

A white woman, chastised by her husband in front of the ranch hands, leaves to rescue an Indian woman wrongly being put to death by the chief. The women heal their wounds and fend for themselves escaping across the prairie.

Speak to My Heart

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/2511.html?s=pdf>

SPEAK TO MY HEART

Copyright © 2006 Du Sharboneau

10-Digit ISBN 1-59113-975-9

13-Digit ISBN 978-1-59113-975-1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Printed in the United States of America.

The characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

Booklocker.com, Inc.
2006

SPEAK TO MY HEART

By

Du Sharboneau

Chapter 14

Driven Away

The cantankerous woman, who had left so suddenly after Sarah's and Alice's return had seen the naked Indian woman running through the yard and into the barn on that cold night.

She had just said her prayers asking the Lord to help get rid of the heathen Indians and to help the new preacher cleanse the town of all the sinners, when she heard a noise. The sounds came from outside the parlor window where she'd had a mat on the floor. When she thought about not even being given a decent room upstairs, it made her mad. But, she reflected, she didn't want to be any closer to that Indian woman than she had to be. No telling what kinds of things were going on upstairs.

"Wicked, wicked," she had muttered to herself as she thought back on the sight she had witnessed. That woman, completely naked, running like the devil was after her.

She had wasted no time in leaving that awful house and had walked clear to Wilson City where she reported the entire goings on to the Director of Indian Affairs. He was

DU SHARBONEAU

aghast, she remembered, and wanted all the details she could give him. "And," the coup de grace, "The little one wears a Indian feather in her hair! Imagine that, a dirty ol' Indian feather in her golden hair!"

"Lord God almighty," was his whispered reply.

He had thanked her repeatedly for her information and told her he'd see that something was done about the problem. He didn't take to Indians, he had told her, and especially the ones thinking they were as good as white folks. There were reservations set up they belonged in.

Big Lizzie answered the door on the day the Director of Indian Affairs made his call. She nervously let him in and asked Dolly to get him some tea, which he declined.

"I want to talk to this Indian woman you've got here," he spoke harshly taking in the room as he spoke.

"Ah don't b'lieve she's here anymore since her husband got killed," Big Lizzie lied while Dolly watched the man's face anxiously.

"Well, the Indians we sent for are on their way," he said, "She doesn't belong here with civilized people. You better find out where she went and let her know we're planning on

SPEAK TO MY HEART

sending her back to the reservation," he hacked coarsely and swallowed.

Big Lizzie walked to the door and opened it. He left without saying anything more.

The mother and daughter stood looking at his back as he rode away.

"She has to go," a quiet voice said from the hall.

They turned and saw Alice standing at the foot of the stairs, her face pale, and her voice weak.

"Where?" asked Big Lizzie.

"I don't know. I'm going to talk to her."

They all went to the kitchen together where Sarah sat talking to Beth. She didn't seem surprised when told the man from the Bureau had been there. They looked at Beth who looked back at them, her look so much older than that of a two-year-old.

It had been Beth who had alerted the family of Sarah and Alice's return. Family members were beginning to heed the talk of this small girl and had gone to the barn to wait. She hadn't been wrong with her simple sayings. Big Lizzie shuddered when she thought of how hard Beth had cried the day Joe rode away. And when told he would be back, she had told her mother, "No."

DU SHARBONEAU

Now Alice stood by the kitchen table looking at Sarah. She could feel Beth waiting for her words, "Put fresh straw in the covered wagon and enough blankets for both of us," she directed the boys without taking her eyes from Sarah and under Big Lizzie's protests and under J.W.'s offer to go in her place which she declined.

Sarah's standing put the departure into motion and the family went along with it.

Sarah showed Big Lizzie where Joe had kept his money indicating that she should use it for food for the family. The cow would stay behind this time, but they took ample butter and cheese to last a while.

Big Lizzie packed flour, beans, a ham, eggs, cooking utensils and two of the soft, white night gowns.

Their clothing was in short supply. One of the dresses was no longer salvageable and had finally been thrown away. Alice had only her one old dress. The other was lost someplace, probably in the cave. Alice didn't even want to think about it. Sarah opened the armoire and pointed to Joe's clothes.

After the two women had selected two pairs of pants, under drawers, and shirts for each of them, the rest were given to the boys. Joe's heavy jacket and old work one along

SPEAK TO MY HEART

with two beat up, wide-brimmed hats were put into the wagon. J.W. put the gun behind the buckboard and looked at Alice, "You know where the bullets are," he said with a half-smile trying to make a joke about their secret supply hidden inside the wagon. But, it was no joke to either of them.

Lizzie fetched two bows and a supply of arrows. "I'm keeping mine," she said, "and I'm going to teach Dolly and Bertie how to use it."

Both Alice and Sarah nodded in agreement and Sarah reached over and pulled Lizzie to her. She looked directly into the girl's eyes and talked to her in her native tongue. Lizzie's eyes didn't leave Sarah's face. "Yes, Aunt Sarah," she said and Sarah finally let her go.

In an hour's time the wagon was ready and remained in back of the house. Nellie had watched the scurry of activity and of the wagon being loaded without saying anything. Even though she'd lived with them for a very short time, she knew by the looks on the faces of this remarkable family what a solemn occasion this was.

Alice and Sarah followed each other down the quiet row of family members lined up outside the back door. Each member was hugged, patted and talked to by both women.

DU SHARBONEAU

Alice had the hardest time saying goodbye to Beth, as did Sarah have a difficult time with the black-haired baby, Sarah.

They finally got into the wagon and rode through the back gate and across the pen where the other horses were kept, and where the calf, now larger than the cow, watched them with its big eyes.

Tommy John ran across the pen and opened the last gate that led into the cornfield and beyond.

Nellie stood at the window and watched the wagon skirt the empty cornfield and disappear over a slight rise of ground. The family hadn't moved from where they'd been standing outside. She hurried to the kitchen and put tea into cups and waited.

Sarah steered the wagon west keeping to the isolated lands beyond Wilson City and into the area referred to as "out yonder" by the townspeople.

Alice remained in back napping on and off, feeling the roughness of the terrain they were on, knowing that Sarah was taking them away from the populated areas. They were on their own again and missing the family who were only a short distance behind them. She suddenly scrambled for the

SPEAK TO MY HEART

back of the wagon and threw up. She had frequent headaches and now this nausea made her realize how much more rest she needed.

In the front, Sarah turned and watched as Alice crawled back to the straw bed sighing deeply as she lay down and covered herself. Thoughts of Joe came to Sarah. She welcomed them. They were her company while her friend rested in the back of the wagon.

Her understanding of the language spoken by the family and others had improved greatly. But she was still hesitant about using it herself, except for a few words she was sure of. The words Joe had spoken privately were lost to her forever, but their meaning would remain, as would the touch of his hand.

Alice joined Sarah on the buckboard as the sun started to set directly in front of them beyond the sparse, rolling hills.

She took the reins from Sarah and motioned for her to get in the back, but Sarah shook her head. It felt good to have Alice beside her as they traveled.

They stopped on a gradual downward slope where dark, jagged rocks stood out like gravestones in the last rays of the setting sun, and settled in a nest of rocks where clumps of grass nourished the horses for the night.

DU SHARBONEAU

Early morning found them beside a large river among bare cottonwoods whose branches rose nearly a hundred feet into the air. Plenty of brittle, dry wood gave them a good fire and a cup of hot coffee with the thick bread that they had toasted on a wire rack after the pot was removed. Butter and plum jam spread thick on the black-streaked bread was a good meal; a meal that would sustain them as they set out on the first day of a journey without a destination.

The idea was to distance themselves from Brownsville and from the family to avoid any confrontation with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, no matter which tribe it had chosen to contact.

Alice had headaches again with a feeling of nausea that lasted for part of the day. Other than that, she could feel her strength returning and enjoyed watching the changing landscape as they slowly moved along.

Each time there had been a downpour the sun would break through again clearing the air and it was on one of these times that the first, faint, hazy outline of mountains could be seen in the distance.

Stands of pines and firs replaced the monotonous landscape of barren, rolling hills. It was a relief to camp beside the smaller creeks and good-smelling trees. They had

SPEAK TO MY HEART

left the river far behind after having deliberately piled stones as though there'd been a campsite at a place where it had been possible to cross just to throw anyone following off their trail. They hoped the rain would have erased their tracks that led away in the other direction.

Both women walked beside the wagon to help relieve the horses as they began an upward climb. These were stronger horses than the ones Alice and Sarah had started with before they had met the family. Those horses, and that wagon, had still not been found since James Harrison had met them on the road to the bridge that morning. Alice felt the hair on the back of her neck rise when she thought about that day.

She and Sarah had been so eager to help the woman with her birth. As they had approached the dilapidated house, Alice felt there was something wrong. It was the only house around, the instructions had been clear, but she remembered how quickly the messenger had left their place.

From nowhere, the bulk of the man had appeared grinning wildly and showing the gun, swinging it back and forth at them. Sarah was the first to move, jumping down from the other side of the wagon. Alice thought if she'd only had her wits about her, she could have whipped the horses to crash into him as he plunged forward in front of the wagon. He

DU SHARBONEAU

had reached Sarah in just a few long strides and had knocked her to the ground with the side of his gun.

He had ordered Alice to pick her up and dismounted to help give Sarah's body a final shove into the back of the wagon as Alice struggled with it. Clearly, he was deranged. Alice had looked right into his face as he grabbed her from the back of the neck and turned her to him. The look was like a painting where the artist has drawn the features and not the expression or the characteristics that show feelings. There was nothing there. He was turned into himself with his thoughts. His eyes suddenly focused on her and he shoved her to the seat of the wagon.

They had ridden in silence. There wasn't a place where Alice could whip the horses around, or onto a crossroad, or into a farm driveway; there was nothing. He rode close, almost touching the wagon, his horse's eyes big, with white showing from fright.

Then they had left the road and followed the ravine to the cave. Sarah had moaned and as Alice turned, something hard hit her. She could only put together the rest of the story from Sarah's telling the family in the quiet of the bedroom a few days after they had returned home.

SPEAK TO MY HEART

But at the time, Alice had remembered being cold and being pulled over rough ground by hands under her arms. Her head had hurt so badly, it was all consuming until she felt pain shooting up from between her legs. He had raped her. Even that didn't seem real. Later she thought he was the one pulling her along and she groaned with anxiety. When she had heard Sarah's voice calling her name, she was afraid for both of them until she heard her say, "A gift." Something nice was happening, not the evil she had lived through and had anticipated again.

Even when she had opened her eyes to total blackness, hearing her friend anxiously calling her name, she knew everything was going to be all right, no matter what she'd endured.

Now to be alive in the fresh air of the mountains and feel the wind blowing against her face were wonderful gifts to her. She thanked God for all the things that meant so much to her. She took deep breaths of the fragrant air. She heard Sarah chuckle beside her and hadn't realized that she'd stopped walking just to breathe the air. She was sure she could do both at once if she'd just put her mind to it. She smiled back at Sarah and gave her a gentle push.

DU SHARBONEAU

There was a fur trapper's cabin on the side of the mountain over-looking a beautiful, blue valley.

The women sat in the wagon talking, taking in the scene, deciding to stay there until after summer, or until the trapper reclaimed the cabin, whichever came first.

They pulled small dead trees from the forest and built an enclosure for the horses against one side of the building. It was an all day job but one that they couldn't delay. Without their horses, they could never make it back home again. A grizzly bear could kill a horse without much trouble. It was incentive enough to make them work all day without stopping to eat.

When the horses were unhitched from the wagon and driven into the rough corral, the women put crosspieces up for the night lashing them with stout rope.

The next day would require more building to make a gate that would be easier to open and close than the maze they had just erected.

"What the hell is that?" came a gruff voice that made Alice and Sarah grab each other as they jumped.

The man almost looked like a bear, covered in fur from the top of his head down to his feet with a mustache and beard

SPEAK TO MY HEART

that covered most of his face. He was hard to distinguish from the wild animals of the woods.

"What the hell is that contraption?" he demanded.

They looked at each other. Alice wanted Sarah to handle the situation. Surely, she could talk to him in her native tongue and he would turn and go and never return.

In the silence, with neither woman speaking, the man stepped forward and peered between the poles.

"Is this 'posed to keep the horses from bein' et by bears?" he asked grabbing a pole and giving a pull. The whole thing came loose and fell in a heap as the horses skittered in their close quarters waiting for the attack that never came.

"We're goin' ta haveta put 'em in the cabin fer the night," he walked to the cabin and lifted a bar opening the door. "Whal, bring 'em on in," he called and went inside.

Alice began clearing away the remaining poles and untangling the rope to indicate to Sarah they were to take the horses inside the cabin. Sarah followed with one of the horses and a puzzled look on her face. She had understood correctly, they did go right into the building with the horses. She let go of the horse after closing the cabin door and waited to see what else was going to happen.

DU SHARBONEAU

The trapper busied himself with building a fire in a small, metal stove.

"Can I bring our things in?" Alice asked.

"Is they food?" he asked without looking up.

"Yes."

"Git 'em on in here then 'fore a bear gits 'em."

Alice headed for the door pulling Sarah with her.

They unloaded everything from the wagon except the straw and then Alice went back outside for an armload of that throwing it into a corner for the horses.

Already the horses had dirtied the floor. It made Alice's nose wrinkle. With a flat piece of chimney metal and a stick, she cleaned up the droppings and threw them away outside.

"I wouldn't do much more o' that tonight was I you. A bear could be just standin' there awaitin' to git in," he cautioned while poking around in their packs.

"I'll fix us some grub," Alice offered falling into his pattern of speech.

"Whal," he hesitated a moment before plopping down on a stump and lighting a pipe.

Sarah looked on, and then started making their bed in a corner of the room, far from the man's woven bedstead, but farther still from the rear end of the horses.

SPEAK TO MY HEART

In the middle of the night, the strong odor of new droppings filled the air, but was forgotten instantly by the women who returned to a sound sleep, neither hearing the loud noise of a bear outside sniffing around the door, nor hearing the trapper say, "Whas 'at?" when he heard the whinnying of the frightened horses.

Alice had felt safe. Under such strange circumstances, she felt safe and slept soundly for the first time since they'd started out.

Although they were awake; the banging of metal completely got the women's attention. The fire was being stoked into life while the horses stomped nervously on the hard-packed clay floor.

"Whyn't cha let them critters out?" he asked over his shoulder.

Both women leapt at the idea. The odor was too strong to endure long while they were awake. Sarah led the horses out and used rope from the destroyed corral to stake them in a sunny, grassy area near a spring.

Alice scooped up the droppings and threw them as far from the cabin as she could. The trapper eyed her movements, and relaxed on his stump when he saw her head for the flour sack.

DU SHARBONEAU

"Yer horses would a been et up las' night. Did ja see the size o' them bear prints outside the door? Mighty damn big. You betcha, mighty damn big!"

He sat back and lit his pipe watching Alice's every move. His stomach growled in anticipation. "Now, 'pears to me as how we's gonna have to construct us a pen so tight, a bear the size of that 'un las' night can't get in. You girls are gonna have to help me carry some really big timber. We kin use them two horses to help pull it."

When breakfast was eaten, they hitched the horses to downed trees and pulled them up next to the cabin. The trapper dug holes and the three of them tilted the logs into the holes until they stood upright, some of the poles were ten feet high.

Alice fixed coffee and food while Sarah packed dirt around the bases of the standing logs and pounded it with one of the smaller poles they'd dragged from the hillside the day before. They had worked all day, but still the corral wasn't completed by nightfall.

"Come on, bring them horses and let's git inside, we'll finish tomorry."

Sarah's eyes rolled as she saw Alice bringing the horses to the cabin. They were all so tired, they settled for corn meal

SPEAK TO MY HEART

mush spooned into tin cups with milk and butter. They rolled into their blankets. Just like three old friends, Alice thought, as she drifted off to sleep.

The trapper helped pick up the droppings while Alice made biscuits for breakfast. He'd waited all night to see what she would make to eat.

"When we git them horses fixed, I gotta see about my traps."

"We have to see about getting some meat in here. Our food supply won't last forever," Alice, replied, one old friend to another.

"Yep," he pondered this for a moment and then asked, "How ya gonna do thet?"

"Sarah's real good with a bow, and I'm going to learn."

That seemed to satisfy him. He looked happily from one woman to the other over a hot biscuit dripping with plum jam and melted butter that ran down his hand, losing itself inside the sleeve of his leather jacket.

They finished the corral by using smaller poles sideways across the opening. Alice had to stop and rest. Her headaches and nausea continued almost daily.

"Wha's wrong with yer frien'?" the trader asked Sarah. She made the sign of something striking her head, in answer. He

DU SHARBONEAU

nodded and stared at Alice awhile trying to find the rest of the story in his observation. Failing that, he finished working on the pen. They left the small logs down leaning into their slots ready for the horses.

The trapper was gone the following morning, after one of Alice's meals and with a chunk of cheese wrapped in cloth that he thrust into his sack with his pemmican.

The women had the cabin to themselves. They scraped the places on the dirt floor with the flat piece of metal and carried out the last, remaining odor of the horses. Then they practiced with the bows and arrows before riding bareback through the trees to a shady meadow where they waited for deer.

Dusk found them hurrying to the cabin with a small buck. The horses were quickly put inside the closure and the small logs tied in place before the process of dressing down the deer began. Alice and Sarah worked as fast as they could before it got too dark to carry the innards far from the cabin and to wash down the area where they had cut the meat.

Sarah threw the deerskin over a fallen tree until she could get to it the next day. It was dark when they put the wooden bar across the door.

SPEAK TO MY HEART

The bear's presence, having been there again, was evident the next morning. Scratch marks showed around the place they'd cut up the deer and the skin had been pulled from the log and dragged around.

Sarah cleaned the skin and pegged it out on the ground. They set up drying racks and built fires to cure the meat. Fortunately, the weather remained cold so the meat didn't spoil quickly. Even their milk supply, now used up, had remained fresh to the last tin cup full. Sarah found wild onions and roots with which they supplemented their meals.

The trapper returned a few days later carrying pelts and some traps to repair. His cheery face was as welcome a sight to them as their pot of bubbling stew was to him. It was a trade-off on who was getting the better deal, but they were friends so it didn't matter.

Visitors came one day when the weather had turned warm and the cabin walls had been covered with stretched deerskins. The visitors: two burly men who were smaller and thinner, but just as hairy as the trapper, made themselves at home on stumps brought in for the occasion.

"Why, ya ole dog you," teased the smallest man, "got yerse'f a squaw an' a gal. Here y'ar, way to hell an' gone up in

DU SHARBONEAU

this here backcountry an' ya got the on'y two women in five hundred mile! Thet sure is a good 'un!" he leaned back and laughed and the little stump he sat on went over with him.

His partner slapped his legs and laughed until the tears streamed down his face. "See, tha's why you don't have no gals, ya can't even set up straight!" he laughed some more.

Alice and Sarah served biscuits and a thick stew made with deer meat that kept the men quiet through three portions of it.

"Whal, tha'us the best meal I think I ever done et," the skinny friend said. "I think I'll take one o' these here gals off'n yer hands," he joked with the trapper who beamed happily.

"'fraid tha's not gonna happen, my frien', they's a set and I'm plannin' on keepin' 'em thataway."

They all laughed.

"Looks like ya been so derved busy with this here set, ya ain't done nothin' with yer trappin'," one of the men said noticing the small bundle of furs hanging on a nail.

"Whal boys, I think the trappin's done fer," his voice sobered, "Ain't many beaver left and they don't pay nothin' fer 'em anyways. I think this'll be my last year."

The friends agreed.

SPEAK TO MY HEART

"I recollect' when they was a pullin' 'em beaver pelts outta here in hunderd pound sacks," the thin man said shaking his head sadly from side to side.

"None o' thet, no more," the other said.

To enliven the men's sagging spirits, Alice suggested they play a game. It was one Sarah had taught the family. She looked around outside and spotted a small ochre-colored acorn on the ground and brushed it off. She returned to the men and explained the game to them.

They sat in a circle, Alice and Sarah on the hard packed floor, the men on their stumps. Alice had the acorn inside her outstretched hands, palms together, so the acorn couldn't be seen. She held her hands over Sarah's, outstretched as well. They passed the acorn back and forth without it being seen, then stopped and asked the men to guess who had the acorn. The men all guessed Sarah who had scooted her hands back and forth as though trying not to let the acorn fall. Alice opened her hands wide and showed them the acorn.

It was the men's turn. They tried to do the same thing Sarah had done, but the trapper kept looking at his own hands and that's whom the women guessed.

Out of ten tries on each side the men only won once. The game was on again, this time the women were guessing.

DU SHARBONEAU

Alice wasn't sure who had the acorn. The men were getting better at the game. She looked at all three of the men's hands, then at their faces, and couldn't tell. Suddenly the acorn squirted out between the trapper's fat fingers and Alice yelled, "Sam!" and laughed at the look on his face.

The men stayed four more days and left the same day that Sam went to check his traps again.

Time went by quickly in the beautiful mountains. Alice's headaches and nausea stopped, replaced by the knowledge that she was pregnant.

When she had told her, Sarah's eyes watered. They hugged, neither in celebration nor in pity, only with the realization that something was about to change, again, in their lives.

By August, the leaves were beginning to change color. What Alice had once thought of as a blue valley was turning gold. The fur trapper had stopped setting his traps and, gathering all the pelts he had, they made a journey to a trading store. The exchange was so poor that Sam knew that fur trading was pretty much a thing of the past.

Nights were getting colder as September rolled around. Sarah and Alice had a supply of berries, roots and meat, but

SPEAK TO MY HEART

they knew they couldn't stay much longer. Alice couldn't hunt and Sam was too old to be chasing deer, and besides, game would become scarce during the freezing mountain winters. As it was, Alice would have a difficult time traveling. When they told Sam, he sat a long time without talking.

He finally cleared his throat and said, "I don't think I'll be able to stand it around here without you gals," he cleared his throat again and went on, "Guess I'll jest move on, m'self."

"Come home," Sarah said.

Alice's head lifted. She was surprised to hear Sarah speak, but more surprised that she hadn't thought of Sarah's idea before. They needed Sam as much now, it seemed, as he needed them.

Sam had been taken aback by Sarah's remark. He didn't remember her ever having said one word, let alone two, before. And what she said intrigued him. "Home?" he asked.

"Yes," Alice smiled broadly, "I can't imagine not having you around. We need you."

"But what would I do? What kind'a place is 'home'?" Sam looked from one woman to the other for answers, but Sarah had already extended herself so she let Alice do the talking.

DU SHARBONEAU

Alice told him their story. She saw that Sarah listened as intently as Sam did. It took most of the evening to tell him, even without doing any signing. Sarah followed along, hearing familiar words and being able to tell what part of the story Alice was telling about by the inflections in her voice, or the choked pauses that Sam remained quiet through until she could compose herself and go on.

"An' you want to have yer baby at home," it wasn't a question, merely a statement. Nothing had ever been mentioned about the baby.

"Yes," Alice said quietly.

The wind howled outside and a sprinkle of rain hit the roof.

"Looks like it's time to go," Sam said looking at the lightening through the small window.

All three nodded.

They headed out at the end of September, packing the skins, traps, bedding, food, and a few things Sam couldn't leave behind. The wagon was loaded, but it was mostly down hill so Alice drove.

SPEAK TO MY HEART

They left the corral gate open but the cabin door shut tightly after bringing in loads of dry wood. "Jes in case m'friends come by," Sam told the women.

The sun was out warm as they headed into it, eager to get going. Even Sam didn't seem sad to be walking away from the life he'd known and enjoyed for many a long year.

They were still in the mountains the first night they stopped, so they built a fire on either side of the camp to protect themselves and the horses.

The journey was slow going as they stopped often to rest the horses and to give Alice a chance to get out of the bumping wagon. She felt better walking too, and they talked and laughed a lot as they headed for home.

A white woman, chastised by her husband in front of the ranch hands, leaves to rescue an Indian woman wrongly being put to death by the chief. The women heal their wounds and fend for themselves escaping across the prairie.

Speak to My Heart

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/2511.html?s=pdf>