



A PROJECT OF THE DOMINION INSTITUTE

No Regrets

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June 6,2005

She watched the sacred stones splash into the river below, and a feeling of finalization swept through her entire body. She was weightless. The grey clouds separated and a single sun beam shot down, onto her children and grandchildren like a spotlight. The shaman's deep voice echoed through the mountains. The soft vibration made her feel at peace. She closed her eyes, feeling no regrets.

August 19,1932

"Joan you don't understand what will happen if you don't go!" Her mom yelled. "I don't want to go and live with your sister in Kimberley. I won't know anybody. I'm scared, mom." she replied. "Joan it's either you leave, or they're going to take you to the residential school. You're leaving in two days. Get your belongings together." Her mom sighed. She stormed down the hallway to her room. She began to pack her suit case.

September 8,1932

The sign read, 'No Dogs Allowed'. She studied the sign for a moment, not understanding why half the signs in town carried these same three words. She thought that it was quite obvious that dogs did not belong in grocery stores.

May 9,1935

She screamed, "HELP!" as loudly as possible, but no one seemed to notice. She pleaded for them to stop but that was not part of their plan. The steel pipe made her head throb and the cigarettes burned. She could see that the floor around her was covered in her own blood. The men around her were chanting, "No dogs allowed! No dogs allowed!"

She could not move and she could not speak. Her whole body was stinging and her blood soaked sun dress stuck to her body. She saw one mans' face. He had piercing blue eyes. Now she understood the sign.

May 10,1935

There was broken glass and rotten food all around her. She realized that she was in a garbage bin and a tall, dark haired man was yelling at her to wake up. She remembered the man with blue eyes and the sign that read, 'No Dogs Allowed'.

May 11,1935



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She ran as fast as she could until her lungs felt like they were going to explode. She had never been ashamed of being an Indian. Her grandmother had taught her to respect nature and how every living thing had a spirit. Her grandmother did not warn her about the white men. She vowed to keep her heritage a secret. All she had were the clothes on her back, and a knapsack full of food. She was going to run away to Trail. It didn't matter how she got there, or how long it took. She needed to leave the place where everyone knew that she was an Indian.

May 25, 1935

She collapsed on the soft green grass. It took two straight weeks of walking, but she finally made it. She promised herself that she would never admit to being Indian to anybody. If people asked about her dark skin, she would say that she was a tanned Italian. She laid on the grass wondering what to do first. She had no money, food or even a place to go. She knew deep down, that she would be okay.

February 14, 1936

"Hello, Miss, can I please get some more napkins?" a young girl asked.

"Yes, right away," she replied.

She managed to get a job as a waitress at a small family restaurant. The owners took her in a few days after her arrival. They supplied her with a small room and a decent wage. She made a few friends, she didn't tell any of them the truth about her Indian heritage. She was petrified of reliving her past experience in Kimberley.

January 8, 1939

She noticed him as soon as she entered the dance. He was watching her every move on the dance floor, until he finally had the courage to come and talk to her.

"Hello, Miss. May I share the next dance with you?" He asked smiling.

His skin was the colour of authentic porcelain and his eyes were a soft blue.

"Of course." She smiled back.

His name was Harry. He came from an English background and he despised Indians.

December 31, 1949

"IT'S A GIRL!" The doctor told her.

She had never been happier in all of her life. She instantly wished that the girl would be fair skinned like her father. She got her wish.

July 15, 1995



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"Grandma, what Indian tribe do we come from?" her grand-daughter asked, curious.
"What are you talking about? We're not Indian, we're Italian. Silly little girl. Why would you say something so foolish?" She replied, her face turned fire red.
"Oh, I just thought ..."
"You thought wrong. Now go play with your brother." she snapped.
She could not even tell her own grand-daughter about being Indian.

December 1, 2004

She could barely open her eyes. The cancer was spreading from her throat to the rest of her fragile body. Harry had passed away a few years earlier. She knew that they would be re-united soon. A shaman came and did a short blessing. she did not mind. It seemed that ever since Harry passed away, she felt the need to rekindle her Native background. She closed her eyes and passed away to the soft vibrations of his voice.