

# READ THE FIRST CHAPTER FROM BOOK FOUR, *RECOVERY*

## Faythe's Nighttime Journey

No one had seen Faythe leave North Hinkapee that autumn night, other than Sheriff Jones, who sent her off with his guidance, his very long and sharp hunting knife, his pistol, and his advice. Later, he told everyone she had gone south when in fact she had gone north. All her possessions were with her on the Carlins' horse. It was just Faythe and the horse she was riding, off into the dark and cold. She had some money—actually, a lot of money—and she also had her flintlock musket and some clothing in the saddlebags.

Faythe was grateful for the partial moon that night, which brightened the roadway just enough to permit her to canter along at a relatively good pace, but at the same time wasn't so bright that it easily revealed her. Riding at night was dangerous for many reasons, but under the circumstances it was the best plan. There was hope she could reach Sheriff Jones's friends before morning and before prying eyes would see her on the road.

However, gratitude was not Faythe's emotion by any means. She had a strange feeling, almost exhilaration, as the hours of riding went by. Instead of feeling pain and grief after the deaths of her entire family by the ruthless actions of the Downing clan and some of the villagers, she was elated that she had something to do with her life, something that had meaning.

And that something was summed up in one word—"justice." No, it was "revenge," and there was a purity in this emotion. There were no subtleties that perhaps her enemies had some good points that should be taken into account. There was none of that in Faythe's mind. They were bad through to their core. *And they will pay for what they have done*, thought Faythe as she rode.

The villagers were at fault, too. Few of them had helped her, and most of them had turned against

her family in their hour of need. “They can all be damned,” muttered Faythe as she rode along, “because I am coming. I am coming back.”

Faythe had no idea how she would achieve her goals, but she had clarity in her mind, and the confidence of a young person not plagued with the self-doubt that experience and adulthood typically bring. Faythe had no doubt that she would succeed.

Others would tell her that these thoughts were not a good and proper motivation for a life’s work, and especially not for a woman. The thought of someone saying that to Faythe made her tremble with fury. This was all part of the nonsense used to convince women to stay subservient, and it wasn’t going to control her the slightest bit. Indeed, she found herself playing out what she might say to someone who sought to lecture her on what she “should” be doing.

“It’s my life,” said Faythe, out loud in the dark, as her horse huffed in the cold air. “And I am coming!” she said even louder.