

LEGEND OF THE RED FEATHER

BY MAREN MILLER - "PAINT THE SKY"
CREE TRIBE

Many moons ago there was a mighty Indian tribe. The tribe was led by a wise chief who made sure the members of the tribe were well fed, kind, generous, and respectful of nature. The chief had a young son and daughter who were wise and kind, like their father.

The tribe had a special award that it gave to young braves. It was called simply the "Red Feather". The Red Feather represented spirit and character. It was given to those braves who lived by a moral code and set a good example for others by being courteous, respectful, considerate, and friendly.

One day the chief's son was awarded the Red Feather for a special act of kindness to the tribe. The chief's daughter asked when she might receive a Red Feather too. The chief laughed. The Red Feather, he explained, was only for braves of the tribe. No princess had ever received the Red Feather. The princess felt this was very unfair.

One winter, there was a terrible sickness that spread through the tribe. Everyone was very, very ill except the chief's daughter who, for some reason, had not become sick. While she was tending to her father, he explained to her that none of the braves were well enough to search for a special plant that contained medicine that could make the tribe well. It was up to her to find the plant and bring it back to the tribe. She was their only hope.

The princess set off into the cold, dark woods to find the plant. She walked miles and miles, through deep snow and freezing wind. She saw spooky eyes in the trees and heard the howling of coyotes all around her. She was often scared and hungry, but she knew she must go on. She must find the special plant to help her tribe.

With the help of the Great Spirit and her willingness to sacrifice for others, she found the plant hidden deep in the woods and brought it back to her father the chief. Thanks to her bravery and sacrifice, the tribe was able to make the needed medicine and everyone was cured.

When she awoke the next morning she found a large red feather painted on her tee pee and was given a special Red Feather to wear in her hair. She was the first princess to ever receive such an honor.

Her father gathered all of the tribe around her and said, "We have been foolish to only award the Red Feather to braves. My princess has taught us all that character, spirit and sacrifice are qualities found in all of us, not just braves. From this day forward the Red Feather will be given to any brave or princess who demonstrates these qualities."

And that is the Legend of the Red Feather. Ya-Ta-Hay!