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# Shivaree

by Maggie Aldridge Smith

This took place April of 1917 in Seminole Nation, Oklahoma. The dark-headed, blue-eyed groom was twenty-two years old and his bride of like coloring was sixteen-and-a-half, shyly dressed all in white with black patent leather slippers.

The wedding took place on the dog-trot of the bride's parents' home. She was my oldest sister, and we were not sure we wanted her getting in that new buggy to go home with Melvin Mitchess, even if his grandpa did own the store that had all the candy!

Melvin Mitchess was popular with all the young men of the area and knew all about Shivarees. He planned what he would do—but so did the youth that were carrying out a “goodie” for Melvin.

Melvin had already rented an Indian Lease farm that had a small house on it. They had invited all the area to come there for a celebration. The families were invited an hour earlier than the friends were invited.

It was while the family was enjoying the freezer ice cream and cakes, brought by parents and grandparents, that Melvin told his bride where to meet him, near the plum thicket by the barn. That plum thicket was fragrant with ghostly-white blossoms.

Soon as he saw her leave the house he stepped forward, covered her with a dark cloak and drew her with him behind the barn.

The pasture was ankle-tickling high in grass as he told her they were going to hide in the drain-

age ditch above the pond. From his own past experience of grooms trying to hide from the pond-dumping group, he knew buildings would not be safe. So he chose a spot literally in the open, but with dark cloaks about them they would be at-one with surroundings.

It was cool enough so the coats felt good, and they had hardly decided where to stand before they heard a whoop-holler and a spilling of light out the back door of their new home. The ditch was almost breast-deep in the stony sand dirt of their pasture. Not only could they see the house, they could hear the planning.

“You search the barn!” A lantern was lighted. “There's the chicken house, don't forget that!” “We will go see if they're hiding behind the dam!” Here they came right toward the ditch where Melvin and Alma stood watching them.

Melvin whispered to Alma, “Cover your head with your collar, now let's get as low to the ground as we can.” Two round rocks they must have looked against the bottom of that ditch. Footsteps jumped the ditch over their heads more than once. Alma could feel Melvin shaking with laughter as they came so near.

They were not discovered and it remains a tale told and retold down through the years, but how to hide from the Shivaree crowd is easy after you have been one of the hunting party before.

