

IN THE BEGINNING

In the beginning was the work and the work was in the leather shop and the leather shop was the business and the business was Toby's. All things leather and beaded were made by her and without her was not any thing made that was made, neither vests, nor saddles, nor harnesses, nor boots. And in the leather shop was the light, and in this light shone Toby's life.

But her life's light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended her not, for she lived on the mountain in a world made by men, and this world knew her not.

Behold, there was come from Kansas a woman whose name was Eleanor. And this is the record. When the busybodies sent the gossips to ask of Eleanor, Who are you anyway? Eleanor owned up, saying, I'm just an unemployed single mother looking for work. I am a Kansan. I can wait tables to make straight the way of the tourist in the wilderness, and I understand there is already someone who goes before me whose hand tooled leather boots I am not worthy to spit polish.

And the gossips spoke saying, Can there any good thing come out of Kansas?

The next day, Eleanor stood in the market place with her grocery cart with one bad wheel and lo, she saw Toby coming toward her. Behold the woman of the mountain,

whispered Eleanor. Surely, this is the woman of whom they speak, the woman with tools who might give me to work.

And thus it was that Eleanor first met Toby, saying, I saw twinkling eyes clearer than a mountain stream and bluer than a Kansas cornflower. And thus it was that Eleanor saw and bore record that this was the woman of the mountain.

And Toby questioned Eleanor saying, How do you know me? We've never met.

And Eleanor laughed saying, It was the six half-gallons of ice cream in your cart.

And Toby blushed and admitted to a healthy appetite, saying, Does this amaze you? You haven't seen anything yet. Follow me. Come and see where I work and dwell in the house where women come and go talking – not of Michaelangelo – but of diesel fuel and car accidents and the worth of a horse and the snow level that year and how things are not like they used to be.

And hearing Toby speak, Eleanor followed, and they dwelt together from that day forward until Eleanor's days were numbered three score and seventeen, eleven months, and seven days.

Thus endeth the story of the beginning and the beginning of the end of the myth.