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Diary of Winter Mirage

By: Tiffany Rain

Journal Entry #1

Today I woke up to hearing hoof beats thundering the ground dangerously. I thought it had been an earthquake. My mother rushed in to wake my sister and I...as if we needed to be woken up.

"The bearded men are coming again, we must run," she spoke to us in our native language. My sister and I looked at each other, debating the situation before jumping up and running outside. Many of our people were scurrying around, it resembled an ant farm being flooded ... except this was much more different

My mother grabbed my sister's arm and started running. I started to follow them, but I remembered the necklace my mother had given me when I had reached the age of becoming a woman. I could not leave it; I refused.

The four-legged animals were nearing, I could sense if and feel the earth tremble in fear beneath my feet. I ran into the tepee and searched under my pillow. The braided grass with a stone carved into a wolf lay strewn across the ground. I picked it up and stumbled outside, still weary from waking up so fast.

"Winter, run!" My sister's voice echoed shrilly across the field. They had traveled so quickly In so little time. I had grown even more scared when I noticed there were only me and the other stragglers left behind. We ran like the wolf packs at night, covering ground fast.

Suddenly the large beasts and the white skinned men were stampeding through the large field, screaming and making odd noises I had never heard before. They waved black sticks at us but didn't make the awful fire fly from them this time. I yelped as a white beast trampled the ground In front of me. It reared up and beat the sky with its hardened feet. The animal cried out in staggered breaths, then fell to the ground on all fours and took off again.

It seemed to take forever for me to reach the shelter of the trees. I never realized how lucky we were to live near the vast forest that covered our lands. The river and waterfall ran through the field, farther off to the west.

"Are you alright?" my mother asked me, quickly studying me before confirming it herself.



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I'll never forget the results of what the strange animals and men left behind ... The tepees were mostly broken, only a few stood. The tall grass was flat and ragged.

"Heranando De Soto's men ..." I heard one man mutter under his breath. His face was creased into a deep, frustrated frown.

That name sent chills through my spine ...

Journey Entry #2

The men have rebuilt the tepees over a tiring series of days. The women spend most of their time weaving, and collecting water from the river. The grandparents tell stories to the children to keep them occupied and teach them about nature, responsibility, culture, and spirituality, and of course, what the meaning of war is (to them).

Today it was my turn to go collect the water. I travelled for quite awhile. I felt pathetically out of shape, although I did this every other day. My legs were sore and stretched by the time I reached the water.

I looked around, no one was in sight. I thought I had heard footsteps. Hesitantly though, I let myself off-guard and waded into the water.

The sunlight hit it in just the right spot to make it look like I was walking through a million liquefied diamonds. I leaned over backwards and let my hair get wet, and then flipped it back over my head. It had splattered cool water all down my back.

After that I'll never forget what happened. I heard laughter from behind me. My eyes had widened and my body stiffened. I turned around to see a man on one of those large animals. This one was black with a white streak down his face. I noticed this man had no beard and had less wrinkles than the other light skinned men.

I felt my heartbeat grow faster and my breath quicken.

"What is your name Indian?" I remember him asking me. I couldn't understand what he had been trying to say back then. To me it was all jumbled sounds meshed together.

He pointed at himself and said something that sounded like, "Jackson," I wasn't entirely sure if that was his name or not.



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I pointed at myself and told him my name. “Winter,” I said. He looked like he had no idea what I was saying.

I looked at the animal and gave him a confused look.
“Oh him, this is a horse” he told me, forgetting that I didn’t understand what he was saying.

I had given him a blank look, blinking and tilting my head.

“Hor-sah,” he repeated laughing a bit.

“H-Horse,” I stuttered, my cheeks growing peace. I felt like a fool.

The man nodded and laughed again. I wondered if he was laughing at me. He eventually stopped. I wasn’t sure what to do, so I just stared at him, or more through him, not many of our people made straight eye contact. He stared into my eyes, making me slightly uncomfortable. The staring contest went on for awhile before another man on a horse approached us.

This man had a beard and wrinkled skin. He gave me a hard glare. Him and the younger man talked, I wanted to know what they were saying. The younger one looked dejected and annoyed. Both the men came at me, screaming at their horses, and yelling things to me. I ran all the way back that day, forgetting the water behind me.

Journal Entry #3 – Weeks Later

A battle broke out between DeSoto and our Chief. The chief brought so many war canoes that I wondered how they would all fit in the river together...I wondered how many would return.

DeSoto brought many men on horses, and they carried their black sticks with great pride.

I’m not exactly sure what happened between the two rivals. I only heard what happened from the strangled words of one of our sick men.

“The after effects of what those black sticks did were dreadful.” Blood oozed from the tiny puncture wounds continuously.

One of our greatest warriors, titled “Shadow Stalker” died tonight. Everyone was deeply hurt and upset. I’ll never forget what he told the crowd gathered around before we were ordered to leave.

“The men were dressed oddly in colourful material and hides... Their sticks made loud noises... deafening. I thought it was just noise, but then my skin felt wet. I looked down and there was blood. I didn’t even know what happened. It just hurt. The



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white men are stronger than I thought.” He hadn’t had a chance to finish. He had broken into a fit of coughs. The elders told us to go somewhere else.

We found out later that we had lost the battle for the second time. Everyone was confused about what to do next...

Journal Entry #4 – Quite awhile later

We live in high security and isolation. We still celebrate all the necessary occasions and still dance around the night fire, but we are still on-guard from the battle...I guess we half expect DeSoto to jump out at us and randomly attack us.

Everything had been going smoothly for awhile, and then days started passing where some of our people would mysteriously go missing. Sometimes in the night, I would awaken to hearing a cry in the night. Usually it turned out to be the wolves yelping and howling to their pack members. Sometimes it sounded like a human crying out to their family. The thought spreads eerie shivers throughout my body.

Later I found out what had happened; I found out when I went looking for my sister. She had gone missing and I was not willing to sit around and wait for the outcome. I was angry at myself for waiting around for the others to go missing after my sister. I guess I had been scared to go searching alone...I’m not exactly sure what was going through my mind, but the chief was waking awhile and having a difficult time sorting out who would be strong, and brave enough to go looking for them and who would stay behind and look after the rest of us.

When the sun had gone down and everyone, including my mother who slept next to me, had fallen sleep, I had crawled out of the tepee and run silently into the night. While following where my instincts had told me to go, I had gotten lost, but then accidentally stumbled across one of their camps.

I ducked reluctantly into a bush. Prickles tore and reached into my skin. I remember wincing at the pain as it dully raced through my body.

The men talked in a strange language. I strained to hear and understand. I wanted to cry at how frustrated I was. I couldn’t understand it no matter how hard I had tried.

It was then I saw my people working for them unwillingly. I didn’t understand the way they were treated. Most of what I saw was cruel and inhumane. They had long strings that they cracked across the prisoners’ backs when they misbehaved.

My eyes had welled with tears. They glazed over until I couldn’t see. I ran back from to tell everyone what I had seen, and I had a feeling it wouldn’t come to an end soon...



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