

“Stop struggling. I don’t want to kill you. I just want answers.” Brayden wrestled with the man to hold his head hard without slicing his neck but the man’s hat started to come away and slid across his head. Heavy ropes fell from the cap. Like a shot hitting him, Brayden realized what they were—thick, burgundy braids—and threw the person to the ground in horror. “You’re a woman!”

“Quick-witted aren’t you?”

“I could have killed you,” Brayden shouted as he slapped his forehead in exasperation.

The woman stood and dusted herself off. She scooped up the cap, coiled her braids and shoved the hat on her head. “You didn’t seem so all fired worried about killing me when you thought I was a man.” With arms outstretched, her deep blue eyes glared at him. “Easier to kill me now?” She snorted. “Didn’t think so.” The fiery wench swiveled and stomped off. “I’m leaving.”

“Come back here. I’m not finished with you,” Brayden bellowed. He picked up the pistol and cocked the hammer. “I’ll shoot.”

The brazen female flipped her hand with an apparent wave of dismissal and kept walking.