

JENNIFER BOHNHOFF



The
WORST ENEMY

Rebels Along the Rio Grande Book 2

**BOOK 2 OF
REBELS ALONG THE RIO GRANDE**

The Worst Enemy

**A trilogy of novels about
the Civil War in New Mexico**

**by
Jennifer Bohnhoff**

**Illustrated by
Ian Bristow**



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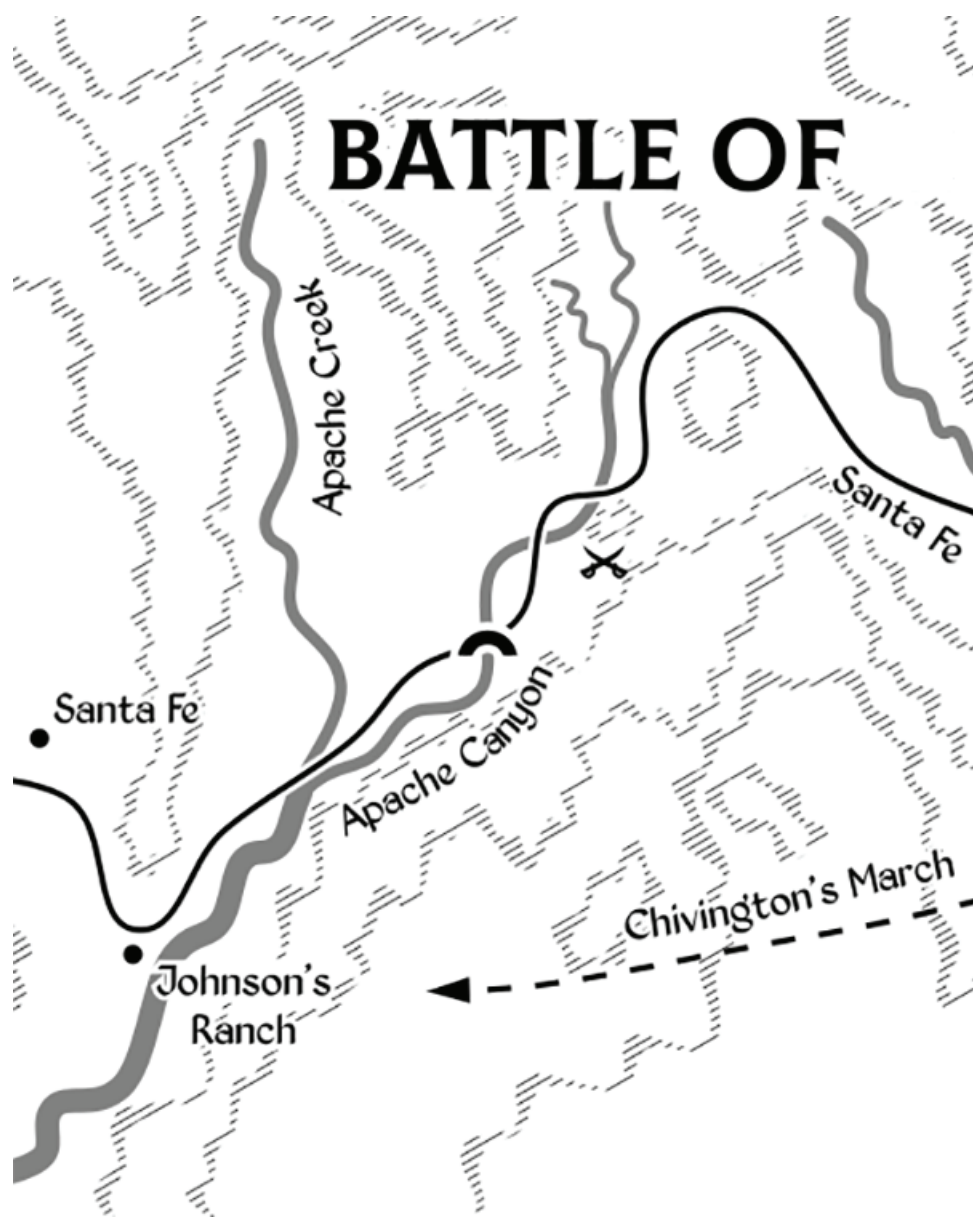
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Content Notice:

This book describes scenes of war and battle that may be traumatic for some readers.

This book is set in a period of U.S. history when modern values on human rights and racial equality did not exist. The book depicts the practices and concepts of racial and social inequality. These practices are not right today, and they were not right at the time when this story is set. The material is presented for historical accuracy and the author and the publisher condemn these practices in all their forms, whether in history or today.

BATTLE OF



GLORIETA PASS

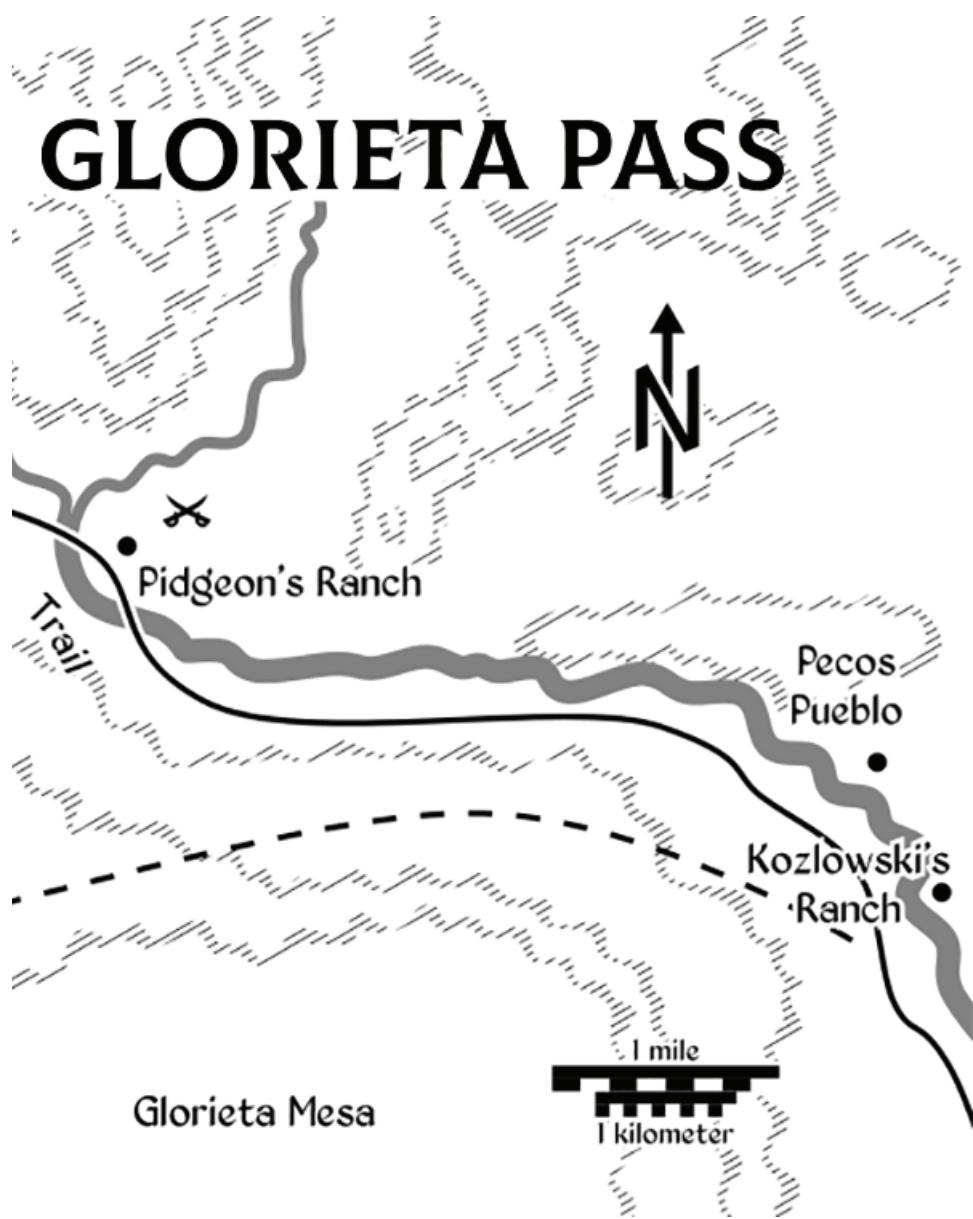


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“What is the position of New Mexico? The answer is a short one. She desires to be let alone. In her own good time she will say her say, and choose for herself the position she wishes to occupy in the new disposition of the new disrupted power of the United States.”

Santa Fe Gazette
May 11, 1861

“Boys, I’m the worst enemy you have.”

Henry Hopkins Sibley.
Sibley had resigned his commission in the U.S. Army and was leaving New Mexico territory by stagecoach when he shouted this to Union soldiers in Albuquerque’s Old Town Plaza.



CHAPTER ONE

A HILL OF BEANS

Jemmy Martin
South of Socorro, New Mexico
February 23, 1862

Jemmy Martin looked at the boy cradled in his arms. “I sees lights up ahead, Willie. We’s almost there.”

“Home?” The drummer boy’s face glowed grey in the twilight.

Jemmy’s throat tightened. “We’s still in New Mexico. Do you remember? You broke your arm two days ago? In the battle for Valverde Ford?”

Willie’s dark eyes stared uncomprehendingly at Jemmy, who shook, both with emotion and fatigue. He’d been marching—no, staggering and stumbling—for

twelve hours. "Just hold on, Willie. This town ahead—it's named 'Socorro.' I's told it means 'help' in Mexican, and that is what we are gonna get. For you and all the wounded."

Jemmy set his jaw and tried to hold in his tears. Ten months ago, he'd been toiling behind the plow that Golphin and Griffith, the family mules, dragged through the field when he saw a dust cloud forming. It had been Drew, Jemmy's older brother, who came over the rise and pulled back on the reins, making his mount sidle and dance. "We fired on Fort Sumter on April twelfth!"

"Fort what?"

"Sumter! In South Carolina! The war we's been waiting for's finally begun!" Drew dug his heels and the horse bolted down the road. Jemmy watched him go, then shook his head and went back to the ploughing. He didn't give a hill of beans about who was firing on who back east. He had a field to plow. But he should have cared. His brother was going to sign himself up as a packer, who'd ride along with the Confederate Army's supply wagons. Worse, Drew had sold Golphin and Griffith to the Confederate Army. When Drew had slipped out of camp and returned home, abandoning the mules, Jemmy had felt responsible for staying with them and returning them home. But he'd never found the opportunity, and now here he was in New Mexico, the land his father hated. Jemmy had lost the mules the night before the Battle at Valverde Ford, the same battle in which Willie's arm had been broken. If he ever made it back to San Antonio, Pa was going to tan his hide for losing the family's two mules. What was he going to think about Jemmy bringing home this orphaned boy instead?

Jemmy carried Willie into a town of mud houses huddled around a dusty central square. Light glowed from

open doorways and a few high, narrow windows. Jemmy stepped into the one that the Confederacy had requisitioned to be their hospital. He laid Willie on a mattress near a beehive-shaped fireplace in the corner of the room, then stretched out his back and straightened his arms, letting the feeling come back into them. "There," he said, "it's done."

Willie opened his eyes and stared up at him, a sad smile lifting one corner of his mouth. "Oh, Jemmy! Do you not know? It has just begun."



CHAPTER TWO

THINKING IS BELIEVING

Cian Lochlann
Denver, Colorado Territory
Ten Months Earlier
Wednesday, April 24, 1861

Cian Lochlann scuffled his feet, sending clouds of dust whirling along Blake Street. *T'inkin' is believin'*, Cian's Mam had said as they stepped off the boat onto a Boston pier back in 1847, when he was only two years old. She'd believed America was the land of opportunity, and that the family would prosper. But things hadn't turned out that way. First, Cian's Da disappeared and was presumed murdered, then his Mam died of typhus. Orphaned and alone, Cian was left to scrounge what living he could in

a town that had grown tired and intolerant of their poor Irish immigrants. So, in 1859, when Cian heard that gold had been discovered in Colorado the previous year, he'd left Boston, determined to start a new, more honest life. That new life turned out to be no more secure and no more honest than the old one. Disenchanted and disheartened by two hard and luckless winters, he'd come down from the hills, looking for a job in a mercantile or livery stable that would offer a few coins and a corner to sleep in. After two days, he'd had no luck. His empty stomach rumbled.

Cian stopped and tilted his head, listening to angry voices somewhere off to the east. He smiled. Shouting could become a riot, and riots were an opportunity to grab food from a shattered shop window. As hungry and discouraged as he was, Cian was willing to slip back into his old ways. He trotted up G Street and turned onto Larimer, where he found himself at the back of an angry crowd. Cian sidled up to a man in a red flannel shirt and dungarees.

"Trouble?"

The man spit out a fountain of brown tobacco juice, then jerked his head toward a log building on the north side of the street. A sign hanging from the eaves said, 'Wallingford and Murphy, Mercantile.'

"Look what them jackasses hauled up their flagpole."

Cian squinted into the bright, cloudless sky at a red flag with a white X spangled with blue stars crossing from the corners. "And 'tis?"

"A Confederate flag, you ignoramus. Wallingford and Murphy are both transplanted southerners. 'Seceshes.' Colorado Territory's Union and intends to stay that way."

"Jaysus! Think they are going to loot the place?" Cian didn't care about either the Union or the Confederacy. He didn't understand what they were fighting about. That

didn't stop him from wanting to grab some food and drink when the crowd surged into the store.

"Could be. Here." The man handed Cian a rock. It was weighty, and big enough to fill his palm. Just hefting it in his hand made his blood pound and his mouth water.

"Lookie there." The man jerked his chin towards a man climbing the hitching rail in front of the store. Transfixed, Cian watched the man swing himself onto the roof. The man was broad shouldered, like Cian's Da had been. The same dark mustache reached past both sides of his mouth. *This, Cian thought, is a man of action. He does not hesitate: He seizes an opportunity and squeezes all the luck out of it. He is the kind of man I'm looking to follow.*

Cian cheered with the crowd as the man hauled down the flag and ripped it to shreds, tossing the tattered pieces like party streamers.

"Now! Go!" The man next to Cian gave him a shove. He stumbled forward as the crowd surged towards the store and threw his rock when the crowd started pelting the building. The sound of breaking glass made his stomach groan in anticipation. Short as he was, Cian couldn't see what was happening, but he heard the heavy thud of shoulders slamming into the door, and then the splintering of wood.

The crowd pressed forward, carrying Cian along with it. Just as he got to the door, he hesitated, the sixth sense that he had honed during those dangerous days on the streets of Boston tingling. He glanced over his shoulder and saw men with badges turning the corner. Cian backed through the crowd and slipped into the shadows in the narrow alleyway next to the store.

A shot rang out. Cian dropped to the ground and flung his arms protectively over his head. The crowd reeled and screamed, just on the edge of panic, and for a

moment Cian was afraid that they would stampede down the alley, trampling him. He looked up. Across the street, five heavily armed men accompanied the Town Marshal, whose badge gleamed in the sun.

"Time to go home, boys. Break it up," the Marshal shouted. The crowd scattered. In a matter of moments, only the Marshal and his men remained in front of the store. The Marshal craned his neck, looking up at the man who stood defiantly on the roof, his hands on his hips. "You want to tell me what you're doing up there?"

The man held up a shred of the Confederate flag. "Cleaning trash off the roof."

The Marshal nodded. "Do not hurt yourself getting down." With a quick jerk of his head, he moved his men back from where they'd come. Cian scrambled to his feet and stepped out of the shadows to wait by the hitching rail.

"Hoy, mister! I saw what you did!"

"Did you now? Good lad!" The man swung down to the street and stuck out his hand. "Samuel Logan."

Cian smiled broadly and pumped Logan's hand. This was the chance he'd been waiting for. "Cian Lochlann at your service, Mr. Logan, sir, and pleased to be making your acquaintance. Would you be needing a man right now?"

"As a matter of fact, son, I could use a few more men. Come, I will introduce you to the company." Logan took Cian by the elbow and guided him back down G Street.

Company, Cian thought, smiling to himself. *Mary, mother of Jaysus! I am going into business!* "And what kind of company would you be meaning, sir?"

"Cavalry," Logan answered, "and we don't even need our own mounts! The U.S. Government is going to supply them."

Cian swallowed down the lump of dread that formed

in his throat. He'd never been on a horse's back and sure didn't want to try it now. As they turned the corner onto Blake Street, a rough looking bunch of down-and-out miners and ne'er-do-wells hailed Logan. Cian felt his sixth sense tingling for the second time that day. He looked around as the rowdy men gathered close to shake Samuel Logan's hand, saw the passing of a flask, and knew these were not the men who were going to lead him into a new, more honorable life.

Cian backed away. It was time to go back to the South Clear Creek Mining District. He wasn't fond of the men there, either, but they looked safer than this lot. The question was, would the three men he'd left behind allow him to return after he'd told them they were all big-talking ne'er do wells when he'd left? They'd almost gotten into a fist fight, and Cian had stomped off in a huff, vowing never to see any of their pug-ugly faces. Now, he intended to do just that.

Cian walked north, the noise of Denver fading behind him. He sniffed and thrust his chin out. "'Tisn't over yet, Da. There are other ways to fill me stomach than joining the Army, other men I can throw me lot in with besides that lot of rowdies. And 'though he shan't be you, Da, I shall find a strong man I can follow yet."



CHAPTER THREE

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

Jemmy Martin
The Home of Dionisio Jaramillo
in Socorro, New Mexico
February 24, 1862

Jemmy leaned against the doorsill of the adobe house and watched the sunset tint the sky pink. His family farm was far away, hundreds of miles south, just beyond the bustling town of San Antonio, Texas. He knew he couldn't see it, but knowing it was there made him stare at the southern horizon all the harder. Planting season was just beginning, and Pa, Ma and Drew would be sitting down to supper after a long day in the fields. How had Pa managed without the mules? How could he plant the fields? It made

his heart ache to think of his family struggling, and him not there to help.

“Water,” someone behind him said, the words coming out in a shaky rasp. Jemmy turned and studied the bodies laid out in neat rows on the floor. Some twitched and writhed, their groans filling the silence. Others lay so still that Jemmy feared they had passed.

“Water,” the voice said again. This time Jemmy saw that it came from a man who lay near the middle of the room.

“Coming.” Jemmy picked up a bucket and ladle, then stepped over and around men until he reached the one who’d called out. He knelt and carefully helped the man raise his head a bit to drink.

“You a doctor?” the man asked after he’d drunk a dipper full.

Jemmy shook his head. “I’s a packer. But I’s lost my mules and my wagon got burned, so I’s helping out best I kin.”

“Am I going to live?” the man asked. Jemmy wondered if the man had even heard him. How would a packer have any idea if a man would live or die of his wounds? Still, what was the point of arguing?

“Course you are,” Jemmy said. “Jest lie there a spell and let your body heal up.” The man nodded and relaxed back, comforted by the words. Jemmy moved throughout the darkened room, dropping to a knee whenever he found another man awake or aware enough to take a bit of water. In the corner, he found one man whose eyes and mouth were open, unblinking and unbreathing. Jemmy shivered. He set down the bucket and ladle and made his way back through the next two rooms to the back of the house.

“Doc Covey? There’s another one gone,” he said.

The doctor, who’d been dozing in a chair, looked up

blearily. He ran a hand over a face lined with fatigue. He still wore a blood-splattered apron, the stains having darkened since he'd dozed off. "Tell the attendants to carry him out and add him to the wagon," Doctor Covey said. "Then, why don't you lay down near the boys and rest yourself. It's been a long day."

"But, there's so many wounded." Even as Jemmy said it, he swayed on his feet.

Doctor Covey studied Jemmy. "When was the last time you slept?"

"When we first got here," Jemmy said.

Doctor Covey nodded. "But you were up again by sunrise, right? I thought as much. You've been on your feet all day. Son, if you don't get some rest, you'll end up one of those bodies on the wagon, and I'll be short another helper. So, get some rest. That's an order. And don't worry about the body. I'll tell the attendants about it." The doctor leaned forward and pushed on the arms of the chair, grunting as he rose to his feet.

Jemmy nodded and staggered back to the room full of men. In the corner near the little beehive fireplace he found Willie, the little drummer boy he'd carried in his arms on the long march from Socorro. Next to him lay the little Mexican boy who'd been brought to him the next morning. Jemmy laid his hand on the boy's forehead and felt the heat radiating from it. The boy's breathing sounded like the purr of a housecat. Jemmy stretched himself out next to the sleeping boys. He had to rest, the doc had ordered it. But he told himself he couldn't rest for very long. There were too many who needed him.