

QUAKER

BRIDES

# Faith

*a novel*

AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR

LYN COTE

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# Faith



QUAKER  
BRIDES

LYN COTE



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*Faith*

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*Faith* is a work of fiction. Where real people, events, establishments, organizations, or locales appear, they are used fictitiously. All other elements of the novel are drawn from the author's imagination.

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# Prologue

CINCINNATI, OHIO  
JULY 21, 1858

The sound of something shattering woke Faith Cathwell. She sprang from her bed in Frances Henry's house. Scant moonlight defined the shapes of furniture. "Shiloh!" she called as she hurried toward the hall. "Is thee all right?"

Faith flung open her door. Stepped into the narrow passage between the two upstairs bedrooms. "Shiloh—"

A hand clamped over her mouth. From behind, an arm encircled her waist. Tight.

Faith struggled, kicking backward. In vain. She could not break free from the strong arms that kept her silent and trapped.

Close to her ear, a harsh, low voice whispered in the blackness. "You got the other one ready?"

"Yeah. Now we'll take care of this one."

Faith struggled harder. "*Take care of this one*"? *Dear God, help.*

A cloth doused with something sickly sweet was pressed

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to her nose. She tried to turn away, but the man behind kept her pinned to him. *Help us, Lord. Help Shiloh. . . .*

Faith sensed herself losing consciousness. She fought it, but she felt the strength draining from her limbs. *Dear God . . .*



“Faith!” a voice shripped. “Faith, what’s happened?”

Faith lifted her head with effort and blinked her eyes in the morning light. Woozy, she couldn’t speak or move.

Shiloh’s sister Honoree worked the knot in the cloth that bound Faith’s mouth. Finally she snatched it off. “How did this happen?”

Faith gagged, dry-mouthed and nauseated.

Honoree tugged at the ropes that bound Faith’s arms and legs to the small dining-room chair. When she managed to pull them away, she caught Faith as she fell forward.

Honoree helped Faith lean back in the chair. Then she ran up the stairs to the bedrooms, calling, sounding hysterical. “Shiloh! Shiloh!”

Faith rubbed her arms, bound for what must have been hours, her hands and fingers tingling with painful pins and needles. She couldn’t rise; her legs shook. She began crying, tears seeping, streaking down her face. How had she gotten into this situation? Why?

Honoree raced back down the stairs. Then to the kitchen. Faith heard the door to the garden open and slam.

Honoree returned to Faith. “Who did this?” She dropped to her knees. “Where’s Shiloh?”

Sobs welled up from deep within Faith. She could only shake her head. *I don’t know. I can’t think.*

Honoree ran outside to the street. “Help! Police! Help!”

Faith rocked back and forth, rubbing her arms, powerless. What had happened last night? She tried to recall the memories. Her mind conjured strong, cruel arms and a chemical smell. And the men had said that they “got the other one ready.” What had they done with Shiloh?

She stared down at the black mourning dress she wore and whispered, “Patience.” The image of her twin, gone forever, flickered in her mind. At a gentle suggestion from her mother, Faith had come to stay with Shiloh. Shiloh worked as a maid for Frances Henry, a family friend’s mother-in-law, who was away from home. This visit to Shiloh was an effort to take Faith’s mind from her identical twin, buried just weeks ago. Her sweet sister Patience was gone. The other half of her had been sliced from her life. Had Shiloh been ripped away too?

Faith wept harder, slipping to the floor. Shards of icy fear exploded within as her mind failed to resist the conclusion forcing itself on her. She remembered the family stories about Shiloh’s mother, kidnapped years ago by slave catchers who intended to sell her back into slavery. Beautiful, freeborn Shiloh . . . kidnapped? *No, no . . .*



# Chapter 1

WESTERN THEATER

MAY 1863

On the road toward Jackson, Mississippi, Colonel Devlin Knight glimpsed the gray riders heading straight toward them. “Charge!” Dev shouted. His men spurred their horses forward. The two forces clashed. Gunfire exploded around him.

Dev aimed and fired his pistol till it emptied. The Rebs crowded around him. No time to reload.

He whipped out his saber, slashing any Reb within reach. Black smoke obscured everything. Then, under a unique cockaded hat, a face he recognized appeared through the murky, choking cloud.

Jack?

Dev nearly suffered a saber thrust, but he parried. Threw

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the Reb from his saddle. Dev plunged forward toward Jack. Was it him?

More troops surged from the rear and the skirmish expanded. Dev lost sight of the face. His saber weighed heavily. He kept his seat, twisting and turning, meeting enemy after enemy. His eyes streamed with tears from the powder. And the gunfire deafened him.

He fell back behind the front. Reloaded his pistol, then plunged again into the fray, the gray Confederate wave regrouping. Dev fought for his life. Had it been Jack? No time. A Reb wheeled his horse and headed straight for Dev.

*God, help me.*



Darkness was easing in lazily, the western sky toward the Mississippi River blazing brilliant pink and gold. Dev slowed his horse and tried not to make a sound. He wanted no one to see him.

The skirmish had ended not even a half hour ago. After sending his unit back to camp, he was going in the wrong direction—toward the Rebel lines, the enemy lines. The moans of the wounded drew him, led him.

An image from the past: Jack shoving Bellamy, cursing him; Dev stepping between them; the stunning blow . . . He shut out the past. No time.

He began picking his way around dead bodies till he came to where he thought he'd seen Jack fall. And his eyes had not deceived him. There Confederate Captain Jack Carroll lay, staring up at the sky. His horse was nibbling grass nearby.

Jack turned his gaze to Dev. “Come to finish the job, Yankee cousin?”

Only Jack would mock the hand that came to save him. “Yes.” Dev swung down from his horse. When he knelt beside Jack, he bit back a gasp. Both Jack’s arms were bleeding and one was splintered, the bone poking through the skin.

He whipped off the kerchief around his neck and tied it as a tourniquet around one of Jack’s arms, then pulled two handkerchiefs out of his pocket and secured them together for the other arm. “I’ve come to take you to the surgeons.”

“So they can chop off both my arms? No thank you, Dev. I’d rather be dead.”

“I don’t blame you,” Dev admitted. “But I’m taking you with me anyway. A good surgeon might be able to save one arm.”

“I don’t want your help.” Jack cursed him long and low.

“I’d never be able to face your father or my mother if I left you here like this.” *Or face myself.*

After shoving Jack’s distinctive hat—its side folded up and pinned with a miniature lone star flag—into his jacket, Dev slid one arm under Jack’s shoulders, the other under his knees, and rose. Jack struggled, swore, and then passed out.

Just as well. Dev managed to sling him facedown over his saddle before he mounted the horse, grasped the reins, and turned away to head toward the Union lines.

“Stop where you stand,” a voice from the trees behind Dev barked.

Dev raised both hands. “I’m taking my cousin with me to get him medical help.”

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“Your *cousin*, Yankee?”

“Yes, we’re from Maryland.”

“That man’s from Texas.”

“Yes, but he was born in Maryland on the Carroll Plantation ten miles from Baltimore.”

“So you do know him.”

“Yes. Now are you going to shoot me in the back or let me help my cousin?”

“So you’ll shoot at him but then return to help him?”

“That sums it up.” Dev choked on the irony of it, but he’d faced this over and over, meeting men he’d grown up with and taking aim at them.

An ominous silence hung over the three of them.

“Okay. But God help you if you do him harm.”

“God help me in any event.” But he doubted God would do any such thing. Dev headed toward his camp, expecting to be shot by a sniper or Rebel straggler at any moment.

He’d fought in the Mexican War nearly twenty years ago, and his goal then had been to serve with honor and survive. He didn’t think any man could expect to live through two wars. His lone objective now was to serve and, when the time came, to die with honor. That’s what kept him going.



When Dev neared the Union camp, he cut off his cousin’s gray military jacket and stuffed it, along with the cockaded hat, under his own jacket. He met the sentry, identified himself. But as he picked his way to his tent, he felt conspicuous, as if he’d be stopped at any moment. Fortunately, more than

one skirmish had taken place today, so the camp was busy with care for the injured.

His manservant, Armstrong, stepped out of Dev's tent before he reached it. Armstrong always did this—heard him coming and was ready and waiting for him.

“Help me get him inside,” Dev said, glad of his presence.

“It's Master Jack,” Armstrong said in obvious surprise.

“Yes.”

Armstrong didn't say another word, just helped carry the unconscious man into their tent. Then he looked at Dev, asking without words what he thought he was doing.

“I will turn him in,” Dev assured him, “but first I need to see if at least one of his arms can be saved.”

Armstrong gazed at the wounded man, obviously pondering. “The surgeons won't think twice about cutting them both off for sure. But I heard about one of the nurses. They say she better than the doctors. Miss Faith Cathwell.”

“A nurse? A woman nurse? Better than the doctors?”

“They say her patients mostly survive. Not all, but enough where some notice the difference.”

“And you know this because . . . ?”

Armstrong looked him in the eye. “You know why, sir.”

*You found out in case I'm wounded.* Dev gripped his servant's shoulder. “How can I find Miss Cathwell?”

“She tall with blonde hair. And if what I heard is true, she'll be in the thick of things near the camp hospital.”

Dev nodded, turned to go, and then glanced over his shoulder. “Check his pockets in case he still has weapons on him. Keep him here.”

“Yes, sir.”

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His man's response was polite, but underneath it Dev read the unspoken question: *What are you doing harboring an enemy soldier? Even if he is your cousin.*



“Miss Cathwell? Are you Miss Faith Cathwell?”

Just outside the hospital tent, Dev found the woman Armstrong had described and whom three different Sanitary Commission soldiers had directed him to. Surrounded by wounded men lying in neat rows, she was kneeling over a patient, facing away from Dev. She appeared slender and was dressed in dark gray with a modest white cap over her hair, a white bonnet hanging down her back.

At his question, she didn't look up from her place on the ground but continued her work. “Yes, I am Faith Cathwell. What does thee need?”

A Quaker? He recoiled mentally, then paused, watching her care for a corporal.

She'd cut off the soldier's sleeve to expose his wound. She loosened the crude tourniquet above it. Blood oozed out. Rinsing the rag in a basin of water, she swabbed the wound, cleaning away the gunpowder and dried gore.

What possessed a young woman to do such . . . disgusting, unladylike work? Yet her movements were deft and sure and gentle. His tension eased. “Miss Cathwell, I'm Colonel Devlin Knight. I—”

“This isn't the time or place for social calls,” barked a doctor standing inside the hospital tent at an operating table.

The man's scathing tone shocked Dev with its rudeness. He straightened up with a snap, ready to put the man in his place.

Miss Cathwell looked up. "Dr. Dyson, is it wise to insult a colonel? He outranks thee." Her tone was pleasant with an edge of wryness. Then she glanced at Dev.

Miss Cathwell's appearance startled him. He'd not expected such a lovely woman to be here doing this lowly work. She had the pale skin of a lady. Her hair was flaxen, and the largest, greenest eyes he'd ever seen dominated her face. Now they considered him with a seriousness that gave him confidence he was doing right in seeking her out.

The colonel leaned close to her ear. "I need help for a wounded soldier. A friend."

She started to respond but paused to gaze at him, assessing. But her hands and nimble fingers continued searching the wounded corporal for, he supposed, any other wounds.

From the corner of his eye, Dev glimpsed Dyson turning away from the patient on the operating table. While the patient was being carried to another tent, Dyson moved between the nurse and Dev. "What do you want, Colonel? I'm the surgeon in this tent."

"My business is with Miss Cathwell," Dev said, straightening and giving full rein to his years of experience in intimidating subordinate officers.

Miss Cathwell rose. "Dr. Dyson, I believe thy next patient is ready for thy . . . attention."

Two Sanitary Commission soldiers lifted the wounded corporal the lady had been nursing. They carried him unconscious across the tent.

The doctor glared at both of them.

Dev did not like the man's attitude, but perhaps the doctor had good reason to disdain Miss Cathwell. Certainly

everything he'd heard about Quakers marked them as trouble-makers. They'd stoked the fire that had ignited this war.

The disgruntled doctor moved away, muttering epithets.

Turning, Dev found that the lady stood nearly as tall as he, and she was regarding him intently.

"Please, I need to get on with my work," she said for his ears only. "How may I help thee?"

He struggled only a moment with caution, with his guilt. He lowered his voice and asked, "Will you come to my tent?" He motioned and gave her directions. "My wounded friend is there."

Calling Jack a friend was an outright lie, but since Dev had already aided and abetted the enemy by bringing him back here, he felt he had no choice but to continue the deception.

She tilted her head like a bird. "I am only a nurse, not a doctor."

Dev nodded. "Will you come?"

Again she studied him. "Yes, when I am done here. If thy friend is bleeding, keep applying pressure, and please have water warming for me along with any bandages thee can find. However, if thy friend is beyond my skill, thee will have to bring him to the surgeons."

Dev found himself snapping to attention as if leaving a superior officer and could not think why. "Until later, miss," he muttered, nonplussed at his own reaction.

She didn't reply but dropped to her knees by the next soldier and, after giving him a sip of water, began examining his wounds.

Then a snide voice yanked Dev back to his surroundings. "If you want your friend to survive, you would do better to

trust me than a woman.” The surgeon’s words cut the air like a whiplash as Dev strode away.

*What am I doing? Asking a woman, a Quakeress, for help?*



Faith wished she could completely ignore Dr. Dyson’s venom. Like most Army doctors, he hated female nurses in general—but Dyson hated her in particular. Was that why she’d agreed to help the Union colonel with the Southern accent? To flout Flynn Dyson? The colonel contrasted with Dyson not only in demeanor but also appearance. The colonel had a seasoned look about him, deep-set blue eyes with wrinkles around them—no doubt from years of squinting in the sun—and a gleam of silver at his temples. Perhaps he’d even served in the Mexican War as so many officers had done in their twenties.

Across the large tent, Dyson’s muttering became louder and more insulting.

Faith focused her mind on the soldier she was tending.

“Miss . . . would you . . . pray for me?” the soldier asked between small gasps.

She looked down into his young, gunpowdered face then and realized that she’d been thinking of the colonel and only going through the motions of preparing this man for the doctor. More and more she concentrated on wounds alone, not on the faces of the men she tried to help. Did that make it easier to do what she did?

“What is thy name?” she asked.

“Private Browning, miss.”

“Thy first name?”

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“Jedediah.”

She pressed her hand over his and prayed aloud. “Father, Jedediah Browning has been wounded this day, as thee knows. Will thee give him strength to face this trial and bring him safely back to health and his family after this dread war ends? We ask this in the name of Jesus, thy Son. Amen.” She patted his hand.

“Thanks. I feel . . . better.”

Faith nodded, but she wondered if this man would survive. Death lurked all around them. Were the fortunate ones those who were killed outright?

Faith continued to clean wounds and prepare men for surgery until finally the rows of men ran out. After all, this had been the aftermath not of a full-scale battle, merely a few skirmishes.

She rose and stretched her back, remembering her promise to the colonel. With a sigh, she washed her hands in the last of the basins of clean water, brought over by a Sanitary Commission man, and started off, wiping her hands on her stained and smudged apron.

Honoree, who had been working as usual within Faith’s sight, caught up with her. “You are going to help that colonel’s friend.” More a statement than a question.

Faith nodded, her back aching and hunger gnawing at her.

“It sounds fishy to me. Why didn’t he just bring him to the doctors?”

Faith glanced sideways at Honoree, who was a few inches shorter and several shades darker complected than she. Too unsure and tired to respond, Faith merely shrugged. They

stopped at their own quarters, a large conical Sibley tent, to pick up Faith's wooden medicine chest.

Before long they glimpsed the colonel pacing outside his tent, like theirs but larger, befitting his rank.

"Colonel?" Faith said, having adopted the use of military titles out of courtesy, though it went against her Quaker ways.

Relief appeared to take the starch from him. "Y'all came." The Southern accent sounded stronger now, probably because of his fatigue and worry.

Faith's nerves prickled a warning.

Honoree sent her a glance that conveyed suspicion.

"This is my friend Miss Honoree Langston." Faith gestured toward her. "She's come to assist me."

With a slight flicker of surprise and a curt nod, the colonel opened the tent flap and waved them inside.

On one of the two cots in the tent, a man lay faceup. His upper body was bare except for a blanket. A tall black man, dressed neatly, stood beside him—no doubt the colonel's personal servant. Again wariness prickled through Faith.

She pushed it aside as she lifted away the blanket and viewed the man and his injuries. He was thin and pale and already burning with fever, his face flushed. Both arms had suffered gunshot wounds. Stained cloths had stopped the bleeding and one arm had obviously been shattered. The other arm appeared to bear a single gunshot wound. She knelt beside him and opened her wooden medicine chest. "Does thee have the hot water I requested?"

"A Quaker?" the wounded man squawked in a thick Southern drawl. "You bring me a blasted Quaker?"

Then Honoree gripped Faith's shoulder. "Look." She

pointed toward the man's belt buckle, which read *CSA*, the insignia of the Confederate States of America.

And Faith glimpsed under the cot a crumpled gray felt hat with a cockade of a miniature one-star flag, the Texas flag.

"He's a Reb." Honoree stepped away and folded her arms. "What's a Reb doing here?"

"He's my cousin," the colonel confessed. "I will turn him in as a prisoner of war, but I didn't believe he would get the right attention if I did so before treatment. Please. Without good care he could lose both arms."

Faith sat back on her heels. "Thee is correct, but this is against everything—"

"I know that," the colonel interrupted.

"We help him, and he will just escape and keep on fighting," Honoree said flatly.

Faith felt torn. Honoree was probably right. "He might lose both arms even with careful nursing."

"Then leave me to my fate," the patient snapped. "I didn't ask for any special treatment." He cursed the colonel and her.

Faith withstood the storm of insults, gazing evenly at the man. She'd learned this response from watching her mother face down slave catchers time and again. Wouldn't this man love it if she told him that?

She rose with a sigh. "Colonel, I will help any wounded soldier regardless of which army he serves in, but thee is putting thyself and thy honor at risk with this."

"I know." The colonel moved forward. "Please. I don't have much family left, and when this war is over, I have to face his father. He's *my blood*." The final two words sounded wrenched from the man.

*“My blood.”* An image of her late twin, Patience, flashed through her mind, followed by Shiloh’s image. Patience was lost to her, but Shiloh, long since kidnapped, might still be found. Double grief squeezed her heart. Did this colonel love his cousin as she loved both Patience and Shiloh, or was his conduct just the constraint of family ties?

“I understand, Colonel, but even if I treat him, I can’t stay here and care for him as he would need. To save even one of his arms in light of the infection already brewing within him—”

“I can stay,” the black manservant spoke up.

“You would help a slave owner?” Honoree accused. “He enslaves our people.”

The manservant returned Honoree’s direct gaze. “I know, but I can’t let a man I knew when he was a child just die before my eyes.”

Faith understood this too.

“Thank you, Armstrong,” the colonel said with evident relief. “And when I’m not on duty, I will help.”

“I am not helping any slaveholder,” Honoree vowed. She addressed the wounded soldier. “You are a slaveholder, aren’t you?”

“Yes, and you need to be put in your place, girl,” he said belligerently.

“I am in my place, in freedom.”

“Well, my cousin here, the Union traitor, is no different from me. He’s a slaveholder too,” the Reb added with audible spite.

Pulling back as if fending off a blow, Honoree turned to Faith, stretching out a hand. “We need to go.”

## FAITH

Faith couldn't hide her surprise at this revelation, though it shouldn't have shocked her. Even the Emancipation Proclamation hadn't changed the fact that border states—though still clinging to the Union—remained slave states.

“Please,” the colonel implored them, “stay.” He looked to his cousin. “Will you promise not to try to escape? Give your word as a gentleman?”

The Confederate grimaced. “All right. I give my word of honor as a gentleman that I will not try to escape. Does that satisfy y'all?”

“And, Miss Cathwell,” the colonel continued, taking another step toward her, “I promise that I will turn him in as a prisoner of war as soon as he is strong enough to survive imprisonment. He's my blood.”