

Believe

“Strong Spirit! It’s time for morning meal! Come quick, you’re going to be late!”

“I’m coming, Mother.” I replied, just barely. I flopped over on my pine needle bed. It was the Moon of the Falling Leaves and I just had the same dream that I had been having over the past suns. Myself, hunting getting so close to killing a mucwa. But then I would turn around and see all of my friends laughing at me, teasing me, shouting that I could never kill any kind of animal let alone a mucwa! My bed seemed harder than it used to be. Maybe it was the spirits telling me my future. I hope that they would have mercy on me.

I put on my deerskin clothing and trudged down to the fire, which was already crackling loudly. I saw the forest and all the other wigwams and the sound of the birds chirping. It was a nice feeling but the birds would have to fly away soon because winter was coming. The leaves on the trees were at their brightest. The cool air felt good on my cheeks.

“There you are Strong Spirit! We were worried about you!” I saw all of my friends sitting around a fire. I saw an open spot next to my best friend, Falling Star.

“Is there room for one more?” I asked nicely.

Falling Star turned. Then a grin spread from ear to ear. “Strong Spirit! Come, sit down and eat with us!” I gladly sat down next to him as he kept talking. “We have some wild rice, venison, and freshly picked berries!” I dug in.

“That was amazing!” we said at the same time after we had eaten our fill. Falling Star and I both walked down to the river to go check our fish traps. I went to my trap, he went to his. The traps were made of bones of animals we had hunted. Our fathers had shown us the way to make them so that they could get in, but not get out. I was shocked to see three fish as long as the trap swimming around in there. I took the trap out of the water and ran to show my father. “Father, look at what was in my trap that I made!”

My father blinked, thinking it would disappear. Then his eyes lit up. “Strong Spirit! This is almost enough food for a whole meal for the village! This will bring you good luck from the spirits! Go show this to your mother and tell her to get cooking!” I excitedly walked over to mother, gave her the fish, and ran off to do some target practice. I walked to my wigwam and grabbed a spear, a bow, and some arrows that I had made last sun, just in case.

In the field, I saw the rest of my friends already, there just getting started. "Wait for me guys!" I shouted. They waved at me to hurry up. I ran as fast as I could and I leaped in line with my spear. Falling Star was the best with the bow and arrow, but I hadn't discovered my talent yet. When it was my turn I saw a woven circle and my friends said to try and hit the middle of the circle. I raised my spear and ran forward. But just as I threw my spear, the sun blinded me. When I could see again the spear was behind me on the ground.

When I looked up all of my friends were laughing at me. Even Falling Star! It was like my dream, but in real life! I could feel my face getting hot. All of a sudden, I knew what I had to do. I picked up my spear and ran back to the village. Then without anyone seeing me, I dove back into the forest. I would need to find some straight sticks and some sharp rocks. I found ten rocks and five sticks. "Perfect" I thought. I grabbed a big rock and carved the smaller ones into arrow heads. I found some wegu strips and tied the rocks to the end of the sticks. I had 15 arrows total so I had to use them wisely. I changed my clothes into hunting clothes so the animals had a hard time seeing me and now I was finally ready to set off.

I crept to the place that my father had said was the best spot for hunting. There was a cave I had never seen before to the right of me. I peered in, squinting, trying to see through the darkness. All of a sudden, yellow eyes peered through the darkness at me. And out of nowhere, a mucwa lunged out at me. I wasn't good at target practice, but I was the fastest in all of my tribe. I rolled to the side and the mucwa hit a tree making it shudder. With the mucwa stunned, I began to run back to the village, but the mucwa was on my tail and was gaining, very fast.

Then I had an idea. I would have to get this mucwa back to the village if I was going to kill it! There was no way I could get a whole mucwa back to the village if I killed it here. I made a quick, good, plan in my head. I would run to the hill just before our village, then, I would run to the side, wait for it to be still and kill it with my spear. I just hoped that I could make it that far! I put my plan into action. The hill was just ahead. I could tell the mucwa was getting angry because he was trying to hit me over and over again, but each time, he failed. After many times of the mucwa doing this, he did hit me. I let out a cry of pain. I saw my mother and Falling Star coming the hill to see what my shout was about. I was thrown against a tree. The mucwa lunged at me but I rolled to the side. By now I could see the whole village watching in shock. I would not fail to kill this mucwa!

After I rolled to the side, the mucwa slammed its head into the tree. I decided this was when I would strike! My spear was broken and gone from the fight, but my bow was fine. I took one of the arrows that I made, aimed, and after saying a prayer of forgiveness, I shot. It was a direct hit! But it was in the back so I aimed and shot again this time it hit the mucwa in the chest. It went still, with one last roar, and then there was silence.

I realized that the whole village was still watching me. First, they just looked at me, then at the mucwa. All of a sudden, they started cheering, gasping, and dancing! I felt proud that even when no one believed in me, I proved that they were wrong! Everyone went silent when the chief walked out in front. This is what he said: "All hail Strong Spirit! For showing bravery, determination, and when no others thought he could, he did! This great act calls for a POW WOW!"

A cheer went up from the whole village. My mother and father came out from the crowd along with all my friends. They all were crying and saying things like, "I knew you could do it!" and "I'm sorry I laughed!" My happiest dream was coming true! Falling Star stood in front of me and said in a voice I had never heard before. "I'm sorry I made fun of you and I thought you might never hunt any thing. But you proved me wrong! But hey, at least you get the bear paw at the pow wow!" I grinned, happy to have my friends back.

"Well, let's go get ready!" my mother shouted.

Later that night, I had my best clothing on. Leather boots, mucwa skin robe and a mucwa claw necklace made from the very one I killed! As I walked out of my wigwam everyone bowed down to me making a path to an elder. I knew what this was for. I was about to be blessed by the spirits. I slowly walked down to him and when he was in front of me I kneeled down. He gave a tobacco offering, which he let blow away in the wind to the spirits. Then even he moved aside and bowed down to me. I made my way down to the fire where the mucwa was cooking. This was where I would recite my speech. "Fellow villagers, friends, and many more, let us remember this day. I hope this can be a lesson. I would not like any special treatment. Now let us eat, dance and enjoy ourselves. LET THE POW WOW BEGIN!"

The music started and everyone was eating the mucwa. I had the bear paw just like Falling Star said I would. Oh, it tasted so good. It was perfectly chewy and the taste was slightly sweet and very smoky! The beating of the drums were like they were in tune with the earth! People were singing and getting up to dance with each other.

Not only am I the fastest person in the village, but I'm also the best dancer. I asked a pretty girl named Little Flower to dance with me. She blushed her whole face turning red but accepted. She slowly stood up and we started dancing. Everyone else was bowing down again, worshiping us. As we danced, we gracefully moved around the fire, spinning, jumping, and sometimes slowly moving if not at all. I had a strange new feeling of happiness in me. I realized it was love. Finally, when I could dance no more, I had to return to my wigwam but before I did I decided I would talk to Little Flower. Her face was still red from being spun around. "So when can I see you again?"

“Tomorrow maybe?”

“That sounds good! Well, see you tomorrow then!” Feeling exhausted and happy, I walked back to my wigwam, jumped on to my bed, and fell peacefully asleep.