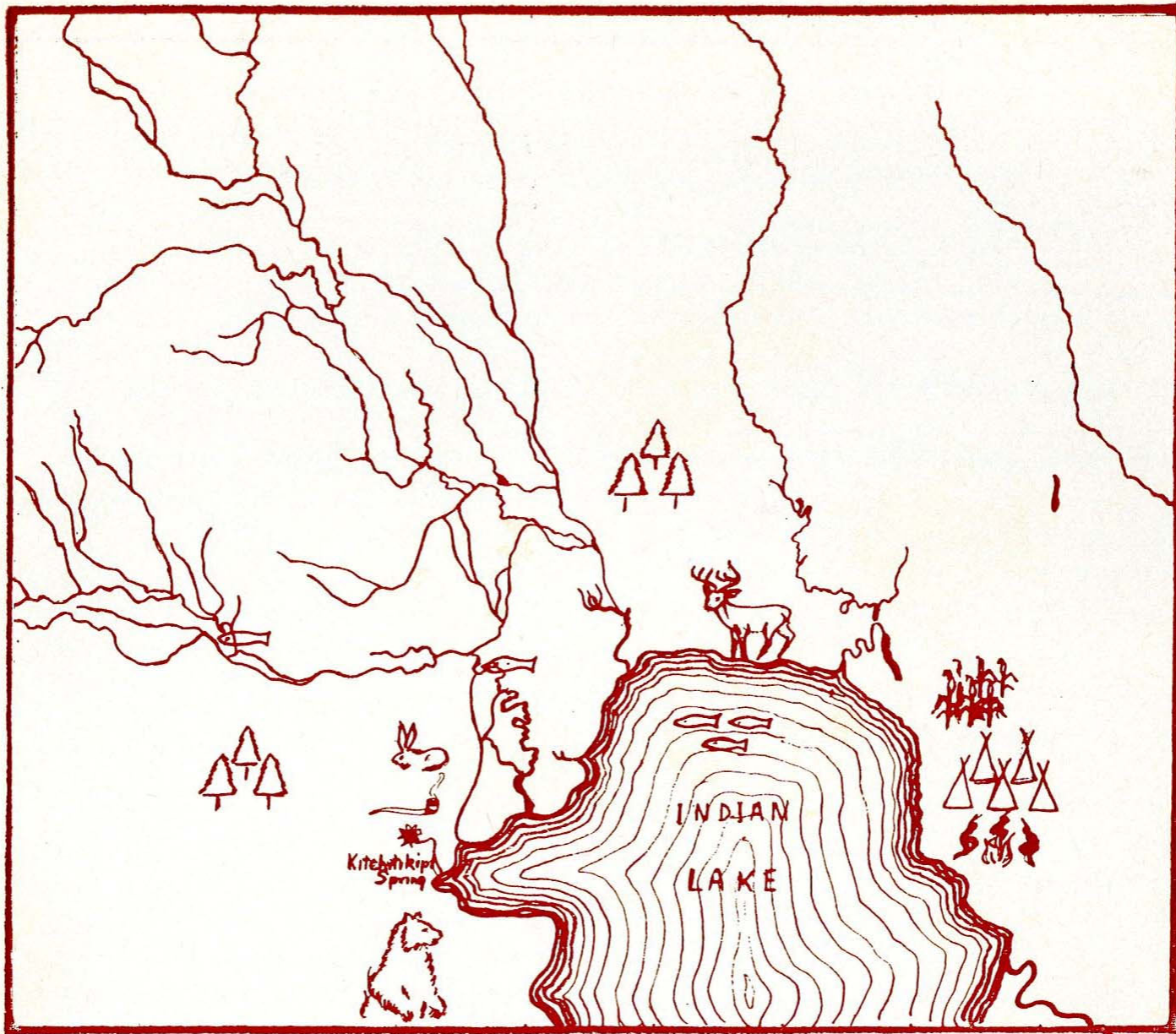
THE LEGEND
OF KITCHITIKIPI



By PEARL SQUIRES

THE LEGEND OF KITCHITIKIPI

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On these shores of Hiawatha, Nature's Eden here below,
Dwelt a tribe of red skinned people, in the ancient long ago.
By the Great White Spirit guided, tall stately like the pine;
Nourished by the forest creatures, bows and arrows fed them fine.
With deer skins they built their teepees, teepees warmed by campfires
bright.

To the rhythm of the tom toms, danced the tribe in pure delight.
They called this the place of many rivers, made of bark their birch
canoes;
Glided softly through the shadows, this was the life they knew.
Beside the river of laughing waters, Indian braves, and chieftains too,
Chanting songs of joy or woe; this was the life of the Chippewa
Indians,
Who dwelt here long ago.



Indian Lake and Kitchitiki Big Spring

I give you nature at its best, where weary souls may come and rest.
Down trails unspoiled by hands of man, I'll lead you through
a wonderland.

And here behold an eventide, and peace within one's soul abides.
Oh, man beset by toil and strife, so weary of the battle Life;
Come cast a line, and catch anew, that faith and courage we once
knew;

When bathed in sunset's afterglow, Heaven's near. We know, we know.

More than sixty years ago, when I was a very little girl, I visited my grandmother at Thompson, Michigan.

Grandmother was a very religious and Christian woman who believed in being kind and charitable to all people. It was well known that no one was ever turned from her door hungry, nor had she ever failed to lend a helping hand to those in need.

One particularly cold night in midwinter, Grandmother had been sitting at her window without a light, as was her habit, gazing out at the winter scene. She saw a dark form lying some distance up the road. She watched for some time but could not see any movement or sign of life. When at last she became uneasy, she bundled up and set out to investigate. It proved to be an old Indian woman known as "Squaw Mary" who had fallen in the snow and was almost dead from exposure. No one knew just how old "Squaw Mary" was, but she was a very old woman who had been living near Thompson as far back as any of the oldest white people could remember. She was admittedly over a hundred years old.

Grandmother half dragged and half carried her into the house where she put her to bed beside the old-fashioned wood stove, covered her with blankets, and made her as comfortable as possible. Mary rested there for that night and part of the next day. When she had regained her strength, Grandmother sent her on her way with a warm meal and a kind word. The old woman never forgot Grandmother's kindness and every time she came to Thompson, she would bring her some little gift.

On one of her visits quite a few months later, Mary brought Grandmother an Indian basket full of ripe blueberries. While she was sitting there, Grandmother's youngest son, a handsome boy of 17, came into the room and told his mother he was going swimming with several companions at Indian Lake.

Squaw Mary became very excited and protested that he was too good looking to go near Indian Lake, and that is how I learned the legend of Indian Lake and Kitchitiki Spring

In the year 1710, Robin stepped from the teepee of Moonbeam and Firefly into the hushed silence of a June morning in quest of a name for the new-born son of Moonbeam and Firefly. Never had Robin beheld so perfect a dawn, and never had she beheld so perfect and beautiful a papoose.

The glassy, calm waters of Indian Lake caught the first pink flush of the rising sun, casting a mysterious beauty over the scenes that lay before the eyes of Robin and, like a mirror, magnified its glory. Tiny breakers edged with foam scarcely broke the calm surface of the water's edge, rolled gently up the beach at her feet, and lapsed slowly back in a movement which seemed to caress the sands upon the shore.

Robin heard the twittering of the awakening birds in the branches of the trees above her head, and breathed deeply of the pure, sweet, dew-washed morning air. Enthralled by the overpowering beauty of the scene, Robin idly gazed along the sands to where they nearly disappeared under overhanging branches of cedar and spruce. There, on the narrow shore, stood a very young eagle. Not a handsome bird as yet — no match for the beautiful perfection of the young son of Moonbeam. But what the young eagle lacked in beauty, he made up in clumsy dignity as he stalked his sparsely-feathered young body proudly up the white sands of the shore. Robin chuckled to herself and said, "You will soon grow into a bird of distinction."

She eagerly entered the teepee to tell the waiting mother that her son would henceforth be called "Young Eagle." Though Robin might have called him "Laughing Water" or "Smiling Sun," she felt sure that Young Eagle was a more fitting name. She seemed to sense that just as the eagle would be outstanding among the bird species, so would Young Eagle be outstanding among the human species.

Robin placed the squirming bundle into the eager arms of Moonbeam who gazed with wonder into the face of her first-born son; the baby looked back, unblinkingly, with as much interest, and Moonbeam would have sworn that the eyes of Young Eagle smiled. Something stirred in the heart of Moonbeam as she clasped Young Eagle close to her breast for his breakfast.

Robin laughed as she saw Young Eagle grab eagerly for his meal. "I should have called him 'Hungry Trout'," she said, as she busied herself with the morning meal. "He is a fine baby, Robin," Moonbeam said, "quite the nicest baby I have ever seen." Moonbeam held his small body close as she gazed fondly upon him. "I love him, Robin," she said. "I love him very much!"

All through his babyhood, Young Eagle grew and cooed and

laughed playfully at everyone and everything, winning the hearts of the whole village. No teepee in all the tribe held so happy and handsome a papoose as Young Eagle.

As he grew older he was always pleasing to look upon, though he was loved as much for his happy smile and good nature as he was for his perfection of face and form.

Near the end of Young Eagle's second year, the tribe was returning to their summer camp upon the northern shore of Indian Lake. As the tribe approached the south side of Kitchitiki Spring, black storm clouds hung low and loud peals of thunder rolled threateningly near, so camp was made upon the hill beside the spring. Sometime later when the storm was about to break in all its fury, Robin came from a teepee in quest of a name — this time for the new-born daughter of Little Beaver and Blue Bird.

Though the light was failing and the shadows were falling and the silence of the night was broken only by the loud claps of thunder that came ever nearer, Robin could see near the water's edge where the glassy waters of the spring caught the last of the day's dying light, approaching through the gloom a very young fawn. Step by step, cautiously it came up until at last it dipped its nose in the refreshingly cool waters of the spring.

It could not be more than a week old and already it had learned the first law of the forest — self-preservation. Without a sound it drank and like a shadow it returned into the black of the forest.

Robin made a chuckling sound that she always made when she was happy, and Robin was happy tonight. She returned to the teepee to tell Blue Bird that her daughter would be named after the baby deer, "Little Fawn."

Then Robin heard a terrible roar and the storm was upon them like an angry giant in full fury uprooting trees and shaking the forest as though it would not leave a single tree standing. Robin listened long into the night to the moaning of the wind and the crashing of trees falling around the teepee, and wondered if at any moment a tree would dash them to bits.

The wind died out suddenly, like someone holding his breath. Soon the rain ceased to fall and at daybreak the only reminder of the terrific battering of wind and rain was the trees torn up by their roots and lying like fallen warriors upon the earth in every direction.

As Robin made ready for the journey across the lake, the day was perfect and warm breezes spoke of the return of summer. While

Robin worked she was watched by Big Buck, the twelve-year-old son of Chief Eagle Feather. It seemed to Robin that Big Buck grew more ugly with each passing summer, if that were possible. His eyes were small and very close together. His pointed nose set between them resembled the beak of the hawk. His cheekbones were high and narrow which made him look as if his face had been pushed up into the center, while his straight black hair grew low on his forehead. All in all, Big Buck was a very ugly Indian to look upon, though he already gave promise of great physical strength.

As the seasons passed, Big Buck grew more and more ugly. On the other hand, Young Eagle grew more and more handsome, until no other young brave in all the village was half so pleasing to look upon.

Young Eagle and Little Fawn were constant playmates all through their childhood. As Little Fawn grew to young womanhood her flower-like beauty blossomed with each day that passed. Her eyes were deep velvet pools that held life's unreadable mystery hidden in their depths. Her hair was blue black and hung in two wide braids to her waist. She was small and slender like a woodland fairy and worshipped Young Eagle, her friend and playmate.

The year Big Buck was twenty-seven, Chief Eagle Feather passed to the happy hunting grounds, and Big Buck became chief of the tribe.

Big Buck had never taken unto himself a squaw and he now showed signs of wanting Little Fawn. This filled Little Fawn with utter fright and sent her flying to the arms of handsome Young Eagle whom she had loved since she could first remember. Little Fawn avoided Big Buck as much as possible, and trembled and grew faint with fright at his approach. Big Buck could not help but see how Little Fawn feared him and this made him very jealous of Young Eagle for whom he began to feel a fierce and terrible hatred. He seemed to think that Young Eagle was his one and only rival — the one thing that stood between him and possession of beautiful Little Fawn.

The summer passed and Big Buck's jealous hatred of Young Eagle soon knew no bounds. He wrapped himself up in his bitterness and hatred, and his ugly thoughts soon were more and more revealed in his already ugly face. Thus the whole tribe came to fear and avoid his hateful presence. In his warped mind he blamed Young Eagle for this also. He came to the point at last where he could not bear the sight of Young Eagle's handsome face. He brooded and nursed his hatred until finally he began to plot ways and means of ridding himself of Young Eagle.

THE LEGEND OF KITCHITIKIPI



Dede

All through the summer the tribe felt the gloom of impending tragedy. Big Buck brooded until late fall and put off going to the winter camp weeks after they should have gone. He was hating with greater and greater intensity and growing more determined to remove Young Eagle from the tribe.

At last came the day when the very smell of snow was in the air. The tribe was growing restless and uneasy. Big Buck could no longer put off making the journey south and gave orders to break camp. He now had a well-laid plan to remove Young Eagle. When the tribe reached the high ground on the south side of Big Spring, he gave orders to make camp for the night. When the camp was quiet and all were peacefully sleeping, Big Buck crept to the teepee of Young Eagle and slew him while he slept.

Then taking Young Eagle's lifeless body in his powerful arms, he bore him to the edge of the Kitchitiki Spring and placed him in his canoe. Without a sound he paddled to the center of the spring, this being the deepest part, and there he slid the still form of his hated rival beneath the waters. Young Eagle's body sank to the bottom of his watery grave, never to return.

Eager to be rid of his awful crime, Big Buck returned to camp and quietly packed Young Eagle's belongings. Returning to his own teepee, early the next morning, he gave orders to be on their way. When someone mentioned that Young Eagle was not starting, Big Buck explained that he had gone out to hunt and would soon catch up with the tribe. He added that they must hurry and be on the march lest they be overtaken by a snow storm that might delay them, perhaps prevent their returning to winter camp miles to the south. This all Indians feared, since a winter spent in the summer teepees would cause them untold suffering.

Big Buck gave the order to go on without Young Eagle. There was nothing Little Fawn could do but obey and follow the tribe without him. As the long days of the very cold and stormy winter passed without a sign of Young Eagle, Little Fawn became just a shadow of her former self. Her heartbreak grew each day, although she made no sound, shed no tears, but buried her sorrow deep in her heart. She spoke not the name of Young Eagle. Always at sunrise Robin would see her looking off into the north. Somewhere in its far frozen depths it held the mystery of her beloved Young Eagle. With all her soul she longed to take wings. wings that would fly her back into that frozen north country in search of her brave.

The winter days and nights were long and bitter cold. Little Fawn wondered if spring would ever come. Each passing week left Little

Fawn more unsmiling and sad. Robin and Moonbeam watched with aching hearts. Well they knew that though Little Fawn moved in their midst, actually she was no more with them than was Young Eagle.

Though no one spoke of the thing that was uppermost in everyone's mind, the thing was there. It was real. A deep gloom had settled in the camp and no one seemed to have the power to lift it. The whole tribe felt it and became restless and uneasy. So at the first signs of Spring, Big Buck gave the order that on the morrow they would break camp and start for their summer home on the north bank of Indian Lake.

Here for no one knew how many centuries the tribe of Big Buck's people had made their summer camp. All the bounties of the Great White Spirit abounded in great plenty and abundance. There were fish, game, and berries in great quantity. Truly, the Great White Spirit had blessed the tribe and people of Chief Eagle Feather.

Now that the hated Young Eagle was no longer around to fan his jealousy, Big Buck's guilty conscience made him avoid Little Fawn. The utter heartbreak of Little Fawn built up its own stone wall of defense against any intruder. Although Big Buck still secretly believed and hoped that in time Little Fawn would forget Young Eagle.

On this last night in the winter camp, Little Fawn could not rest. As she watched the last deep shadows of night giving way to the first faint rays of dawn, her heart lifted for the first time in many seemingly endless months. She was eager for this journey that would bring her back to be near Young Eagle once more. She knew now that there was no Her without Him, and no Him without Her. They belonged together. She knew also that from the beginning of time it had been meant to be.

Little Fawn was the first of the tribe to be ready. Throughout the long journey Little Fawn counted each step, until at last her tiny moccasined feet beat out a rhythm that sang in her tired brain, "nearer, nearer." On the second day of their journey it rained a slow cold drizzle that continued with no let-up for three days and nights. It chilled the marchers to the bone and the spirit of the whole tribe was at the lowest possible ebb. When, on the evening of the third day of rain, the tribe reached the south shore of Kitchitiki Spring, it was with a feeling of joy that they made camp on the same spot where the tribe had been camping each year for no one knew how many moons. Surely since time began this had been the home of this happy and prosperous tribe. So camp was made with the hope that on the



Dede

morrow a clear sky would bless the crossing of Indian Lake to the summer camp on the north bank.

Tomorrow would be Little Fawn's birthday and so Robin and Little Fawn sat before the warming fire in the teepee and talked far into the night. The firelight made a halo around Little Fawn and Robin thought she had never beheld anything so divinely beautiful as Little Fawn as she gazed into the dancing firelight. Robin told her of the night of the big storm, the night of Little Fawn's birth, and told her of the way the wind had torn giant trees up by the roots and crashed them into the depths of the spring as though they were mere sticks. To this day these trees may be seen, preserved by nature against the hands of time. And so Little Fawn told Robin that at daybreak she would visit the spring and see for herself the giants of the forest that had laid in the depths of Kitchitikiipi since the night of her birth.

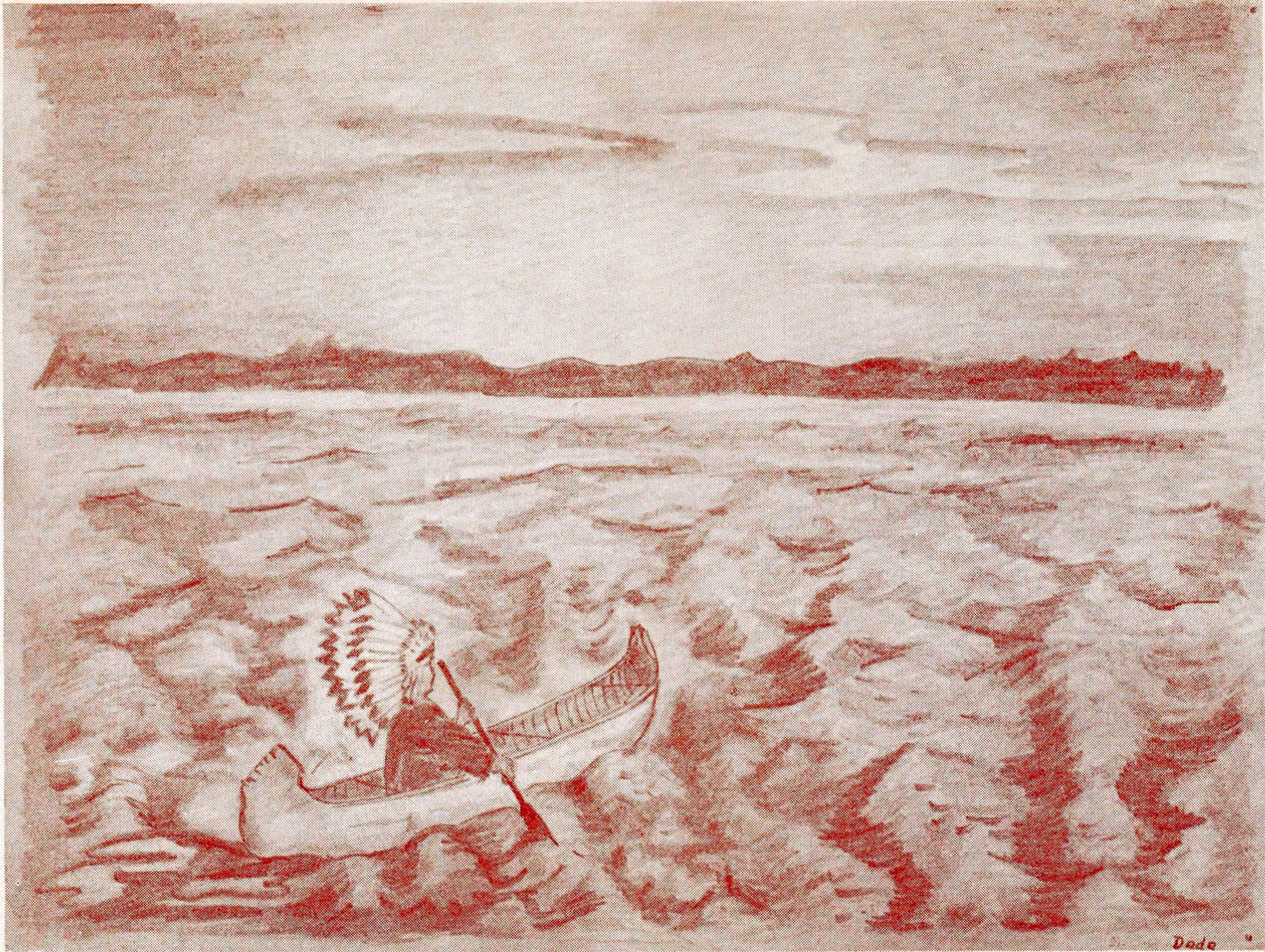
At this spot where Young Eagle had left them, Robin and Little Fawn felt close to him. So they spoke of him. Little Fawn told Robin that she felt sure that soon Young Eagle and she would be together again. There was a light in her eyes as she said this and a peace and joy on her face such as Robin had not seen there in many moons.

After a time Robin slept, while Little Fawn dreamed on, awaiting the promise of a new day. At the first break of day, Little Fawn quietly made her way to the edge of the Big Spring and there on the bank where it had always been, lay her bark canoe made for her by Young Eagle. She slid the canoe afloat upon the waters of the spring and paddled to the center.

The easy stroke of her paddle scarcely made a ripple on the glassy surface of the mirror-like water. Once in the center of the spring, Little Fawn rested her paddle and gazed into the bottom of the waters, so clear that a coin could be clearly seen laying on the bottom one hundred and sixty feet below. Yes, there were the tall trees, just as Robin had said. Funny she had never thought about how they had come to rest there before. She remembered that they had always been there, and now that she knew the story of how and when they came there, she felt strangely related to these uprooted giants of the forest.

As she continued to gaze into the crystal-clear depths of the water, the sands that had been moving on the bottom, stilled and as though a hand of fate had meant it to be, the sun rose from its bed of rest and shone fully down upon the scene. Little Fawn rose to her feet with a moan and with outstretched hands she sank into the cold depths of the spring.

THE LEGEND OF KITCHITIKIPPI



Dede

The slant of the rays of the rising sun had revealed the perfect form of her beloved Young Eagle. Every loved feature was clearly visible. A power stronger than she sent her down, down, straight to the bottom where Young Eagle lay waiting for her.

Big Buck had been fighting a burning desire to visit the spring all night. Just as the sun shone pink in the east he could no longer resist, and came to the spring just as Little Fawn made her frightful discovery. He saw her rise to her feet and heard the echo of her moan. As it reached him across the narrow strip of water, he called her name and with a few mighty strokes of his paddle he sent his canoe flying to the center of the spring. He saw her go straight to Young Eagle never to return. She had not even left a ripple upon the glassy surface so quietly had she slipped beneath the calm surface. Big Buck gazed at the spot where she had come to rest beside the still form of Young Eagle. Young Eagle had won — even in death Young Eagle's handsome face had robbed him of his loved one.

At that moment Big Buck heard a sound at the edge of the spring, and rising from the waters of the spring, he saw a lovely white fawn shake the water from its coat and scamper off into the forest. From that day to this no Indian would ever kill a white deer. It has always been considered bad luck to even see one. The Indian fable told that if you saw a white deer in the woods, the Great White Spirit was ready for you.

Big Buck gazed at the two lovers lying at the bottom of the spring so completely out of his reach forever and his heart was consumed with bitterness and hatred for all things beautiful. From that moment Big Buck set himself against all beauty.

He lived in great bitterness, like a lone wolf, hating and avoiding everyone. About midsummer, in a very black mood, Big Buck went out alone to fish. Robin watched his powerful arms as they dipped the paddle in the water with sure, steady strokes. Each stroke drove his canoe forward faster than ever she had seen a canoe paddled. Standing on the shore Robin watched Big Buck go straight into the sunset's glow and then he was no longer in view. Nor did Big Buck return again to the shores of Indian Lake. The tribe was greatly relieved to be free from his hateful, ugly presence.

But a month later, when Brown Bear, a handsome seventeen-year-old brave, was fishing in sight of the tribe on the shore, so close that they could speak to him, the tribe saw a black cloud suddenly rise from the water at the spot where Brown Bear's canoe was. The water rose in a boiling mass and over-turned the canoe, casting Brown Bear into the lake. The braves on shore heard his call for help and made

haste to go to his assistance. As they drew near, he disappeared beneath the waters of the lake and was not found until several days later when his body floated up near the shore. Brown Bear could easily have swum across the lake, yet he had not once come to the surface. All the tribe wondered at this and at finding two small black marks on his ankles.

A few weeks later three young braves went fishing in a large canoe a short distance from shore. The weather was perfect, the lake was calm, but suddenly, as if a giant hand had swept over them, they were tossed into the water. All were good swimmers and soon two had gained the safety of the over-turned canoe. From this point, they could reach the outstretched hands of the handsomest of the three braves who was still in the water and fighting for his life. They each took hold of a hand and pulled with all their might, but they could not bring him out of the water. Soon he was drawn beneath the water and the two braves had to release their holds upon his hands or drown with him. He did not again come to the surface. He was found the next morning lying on the lake's bottom, nothing holding him, in the same spot where he had gone down. On each ankle again, were two small black marks.

Deep gloom settled down upon the tribe. The horror of what had happened could not be overcome. They decided to move to their winter camp early, so the first week in September when the weather was clear and the lake calm, the whole tribe made ready to cross to the south shore of the lake to start for their winter camp.

The tribe in a body had gone about a quarter of a mile from the shore when a black mist rose from the lake. The lead canoes were caught in a whirlpool of waves and foam. Three canoes were overturned. When all were accounted for, there was one missing, containing a young and handsome brave.

That night the tribe built a great fire and sat in council talking far into the night. At last it was decided that no more would they camp on the shores of Indian Lake for the evil spirit of Big Buck now roamed the waters, and no young or handsome brave would ever again be safe upon the waters of Indian Lake or Indian River. So the tribe never again came to the camp of their Fathers.

It has been half a century since I first heard the legend of Indian Lake and Kitchitikiipi Spring. I have seen this same story prove true over and over again. Always it is a young and handsome man who falls victim to the strange curse of Indian Lake.

Did these young men become victims of Big Buck — or what is

the answer to the strange drowning of young and handsome men?

Only one woman has drowned in the lake and she did so in the company of a handsome man.

Two men have told me of having the frightful experience of fighting for their lives while fishing within a stone's throw of shore. In each case they were caught in a black mist or fog and had the fight of their lives to keep their boat upright. Both of these men managed to save themselves, and each tells the same story of being completely exhausted from his experience. Each of these men was alone in the boat, and it did not occur on the same day. They both swear they will never again fish in Indian Lake.

I have written this story exactly as it was told to me. Can it be the Evil Spirit of Big Buck as Squaw Mary so sincerely believed — or is there some other answer? ? ?