fall runs riot

Outtakes
from a new book speak
volumes
about the mysteries
of Sedona

SHARING A SECRET

ENTER THE MYSTERY AND BEAUTY OF SEDONA

through its artistic sandstone formations, tumbling creeks and white-boled sycamores. Take the time to know this special place.

For me, experiencing Sedona began early one February morning when I walked into a fog-shrouded Boynton Canyon. Misty winter rain soaked the sandstone, turning it dark red. Waterfalls broadcast sounds into the air. By afternoon, I had hiked to a large alcove where I sat spellbound, watching a curtain of water cascading over the opening. I could see the canyon through the falling water as it glistened with sparks of light.

The ruins of a stone dwelling stood behind me. I wondered about people who had lived in it. Had the Ancient Ones watched this same scene transfixed, as I was, by its magic? The moment felt timeless, without boundaries. Everything felt richly integrated. I felt baptized into some hidden knowledge of the sacred essence of life. It was a moment I will never forget.

Season after season, I went out into the red-rock landscape. I found a multitude of decorated potsherds, a bone awl, digging sticks, and a palette smeared with ancient pictograph paint. I left these artifacts where I found them. They belong to the land. They are part of its story.

Capturing the best light of the day for photographs often meant making my return hike in twilight or in the dark. In the dimness, I accidentally startled deer, javelina, lizards, quail, and rattlesnakes. My cheek was brushed once with the wing of a bat (it felt soft, like peach fuzz). I startled myself several times, mistaking exposed tree roots for rattlesnakes.

Sometimes, however, I carried a backpack and spent the night.

From the summit of Capital Butte, I photographed the rising full moon in January. Light from the west tinted Soldiers Pass and Wilson Mountain in sunset colors as the moon broke over the eastern horizon. To the north, the snow-covered San Francisco Peaks turned pink. As the sun disappeared, the temperature plunged. I made my way down the mountain the following morning.

Working on a photography assignment for *Arizona Highways*, I stayed several summer days alone on Secret Mountain. One night, after a nearly cloudless sunset, a thunderstorm arrived around midnight. Crackling lightning speared the mountaintop. The air smelled acrid with ozone. I prayed for sunrise. The next morning — under a calm, overcast sky — I awoke thankful to be alive . . . . AH

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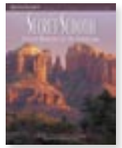

ADDITIONAL READING

Sedona is not just another pretty place. Likewise, *Secret Sedona: Sacred Moments in the Landscape* offers more than pretty pictures. Your senses will transcend beauty and science to savor secret places filled with natural and ancient forces of life in the awe-some Red Rock Country. Written and photo-graphed by Larry Lindahl and published by *Arizona Highways*, the softcover book ($7.96 plus shipping and handling) can be ordered online at arizona-highways.com or by calling toll-free (800) 543-5432.

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