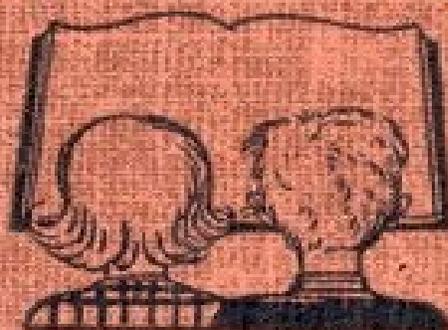


YOUNG MEDICINE MAN

FRANCIS LYNDE KROLL

YOUNG HEROES LIBRARY



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FRANCIS LYNDE KROLL

**YOUNG
MEDICINE
MAN**

(uncaptioned)

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES H. GEER

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*To Alice, who, like Little Eagle, places the welfare of the tribe
first.*

F.L.K.

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YOUNG MEDICINE MAN

CHAPTER ONE

While Little Eagle waited patiently in front of the tepee of Clawing Bear, the medicine man, several of his friends went past. Each of the boys was carrying a bow and arrows.

“Get your bow,” Angry Wolf called. “We’re having a shooting match.”

Little Eagle shook his head.

“I’m taking a lesson from Clawing Bear,” he explained.

“You can take lessons every day when we are in winter camp,” Angry Wolf pointed out. “Today Roaring Lion is giving some fine arrows as prizes.”

Little Eagle’s eyes gleamed. Roaring Lion was one of the best makers of arrows in the whole Sioux nation. One of them would be a prize worth more than a lesson. Little Eagle knew that there was little chance he could win one of the arrows. He was about the poorest shot among the boys in the camp. Still, this time luck might be with him. Certainly it was too good a chance to miss. He started to get to his feet to go with Angry Wolf, but changed his mind and sat down again.

“I have promised to take a lesson,” he said. “I’ll keep my promise.”

“You might as well,” Wounded Face spoke up. “You couldn’t win a prize anyway.”

Little Eagle jumped angrily to his feet. He’d show Wounded Face that he could win a prize. But before he had taken the second step toward his own tepee, Little Eagle realized that

this was no way for a Sioux to act. If he expected to become a great warrior and medicine man, he must keep the promises he made.

“I’ll keep my promise,” he repeated.

Little Eagle squatted again in front of the tepee while Angry Wolf and Wounded Face went on. It seemed a long time before Clawing Bear called for him to come into the tepee.

When Little Eagle stepped inside, Clawing Bear had a pot of grease simmering over a tiny fire. The medicine man motioned for Little Eagle to sit at one side of the fire.

Little Eagle tried to keep his mind on what Clawing Bear was doing, but his thoughts wandered to where the other boys were shooting at the slender target set up for them. He could almost see himself splitting the target while Wounded Face missed. He leaned forward, trying to make his mind and his eyes follow Clawing Bear’s movements.

Abruptly the medicine man stepped away from the fire. He turned quickly, and his burning glance made Little Eagle’s eyes meet his.

“I try to teach you the wisdom of Sioux medicine men,” Clawing Bear growled, “and your mind wanders off to where other boys are shooting for prizes.”

Little Eagle dropped his eyes guiltily. Truly Clawing Bear had looked into his mind.

“I am sorry,” he apologized, and then added with conviction, “I can mix the poultice.”

“Do it then,” Clawing Bear ordered, upsetting the bowl with his foot so that the contents spilled onto the fire. A dense cloud of biting smoke filled the tepee.

Little Eagle waited until some of the smoke had seeped out at

the top of the tepee before he got to his feet. He pulled the bowl from the fire and set it aside. He selected another bowl, put grease in it, and set it on the fire. He began to add powdered herbs which he took from the bags Clawing Bear had hanging on the wall of the tepee.

Clawing Bear had seated himself and was watching Little Eagle's every move. Little Eagle carefully selected the materials to go into the bowl. He hesitated as he reached for the powdered herb in a large bag. At first he took a handful, but he changed his mind and dropped only a pinch into the bowl. He stirred the mixture until it began to boil. When he glanced toward Clawing Bear, he saw a look of approval on the medicine man's face.

"You nearly missed," Clawing Bear said gruffly. "I know it's hard for a boy of twelve summers to study when other boys are playing. There will be no more lessons today."

Using two sticks as tongs, Little Eagle lifted the bowl off the fire. His eyes moved from the bowl back to the fire as though they had been drawn by a magnet. He gave a little gasp as, in the leaping flames, he seemed to see a party of Crow warriors riding swiftly. He tried to count them, but they went too fast. As the Crows appeared to fade away in the fire, Little Eagle became aware that Clawing Bear was speaking to him. He tried to collect his scattered wits so that he could answer respectfully.

"Tomorrow I'll be a better pupil," he promised.

"Tomorrow you will think about becoming a warrior and a hunter," Clawing Bear answered sadly. "Learning the arts of a Sioux medicine man is more important, but you won't think so."

Little Eagle moved toward the flap of the tepee. In a moment Clawing Bear would make the sign of dismissal. There might still be time to race to the tepee, get his bow and arrows, and

join the contest.

“Wait,” Clawing Bear ordered. “You have done better than I expected. As a reward, you may carry some of the poultice with you.”

Little Eagle tried to keep his face from showing the pleased surprise he felt. A real warrior or a real medicine man would have given no sign of pleasure. He watched as Clawing Bear picked up a small bag made from the lining of a deer’s stomach. The medicine man filled it with the mixture from the bowl. Then he took a sack made of soft elk leather and placed the bag of ointment inside the leather sack. He tied the sack with a long thong. He made a knot in the ends of the thong so that the sack would hang at Little Eagle’s belt in the place where a tomahawk would hang when Little Eagle became a warrior.

“What you have learned today may save some Sioux’s life,” Clawing Bear told him solemnly.

Little Eagle tried to find the right words to thank the medicine man. There were words which he should speak, but his tongue couldn’t say them. A brief smile touched the lips of the medicine man.

“I do not care for words,” he said. “Let your deeds thank me.”

Clawing Bear gravely made the sign of dismissal, but Little Eagle didn’t scamper out of the tepee. Instead he stepped out slowly as a warrior would have stepped out of the council wigwam.

When he had gone a few paces, he remembered the other boys. He turned quickly toward his own tepee. He had covered about half of the distance when a commotion near the council wigwam attracted his attention. He turned to look. There was a crowd of warriors near the entrance to the wigwam. A party of Crow chiefs in splendid headdresses was going slowly toward the entrance. Little Eagle had been so

busy with his lessons that he had forgotten this was the day for the powwow between the Crow chiefs and the chiefs of his own tribe to start.

Little Eagle stood watching the Crows as they filed into the wigwam. He thought of how bitterly he hated these enemies of his people. Reluctantly, he admitted to himself that the Crow chiefs were brave. The Sioux chiefs had promised them safety while they were in the Sioux camp, but who knew when a young man, anxious to become a warrior, would ambush them on the way to or from their own camp?

Little Eagle's glance swept over the camp. He saw that there was no real danger to the Crow chiefs. The Sioux dog soldiers had formed a circle around the camp. It was the duty of the dog soldiers to see that camp orders were obeyed. Ordinarily they did little except when they were with a war party or a hunting party. However, now they would see to it that no Sioux left the camp until the Crow chiefs had had time to return to their own camp. Little Eagle was surprised that the teacher and the boys had been allowed to leave camp for the contest. Then he saw that they hadn't. They were standing with the warriors, watching the Crows.

Little Eagle started toward them, but changed his mind. He remembered that strange sight he had seen in Clawing Bear's fire. Those Crow warriors he had seemed to see had been shown to him as a sign. It was a warning. The Crows didn't really want to make peace. They were planning treachery. Flying Wolf, the chief in charge of the Sioux camp was letting the Crows lead him down a blind path. Little Eagle turned and hurried to his own tepee.

When Little Eagle came out of his tepee, he had his bow and quiver of arrows in his hand. He turned toward the land-of-the-setting-sun. In that direction there were low hills covered with small trees and thickets of brush. Little Eagle had no plan for getting past the dog soldiers he could see pacing back and forth along the top of the hill. He hoped a plan would

come to him.

The Sioux camp had been pitched at the base of the hills along the river. There were two rows of tepees, each row forming an arc. When Little Eagle reached the tepee in the second row, he stood near it to watch the dog soldiers. He saw that the dog soldier at the nearest post was Laughing Horse, one of the youngest warriors in the band.

Little Eagle noticed that while Laughing Horse walked his beat steadily, as a good dog soldier should, he often looked toward the river. Little Eagle turned and looked in that direction to see what was attracting the dog soldier's attention. He grinned to himself when he saw that the squaws and young women were working at buffalo hides. Undoubtedly Summer Flower was among them. Laughing Horse was trying to catch sight of the young woman to whom he was paying court. At any other time Little Eagle would have raised a derisive shout.

Little Eagle turned his attention back to Laughing Horse. He watched closely to see how often the dog soldier glanced toward the camp, how often he looked toward the land-of-the-setting-sun, and how often he glanced toward the women. As he watched, Little Eagle kept count of time by slowly folding and unfolding his fingers. He soon knew how long the dog soldier looked in each direction.

Little Eagle tensed himself. The moment Laughing Horse's back was turned, Little Eagle made a running dive for the nearest clump of shrubs. While he was running, Little Eagle was folding and unfolding his fingers as he had done while he was watching the dog soldier. There was a little more time left before Laughing Horse would turn toward the river. Little Eagle used that time to wriggle farther into the shrubs.

Little Eagle continued to fold and unfold his fingers, keeping time to Laughing Horse's movements. He didn't raise his head until the count on his fingers told him that Laughing

Horse should again be looking toward the land-of-the-setting-sun. When that time came, Little Eagle raced across the open space to the next clump of shrubs.

Slowly he made his way up the hill. Near the top, the shrubs were thicker. While these gave Little Eagle better cover, he had to move carefully so that he didn't brush against one of them. Laughing Horse's mind might be on the girl at the riverbank, but he wouldn't miss the quiver of a stem of brush if Little Eagle touched one.

As he saw the sun climbing steadily into the sky, Little Eagle began to worry. It was taking him much longer to get out of camp than he had planned. Still, he must go carefully. If a dog soldier saw him, his whole plan would be spoiled, and Little Eagle well knew that a warrior was not invited to become a dog soldier until he had proved himself more capable than most warriors.

The sun was almost straight overhead by the time Little Eagle reached a point close to the line along which Laughing Horse walked. Little Eagle held his breath while the dog soldier passed so close that Little Eagle could have reached out and touched him. As soon as Laughing Horse passed, Little Eagle crept across to the other side of the hill.

There were more trees on this side. With them to hide him, Little Eagle was able to go faster. Yet it seemed a long, long time before he reached the tree-lined creek where he was out of sight of the dog soldiers.

As soon as he was sure he was safe, Little Eagle got to his feet and started off at a brisk walk. He would have liked to run, but he knew the sharp ears of a dog soldier might catch the thud of running feet. He walked until he was far enough up the next hill so that there was a chance the dog soldiers could see him. Here he crouched down and crawled, slipping from bush to bush until he was across the hill and safely out of sight of the guards.

As he hurried along, Little Eagle grew more and more uneasy. It had taken him a long time to get away from camp. It might take him even longer to discover the treacherous plan that the Crows were making. It seemed almost as though there was a voice whispering in his ear: "Hurry, hurry! Danger, danger!" He began to run.

Little Eagle had been taught the proper pace to use to go swiftly on a long journey. It was an easy trot which he could keep up all day. But the warning voice seemed to be urging him to go faster and faster. The thought of danger to his tribe was like a lash, driving him on. Little Eagle ran faster and faster until he was driving himself as hard as he could go.

He ran until he was gasping for breath and had to slow to a walk. He wanted to sit down and rest, but he forced himself to go on. He walked until he was breathing more easily, although his legs were still trembling from overexertion. He looked about for a place where he could hide and rest.

He was crossing a wide strip of prairie where there were no trees or shrubs behind which he could hide. He saw a place where rain had washed a gully in the hillside. When he turned to it, he found it was a narrow gully with heavy grass overhanging its sides. He crawled into it and stretched out flat. The grass hid him so well that anyone might pass within a few paces without seeing him.

When he felt rested, Little Eagle started to get to his feet. His ears caught the sound of pounding feet. Someone was running toward him from the direction of the camp. Little Eagle guessed that some dog soldier had found his trail and was following him. He should have known that he couldn't escape them. He fought down the impulse to raise his head and look. Instead he stretched out and remained as quiet as possible.

He could hardly believe it when he heard the footsteps go on past and fade out in the distance. It was strange that the dog soldier had followed his trail this far and then failed to see

where he had turned aside. When Little Eagle finally raised his head, whoever had gone by was out of sight.

Little Eagle went back to his own trail. There were a few bits of dry grass which hadn't straightened. He sensed that something wasn't as it should be. He knelt down to get a better look. There were no signs of anyone else having followed his trail. Yet he knew he had heard someone running past. He hunted about until he found another trail several paces to the right of the one he had made. Whoever had been running in this direction had not been following him.

Again Little Eagle knelt to get a better look. He saw that the strides taken were not much longer than his own. The warrior who had passed must not be a large man, but Little Eagle could not tell whether the man had been a Sioux or a Crow. He wished Clawing Bear or a warrior were with him. They would have been able to read all of the signs.

Little Eagle hesitated. He glanced toward the land-of-the-rising-sun, then he turned and took a long look in the other direction. At last he made up his mind. He ran several paces to his left and again started toward the land-of-the-setting-sun.

This time he went at a sensible pace. He ran at a jogging trot, occasionally slowing to a walk. The sun was still high in the sky when he came to the place where the Crow camp should be. He began to go as cautiously as he had when he slipped out of his own camp.

When Little Eagle saw smoke rising into the air across the hill ahead of him, he knew he was almost upon the Crow camp. There didn't seem to be any Crow watchers on this side of the hill. Nevertheless, he moved carefully. The Crows might have dog soldiers around the camp. Near the top of the hill, Little Eagle got to his hands and knees and crawled forward.

The top of the hill was covered with brush and trees, so it was easy for him to keep hidden. He could hear the sounds of the

camp ahead. He crawled forward until he came to a place where the hill sloped steeply down into a valley. He found a clump of brush to hide behind. From there he could look down onto the Crow camp with little danger that a warrior would see him.

As Little Eagle studied the camp, it seemed as though his suspicions had been wrong. There were no more than the agreed twenty-five warriors in it. As nearly as he could tell, the warriors were loafing, waiting for the chiefs to come back from the powwow.

Although everything in the camp appeared to be as it should be, Little Eagle still hesitated. The suspicions in his mind were hard to put aside. But at last he decided to return to his own camp. There was nothing to show that the Crows weren't keeping their agreement. He had made that long run, and taken the chance of being punished by the dog soldiers, all for no purpose.

A warrior rode into camp from the other side

He was starting to move back when a warrior rode into camp from the other side. The other warriors sprang up and surrounded the rider. Little Eagle stopped. He could tell that excited talk was going on in the camp, but he was too far away to hear it. He couldn't even catch the meaning of the signs made by some of the speakers. It did seem odd that the rider didn't dismount. The man talked only a short time to the warriors before he turned his horse and rode out of camp the way he had come.

The whole affair was baffling to Little Eagle. He had a strong feeling that something was wrong, yet he had no idea what it was. He shook his head. And then suddenly he knew the answer. The messenger had come only a short distance, otherwise he would have exchanged his horse for a fresh one before starting the return journey. There was another party of

Crows near! Here was proof that they were planning treachery. They had agreed to have only twenty-five warriors on the disputed land until after the powwow. That rider was proof there was another band near. The only purpose for having that other band near would be to make a surprise attack on the Sioux camp.

Little Eagle knew he had to get back and report what he had learned. Slowly he inched his way backward until he was far enough down the hill that he dared get to his feet. Even then he slipped from tree to tree. It wasn't until he was at the bottom of the hill that he realized he didn't have enough information to take back to camp. Some of the Sioux were so anxious to believe the Crows wanted peace that they would have another explanation for the rider. No, he would have to see the other Crow camp before he could convince his own leaders.

Little Eagle continued away from camp many paces before he turned to go around it. He made a circle wide enough so that there was no longer danger he would be discovered. He continued the circle until he came to the trail made by the rider. At a jogging trot, he turned to follow it.

The sun was alarmingly far down the western sky. However, Little Eagle had learned his lesson, and he held himself to a steady trot. While he was sure this other Crow camp was near, it would still be a long trip back to the Sioux camp. He took some comfort from the knowledge that the Crows wouldn't make an attack before daybreak. By that time he should have his proof and be back to report to his chiefs.

When he heard the sounds of the camp ahead of him, Little Eagle used every skill he knew to move silently. He reached a place from which he could see the other Crow camp. He saw it was much larger than the first one. His eyes sparkled angrily. Here was the proof. This was a camp of many warriors, probably as many as five camps like the first one.

If there had been any doubt in his mind as to the plans of the Crows, activities in the camp below would have erased them. Many of the warriors were busily repairing bows and other fighting equipment. Others were painting their faces with war paint. Little Eagle gave a grunt of anger. While they were pretending to make peace, the Crows were actually getting ready to make an attack. Little Eagle could see that if this band of Crows succeeded in surrounding the Sioux camp, not a Sioux would escape.

Little Eagle had to get the warning back to his own people. Somehow he would make the chiefs listen to him. As he tensed his muscles to start to move back, he could feel danger around him like the chill of a cold wind. This wasn't danger from the Crow camp. This was close at hand. Before he could move to defend himself, someone dropped onto his back. He was pinned helplessly to the ground, and a hand was clamped tightly over his mouth. Little Eagle forgot his own danger in the bitter thought that he had failed his tribe.

His captor leaned close and whispered into Little Eagle's ear, "Follow me."

Little Eagle's heart gave a tremendous bound of relief. The voice was that of Angry Wolf.

CHAPTER TWO

Little Eagle carefully inched his way back from the top of the hill. He knew Angry Wolf was moving back too, but there wasn't the whisper of a sound to tell him where his friend was. When he was several paces down the hill, Little Eagle rose to a stooping position so he could go faster. He darted from tree to tree. He was in the thick growth of trees at the foot of the hill when Angry Wolf hissed softly to call his attention.

Little Eagle looked around. He finally saw Angry Wolf hidden in some thick brush. Little Eagle crawled in beside him.

"We'll wait here to make sure no one is following us," Angry Wolf whispered.

They lay silently in their hiding place while dusk faded into darkness. At last Angry Wolf touched Little Eagle's shoulder to let him know it was time to move. Little Eagle stepped in Angry Wolf's footsteps as the other boy led the way from the Crow camp. Angry Wolf went on until they were many paces from the Crow camp. When he stopped, he listened carefully for signs of enemies.

"What are you doing away from our camp, Little Eagle?" he demanded as sternly as though he were a dog soldier.

A sharp answer rose to Little Eagle's tongue. Angry Wolf was only a summer older than he, and he hadn't yet earned the right to be called a warrior. He had no right to speak to Little Eagle in that tone of voice. Little Eagle choked back an angry answer when he realized that it was anxiety and excitement that made Angry Wolf speak so sharply.

“I felt there was something wrong about the powwow,” Little Eagle answered. “I came to see if the Crows were planning treachery.”

“It would have been better for our party if our chiefs had been as suspicious,” Angry Wolf agreed gloomily. “I slipped out of camp because I too, thought the Crows could not be trusted. Now we must get a warning back to our people.”

“It is a long trip,” Little Eagle reminded him. “If we had horses—”

“It is too dangerous to try to take horses from this Crow camp,” Angry Wolf replied. “If we failed, there would be no one to take a warning to our camp.”

“Happy Otter is in charge of the dog soldiers,” Little Eagle said. “He will be angry when he learns that both of us slipped through the lines. He may have us punished and not listen to our reports.”

“He will have to listen to us,” Angry Wolf protested. “If our camp isn’t warned, it will be destroyed.”

“Happy Otter will be too angry to listen,” Little Eagle insisted. “However, if we rode Crow horses into camp, he would have to take us to the chiefs to explain why we took horses when our chiefs had promised to have peace until the powwow was over. That would give us a chance to tell about this camp.”

“You are right,” Angry Wolf agreed. “We must have at least one horse.”

Angry Wolf led the way farther from the Crow camp. He went on until they were so far from the camp that they could no longer hear the noise made in it.

“I have a plan,” he announced when they stopped. “You return to our camp. If I fail to get a horse, you still may reach our

camp in time. When the dog soldiers arrest you, demand to be taken to Clawing Bear. Everyone knows you are a pupil of his.”

Little Eagle saw the wisdom of Angry Wolf’s plan. It did seem that since he was the one who had thought of taking a Crow horse, he should be the one to try it instead of Angry Wolf. Yet the plan for Little Eagle to demand to be taken to Clawing Bear was good.

“It is a long journey to our camp,” Little Eagle said. “I’ll start at once.”

The two boys had been sitting down as they talked. Now Little Eagle got to his feet. Before he took the first step, Angry Wolf grabbed his ankle. Little Eagle felt the warning pressure of Angry Wolf’s fingers. He stood like a statue. He caught the sound of horses coming from the direction of the Crow camp. A moment later two mounted Crow warriors could be seen in the starlight.

Little Eagle checked the impulse to duck down. Many times it had been explained to him that by remaining motionless he would be safer. The sudden movement of ducking out of sight was more apt to be seen than a person standing quite still. He waited until the two Crows disappeared in the direction of the other Crow camp. Angry Wolf hadn’t released his hold on Little Eagle’s ankle. He increased the pressure to let Little Eagle know that he thought they should make a new plan.

“Those two Crows are great warriors,” Angry Wolf whispered. “They have been sent to keep watch during the night between our camp and the other Crow camp. They will make your trip far more dangerous.”

Little Eagle wondered how Angry Wolf knew so much about the two Crow warriors. He had had only a brief look at them.

“I will keep a sharp watch,” Little Eagle promised. “I will be careful not to walk into an ambush.”

Angry Wolf shook his head.

“Crow warriors may be anywhere between our camp and that other Crow camp,” he said. “The only chance is to ride through on a horse. It would be better if you helped me get a horse.”

Little Eagle kept the smile of triumph from his face. Now they would use the plan that he had thought wisest from the first. Both of them would sneak to the Crow horse corral and each would take a horse. One of them would get away and take the warning to the Sioux camp. His mind turned back to the question that had been bothering him since they had seen the two Crow warriors.

“How did you know those two Crows were great warriors?” he asked.

“I saw the belts they wore,” Angry Wolf answered. “They had trophies of many successful raids.”

Little Eagle was ashamed that he hadn't noticed the belts. Truly, if he were to become a great warrior or a great medicine man, he would have to learn to watch more closely. When Angry Wolf got to his feet and started back toward the Crow camp, Little Eagle followed willingly. Angry Wolf had proved that he should be the leader.

Not the sharpest ear could have heard the two young Sioux as they went back to their hiding place at the top of the hill above the Crow camp. Before he put a foot down, Angry Wolf looked carefully to see that there was no twig to snap under his step. Little Eagle made sure that he stepped in the other boy's tracks.

When Little Eagle looked down onto the Crow camp, he saw that it still was as busy as it had been earlier. As the two boys watched, the warriors finished their work with their fighting equipment. The fires were allowed to die down to beds of glowing coals. It looked as though the warriors were ready to

roll up in their blankets and sleep until it was time to make their attack.

Little Eagle saw several warriors leave the camp and go toward the horse corral. At first he thought they were merely going to look at their horses. He felt the icy finger of fear when he saw the men returning to camp, leading their horses. Evidently the Crows weren't going to wait until dawn to make their attack. Little Eagle and Angry Wolf wouldn't have time to take a warning back to camp. Little Eagle glanced toward Angry Wolf. Angry Wolf signaled that they should move back.

Hopelessly, Little Eagle obeyed the signal. Halfway down the hill, Angry Wolf stopped.

"The horses will be tied to the wrists of their owners tonight," Angry Wolf explained. "We must think of a plan to get one of them."

Little Eagle felt as though a weight had been lifted from his shoulders. Of course that was what the Crow warriors were doing. He had heard of this custom of the Crows. The night before a Crow warrior went into battle, he slept with his horse's long tether tied to his wrist. The Crows believed that while the owner slept, his spirit talked to the horse. In that way, the horse would know just what to do when the battle started. Little Eagle was so relieved to know there was still a chance to get a warning back to his own camp, that he could hardly wait to make the attempt.

"There will be other horses in the corral," he said. "It would be easier to get one of them."

"If we get a horse from the corral, it might be one that wasn't much good," Angry Wolf answered. "The best horses will be tied to the owners' wrists. I must get one of them."

Little Eagle wanted to protest that both of them should try to get horses, but he remained silent. Angry Wolf was the one

who had remembered the Crow custom of keeping horses in camp the night before a battle. He had proved himself capable to be the leader. Little Eagle must obey him until he, too, proved himself.

Angry Wolf stretched out full length upon the ground. He seemed to be unworried about this expedition. He took a piece of dried meat from a leather sack at his belt. He broke the chunk of meat in two and offered a piece to Little Eagle. Little Eagle hesitated. He was ashamed that he had forgotten another lesson their warrior-teacher had taught all of the boys.

“Whenever you leave camp, be sure to take food with you,” the teacher had told them many times. “Sometime you may be hiding near enemies where you don’t dare hunt for food.”

Here was another way in which Angry Wolf had proved himself more nearly a warrior than Little Eagle.

“Take it,” Angry Wolf urged. “We will need all of our strength to do what must be done.”

Little Eagle took the food. While he ate, he stretched out beside Angry Wolf. His muscles relaxed. Almost the moment he swallowed the last of the food, he fell asleep. He was awakened by the pressure of Angry Wolf’s hand.

Little Eagle waited until he was sure that he was wide awake before he sat up. Angry Wolf gave a little tug on his arm to signal Little Eagle to follow. They made their way back to the top of the hill.

The campfires still cast some light about the camp. Occasionally a burning branch would break in two, sending up a flickering light. Little Eagle could see that there was a horse near every tepee. The campfires didn’t give off enough light for him to see the thongs which tied the horses to their masters, but he knew they were there.

Angry Wolf leaned so close that his lips were almost against

Little Eagle's ear.

"I believe I can get a horse," Angry Wolf whispered. "If I fail, you must find a way to get the warning back to our camp."

"You'll get a horse," Little Eagle whispered confidently.

Angry Wolf waited until he was sure no one was moving about the camp. He disappeared so silently that Little Eagle was hardly aware that he was leaving.

Little Eagle turned all of his attention to the Crow camp. He held his breath when he saw a Crow warrior step out of one of the tepees. He let his breath out in a sigh of relief when the warrior turned and went back into the tepee.

It was a long time before Little Eagle caught the faint shadow of another movement in the camp. He knew it must have been Angry Wolf darting between two campfires. Little Eagle watched anxiously for the quick movement of a horse which would betray Angry Wolf to their enemies. Slowly and silently, Little Eagle moved his bow to a shooting position and fitted an arrow to the string.

He saw one of the horses take a couple of steps and thought that must be the one Angry Wolf had selected. The horse moved a few more steps and then stopped. Little Eagle almost shouted a cry of warning as a Crow warrior stepped out of a tepee near the horse. There was enough light from the glowing campfire for Little Eagle to see the warrior start toward the horse, but there the man faded into the shadows. It was a long, anxious time before the Crow again came into view in front of the tepee. The warrior hesitated a moment before he went inside.

Little Eagle put every effort into watching. He was sure that Angry Wolf would leave that horse and try to take another. Little Eagle turned his head, looking from one tepee to the next. Finally he saw another horse moving slowly away from a tepee. The horse took a few steps and stopped. It continued

this slow pace as it moved toward the edge of the camp. When the horse passed between two campfires, Little Eagle couldn't see Angry Wolf, but he was sure his Sioux friend was pressed against the horse's other side.

The horse made slow progress. It walked slowly and it stopped often. At last there was only one more campfire for it to pass and it would be out of the light. Little Eagle's heart leaped into his throat as he saw a Crow warrior step out of a tepee. Evidently Angry Wolf had seen the Crow too, because the horse stopped and remained standing.

Slow moment followed slow moment. Little Eagle found that he was breathing as hard as though he had run a great distance. At last the warrior reached his hand toward the tepee flap and started to go back in. At the same instant the horse took a couple of quick, sidling steps. The Crow warrior whirled around. His warning yell rang through the camp.

Mounted Crow warriors were in pursuit

Since he could no longer hope to stay hidden, Angry Wolf sprang onto his horse's back. He drummed his heels against the animal's side and sent it racing out of camp. Warriors sprang from tepees as though they had been waiting for a signal. Before Angry Wolf had more than started up the hill, mounted Crow warriors were in pursuit.

For a moment Little Eagle forgot that most of the Crow camp was riding toward him. He jumped to his feet to watch Angry Wolf. He remembered his own danger and crouched down out of sight. He tried to get a shot at the pursuing Crows, but in the darkness and among the trees, he had no chance. He watched helplessly as some of the warriors gained rapidly on Angry Wolf.

Little Eagle wondered why the warriors didn't shoot. They were within easy bowshot of Angry Wolf. He knew the answer almost as quickly as he thought of the question. As

long as they had a chance to surround Angry Wolf, they wouldn't take the risk of an arrow wounding a Crow horse.

Angry Wolf reached the top of the hill and started down the other side. His horse was running harder, and the gap between him and his pursuers began to widen. As the Crow warriors dashed past, Little Eagle sprang up. The warriors were so intent on the chase that there was no danger they would look back. Little Eagle raced after them as though he expected to overtake the horses. The riders reached the bottom of the hill, crossed the narrow valley, and started up the other side. Little Eagle's hopes began to rise. Angry Wolf was getting farther ahead at every jump of his horse.

Little Eagle didn't see the arrow fly, but he did see Angry Wolf topple from his horse. The horse kept running, and the Crows went after it.

"They'll catch the horse before they come back to take Angry Wolf's scalp," Little Eagle thought to himself.

There was no time to make a plan. Little Eagle kept running toward the place where Angry Wolf had fallen. He hadn't any idea how he would do it, but he must hide Angry Wolf from the Crows. A Sioux who went to the Happy Hunting Grounds without his scalp could never be happy there.

When Little Eagle reached Angry Wolf, he crouched over his friend. He had been so sure that the Crow's arrow had killed Angry Wolf that he gave a grunt of unbelieving surprise when he found that Angry Wolf still breathed. The deep, bloody gash along Angry Wolf's head warned Little Eagle that there was little hope of saving the other's life. Yet, since he was still alive, there was a chance.

Little Eagle raised his head and paused to listen. He could hear the sounds of the Crows still chasing the runaway horse. He had a little time. He got Angry Wolf's arm across his shoulder and somehow got to his feet. Half carrying and half

dragging the wounded boy, Little Eagle started away from the trail.

He went on until he was gasping for breath. Although it seemed that he had been struggling under that weight for a long time, Little Eagle knew he had gone only a few paces from the trail. But he could go no farther. As gently as possible, he lowered Angry Wolf to the ground. Again he bent over Angry Wolf, and again he was relieved to find that the boy still breathed.

The only plan which occurred to Little Eagle seemed to have small chance of succeeding, but it was better than not trying at all. He picked up a small branch. Holding this in both hands, he walked backward, brushing the limb back and forth across his trail. It wasn't a good job of erasing his tracks, but it might keep the Crows from finding them until after daylight.

When Little Eagle reached the place where Angry Wolf had fallen, he stretched out on the ground. He heard a triumphant yell which meant that the Crows had caught the horse. They soon would be coming back. Little Eagle was careful to make plain marks to make it appear that Angry Wolf had struggled to his feet. He started from the trail in the direction opposite to that in which he had taken Angry Wolf. He took as long strides as he could, and at first, staggered about. He wanted to convince the Crows that they were following the trail of a wounded warrior.

He had gone only a short distance when he heard the sounds of the Crows returning. He began to go faster. Whenever he neared a clump of brush, he went directly toward it. He knew the Crows would stop and send warriors to surround the clump before they went near it. They would take no chance of having a wounded warrior ambush them. Each of these delays would give him a chance to lead them farther from Angry Wolf before he himself was captured.

Little Eagle heard an angry yip. The Crows had returned and

found that the enemy, whom they had supposed slain, had slipped away. Little Eagle increased his speed. It wouldn't be long until the Crows found his trail and came in pursuit. He knew they would come slowly. They were sure that the enemy they were pursuing was badly wounded. They wouldn't be afraid the enemy would escape. Their only fear would be that he might ambush them.

A series of short, sharp yells told him that they had found his trail. He could almost see them following it. A couple of trackers on foot would follow the trail. Mounted warriors would ride at each side of the trackers and behind them. The riders would turn aside to surround each of the clumps of brush toward which he had made his trail.

When he started, Little Eagle's one plan had been to lead the Crows away from Angry Wolf. As he realized that he was getting farther away from his pursuers, he began to change the plan. There was a small hope that he might escape and get back to Angry Wolf. His hand brushed against the bag of poultice Clawing Bear had tied at his belt. If he could get back to Angry Wolf, there might be a chance to save the wounded boy's life.

Little Eagle had thought he was going as fast as it was possible for him to go. As the hope of saving Angry Wolf's life grew, he somehow managed to go faster. He heard the gurgle of running water ahead of him. When he pushed through a clump of small trees, he saw the stream. He knew this was the creek that twisted among the low hills near the Crow camp.

Little Eagle saw that he could take a short run and jump across the creek. He ran as though this were his plan, but he shortened his leap and landed in the water. He stopped to listen. He had gained so much on his pursuers that he could hardly hear them. He smiled to himself when he remembered something the warrior-teacher had told him.

“When you have to hide from your enemies,” the teacher had said several times, “hide as near them as possible.”

Instead of turning downstream, Little Eagle turned the other way. This route would take him near the Crow camp. Although the water was cold, Little Eagle waded up the stream. There would be no tracks here for the Crows to follow. He was quite near the Crow camp when he heard the warriors yelling behind him. He listened long enough to make sure they had found the place where he had jumped into the creek. He felt certain they would look downstream for him. He climbed out of the stream at a place where the Crows had been bringing their horses to water. Even if the Crows looked for the trail here, it would be lost among the many other tracks.

As soon as he left the water, Little Eagle trotted along the bank until he was many paces past the Crow camp. Here he started a great circle which took him around the camp and back upon the ridge on which he had left Angry Wolf. From the spot where he reached the top of the ridge, he was still a considerable distance from Angry Wolf.

Little Eagle went as cautiously as a warrior would have gone. Although he had heard no more sounds of the Crows, it was still possible that they had found Angry Wolf. If they had, they would be waiting in ambush. Even when he reached a place from where he could see Angry Wolf stretched on the ground, Little Eagle moved slowly, stopping often to look and listen.

At last he was sure there were no Crows near. Little Eagle crawled the remaining distance to Angry Wolf. He gave a grunt of dismay. Angry Wolf had thrown one arm across his chest. Little Eagle could see no sign of the wounded Sioux's chest rising and falling as it would do if he still breathed. Little Eagle bent forward until his face was almost against Angry Wolf's mouth. He felt Angry Wolf's breath blowing faintly against his face. Angry Wolf was still alive.

Little Eagle looked at the deep gash along the side of Angry Wolf's head. It had been bleeding badly. Even now a trickle of blood was running from the wound. It looked as though Angry Wolf had already lost so much blood that his life couldn't be saved. But the very first lesson Little Eagle had learned from Clawing Bear was that as long as a person breathed there was hope of saving his life.

Little Eagle opened the pouch at his belt and took the wad of ointment into his hands. He kneaded it with his fingers until it was soft and pliable. If there had been a place near where he could get water, he would have washed the wound before applying the poultice. However, the creek was many dangerous steps away, and there was no time to lose. As gently as possible, Little Eagle spread the soft mass along the wound. He held it in place until the flow of blood completely stopped. He nodded in satisfaction when he took his hand off the poultice and it stayed in place.

Little Eagle bent over Angry Wolf's face. His friend still breathed. Now there was nothing Little Eagle could do except wait. He could see the sun beginning to build its campfires. Already there was a little light in the sky where the sun would rise. It wouldn't be long until the Crow warriors returned unless they had ridden straight on to the Sioux camp.

It was almost daylight when Little Eagle heard the Crows returning. He would have liked to jump up and give the Sioux victory cry. If the Crows were returning this soon, they had given up their plan to attack the Sioux camp.

Little Eagle scarcely dared hope that the Crows would fail to find Angry Wolf and himself. He told himself it really didn't matter. He had saved the rest of the Sioux tribe by outwitting the big party of Crows. Truly he had won a great victory.

CHAPTER THREE

Little Eagle was ashamed of the way his hands trembled as the sound of the returning Crows came nearer. He had trouble fitting an arrow to his bow. He heard the Crows stop at the place where Angry Wolf had fallen. Now that it was daylight, the Crows were sure to find the trail he had made when he had dragged Angry Wolf away. He couldn't fight off the whole Crow party, but he would take some of the Crow warriors with him when he and Angry Wolf went to the Happy Hunting Grounds. He hardly believed his ears when he heard the Crows riding on toward their own camp. They had missed his trail.

Little Eagle warily scouted around. When he returned to Angry Wolf's side, he was sure that all the Crows had ridden into camp. He noticed that Angry Wolf was feebly running his tongue across his lips. There had been no time for Little Eagle to remember how badly a wounded person needed water. He thought of the long distance to the creek. There was the added danger that at any moment Crow warriors might return to search for them. Yet Angry Wolf must have water.

Little Eagle picked up the bag in which he had carried the poultice. It would hold so little water that it scarcely seemed worth while to take the risk to fill it. Then he remembered the pouch in which Angry Wolf had carried meat. Little Eagle untied it from Angry Wolf's belt. The two sacks together would hold enough water to do some good.

Little Eagle started directly toward the creek, but when he reached a point opposite the Crow camp, he turned toward it. He crawled to a place where he could look down upon the camp. The warriors were gathered in a circle, talking earnestly together. Little Eagle couldn't hear their words, but

he could tell from their attitude that they were disputing some plan.

He watched the gestures of each warrior who spoke. From the motions they made, Little Eagle learned that the dispute was about the Sioux who had escaped. Most of the warriors seemed to believe that the Sioux had been able to take a message to the Sioux camp. A few warriors made motions to indicate the ground near their own camp. These were the ones who thought the wounded enemy must be hiding near by.

Little Eagle saw that the Crows had reached an agreement, but there was no way for him to tell what the agreement was. When he saw two warriors mount horses and ride up the hill toward him, it looked as though the decision had been made to search near the camp. He was puzzled to see a third warrior come up the hill on foot. The two mounted warriors sent their horses racing along the trail which led to the other Crow camp. The warrior on foot selected a tall tree and started to climb it.

“The riders are going to urge the other camp to hurry away, and the one climbing the tree is to keep watch,” Little Eagle thought to himself.

While the warrior was giving all of his attention to climbing the tree, Little Eagle slipped toward the stream. When he had gone a few steps, he was in a thick growth of trees where there was little danger that the lookout could see him.

When he had the bags filled with water, Little Eagle hesitated. He almost decided to cross the stream and circle the Crow camp again in order to take a safer way back, but the memory of Angry Wolf licking his lips made Little Eagle determine to take the shorter route. He had to walk carefully, avoiding not only twigs which might snap under his feet but also limbs and brush which might shake if he touched them.

When Little Eagle was near the tree the Crow warrior had

climbed, he redoubled his caution. At first he couldn't see the Crow, but when the warrior moved to look in another direction, Little Eagle saw him. Folding and unfolding his fingers, as he had done when he slipped out of his own camp, Little Eagle timed the movements of the Crow lookout. As soon as he knew it was safe, he darted across an open space to the shelter of another clump of bushes.

Here he got to his hands and knees. He crawled forward, making sure that he touched nothing which would move and betray him. As he crawled past the tree, Little Eagle's heart thumped so wildly that he thought the Crow must surely hear it.

It wasn't until he had crossed the trail and was in the shelter of the trees on the other side that Little Eagle felt safe. He hurried on to Angry Wolf's side.

Little Eagle took the smaller bag and let a few drops of water fall on Angry Wolf's lips. Angry Wolf ran his tongue across his lips and opened his mouth. Little Eagle poured water into Angry Wolf's mouth. He was vastly relieved when Angry Wolf swallowed without choking.

After Angry Wolf had been given water, he seemed to breathe more strongly. It wasn't long until he began to lick his lips again. When Little Eagle gave him more water, he swallowed it easily.

As there was nothing more he could do for Angry Wolf for a while, Little Eagle crawled back to the place where he could watch the lookout in the tree and the Crow camp. He had scarcely settled himself in his watching place when the Crow warrior started scrambling down the tree. The moment the warrior touched the ground, he went racing toward the Crow camp.

Little Eagle turned to look at the camp. It was no longer a camp. The tepees had been taken down and loaded onto pack

horses. All of the horses were in a close-packed herd, with warriors holding them. As the lookout ran down the hill, he waved at the warriors. Immediately the Crows sprang on their horses and started toward the land-of-the-setting-sun.

One warrior stayed behind, holding his own horse and that of the lookout. As soon as the lookout reached the horses, both warriors mounted and started after the others. There was a puzzled frown on Little Eagle's face as he watched the Crows. What was the meaning of this sudden flight?

Little Eagle was still looking at the place where the Crows had ridden from sight when he heard more riders coming from the direction of the other Crow camp. He recognized the two leading horses in the band as those he had seen ridden out of camp a short time before. He saw that this band of Crows was the one that had been taking part in the pow-wow. The warriors were riding so hard that Little Eagle was sure there was a band of Sioux in close pursuit.

The Crows dashed down the hill, rode out onto the trail left by the other band, and went on. As soon as the Crows were out of sight, Little Eagle stood up to look back in the direction from which the Crows had come. Every moment he expected to see a party of Sioux warriors dash toward him. The Crows had been so anxious to get away that it seemed certain someone was pursuing them.

Little Eagle waited eagerly, but there was no sign of his friends. At last he thought to do what he should have done earlier. He stretched out on the ground and put his ear down. He could hear no sound of hoofbeats. The Crows had ridden so far that he couldn't hear them, nor could he hear any sound of approaching Sioux. Disappointedly, he turned back toward Angry Wolf.

When he reached Angry Wolf, Little Eagle had to bend over the wounded Sioux to make sure he still breathed. He gave Angry Wolf more water and then sat down to try to make a

plan. When he had seen the Crows fleeing so hurriedly, he had been sure that Sioux were close behind them. He could have stopped the Sioux and someone would have gone to get Clawing Bear to help take care of Angry Wolf. But now he knew the Sioux weren't coming. If Angry Wolf's life was to be saved, he must have help. But how could he get help?

Little Eagle bent over to look at the poultice on Angry Wolf's wound. He was dismayed to see that a few drops of blood were seeping through the poultice. It should be replaced with a new one, but Little Eagle had used all of his material. He knew then that his only chance to save Angry Wolf was to go to the Sioux camp and get Clawing Bear to help.

Little Eagle immediately began preparations for his trip. He raked up leaves which he put over Angry Wolf, leaving only his face uncovered. If anyone should chance to come that way, he wouldn't be likely to see the wounded Sioux. The leaves would protect Angry Wolf from the chill too, if Little Eagle didn't get back before sundown.

Little Eagle followed the trail which the Crows had made between their two camps. In spite of the need to go swiftly, he held himself to the pace he had been taught. Although it seemed to be taking him a long time to make the journey, he was encouraged by the thought that there would be horses at the Sioux camp. He and Clawing Bear could make the return trip quickly.

As he trotted along the trail, Little Eagle kept a constant watch ahead. It was unlikely that the Crows had left scouts behind, but there was danger that other enemies might be near. There was always the possibility that a band of Pawnees would be hunting on land which belonged to the Sioux.

Going through the valley where the Crow camp had been pitched, Little Eagle looked about without slackening his pace. He saw many signs that the Crows had left hurriedly. They had left several pieces of camp gear behind. Little Eagle

noticed one fine cooking pot which he would have liked to take, but he passed it.

By the time he reached the hillside where he had hidden to rest when he left the Sioux camp, Little Eagle was growing alarmed. Thus far he had seen no spirals of smoke or other signs which ought to have been coming from camp. He should have met Sioux scouts. Surely the chiefs would have sent scouts out to watch the Crows when they failed to return to the powwow. Or, if yesterday's powwow had ended in a quarrel, there would be Sioux scouts out to make sure that the Crows didn't try a surprise attack.

The nearer Little Eagle came to the camping place, the greater grew his fears. For the first time since he had seen the Crow warriors come back to their own camp at daybreak, he became afraid that they had managed to carry out a successful raid.

As he trotted up the hill, Little Eagle thought back to the actions of the Crows. He was sure they had spent considerable time following the trail he had made to lead them away from Angry Wolf. None of the returning Crow warriors had had new scalps at their belts. They had acted much more like defeated warriors than like ones who had carried out a successful raid. Even though he thought of all those things, Little Eagle dreaded the moment when he would look down onto the Sioux camp.

When he reached the top of the hill, Little Eagle saw that the camp was gone. Not a tepee was in sight. His fears gave way to a feeling of triumph when he saw there were no signs of fighting. The tribe had escaped.

When he studied the camping place, he found as many signs of hasty breaking of camp as there had been at the Crow camping place. Little Eagle easily found the trail which led toward the north. The tribe was headed toward the Sioux winter camping grounds.

Little Eagle raised his bow above his head and gave a shout of triumph. Here was proof that he and Angry Wolf had succeeded. In some way, what they had done had warned the Sioux that the Crows were planning treachery and they had escaped. The feeling of triumph faded quickly. How could he alone save Angry Wolf's life?

Little Eagle walked slowly along the trail left by the fleeing tribe. Someone should have left a message for Angry Wolf and him. There should be pointers to tell them where they could join the party and other marks to show how to signal for help, but he couldn't find any. There were many signs to show that the party had gone swiftly. Little Eagle knew there was no hope he could overtake it on foot. He tried to hide from himself his fears and disappointment as he turned to go back to Angry Wolf.

He had scarcely taken a dozen steps on the return trip when he thought of Clawing Bear. The other Sioux might be convinced that he and Angry Wolf had fallen to the Crows, but Clawing Bear would have hope that they would escape. The medicine man wouldn't leave without hiding a message for them. Little Eagle turned back to the place where Clawing Bear's tepee had stood.

He found the message at once. There were only a few piles of stones and sticks, but Little Eagle easily read the story they told.

When it had been learned that both Angry Wolf and he had slipped through the line of dog soldiers, there had been great anger in camp. When they didn't return after nightfall, the best dog soldier scouts had been sent to find them. Some of these scouts had come upon hidden Crows. They had looked down on the first Crow camp and seen the preparations for an attack. As soon as most of the scouts reported back to camp, the chiefs had ordered the tribe to move.

"That's why the Crows were fleeing," Little Eagle said aloud.

“Their scouts found our camp abandoned. They were afraid this party would circle to cut them off and at the same time send for help. They were afraid they would be caught in the same sort of trap they set for us.”

After he had read the message, Little Eagle looked farther. He found the sign pointing to the cache. Clawing Bear had hidden the sign well. That meant that whatever was hidden was so valuable Clawing Bear didn't want it to fall into enemy hands.

Little Eagle had to do considerable searching before he found the hiding place. Clawing Bear had so cleverly put the dirt back into the place that it was almost impossible to find. Little Eagle dug the dirt loose with a pointed stick and scooped it out with his hands. The stick struck something solid. When Little Eagle scooped away the dirt, he found a cooking bowl turned upside down. As soon as he lifted the bowl, he saw the leather bag. He was trembling with excitement when he picked up the bag. He unwrapped one of the small packages it contained. It was a package of powdered herbs used in making the poultice.

Little Eagle didn't need to open the other packages to know that they contained the other necessary materials. Truly Clawing Bear was a great medicine man. In some mysterious way he had learned that Little Eagle would need these things.

Little Eagle glanced up at the sky. The sun was almost straight overhead. He had been gone a long time. Now that he had the things to cure Angry Wolf, it was important that he get back as soon as possible.

Little Eagle tied the leather bag to his belt. He stooped down to pick up the cooking bowl, but changed his mind. He would take the larger one he had seen abandoned in the Crow camp.

As he hurried back toward Angry Wolf, all kinds of fears tormented Little Eagle. Without water, Angry Wolf might not

still be alive. Some enemy might have passed that way and found him. Little Eagle used all of his will power to hold a reasonable pace. He reminded himself that if he became exhausted, there would be no one to care for Angry Wolf.

When he went through the valley where the Crow camp had been, Little Eagle stopped only long enough to pick up the cooking pot. By the time he reached the hill on which he had left Angry Wolf, he was so tired that he had to drive himself to keep going. Yet, when he knelt beside Angry Wolf and saw that the wounded boy still breathed, he forgot his weariness.

As soon as he had given Angry Wolf a drink of water, Little Eagle started to build a fire. He knew it would be dangerous. It would lead any passing enemy to them. Still he must cook the poultice to put on Angry Wolf's wound. To make the danger as small as possible, he selected dry, hard sticks for the fire. These would give off little smoke and would soon burn to a bed of glowing embers.

When he had the fire going, Little Eagle poured some of the water into the bowl. He set the bowl on the fire. While the water was heating, Little Eagle took the packages from the bag. He found a packet of bear's grease and laid it close at hand.

As soon as the water was boiling, Little Eagle used two sticks as tongs and picked the bowl from the fire. He moved the sticks so as to slosh the water around in the bowl. When he had cleaned the bowl as much as possible, he dumped the dirty water out. He rinsed the bowl with the water that was left in the bag before he set it back on the fire.

Little Eagle dropped some bear's grease into the bowl. While he was waiting for it to melt, he examined the poultice on Angry Wolf's head. Although blood was seeping around the edges, the poultice seemed to be firmly in place. He would need water to soak it so he could remove it.

Little Eagle took the two bags and started toward the stream. He was so tired that the journey seemed longer than the trip he had made back to the Sioux camping place. It was fortunate for him that there were no enemies about. He couldn't arouse himself enough to take care. Several times he stepped on twigs which snapped loudly.

Back at the fire, Little Eagle picked up a small stick. He poured portions of the powdered herbs from each package into the bowl, stirring all the time with the stick. He stirred the mixture until it started to bubble. Then he picked the bowl from the fire, using the same sticks for tongs that he had used before.

While the mixture was cooling, Little Eagle took one of the bags of water. He let water drip from it onto the poultice on Angry Wolf's wound. The water washed the blood away from the edges of the wound, but it didn't soften the poultice. Little Eagle squatted beside Angry Wolf and carefully thought back over the lessons Clawing Bear had taught him. Clawing Bear's words finally came back to him.

"The poultice will fall off when the wound is cured," the medicine man had said. "If the wound starts to bleed again, put a new poultice over the old one."

Little Eagle was almost cheerful as he went back to the bowl. The mixture had cooled enough so that he could dip it up in his hands. He kneaded it with his fingers until it was soft and pliable. He spread it over the old poultice, making sure that the edges were tight against the skin so that there was no blood seeping from the wound.

"Thank you, Clawing Bear," Little Eagle said aloud, when he saw that the wound was no longer bleeding.

It wasn't until he had finished caring for Angry Wolf that Little Eagle realized how hungry he was. He had eaten nothing since he and Angry Wolf had shared that small piece

of meat the evening before. The thought of venison steak made his mouth water. He had seen the place where deer came to the stream to drink. However, he was afraid to leave Angry Wolf long enough to stalk a deer. Tonight some small game—a rabbit or a squirrel—would have to do.

Little Eagle picked up his bow and arrow. He remembered that the water sacks were empty, so he tied them to his belt. He had seen squirrels in some of the trees between here and the creek. He kept watch of the trees as he walked along. When he saw a pair of squirrels running along the limb of a tree, he stopped. Slowly he brought his bow up. The moment one of the squirrels stopped, Little Eagle let an arrow fly. He grinned to himself as the squirrel dropped from the tree with an arrow through its head. Perhaps the next time he was in a shooting match he would win a prize.

At the creek Little Eagle filled the water bags. He skinned and dressed the squirrel and washed it in the stream.

When he returned to Angry Wolf, Little Eagle put water into the cooking bowl and set it on the fire. He cut the squirrel into small pieces and dropped them into the bowl. As the first tantalizing odors of cooking meat rose from the bowl, he was tempted to take one of the pieces and eat it before it was done. To keep himself busy while the meat was cooking, he found a small stick. He pulled the bark from it and scraped off the loose fiber.

He waited until he was sure the meat was thoroughly cooked before he lifted the bowl from the fire. He set the steaming bowl close to Angry Wolf. Little Eagle dipped the stick into the bowl, then held it so the broth dropped onto Angry Wolf's lips. Angry Wolf opened his mouth and swallowed the drops hungrily. Patiently, Little Eagle dipped the stick into the broth and let the broth fall into Angry Wolf's mouth.

When he had given Angry Wolf all of the broth he could dip out with the stick, Little Eagle ate the meat. By the time he

had finished, the sun was down. Already the air was becoming chilly. He considered building the fire up so that Angry Wolf would be kept warm. Because a fire could be seen a long distance at night, he decided against that plan. He covered the fire with dirt. In order to keep Angry Wolf as warm as possible, Little Eagle gathered more leaves and dumped them over the wounded Sioux.

Little Eagle gathered a smaller pile of leaves for himself. It was scarcely dark when he snuggled down into the leaves. He fell asleep while he was still trying to get into a more comfortable position.

CHAPTER FOUR

Little Eagle awoke as the first, faint streaks of dawn were lighting up the eastern sky. He sat up, trying to decide what sound had wakened him. He glanced toward the other pile of leaves and saw Angry Wolf struggling to sit up. Angry Wolf managed to raise his head, but immediately let it sink back upon the leaves.

“Where am I?” Angry Wolf asked weakly when Little Eagle bent over him.

“We’re camping by ourselves,” Little Eagle answered.

“Where are—” Angry Wolf began but stopped when Little Eagle raised his finger to his lips in the signal for silence.

“You have been badly wounded,” Little Eagle explained. “When you have eaten, I’ll tell you about it.”

Little Eagle held one of the water bags to Angry Wolf’s lips so that he could drink.

“I’ll get meat for our breakfast,” Little Eagle told him.

Little Eagle saw that the chill morning air was making Angry Wolf uncomfortable, but he was afraid to build a fire until he had scouted around their camping place. He tied the one empty water bag to his belt, took his bow and arrows, and started off.

Little Eagle didn’t go directly to the stream. Instead, he circled the camp to look for signs of enemies. Not until he had completed the circle did he start toward the creek. On the way, he stopped often to look and listen. By the time he reached the

stream, he was sure that there were no enemies near.

He studied the place where deer came down to drink. There were signs that deer had been there a short time before. It wasn't likely that others would use the same watering place soon, so Little Eagle shot another squirrel. He cleaned and dressed it at the stream.

As soon as he was back at camp, Little Eagle built another fire. He spitted the squirrel on a stick and roasted it over the coals. When the squirrel was cooked, Little Eagle carried it to Angry Wolf. Angry Wolf took it, but he didn't have strength enough to tear it apart. He handed it back to Little Eagle. Little Eagle twisted off a chunk which he handed to his friend. Angry Wolf accepted the piece of meat, but he didn't start to eat. Little Eagle looked at him questioningly.

"I eat when you eat," Angry Wolf told him.

Little Eagle took a piece of the meat for himself. Both of them ate until the meat was gone.

"Now tell me how I came here," Angry Wolf ordered.

As briefly as possible, Little Eagle told him all that had happened since Angry Wolf had been knocked from the horse. As he finished his account, Little Eagle looked toward Angry Wolf. The other boy's eyes were closed and he seemed to be asleep. Little Eagle picked up his bow and arrow and got to his feet.

"Where are you going?" Angry Wolf asked, opening his eyes.

"We need more meat," Little Eagle explained. "I'm going to try to get a deer."

"Let it go until tomorrow," Angry Wolf answered. "You have done everything. You need a rest. Tomorrow I'll be strong enough to do my share. Let the hunting go until then."

Little Eagle tried to hide the doubt he felt when he looked toward his friend.

“We are in much-fought-over land,” he pointed out. “Tomorrow some of our enemies may come here. Then we would have no chance to hunt.”

“That is true,” Angry Wolf agreed slowly.

“I’ll put a bag of water where you can reach it,” Little Eagle told him. “There is much game. I shouldn’t be gone long.”

“Prop me up and put my bow near me before you leave,” Angry Wolf suggested.

Little Eagle found a large limb which had been blown from one of the trees during a storm. He dragged this over and put it behind Angry Wolf. He put a water bag as well as the bow and arrows where Angry Wolf could reach them easily.

“I have some good hunting arrows,” Angry Wolf said. “Take two of them. Any hunter might miss one shot.”

Little Eagle selected two arrows from Angry Wolf’s quiver. Before leaving, he made another scouting trip around their camp. When he had made sure that there were no enemies near, he started off.

Little Eagle went to the creek. He studied the place where deer came to drink. There were many tracks on the other side of the creek. He wet his finger and held it up to tell from which direction the wind was blowing. He gave a pleased nod when he found it was blowing from the other side of the creek toward him. He jumped across the creek and went straight into the wind.

Little Eagle picked his way with care. He went slowly, being careful to make no sound that would warn game ahead of him. He hadn’t gone far when he sighted five deer grazing in a small meadow.

The meadow was completely surrounded by trees. Although the deer were grazing near the middle of it, they were within bowshot of the nearest trees. Little Eagle dampened his finger again and tested the slight breeze. It was blowing directly from the deer toward him.

As he worked his way toward the deer, Little Eagle noticed that the stag constantly lifted his head and sniffed as though sensing danger. Little Eagle was sure that he was moving so quietly the deer couldn't hear him. With the wind blowing from the deer toward the boy, the stag couldn't catch his scent. Still the animal continued to sniff and move about uneasily.

Little Eagle stopped. In some way his movements must be carrying a warning to the deer. However, while Little Eagle remained motionless, the stag continued to sniff. Suddenly he snorted and bounded high into the air. While Little Eagle watched helplessly, the whole herd raced away. In a moment he saw the cause of the deer's alarm. Two big gray wolves dashed out of their hiding place toward the nearest doe. Both wolves sprang, but both missed, and the deer were gone.

Little Eagle was so angry that he brought the bow up and took aim at one of the wolves. Before he let the arrow fly, he remembered that it was one of Angry Wolf's good hunting arrows. If he missed the wolf, or merely wounded it, the arrow would be lost. Reluctantly he lowered the bow.

There would be no chance to stalk those fleeing deer. Little Eagle knew the stag might lead his herd for miles before he allowed them to stop and graze again. When he saw the wolves slink off to the right, Little Eagle turned to his left.

He continued until the sun was straight overhead without finding another herd of deer. Disappointed, he turned back toward the creek. This was too far for him to carry a deer if he managed to get one. Besides, he didn't like to stay away from Angry Wolf so long. Angry Wolf was better, but he was still

far from well.

Twice on the journey back to the creek, Little Eagle saw small herds of deer. Each time the wind was blowing from him toward them. They caught his scent and dashed away long before he was within bowshot of them.

Little Eagle reached the creek at a place far downstream from where he had crossed before. He turned to follow the bank to the place where he had crossed. He had covered about half of the distance when he saw a stag and two does grazing near the creek. The deer were in a small, grassy glade. They were so far from the trees that it didn't seem possible for Little Eagle to get close enough to them. Still he didn't want to give up without trying.

He tested the wind again. Before he started toward the deer, Little Eagle worked his way to a point where the wind was blowing from them to him. From the cover of the trees nearest the deer, Little Eagle measured the distance with his eye. It was too far for a bowshot. He would have to try to reach the clump of shrubs between him and the deer.

The deer continued to graze while Little Eagle crawled toward them. He reached the clump of shrubs without alarming the game. He was still a long bowshot from the deer, but as there was no more cover between him and them, he had to risk a shot from where he was.

As Little Eagle slowly raised his bow, the stag lifted his head and sniffed suspiciously. Little Eagle took careful aim at the nearest doe. He pulled the bowstring back with all of his strength. At the instant Little Eagle released the arrow, the stag snorted and gave a tremendous leap. Before the doe could heed the warning, the arrow struck her. The doe crumpled to the ground. Little Eagle gave a low cry of triumph. Here was food to last several days.

Dressing the deer was slow work. It had looked easy when

Little Eagle had watched a warrior do it. He found it wasn't nearly so easy as it had looked. He could have skinned the deer more quickly if he hadn't been so careful not to cut a hole in the hide. This was the first deer he had ever shot. He had been told that if a hunter removed the hide from the first deer or buffalo he shot without cutting a hole in it, he would always be a successful hunter.

When he finally had the hide removed, Little Eagle looked it over carefully. He had done it. There wasn't a single hole. He finished dressing the carcass and tied it as high in a tree as he could reach. When that was done, he carried the hide to the stream where he buried it in the soft mud. He went back to the carcass and cut off a large chunk of meat to take with him.

Little Eagle approached camp uneasily. He had been gone much longer than he had planned. In that time many things could have happened to Angry Wolf. As he stepped into sight of the camp, Little Eagle stopped abruptly. Angry Wolf had picked up his bow and was holding it with an arrow pointing straight at Little Eagle. In his surprise, Little Eagle didn't notice that Angry Wolf hadn't the strength to draw the bowstring back. When Angry Wolf saw that it was Little Eagle approaching the camp, he lowered the bow.

"You are better," Little Eagle exclaimed.

"By tomorrow I'll be able to travel," Angry Wolf assured him.

As soon as he had a fire started, Little Eagle cut steaks from the piece of meat he had brought to camp. He noticed that both water bags were empty, so he took them to the creek and filled them while the meat was cooking.

While they were eating, Angry Wolf insisted that Little Eagle again tell all that had taken place since he had been wounded.

"I owe my life to you," Angry Wolf said, when Little Eagle finished the account.

“You would have done the same for me,” Little Eagle insisted.

“I wouldn’t have known how,” Angry Wolf admitted. “When we were trying to get horses from the Crows, I thought I should do it because I am older than you. Now you have proved that you are the real leader.”

“There are many things I should have learned from our teacher,” Little Eagle protested. “In winter camp I will learn more.”

For a time both boys were quiet. When Angry Wolf broke the silence, he spoke gravely.

“It is a long journey on foot to the winter camp,” he said. “Old-man-of-the-north might send snow to catch us on the prairie.”

Little Eagle shuddered. He knew what it would be like to be caught on the prairie in a blizzard. They had no tepee to shelter them, nor blankets to keep them warm. There were places where they might travel on foot for several suns without seeing a tree. If they were caught in one of those places, they would be without fuel or shelter.

“We must get horses,” Little Eagle urged.

“It is late in the season for hunting parties to be here,” Angry Wolf said. “There may be no one from whom we can take horses. Besides, our medicine is not strong. We didn’t get any horses from the Crows.”

“What are we to do?” Little Eagle demanded.

“Perhaps tomorrow we can decide,” Angry Wolf suggested. “It may be that while we sleep, you will have a dream to guide us. You have studied under Clawing Bear. You might have a medicine dream like a medicine man or a warrior.”

“I hope I do,” Little Eagle responded.

Little Eagle took the log away from Angry Wolf's back. As soon as Angry Wolf had stretched out on the pile of leaves, Little Eagle put armloads of leaves over him. Before he crawled into his own pile of leaves, Little Eagle covered the fire with dirt.

When he awoke in the morning, Little Eagle could taste disappointment like bitter food. He had hoped that a dream to guide them would come to him in his sleep, but there had been none. He glanced toward Angry Wolf. The look on Angry Wolf's face told plainly that he had had no vision either.

Angry Wolf got slowly to his feet. He stood for a moment, weaving from side to side. Little Eagle jumped up and ran to him when it looked as though Angry Wolf would fall. He steadied Angry Wolf while the wounded boy sat down.

"I'm still weak," Angry Wolf admitted unhappily.

"You are stronger than you have been," Little Eagle encouraged him. "That is the first time you have been able to get to your feet."

After he had eaten, Angry Wolf again stood up. He was able to take only a few steps before he had to sit down.

"It will be another day before I can travel," he said.

Little Eagle picked up the water bags. One was empty and the other had only a little in it.

"Drink this," he said, offering the water bag to Angry Wolf. "I'll fill both of them and bring more meat back to camp."

"We should get closer to the stream," Angry Wolf told him. "This is too far for you to carry water and food. Besides, you are making a trail which can easily be seen if an enemy comes this way."

Little Eagle had thought of the danger of an enemy stumbling onto his trail. Wherever they camped, there would be danger of someone finding them. Here was the added danger that the trail leading to their camp would be found.

“I’ll try to carry you,” he offered.

“I’ll lean on you and walk,” Angry Wolf replied.

Little Eagle kicked dirt over the fire. He brushed about the camping place with a small branch. It wasn’t possible to hide the signs that they had been there, but by brushing over the ground, Little Eagle made it difficult for anyone to judge how long they had been gone.

Angry Wolf had difficulty walking. The first two or three steps he was able to go by placing his hand lightly on Little Eagle’s shoulder. He rapidly grew weaker and had to lean heavily on Little Eagle. They went slowly, stopping often to rest. The day was half gone by the time they reached the stream. Angry Wolf was so exhausted that he sprawled on the ground and immediately fell asleep.

The next few days were busy ones for Little Eagle. Twice a day he made a scouting trip around their camp. He built a lean-to which would protect them in case of a storm. He brought the rest of the meat into camp and tied it in a nearby tree. Whenever he could find time, he added to the supply of firewood.

Angry Wolf gained strength slowly. The first two days after his long walk to camp, he spent most of the time sleeping. The third day he managed to walk to the creek for water. That evening the poultice fell from his wound. When Little Eagle looked at the wound, he found that it was completely closed.

“In another day or two I’ll be able to travel,” Angry Wolf said confidently.

“I’m sure you will,” Little Eagle agreed.

The fourth morning Little Eagle started the day by making his usual scouting trip. He crossed the stream and went south to the first row of hills. As he was going up the hill, he stopped and sniffed the air. The wind was blowing from the other side of the hill toward him. It carried a faint odor of wood smoke. He used all the skill he had to reach the top of the hill without giving warning to whoever was on the other side of it.

His first glance from the top of the hill showed him that there was no one camping in the valley below. There were only two trees in the valley. The branches on them were so high that Little Eagle would have been able to see any camp under them. But the smell of smoke was stronger.

“The camp must be across the hill on the other side of this valley,” Little Eagle told himself.

Little Eagle looked doubtfully at the valley below him. If he crossed it to climb the hill on the other side, he would have to walk in the open. He shook his head. Since enemies were so near, he would have to be very careful. The best plan would be to circle to the left where he could stay in the protection of trees.

It took him a long time to circle through the trees to a place where he could look down into the valley. When he saw the camp, he knew it belonged to Pawnees. Most of the tepees were hidden from him by trees, so he couldn't count them and learn how many warriors were in the party. The cooking fire was in the open where he could see it. Several warriors were gathered around it. Little Eagle saw two of the men leave the campfire and go toward the grove of trees west of camp. When he looked in that direction, he saw horses grazing. There were at least twenty horses in sight, and others were hidden from him by the grove.

Little Eagle watched the two warriors. He saw them start to drive the horses toward camp. If the horses were being brought in, it must mean that the warriors were ready to leave.

Yet, when Little Eagle glanced back toward the fire, the men were still sitting there. It seemed that they were waiting for something or someone. A couple of men got up to go help the two with the horses, but no one seemed to be in a hurry.

While Little Eagle was wondering if he should try to get closer to the camp, a rider came dashing toward it from the east. The man jumped off his horse and spoke excitedly to the others. The warriors suddenly sprang into action. In a few moments every warrior had caught a horse and was mounted. At a signal from the man who had ridden into camp, all of the warriors dashed off in the direction from which the rider had come.

Little Eagle understood their actions as well as if he had heard them talking. The rider who had dashed into camp was a buffalo scout. He had found a large herd of buffaloes near camp and was leading the warriors to the hunt. If the buffaloes had been far from camp, some warrior would have been given the job of bringing the herd of pack horses. The pack horses would be needed to bring the meat into camp.

Little Eagle looked longingly at the herd of horses. If Angry Wolf and he had two of them, they could safely risk the long journey across the prairie. Little Eagle was confident he could get two horses, since no warrior had been left to guard the herd. By the time the Pawnees had finished killing and butchering buffaloes, he and Angry Wolf could have half a sun's start. But Angry Wolf wasn't strong enough to do the hard riding they must do to escape.

Little Eagle turned away and hurried back to camp.

"What did you learn?" Angry Wolf asked as Little Eagle came into sight.

For a moment Little Eagle looked at his friend in surprise. Did Angry Wolf have the power to look into his mind as Clawing Bear had done? Little Eagle smiled at his own foolishness. He

had been gone longer than usual. He had hurried back into camp. These things had told Angry Wolf that he had discovered something.

“There is a party of Pawnee hunters,” Little Eagle answered.

“Are they coming this way?” Angry Wolf asked quietly.

Little Eagle shook his head.

“They found a herd of buffaloes near their camp,” he answered. “They’re hunting now.”

“It is too bad that you couldn’t have taken two of their horses,” Angry Wolf said thoughtfully. “We would have had a chance to escape.”

“I could have taken two,” Little Eagle answered. “The horses that the warriors weren’t riding were left unguarded in camp. I didn’t take them because I was afraid you weren’t strong enough to ride as hard as we would need to ride in order to escape.”

“I could ride,” Angry Wolf said. “However, it would be too dangerous for you to try to get the horses. It is likely that someone would catch you at it.”

“I could still get them before the warriors returned from hunting,” Little Eagle insisted.

“It might be our last chance to get horses,” Angry Wolf said thoughtfully.

“I am going to get horses for us,” Little Eagle said, suddenly making up his mind.

“It is too dangerous,” Angry Wolf repeated. “There is some danger you have overlooked.”

“When the Pawnees have finished dressing the buffaloes they

have killed, they will cure the meat before leaving their camp,” Little Eagle pointed out. “While the meat is curing, the Pawnees will have time to scout. They are sure to find our camp. There is a danger that I have seen.”

Angry Wolf smiled.

“You are learning to be a good leader,” he said. “If you think you can get horses for us, I am willing that you try.”

Little Eagle whirled around to leave camp. Before he had gone a dozen steps, he turned back to Angry Wolf.

“How would you take the horses?” he asked. “You have had more lessons from our teacher than I have had.”

“First I would make a scouting trip to be sure that the Pawnees will be hunting long enough for us to get a safe start before they discover the loss of their horses,” Angry Wolf answered thoughtfully. “When I had the horses, I’d ride straight here.”

A confident smile touched the corners of Little Eagle’s mouth.

“I will get the horses,” he vowed.

“From here we’ll leave a crooked trail,” Angry Wolf said with equal confidence.

CHAPTER FIVE

Instead of taking a direct route back to the Pawnee camp, Little Eagle made a circle. This took him to the valley where he was sure the Pawnees were hunting. Before he reached the top of the hill which formed the boundary of the valley, Little Eagle could feel the ground trembling. The Pawnees must have found a tremendous herd of buffaloes.

From the top of the hill he could see the progress of the hunt. The far end of the valley was covered by the fleeing herd. Some of the buffaloes had crossed the hill and were out of sight. Already the valley was dotted with the carcasses of slain buffaloes. The Pawnees were still riding into the herd, selecting young cows to be slain and added to the supply of meat.

Little Eagle knew how Sioux hunters would do if they were on this hunt. They would kill as many buffaloes as they could use. As soon as they had enough, each hunter would start dressing those he had killed. As Little Eagle watched, a Pawnee hunter stopped his horse, dismounted, and started skinning one of the buffaloes he had killed. Another warrior, and another, turned back to the slain buffaloes until the whole party of hunters was busy skinning and dressing buffaloes.

Little Eagle waited only long enough to make sure that no warrior was sent to bring the horses, before he turned toward the Pawnee camp. Little Eagle kept a sharp watch as he approached the horses. He could have made a mistake when he watched the hunters leave the camp. A warrior might have been left to watch the horses.

As soon as he was sure there was no one watching the herd, Little Eagle went straight to the horses. A few of them moved

away from him, but most of them continued grazing. He selected the two that he thought were the best in the herd. He jumped onto the back of one of them and took the halter rope of the other.

Little Eagle made no attempt to hide his trail. Angry Wolf had said they would make a crooked trail when they left camp. There had been many lessons about how to hide a trail. Angry Wolf probably knew most of the tricks.

When Little Eagle rode into camp, Angry Wolf was ready to leave. He had made a bundle of the small piece of meat left from the deer Little Eagle had shot. He had dug up the deer hide and washed it in the stream. Little Eagle noticed that Angry Wolf had brushed around the camping place with a tree branch and had even scooped up the coals from the fire and dumped them into the stream. When the Pawnees trailed the horses to this camp, they would learn little about how many had camped there or how long they had been gone.

Little Eagle took the package of meat and the deer hide. He watched anxiously as Angry Wolf climbed onto the back of the other horse. Ordinarily, Little Eagle would have tossed the halter rope to Angry Wolf before he started to mount. This time he held it until Angry Wolf was safely on his horse.

“We’ll follow the trail the Crows made,” Little Eagle called to his companion as they started off.

Little Eagle took the path he had made when he had been carrying water to Angry Wolf. He had planned to turn toward the place where the Crow chiefs had camped. Before he reached the trail, he changed his mind. It might be easier to fool the Pawnees if they were led to believe their enemies were Crows.

Although his horse was eager to run, Little Eagle held it to a walk. He continually looked back over his shoulder to see how Angry Wolf was getting along. He was pleased to see

that Angry Wolf was sitting erectly on his horse. He didn't appear to be any more tired than he would have been in camp. At a place where the trail went over level ground, Angry Wolf brought his horse alongside that of Little Eagle.

"Did the Pawnees have many buffaloes?" Angry Wolf asked.

"Enough to feed a big camp many days," Little Eagle replied. "The sun will be far down by the time they have all of them skinned and butchered."

"That is good," Angry Wolf said. "We'll have a long start before they notice their loss. However, as soon as the Pawnees learn they have lost horses, they'll send two or three trackers on our trail."

Little Eagle shifted uneasily on his horse. There were many good trackers among the Sioux, but none so good as the Pawnees. Many times he had heard warriors tell about Pawnees following trails that it had seemed impossible for anyone to find.

As the sun began to slip down the western sky, Little Eagle lost some of his uneasiness. Angry Wolf was still riding erectly. Perhaps, if they had to increase their speed, Angry Wolf could stand the pace. At the top of each hill, both Angry Wolf and Little Eagle looked back down the trail. Each time they were relieved that there was no sign of pursuit. Before the sun went down, they stopped at the top of a high hill. Little Eagle jumped from his horse and climbed a tall tree. From there he could see a long way back. There was no sign of Pawnees.

The Crow trail turned into land that was much rougher. There were chains of steep hills with only narrow valleys between them. Every valley had a stream flowing through it. At each stream, Little Eagle considered riding up the stream where they would leave no tracks. Each time he decided that the farther he and Angry Wolf rode along the Crow trail, the more

likely the Pawnees would be to turn back.

There was still daylight left when Little Eagle noticed that Angry Wolf was slumped over his horse's neck. Evidently Angry Wolf had suddenly become so tired that he could scarcely stay on his horse. Once Little Eagle saw him grasp his horse's mane to save himself from falling.

"We'll have to make camp," Little Eagle called to his friend.

"I think we have escaped," Angry Wolf agreed. "Anyway I need rest."

They were near the top of another of those high hills. When they reached the top, Little Eagle jumped from his horse and handed the halter rope to Angry Wolf.

"I'll watch the trail for a while," Little Eagle said. "You ride to the stream at the foot of the hill. We'll camp there."

As Angry Wolf rode ahead, Little Eagle found a place from which he could see back along the trail they had followed. In the dusk he couldn't see far. Nevertheless, he felt he should watch for a while.

Little Eagle heard the Pawnees before he could see them. He could tell by the pound of hoofbeats that the Pawnees were riding hard. Evidently they weren't afraid of riding into an ambush. Perhaps those expert trackers had found signs that told them they were following two boys.

Little Eagle had his first glimpse of the Pawnees when they stopped at the stream. He was relieved to see there were only two. One of the Pawnees dismounted and stepped across the stream. Since Little Eagle and Angry Wolf had made no effort to hide their trail, the Pawnee found it at once. The warrior signaled for the other Pawnee to bring the horses.

Little Eagle knew it was too late for him to run to Angry Wolf with a warning. The Pawnees would be upon them before

they could mount. He had to stop the Pawnees. He saw a hiding place farther down the hill. While the Pawnee warrior was remounting, Little Eagle slipped to the hiding place he had selected.

By the time he had hidden himself, Little Eagle had decided how far he would let the Pawnees ride up the trail. He tried to control the shaking of his hands as he raised the bow. He aimed an arrow at the nearer Pawnee and slowly moved the bow to keep the arrow pointed at him as the warrior approached. This was a far more important shot than the one he had taken at the deer. If he had missed the deer, there would have been other chances later. If he missed the Pawnee, neither he nor Angry Wolf would escape.

The Pawnee was almost to the spot Little Eagle had decided upon as the limit. Little Eagle held his breath to steady his hands. He pulled the bowstring back. At the instant Little Eagle let the arrow fly, the warrior's horse half stumbled. The arrow hit the Pawnee higher than Little Eagle had aimed, but it hit true enough to knock the Pawnee from his horse.

The other Pawnee acted so quickly that Little Eagle didn't have a chance for another shot. The warrior wheeled his horse from the trail into the shelter of some tall bushes. Little Eagle leaned forward, trying to keep the Pawnee in sight. He was sure the warrior would get off his horse and try to sneak around him or would send his horse charging toward the spot from which the arrow had come. To Little Eagle's amazement, the warrior rode out onto the trail beside his wounded companion. He jumped from his horse, picked the wounded man up, and placed him on his own horse. The wounded warrior's horse was already trotting back down the trail. The Pawnee leaped on his horse behind his wounded companion and rode back the way he had come.

Little Eagle brought his bow up and took careful aim at the warrior's back, but he didn't let the arrow fly. He hadn't supposed that anyone, unless perhaps a Sioux warrior, would

have the courage to do what that Pawnee had done. While he despised himself for his weakness, he couldn't shoot that brave warrior in the back. He gave a little sigh of relief when the warrior was out of sight and the chance to shoot him was gone.

When Little Eagle reached Angry Wolf, he found the other boy stretched out on the ground. Angry Wolf raised himself on one elbow as Little Eagle approached.

"What has happened?" he asked. "You were gone a long time."

Little Eagle gave an account of what had occurred. He hesitated when he told about letting the second Pawnee escape.

"He was so brave I couldn't shoot him in the back," Little Eagle said in a shamed voice.

"I would have let him go too," Angry Wolf admitted. "Not many warriors are that brave."

"I wonder if the whole party of Pawnees will come after us now?" Little Eagle asked.

Angry Wolf was silent for a while. Little Eagle knew the other boy was thinking of the stories their teacher had told them around the campfire. Many of those stories had been about other tribes and the ways they fought.

"I suppose they will," Angry Wolf said after a long pause. "The Pawnees will want to get revenge for the loss of their horses and especially for the wounded man."

Little Eagle opened the package of meat. There were a couple of small pieces that had been cooked. He and Angry Wolf made a meal on those pieces. When they had finished eating, Angry Wolf stretched out on the ground to rest. Little Eagle started to get to his feet.

“Lie down and rest,” Angry Wolf ordered. “We will have to go on, but we should rest first. We will have time before the other Pawnees start.”

Although he wasn’t at all sure that the Pawnees wouldn’t be upon them at any moment, Little Eagle obeyed. He stretched out beside Angry Wolf and fell asleep. It seemed to him that he had scarcely closed his eyes when Angry Wolf touched him gently on the shoulder.

“I think we should ride on,” the older boy said. “We ought to follow this trail a short distance and then turn up one of the streams.”

Little Eagle caught the horses and brought them to where Angry Wolf was waiting. Slowly and painfully, Angry Wolf got to his feet. Little Eagle had to help him onto his horse.

Little Eagle led the way along the trail until they came to the third stream. Here he turned upstream. Both horses fought against the halter ropes, trying to get out of the cold water. When the animals found they wouldn’t be allowed to get out of the water, they went more rapidly. There were places where the horses slogged through pools. At every step, water was splashed high into the air. Both Little Eagle and Angry Wolf were thoroughly soaked.

At every step water splashed high

When he glanced back over his shoulder, Little Eagle saw Angry Wolf bent low on his horse’s neck. Little Eagle pulled his horse to a stop and motioned for Angry Wolf to take the lead. If Angry Wolf fell from his horse, Little Eagle wanted to be ready to save his friend.

The stream wound through steep, wooded hills. What little light the stars gave was almost entirely shut off by the trees. Little Eagle could see very little on either side of the stream. After they had ridden a long time, Little Eagle noticed a

change. The hills were farther back from the stream and there were fewer trees on them. The farther he and Angry Wolf went, the fewer were the trees.

It seemed to Little Eagle that they must have been riding most of the night when he saw a tiny creek flowing into the stream they were following. He called softly for Angry Wolf to turn off into the creek. Angry Wolf obeyed without answering. They followed the creek until it ended abruptly in a gushing spring at the foot of a hill.

Angry Wolf waited and let Little Eagle lead the way. Little Eagle rode along the base of the hill until he came to a place where a narrow finger of a valley extended back into the hills. Here both riders dismounted. They turned the horses loose to graze. Little Eagle unfolded the deerskin and put the fur side down. Both he and Angry Wolf crawled under it and fell asleep at once.

Little Eagle awoke at daybreak. When he crawled out from under the deerskin, he saw that the grass was covered with a heavy layer of frost. He watched anxiously as Angry Wolf got to his feet. He noticed that in spite of yesterday's hard travel, Angry Wolf seemed much stronger. He walked easily and held himself erect.

"You are almost well," Little Eagle told him.

"I am strong enough to start our trip to the winter camp," Angry Wolf agreed. "It is time we were starting," he added, kicking at the heavy frost on the grass. "Old-man-of-the-north will soon send snow."

"Snow will hide our trail from our enemies," Little Eagle said.

"It will make traveling harder for us, too," Angry Wolf replied.

The two boys went to explore the finger of the valley. They found it was a narrow, grassy glen with a few trees in the

middle. It was ringed with steep hills. The only entrance was the one through which they had come.

“I wonder if it will be safe to start a fire and cook meat?” Angry Wolf asked.

Little Eagle noticed how differently Angry Wolf treated him from the way he had when they were planning to get horses from the Crows. Then, because he was older, Angry Wolf had wanted to make all the plans without asking Little Eagle’s advice. Now, he seemed to think that Little Eagle was the wiser and should decide what was to be done.

“It is dangerous, but we need food,” Little Eagle answered.

Little Eagle went back to the entrance where they had left the meat. By the time he returned, Angry Wolf had a small fire started. While Angry Wolf tended the fire, adding fuel slowly so there would be little smoke, Little Eagle cut the meat into slices. They cooked all of the meat and ate as much as they wanted. Little Eagle made a package of what was left. He covered the fire with dirt.

“Are you going to catch the horses so we can start on?” Angry Wolf asked.

“It will be better if we stay here today,” Little Eagle answered. “The Pawnees will come to look for us. I don’t think they will find the old trail we made. If we make a new one, they might find it.”

“I should have thought of that,” Angry Wolf said.

Little Eagle went back to the place where the glen opened into the main valley. He could see across the valley and to the tops of the hills on the other side. No one could go through the valley without being in sight.

Little Eagle heard the faint stir of footsteps in the grass behind him. As suddenly as a startled deer, he twisted aside and

rolled over. At the same time he brought his bow up. He had an arrow pointed straight at Angry Wolf. He felt foolish as he lowered the bow. There had been a frightened look on Angry Wolf's face. It gave way to a smile of admiration.

"You are becoming a warrior," Angry Wolf said. "It will not be easy for an enemy to take you by surprise."

"I don't believe the Pawnees are coming," Little Eagle said, thinking of the long journey to the winter camp and the need to get started at once.

"Maybe not," Angry Wolf replied. "However, I think your first plan a good one. Besides, we need more rest. You go farther back and sleep. If I need you, I'll toss a stone."

Little Eagle took a couple of minutes to decide which would be the better plan. The heavy frost on the grass this morning was a warning that winter could not be far off. He and Angry Wolf had a long journey to make across the prairie before they reached winter camp. Perhaps they were being too cautious. It was the need for rest rather than the fear that the Pawnees would still come which decided him. He went back to where they had left the deerskin.

Although he was sure his thoughts would keep him awake, Little Eagle stretched out on the deerskin. He closed his eyes against the glare of the sun and fell asleep at once. He was awakened by the rattle of a small stone, falling in the grass near him.

Little Eagle crawled to a place beside Angry Wolf. He saw the two Pawnee scouts at once. They were riding up the trail on the other side of the creek. Little Eagle watched the scouts with a puzzled frown. The scouts didn't seem to be watching for the place where their enemies had ridden out of the stream.

"They don't act as though they're looking for our trail," Little Eagle whispered.

“I expect they know of a beaver dam farther up the stream,” Angry Wolf whispered back.

Little Eagle nodded. That was a likely explanation. If the beavers had made a dam across the stream farther up it, anyone riding upstream would have to go around it. The Pawnees must know of such a dam. They would ride there, expecting to pick up the trail again. It was lucky that he and Angry Wolf had turned off here.

The two Sioux watched the Pawnees until a bend in the valley hid them from view. Angry Wolf started to crawl away, but Little Eagle touched his arm to stop him. It wasn't long until a party of Pawnee warriors rode into sight. Angry Wolf turned an admiring glance on Little Eagle.

“How did you know a party of warriors would follow those two Pawnee scouts?” he asked.

“You told me that was the way Pawnees followed a trail,” Little Eagle reminded him. “It is because you are so tired that you didn't think of it,” he added. “Go back and sleep while I watch.”

Angry Wolf obeyed without protesting. Little Eagle kept his eyes on the bend in the valley where the Pawnees had disappeared. Little Eagle smiled to himself as he thought how surprised the Pawnee scouts would be when they reached the beaver dam and couldn't find their enemies' trail. He and Angry Wolf had certainly made a crooked trail.

The warm sun had wiped away the frost and dried the grass. For a while its heat made Little Eagle drowsy. Now some clouds rolled up and hid the sun. The wind was rising and it had a chilly edge. Little Eagle raised his eyes to study the clouds. He saw that it wouldn't be long before rain started to fall.

His attention was drawn back to the trail by the faint drumming sound made by the hoofs of fast-running horses.

The sound rapidly became plainer. Little Eagle picked up a small stone and tossed it back over his shoulder.

By the time Angry Wolf had crawled to Little Eagle's side, the Pawnees were flying back down the trail. Three riderless horses raced ahead of the warriors. Little Eagle saw that the Pawnees were whipping their horses, trying to get them to go still faster. When he saw the big band of Crows come into sight around the bend, he understood why the Pawnees were fleeing.

There must have been fifty warriors in that band of pursuing Crows. The Crows were lashing their ponies as furiously as were the Pawnees. Three or four Crows were outdistancing the rest of the pursuers and drawing closer to the Pawnees.

Most of the Pawnees leaned low over their horses' necks. One, at the rear of the group, suddenly straightened up. He half turned and, seemingly without taking aim, let an arrow fly. The leading Crow dropped from his horse as though he had been jerked off by an invisible, giant hand.

The other Crows pulled their horses to a stop around the fallen man. They hesitated for only a moment before they raced on, but it was long enough to allow the Pawnees to gain a considerable distance.

Little Eagle and Angry Wolf watched the chase until both parties were out of sight. They continued to watch the fallen Crow where his companions had left him, with his horse grazing a few paces away. The sun was almost down when the party of Crows returned. They weren't leading any riderless ponies so it was plain that the Pawnees had escaped. The Crows stopped and picked up the slain warrior. They laid him across the back of his own horse and slowly rode out of sight.

"That is a lesson we must remember," Little Eagle said. "The Pawnees were so anxious to catch us that they forgot to watch for other dangers."

“But they did kill a Crow,” Angry Wolf replied.

“There were three Pawnee horses without riders,” Little Eagle reminded him.

“It was a high price to pay for one enemy,” Angry Wolf agreed.

Both boys were silent for a while. Little Eagle’s thoughts were following the band of Crows. It could have been the same band which had planned to attack their camp.

“The Crows have powerful medicine.” Angry Wolf spoke almost as if his thoughts were following those of Little Eagle. “It is fortunate that we were able to get horses from the Pawnees. If we had tried to take horses from the Crows, we would have failed again.”

Little Eagle turned Angry Wolf’s words over in his mind. It was true that fortune had seemed to be with the Crows. They hadn’t been punished for the treachery they had planned against the Sioux. Even though he and Angry Wolf had kept the Crow plan from succeeding, it was still an almost-victory for the Crows.

“The Crows should be punished,” Little Eagle said angrily.

Angry Wolf nodded. He rubbed his hand along the side of his head where the Crow arrow had struck him.

“They will be,” he answered. “With the horses we have, we can reach the winter camp. Next spring a war party will be sent to punish the Crows.”

Next spring seemed far away to Little Eagle. In his mind he could picture the party of Crows sitting around their campfires. They would tell of how they had tricked the Sioux chiefs. While they hadn’t succeeded in making an attack, they had forced the Sioux to run. Now they had won a victory over the Pawnees too. Truly there would be boasting around the

Crow campfires this winter.

“We ought to find a better place to make camp,” Angry Wolf interrupted Little Eagle’s thoughts. “We will want shelter against this rain.”

Little Eagle had been so wrapped in his thoughts that he hadn’t noticed the rain. It was only a sprinkle, but the heavy clouds in the northwest gave promise of more to come. Little Eagle arose and went to bring the horses.

He caught the horses and led them to the place where he had left the deerskin. He rolled their belongings into a bundle with the deerskin around it. He mounted his horse and led the other to Angry Wolf.

Little Eagle led the way across the valley to the trail by which the Pawnees had fled from the Crows. He turned down the trail in the direction the Pawnees had gone. He rode across one stream but, at the second, left the trail and rode to a thick grove of trees.

“We’ll make camp here,” he said.

They turned their horses loose and set to work to build a shelter. They found a clump of small trees. By lacing the branches together, they made a sort of lean-to to protect them from the rain. They found a big pile of leaves and dug into them until they came to dry ones. These they carried to the shelter to make a bed.

Before they went to sleep, the two boys ate some of the cooked meat.

“In the morning we’ll have fresh meat,” Angry Wolf vowed.

CHAPTER SIX

When Little Eagle awoke the next morning, he was surprised to find the ground covered with a light blanket of snow.

“Old-man-of-the-north sent snow early,” Angry Wolf said, as he crawled out of the shelter.

“It isn’t much,” Little Eagle pointed out.

“It’s enough to be a warning to us,” Angry Wolf answered. “Old-man-of-the-north sent it to warn us that we should hurry to the winter camp.”

“Maybe he sent it to tell us that he would send more to cover our tracks, if we take horses from the Crows,” Little Eagle suggested.

Angry Wolf looked at him questioningly. Little Eagle wondered if that was fear he saw in his friend’s eyes. Since he had been wounded by the Crows, Angry Wolf had acted strangely every time the Crows were mentioned.

“If I can lead him in a successful raid against the Crows, he will be as brave as he has always been,” Little Eagle thought to himself, but he said nothing more to Angry Wolf.

“I’ll try to get fresh meat while you build a fire,” Angry Wolf offered.

Little Eagle watched as Angry Wolf left camp. It was surprising how much better Angry Wolf had become in the last two days. He seemed as strong as he had ever been. It was hard to believe that less than a moon ago he had been seriously wounded.

By the time Little Eagle had a cheerful fire going, Angry Wolf returned to camp with an antelope on his shoulder.

“Hunting is good,” Angry Wolf said, with a pleased smile. “This will be food enough until we get a buffalo.”

As soon as they had finished eating, Little Eagle brought the horses into camp. The sun had risen in a clear sky and already was melting the snow. Angry Wolf had made two packages of the meat. One he had wrapped in the hide of the antelope he had shot and the other in Little Eagle’s deer hide. He handed one of the packages to Little Eagle.

Little Eagle led the way. At first the route was up and down wooded hills, but soon the hills became smaller and the trees fewer. When they stopped to rest at midday, Little Eagle could see the open prairie ahead of them.

“We’re really started for our winter camp now,” Angry Wolf said cheerfully.

“It will be good to be in camp with the rest of our people,” Little Eagle replied, trying to forget how disappointed he was that the Crows would go so long unpunished.

Several times during the afternoon the two boys sighted small herds of buffaloes. Little Eagle’s mouth watered at the sight of them. Antelope and deer steaks were good food, but not so good as buffalo. Every herd of buffaloes that they sighted lumbered away before the riders were within bowshot. Little Eagle knew that although the buffaloes could not see far, their keen noses quickly caught the scent of enemies. If the wind had been blowing from the other direction, he and Angry Wolf would have had a chance to get one of the animals.

The sun was sliding down behind some clouds in the west when Little Eagle and Angry Wolf reached a small stream. There were a few trees along its banks. The trees would provide shelter and their branches could be used for fuel.

“Shall I start building a shelter?” Angry Wolf asked.

As Little Eagle looked at the clouds climbing in the western sky, he thought how much Angry Wolf had come to depend upon him to make all of the decisions.

“The trees will protect us,” he replied. “With my deerskin over us, we’ll be dry even if it should snow.”

While Angry Wolf cooked meat for their meal, Little Eagle made a pile of dry leaves for their bed. Both of them were so tired that as soon as they had eaten they put out the fire, crawled into the bed of leaves, and pulled the deerskin over them.

When Little Eagle awoke the next morning, he saw that the branches of the tree were wet and the ground around was, too. However, he and Angry Wolf had been warm and dry in their bed. He was pleased that there was no snow. Perhaps Old-man-of-the-north would let them cross the prairie before he blew snow with his icy breath.

Little Eagle led the way across the open prairie. At midday he and Angry Wolf stopped for their usual rest. They had come a long distance that morning, but they had seen only one clump of trees. While they were resting, Little Eagle watched a bank of clouds forming in the northwest.

“Will we be rained on again this afternoon?” Angry Wolf asked.

“Rain will not matter,” Little Eagle answered uneasily. “To me, the air has a feel as if Old-man-of-the-north’s cold wind was behind that cloud. It may be a long way to the next camping place. It would not be good to be on the prairie if there is much snow.”

Angry Wolf looked doubtfully around the prairie where they were resting.

“It couldn’t catch us in a much poorer place than this,” he said.

“That’s true,” Little Eagle agreed. “We’ll keep going.”

When they started again, Little Eagle wondered what caused his feeling of uneasiness. The air was warmer. There didn’t seem to be any reason for thinking that snow would fall. Even when the rain started, Little Eagle was not too uncomfortable. Later in the afternoon the rain felt colder. However, when the boys were chilled, they jumped from their horses and trotted beside them. As soon as they were warm, they remounted. There was still some daylight left when they reached a small, tree-lined stream.

“This is the place for us to camp,” Little Eagle called cheerfully.

The two boys made camp quickly. As soon as they had a fire going, they built a shelter. It was dark by the time they had the shelter finished. It was while they were eating that the drops of rain began to change to flakes of snow. In a short time the northwest wind was driving the snow with stinging force.

“It is fortunate that we found this place,” Little Eagle said. “We may have to stay here several days.”

The next morning it looked as though Little Eagle’s prediction would come true. The wind was still driving the snow before it. A drift had buried the boys’ fire and the pile of wood. They had to scrape the snow from the wood and work carefully to get dry shavings to start a new fire. Little Eagle noticed that Angry Wolf was restless and disturbed because of the delay.

“Old-man-of-the-north may send much snow,” Little Eagle told him, “but it won’t matter. In a few days much of it will melt. Then we can travel easily.”

“If Old-man-of-the-north sends one snow, he will send others,” Angry Wolf protested. “We may be caught on the

prairie.”

“This will be the last snow of this moon,” Little Eagle stated with certainty.

Angry Wolf seemed much encouraged by Little Eagle’s words. He took his quiver of arrows and began smoothing some of the arrows. Little Eagle spent his time rewrapping the hand grip on his bow. About midday the snow slackened, and soon afterward it almost stopped. Little Eagle stood up and looked about. In some places drifts of snow had been piled high. In others, the ground had been swept almost bare. Although the wind was cold, rays of sunshine filtered through the clouds.

“I’m going to see about our horses,” Little Eagle announced.

“I’ll finish scraping my arrows unless you want me to go with you,” Angry Wolf decided.

“I’ll go alone,” Little Eagle answered. “They aren’t far away.”

However, Little Eagle walked a considerable distance from camp without finding a trace of the horses. He couldn’t even find the trail they had left when they wandered away. When the sun was getting low in the western sky, Little Eagle turned back toward camp. On the way back, he wondered what words he would use to tell Angry Wolf so that the other boy would not be too alarmed at the danger of their situation. Little Eagle didn’t try to hide from himself the fact that they were in grave danger. Here in the middle of the prairie, with no horses, they might not be able to get enough game to keep them alive through the winter.

Oddly enough, Angry Wolf was not greatly disturbed when Little Eagle announced that he hadn’t been able to find the horses.

“They probably drifted ahead of the storm,” Angry Wolf said calmly. “In the morning we’ll both look for them.”

The next morning the two boys left camp together. When they had gone about a third of the distance Little Eagle had covered the day before, they halted.

“You’d better go south here,” Little Eagle suggested. “I’ll go farther east and then I’ll turn south.”

Little Eagle went almost as far east as he had gone yesterday before he turned south. He plodded slowly through the deep snow. He climbed and crossed many low hills without finding the horses. As he climbed to the top of another hill, he decided he would turn back toward Angry Wolf and search the ground between them. From the top of the hill Little Eagle could see a clump of trees below him. It was possible that the horses were crowded into the shelter of the trees and were hidden from his sight. He decided to look behind the trees.

When Little Eagle circled the trees, he saw the tracks of the horses leading south. He hurried forward to get a better look at the trail they had left. He saw that the horses had left the grove while snow was still falling. Their tracks were partly covered with snow. He stopped in dismay when he saw that the tracks had been made by three horses.

Little Eagle made a quick search under the trees. He found where someone had camped during the worst of the storm. He was not good enough at tracking to read all of the signs, but he could read enough of them to tell that someone had been camping here and that the horses had wandered to the shelter of the trees during the storm. Whoever had been here had taken the horses and ridden on while the snow was still falling.

It didn’t take any sign reading for Little Eagle to realize how great a misfortune had befallen Angry Wolf and himself. There was no hope that they could get the horses back. It would be equally hopeless to try to cross the prairie on foot. They would have to turn back to where there were more trees. He and Angry Wolf would have to spend the winter by

themselves.

Little Eagle turned west to find Angry Wolf's trail. When he reached it, he followed it south. He went as swiftly as he could go. Angry Wolf glanced back and saw him. The other boy turned back to meet Little Eagle.

"Where are the horses?" Angry Wolf asked.

"Someone took them," Little Eagle answered.

As Little Eagle told of the trail he had found, he closely watched Angry Wolf's face. He saw fear in the other boy's eyes, and he tried to make his voice cheerful.

"It was a Crow warrior who took our horses," Angry Wolf said hopelessly when Little Eagle had finished. "The Crows have powerful medicine."

"We have to get those horses back," Little Eagle urged.

Little Eagle spoke with a confidence he didn't feel. He had no plan for getting the horses, yet he knew he must say something to encourage Angry Wolf.

"The Crows have powerful medicine," Angry Wolf repeated.

"Old-man-of-the-north might send another snow to keep the Crow in camp until we get our horses back from him," Little Eagle suggested.

Angry Wolf glanced around the sky.

"There'll be no more snow this moon," he said. "We may as well return to our camp."

Without a word, Little Eagle turned back toward their own camp. While Angry Wolf was in this mood, it would do no good to argue with him. Perhaps when he had eaten and rested, he would see that their best hope to escape would be to

get their horses back from the Crow.

As soon as they reached camp, Angry Wolf began to slice thin pieces of meat and put them on a stick. Little Eagle saw that Angry Wolf was cooking enough food for a trip.

“It would be foolish for us to try to cross the prairie on foot,” he said quietly.

Angry Wolf nodded agreement.

“Our best plan is to return to the camp we had on the creek,” he said. “I’m preparing extra food in case we have trouble reaching the place.”

While Little Eagle busied himself with work around the camp, he turned the problem over in his mind. He knew Angry Wolf would agree to wait until morning to start the return trip. In the meantime he had to think of a plan to get their horses from the Crow. It would have to be a good plan if it convinced Angry Wolf. Angry Wolf had said that the Crows had powerful medicine. Yet the two of them had spoiled the Crow plan to attack the Sioux camp. Perhaps their own medicine was as strong as that of the Crows.

Little Eagle sat down a few paces from the fire. He wanted to think more about this problem. He tried to imagine what advice Clawing Bear would give. When the answer came, it was almost as if Clawing Bear were speaking to him. He had the deer hide. It was powerful medicine. He should take the hide and go away from camp. If he rolled himself up in the deer hide and slept, he might have a dream which would tell him what to do. He told his thoughts to Angry Wolf.

“You have studied under the great medicine man, Clawing Bear,” Angry Wolf said thoughtfully. “You should know more about these matters than I. Yet, if you don’t get a clear dream, we ought to start back to the old camp at daylight.”

As soon as darkness fell, Little Eagle carried his deer hide to

the top of a high hill. He was so far from camp that he couldn't see the twinkle of the fire. When he had thought of the plan, Little Eagle hadn't thought of the danger. As he pulled the deer hide over him, he felt uneasy. He had never had a visit from a spirit. Suppose he was frightened? It would be a disgrace for a Sioux boy to show fear.

At first he moved about restlessly. The wind seemed to creep under the hide and keep him cold. After a time he had the deer hide arranged so that the wind didn't get under it. As soon as he was warm, he grew drowsy. He had almost fallen asleep when a faint sighing noise aroused him. He listened tensely. After a few minutes he realized the sound was made by the wind sifting snow against the deer hide. He closed his eyes and fell asleep.

Afterward Little Eagle was never sure whether he woke up, as he seemed to do, or whether the whole thing was a dream. At least it was so real that it seemed to happen. He felt cold. When he opened his eyes he saw that it was still dark. He realized that the deer hide had slipped off his shoulder. He reached his hand out to grasp it and pull it back over his shoulder. He stopped when a soft voice spoke to him.

"Get up, Little Eagle," the voice said. "I'll show you how you can get horses from the Crows. They are my enemies too."

Little Eagle sat up. It wasn't as dark as he had thought. The eastern sky was beginning to lighten. It wouldn't be long until the sun came up. Little Eagle looked around, but he could see no one. The only living thing near was a small bird which sat huddled on his deerskin. When the voice spoke again, Little Eagle saw that it was the bird speaking.

"The Crows have killed many buffaloes," the bird said. "They are gorged with food. It will be easy to take horses from them."

Little Eagle scrambled to his feet. He could dash back to

camp and get Angry Wolf. Together they would follow the bird and get horses. He reached down to pick up the deer hide to carry it back to camp.

“Put it under that tree,” the bird said, nodding his head toward a tree in the direction away from the camp. “My family will use it to build warm nests for the winter which is almost here.”

Little Eagle folded the skin neatly. The bird flew ahead and perched on a limb while Little Eagle placed the hide at the foot of the tree. The bird flew off to the west. He went so quickly that Little Eagle didn't have time to ask for permission to get Angry Wolf. He had to run to keep the bird in sight.

While it didn't seem that they had traveled long, the sun was down and darkness had fallen when they reached the Crow camp. The camp had been set up on the sheltered side of a grove of trees. The smell of roasting buffalo meat made Little Eagle's mouth water. A few Crows were feasting on the fresh buffalo meat. Little Eagle knew that most of the band had stuffed themselves with fresh meat and had crawled into their tepees to sleep.

The bird flew around the Crow camp, and Little Eagle followed him. In a short time they came to the herd of horses. Little Eagle saw the ones that belonged to Angry Wolf and him. He guessed that the warrior who had taken them had gone south until the storm stopped and then had circled to join the Crows in this camp.

“See how easily you can take all the horses you want,” the bird whispered.

Little Eagle looked around. What the bird said was true. There were no guards. Most of the horses were out of sight of the camp. Anyone who used reasonable care could take horses from this herd.

Little Eagle didn't know what happened after that. He was chilly and he awoke to find that the deer hide had slipped from his shoulder. He sat up. The sun was just rising over the eastern hills. His dream had been so plain that for a moment he couldn't believe it had been a dream.

Little Eagle's first feeling was of disappointment. It had been a dream and he didn't actually have the horses. The feeling of disappointment passed quickly. He had heard Clawing Bear tell of the messages that came to a medicine man in dreams. This was a message for him. He had learned how he and Angry Wolf could get horses. He jumped to his feet and raced to camp.

Angry Wolf had already risen. He was cooking more meat at the fire. He looked sad and dejected as Little Eagle ran into camp.

"You had a message?" he asked doubtfully when he saw Little Eagle's excitement.

Little Eagle nodded. Eagerly, he related what had happened in his dream. When he had finished, he saw that Angry Wolf was still unconvinced.

"Was the messenger a blackbird?" Angry Wolf demanded.

"No," Little Eagle answered. "It was—"

He stopped. In his excitement he hadn't noticed what kind of a bird it had been. He was sure it wasn't a blackbird. He would have known better than to follow one of those bringers of misfortune, even in a dream. Then he remembered that the bird had said, "The Crows are my enemies too."

"It was a mud swallow," Little Eagle exclaimed. "It told me that the Crows were its enemies too."

"That is better," Angry Wolf admitted. "The Crows shoot the swallows, and we never do."

“Then you are ready to accept the sign and try to get horses from the Crows?” Little Eagle demanded.

“I’m not sure it is a sign,” Angry Wolf answered slowly. “It may just be a dream with no meaning.” He stood up. “We have to have horses, though. I am willing to try.”

In spite of Angry Wolf’s doubts, Little Eagle was so excited that he could hardly eat. He reminded himself that it had been a long journey in his dream. He would need all of his strength, so he forced himself to eat as much as if he were hungry.

As soon as Angry Wolf was ready, Little Eagle led the way. He went to the hill where he had spent the night. He picked up the deerskin, folded it carefully, and put it under the tree, as he had done in his dream. In his dream Little Eagle had gone so swiftly that he hadn’t noticed the landmarks. Now there was nothing to guide him. He remembered that he had gone west and a little south. He tried to take the same direction.

As the sun began to sink low in the west, Angry Wolf watched anxiously ahead.

“We should be nearing the place,” he said.

“It was almost dark when the bird and I got there,” Little Eagle answered. “We can go many paces before darkness falls.”

“You said the Crows were camped near trees,” Angry Wolf reminded him. “We have seen no trees since we started.”

The same fear had been nagging at Little Eagle. In his dream the Crows had been camped behind a grove of trees. Yet he and Angry Wolf had traveled all day without seeing trees and there seemed to be none ahead.

The two of them came to the top of a high hill. Far ahead of them they saw a grove of trees.

“That must be the place,” Little Eagle exclaimed.

“We’d better rest and eat,” Angry Wolf suggested. “We can’t take horses until after darkness falls.”

They found a place where the sun had melted the snow and dried the ground. Here they ate the cold meat they had brought with them. For the first time since they had started, Angry Wolf seemed to think they had a chance to succeed.

“When we have horses again, we’ll hunt buffaloes,” Angry Wolf said.

“No other meat is so good,” Little Eagle answered.

They rested until the darkness was heavy enough to hide their movements. It didn’t take them long to reach the grove of trees. They could see the gleam of campfires on the other side of the grove.

The two Sioux slipped among the trees until they reached a place where they could see the Crow camp. There were several campfires, and chunks of buffalo meat were roasting over each of them. Some warriors were sitting around, gorging on fresh meat. Others had evidently stuffed themselves and crawled into their tepees to sleep. As Little Eagle and Angry Wolf watched, one of the warriors got to his feet and staggered to a tepee.

Little Eagle knew that sometimes warriors, who had been without food for several days, would stuff themselves with fresh meat when they had the chance. Warriors who did that would sleep soundly. He and Angry Wolf should be able to take horses without trouble.

Little Eagle touched Angry Wolf’s arm. He began to circle the camp, with Angry Wolf following him. They went around the west side of the camp and continued south until they came to the herd of horses. Even in the darkness they located the two that had been taken from them.

Angry Wolf took a careful look around. He motioned for Little Eagle to stay where he was. Little Eagle waited patiently as Angry Wolf slipped away in the darkness. While he was sure there were no guards watching the herd, Little Eagle realized that Angry Wolf was doing what should be done. A warrior should look for his enemies even when he didn't expect to find them.

"There are no guards," Angry Wolf whispered when he returned.

The two boys went straight to their own horses. The horses stood quietly while their riders mounted. Angry Wolf wanted to take at least ten horses apiece, but Little Eagle objected.

"We'll have a better chance to get away if we pick a few good horses," he pointed out.

"The more horses we take, the greater our victory," Angry Wolf whispered urgently.

After a few minutes of whispering together, Angry Wolf agreed to accept Little Eagle's plan to take five horses apiece. When the horses had been selected, Angry Wolf took the halter ropes of two of them and started away from the camp. Little Eagle rode behind, herding the others. Now the wisdom of Little Eagle's plan was plain, for even the few horses were hard to get started. Little Eagle's horse was kept turning and plunging to hold the horses in a bunch.

Angry Wolf rode straight west until he saw that Little Eagle had the herd under control. Then he turned north, as they had decided to do. There was no chance to pick a route where they wouldn't leave a trail. Even in the places where there was no snow, the tracks of the horses could easily be seen.

After they had ridden for what seemed a long time, Little Eagle called for Angry Wolf to stop. Little Eagle circled the herd and rode to his friend's side.

“We’ll turn east here,” Little Eagle ordered. “We may be able to fool the Crows into thinking we are Pawnees. If we do, they’ll turn south to cut us off. We will soon turn north again.”

“We have won a great victory over the Crows,” Angry Wolf gloated.

“We will win a great victory if we get away,” Little Eagle answered grimly. “The Crows will follow us when they learn of their loss.”

“By that time we shall have escaped,” Angry Wolf said hopefully.

Little Eagle looked at his friend in wonder. For days, Angry Wolf had been downhearted and gloomy. He had thought they had no chance against the Crows. Now that they had made this little start, Angry Wolf had completely changed. He already counted the victory won.

“We won’t sing the Victory Song until we are sure we have escaped,” Little Eagle said quietly.

CHAPTER SEVEN

As he rode east, Little Eagle felt more and more uneasy. This plan of his might not be so good. If the Crows guessed that it was Sioux and not Pawnees they were chasing, they would take a more direct route. Or they might send one party to follow the trail and the other to take a shorter route. It might well be that his plan would actually make it easier for the Crows to catch them.

Little Eagle felt easier in his mind when he turned north. As the eastern sky began to light up, he felt still better. He and Angry Wolf had come a long way from the Crow camp. It might be that the Crows hadn't yet learned of their loss.

As the sun came up, Little Eagle called a halt. He noticed Angry Wolf's anxious look as the horses scattered to graze. Little Eagle unwrapped the last of their supply of meat.

"For our next meal we'll have buffalo meat," he said, trying to rouse Angry Wolf from his gloom.

"If the Crows catch us, we won't have a next meal," Angry Wolf answered.

"The Crows won't catch us," Little Eagle insisted. "We took the horses easily, just as the mud swallow in my dream told me we could."

"We did," Angry Wolf agreed. "But the swallow didn't show you how we were to escape after we had the horses."

Little Eagle frowned. A short time ago Angry Wolf had been full of confidence. He had wanted to sing the Victory Song. Now he was sure that they couldn't succeed. It was true that

his dream had ended without the swallow showing him how to escape with the horses. Suddenly Little Eagle's frown changed to a smile of relief.

"The mud swallow is an enemy of the Crows," Little Eagle reminded his friend. "He won't let them catch us."

"I hope you're right," Angry Wolf replied doubtfully. "Anyway I think we should sleep before we start on. We need rest."

Little Eagle wondered if Angry Wolf's plan was good. The Crows would soon be on their trail. Every step he and Angry Wolf went now would be another step away from their enemies. If the Crows started while he and Angry Wolf slept, they would be cutting down the distance between them. But they did need the rest. Besides, Angry Wolf should make some of the decisions. He stretched out on the ground and fell asleep.

Little Eagle sat up sleepily when Angry Wolf touched his arm. He felt as though he had just closed his eyes, yet when he looked to the east, he saw the sun high above the hills.

"We must start," Angry Wolf urged.

It took the two of them a long time to catch horses to ride and drive the others into a herd. When they were ready to start, Little Eagle again took the lead.

They had trouble keeping the herd moving fast. Sometimes the horses would trot, but most of the time they plodded along at a walk. Often one of the horses tried to turn back. Angry Wolf had to be constantly alert.

When the sun was straight overhead, Little Eagle didn't stop for their usual rest. He did signal for Angry Wolf to take the lead, and he rode behind the horses.

Whenever they crossed a hill, Little Eagle stopped to look

back. As the day wore on and he saw no signs of Crows, he began to feel more confident. It was nearly dark by the time they stopped beside a small stream. Little Eagle felt almost safe. He was even more encouraged by Angry Wolf's growing cheerfulness.

"We seem to have escaped," Angry Wolf said.

"You could hunt for fresh meat while I build a fire," Little Eagle suggested, hoping that by keeping Angry Wolf busy, he could keep him in good spirits.

Angry Wolf was gone only a short time. He came back with one rabbit.

"It's too dark to hunt," Angry Wolf said gloomily.

"I'm so hungry that rabbit will taste as good as roasted buffalo tongue," Little Eagle assured him.

As soon as the rabbit was cooked, Little Eagle covered the fire with dirt.

"There's no need to give the Crows a signal if they are following us," he said.

Little Eagle was glad that there were no clouds in the sky. Since he had left the deer hide for the swallows, they had no cover. As long as there was no snow or rain, he and Angry Wolf could sleep comfortably by burrowing into a pile of leaves.

When Little Eagle awoke the next morning, he felt like jumping and shouting. It seemed that he ought to dance the Victory Dance. He and Angry Wolf had escaped the Crows. The horses they had taken were proof of a great victory. Because Angry Wolf was already rounding up the horses, Little Eagle delayed his celebration. He hurried to help the other boy.

“I’ll try to get a buffalo,” Angry Wolf said when they had the horses driven together in a herd.

“While you’re hunting, I’ll ride back to the top of the first hill,” Little Eagle told him. “From there I can see a long way. If there are no Crows in sight, we can feel safe.”

Little Eagle would much rather have gone with Angry Wolf to hunt buffaloes. It was almost certain that they had escaped the Crows. Yet he had been taught that a warrior must always guard against surprise.

The hill rose to a high, pointed peak. Little Eagle rode half way up it. Here he dismounted. He crept up the last few paces to the top as carefully as though he expected to see Crows coming up the other side. He took a long time to study the trail. Nothing moved along it. At last he returned to his horse, mounted, and rode back to camp.

Little Eagle had been in camp only a short time when Angry Wolf rode in, carrying a piece of buffalo meat. Angry Wolf rode triumphantly. All of his gloom of the evening before was gone.

“We’ll bring in the rest of the buffalo meat as soon as we have eaten,” he said cheerfully.

“We have done well,” Little Eagle said.

“Well!” Angry Wolf exclaimed. “We have won victories over the Pawnees and Crows. Hunting has been good. We ought to sing the Victory Song.”

Only a short time ago, Little Eagle had thought they should sing the Victory Song. Now, as Angry Wolf became surer that they had escaped, Little Eagle began to feel new doubts.

“We’d better wait another day,” he said. “I think we have escaped the Crows, but surely after one more day there can be no doubt.”

Angry Wolf didn't act greatly disappointed. He seemed to feel that one more day before they sang the Victory Song would make little difference.

Before they started on, Little Eagle helped Angry Wolf bring in the rest of the buffalo meat. They cut the buffalo hide into two pieces. They placed the meat on the pieces of hide, then wrapped the hide around the meat so that each piece of hide made a big bundle. They tied the two bundles on one of the horses. This time Angry Wolf led the way, while Little Eagle rode behind to keep the herd moving.

The prairie here was different from that they had been crossing. The hills were higher and closer together. It seemed to Little Eagle that they were always either going up a hill or down one. He was glad that they seemed to be safely away from the Crows. Here a party of enemies might have ridden close before he or Angry Wolf discovered them.

All morning they seldom saw a tree. They crossed a few spring-fed streams, but even beside these there was hardly ever a tree. Little Eagle and Angry Wolf continually traded places so that part of the time Little Eagle rode ahead and led the way, while at other times he rode behind. About the middle of the afternoon he was riding behind. The horses had given so little trouble that he paid them scant attention. He was humming the Victory Song under his breath when, for some reason, he glanced back. A lone Crow warrior was charging toward him!

Little Eagle acted swiftly. He shouted a warning to Angry Wolf and at the same time jabbed his right knee against his horse's side to whirl it around to face the Crow. As his horse whirled, Little Eagle brought up his bow. There was no time to take aim. The Crow was almost upon him. Little Eagle let his arrow fly just as the Crow's arrow struck him. Little Eagle felt a cutting, tearing pain in his right arm or shoulder, and the force of the arrow almost tore him from his horse. He clutched the horse's mane to keep from falling.

In a half daze Little Eagle realized that he had dropped his own bow. He heard the pound of hoofs as the Crow circled and came back. Little Eagle tried to sit erectly on his horse. He could do nothing to defend himself, but he would meet death like a Sioux warrior. The Crow swept past without taking another shot. It was then that Little Eagle saw the Crow had been struck with an arrow too.

Angry Wolf dashed past in pursuit of the Crow, but he couldn't get near the wounded warrior. He fired two arrows, but both of them went wide of the mark. Little Eagle dimly realized that Angry Wolf pulled his horse to a stop at the top of the hill.

Little Eagle didn't know how long Angry Wolf was gone. He felt himself falling. He braced himself with the hand that held the horse's mane and fought against the darkness that was closing in on him. The wave of darkness passed, and Little Eagle was still on his horse.

When he felt stronger, Little Eagle took his hand from his horse's mane and felt of the wound. His fingers touched a shaft of wood. The arrow was stuck in his arm. The head had gone through the flesh, but the shaft hadn't. Little Eagle felt the darkness closing in again, but he fought it off.

It took a long time for Little Eagle to get up enough courage to try to pull the arrow out. When he reached for it, he heard a horse approaching. He looked up and saw Angry Wolf returning.

"I thought the Crow's arrow had killed you," Angry Wolf said as he came near Little Eagle.

Angry Wolf's eyes widened, and a look of fear came into them when he saw the arrow stuck through Little Eagle's arm and the blood running down from the wound.

"Help me off my horse," Little Eagle ordered.

Angry Wolf jumped from his horse to obey. Little Eagle clamped his teeth together. He held out his good hand to Angry Wolf. With the other boy's help he got off his horse.

"You'll have to take the arrow out of my wound," he told Angry Wolf.

Angry Wolf looked at the arrow. His face was drawn and he was gritting his teeth.

"How can I get it out?" he asked.

"Take a careful hold of it with both hands," Little Eagle answered. "Snap it in two and pull the rest out."

Little Eagle took a deep breath as Angry Wolf took hold of the arrow. He felt a stab of hot pain as Angry Wolf broke the arrow. In spite of himself, Little Eagle gasped as Angry Wolf drew the rest of the arrow from the wound. Little Eagle kept his head turned aside until he was able to smile. When he looked toward his friend, he saw that Angry Wolf's face had the same sickly color it had had when he had been wounded.

"Did a Crow arrow hit you too?" Little Eagle demanded.

Angry Wolf shook his head.

"I was afraid the Crow's arrow had taken you to the Happy Hunting Grounds," he replied.

Then, as though afraid he had shown too much feeling, Angry Wolf spoke sharply.

"Tell me how to take care of your wound," he snapped. "You have studied under Clawing Bear."

Little Eagle forced himself to look at his wound. It was a ragged hole, and blood was oozing down both sides of his arm.

“I have the material for another poultice,” he answered. “But it must be cooked. There is no fuel here.”

Angry Wolf looked around. There was grass that he could gather and twist into knots. Although it would be slow work, they could build a cooking fire with it. He raised his eyes and looked ahead. As far ahead as he could see, the prairie looked the same. Yet it might not be far to a stream that had trees growing beside it. That would be a safer place to camp than this open ground.

“Can you ride?” Angry Wolf asked, turning toward Little Eagle.

“Of course,” Little Eagle answered.

Little Eagle spoke stoutly, but when he tried to mount his horse, he wasn't able. He had to have Angry Wolf's help.

“You ride in front,” Angry Wolf directed. “Go as straight north as you can.”

A new thought suddenly struck Little Eagle.

“Did the Crow get away?” he asked.

“He was still on his horse when it went out of sight,” Angry Wolf answered. “But your arrow has wounded him badly. I don't think he will get back to the Crow camp.”

“There might be other Crows near who would come to avenge him,” Little Eagle pointed out.

“There are no other Crows near,” Angry Wolf answered positively. “If there had been, they would have joined in the attack on us.”

Little Eagle nodded. No warrior would have been foolish enough to make an attack alone when other warriors were near who could help him. He turned his horse and started off.

At first Little Eagle was able to ride without too much trouble. It wasn't long, though, until the journey became a torture. The wound in his arm made his whole body hurt. He had lost so much blood that he was weak and lightheaded. It took all of his remaining strength to stay on his horse. Weary step after weary step he held on, but at last he could hold on no longer. He slid from his horse.

Although Little Eagle didn't know about it, Angry Wolf lifted him onto his own horse. He mounted behind Little Eagle and held him. Angry Wolf rode off without a look at the herd of horses. He hoped they would follow, but if they didn't, it couldn't be helped.

He added the powdered herbs and the bear's grease

There was still daylight when Angry Wolf sighted trees ahead. Before he reached the grove of trees, he saw that they were growing along a stream. When he reached the grove, he gently lifted Little Eagle to the ground. He dug the bowl from one of the packs and filled it at the stream. He held the bowl to Little Eagle's lips.

Little Eagle opened his eyes and drank. Angry Wolf smiled briefly.

"I'll build a fire," Angry Wolf told him. "You will tell me how to fix the poultice."

Little Eagle didn't try to answer. He lay back with his eyes closed. When Angry Wolf stepped over to tell him the fire was ready, Little Eagle opened his eyes.

"Lift me up," Little Eagle ordered. "I'll help you make the poultice."

Angry Wolf opened the sack which contained the material for the poultice. Under Little Eagle's direction, he added the powdered herbs and the bear's grease and stirred them until

the poultice was cooked. He set it off the fire and waited until it cooled enough so that he could handle it. Little Eagle helped him press the poultice over the wound.

Both boys looked anxiously to the south as they heard the sound of approaching horses. They exchanged pleased smiles when they saw the horses they had taken from the Crows come to the stream. All of the horses, except the one with packs, drank at the stream. Angry Wolf quickly took the packs off the other horse so that it could join the herd.

Angry Wolf sliced steaks from the buffalo meat and cooked them over the fire. When they were done, he fed Little Eagle before he ate any himself.

When he had eaten, Little Eagle had Angry Wolf help him lie down. He fell asleep almost as soon as his head touched the ground. Several times the pain in his shoulder awakened him. However, toward morning he fell into a deep sleep. He awoke with a throbbing pain in his shoulder, but he felt surprisingly strong. He sat up carefully.

Angry Wolf, who had been cooking meat, rushed anxiously to Little Eagle's side.

"I am better," Little Eagle assured him.

Little Eagle got slowly to his feet. Although he felt weak, he managed to walk to the stream. He felt better after he had washed himself and had drunk of the clear water.

"We should sing the Victory Song as soon as your arm is healed," Angry Wolf suggested, as they were eating the meat he had cooked.

"Let's wait until we reach winter camp," Little Eagle said. "Other times we thought that we had escaped the Crows, and we were ready to sing the Victory Song, yet that one warrior was following."

“He was the last,” Angry Wolf said confidently. “But you have proved yourself a good leader. We shall wait until you are ready to sing the Victory Song.”

“You said that warrior was wounded by my arrow,” Little Eagle said. “Are you sure?”

“Yes,” Angry Wolf replied. “The Crow was wounded when he rode toward me. I didn’t get close enough to him to get a shot.”

“How did I get my bow back?” Little Eagle asked. “I seem to remember dropping it when I was hit by the arrow.”

“I picked it up,” Angry Wolf explained.

All day Little Eagle was restless. Several times he wanted to suggest that they go on. The Crows were bitter enemies. It might well be that when the warrior didn’t return, they’d send a party to search for him. When they found him, they would look for their enemies so that they could take revenge. Angry Wolf seemed to feel that it was safe to rest in camp. He did mount one of the horses and ride a scouting trip around the camp. When he returned, he stretched out on the ground and slept.

“Shall we start in the morning?” Little Eagle asked as they were eating that evening.

“Don’t you think we should stay here another day so there will be no danger of reopening your wound?” Angry Wolf suggested.

Little Eagle nodded reluctant agreement. His arm still throbbed painfully. He had used the last of his material to make the poultice for this wound. It would be better to make sure the wound was healed before they started.

The one day became two. Both days dragged slowly for Little Eagle. Much of the time he was thinking of Clawing Bear and

the many things yet to be learned from the medicine man. Late in the afternoon of the second day, Little Eagle picked up his bow and shot a few arrows at a slender sapling. He couldn't draw the bow as well as he had before, but it seemed good to be able to use it at all.

"We can start tomorrow," Angry Wolf said with a smile, as he watched Little Eagle.

That night they had a feast of buffalo meat. Angry Wolf cooked all that they could eat. When they had had enough, he put a small piece aside to cook for their morning meal. The rest he made into packs to be put on one of the horses.

"It still seems strange to me that the Crows haven't sent a war party to catch us," Little Eagle told his friend.

"We are far into Sioux land," Angry Wolf replied. "They are afraid to come this far."

"They would know that most of our people are in winter camp by this time," Little Eagle pointed out. "They would be in little danger of meeting one of our war parties."

"Perhaps they're still chasing the Pawnees," Angry Wolf suggested.

"It is more likely that by this time they know it was two Sioux boys who took their horses," Little Eagle answered. "We must have left signs that told—"

Little Eagle had been looking into the fire. He stopped speaking when he seemed to see a party of Crows riding in the fire just as he had seen them in Clawing Bear's fire. Angry Wolf gave him a surprised look and then bent forward to look into the fire too.

"What do you see in the fire?" Angry Wolf demanded.

As Angry Wolf spoke, the Crows disappeared in the coals.

“I saw a party of Crows riding hard,” Little Eagle replied. “It is the same sign I saw in Clawing Bear’s fire.”

“Which direction were they riding?” Angry Wolf asked.

“I don’t know,” Little Eagle answered. “When you spoke, they disappeared.”

“Couldn’t it be a sign that they have given up and are riding toward their own winter camp?” Angry Wolf suggested.

Little Eagle looked thoughtfully into the fire. What Angry Wolf had suggested might be right, but he knew at once that it wasn’t. The other time he had seen the Crows in the flames, it had been a warning. This must be a warning too.

“It is a sign that the Crows are still chasing us,” Little Eagle insisted.

As he spoke, Little Eagle glanced at his friend. He saw the doubt in Angry Wolf’s eyes. The look of doubt slowly faded.

“You have studied with a great medicine man,” Angry Wolf said. “You may have misread this sign, but we must make sure. Before we start in the morning, I will make a scouting trip far back on our old trail. If the Crows are on it, we must know.”

CHAPTER EIGHT

At the first sign of dawn the next morning, Angry Wolf arose. Little Eagle heard him and immediately crawled out of his own pile of leaves. Together they went to the herd of horses. As soon as they caught a horse, Angry Wolf mounted and rode off.

Little Eagle caught another horse. Riding it, he drove the horses together into a herd. He brought the herd close to camp. While he waited for Angry Wolf to return, Little Eagle busied himself around the camp.

As the sun climbed above the eastern hills, Little Eagle worried about Angry Wolf. Angry Wolf had been gone long enough to ride far back on their trail. Little Eagle tried to check his rising fears by reminding himself that camping places were far apart. If Angry Wolf rode all the way back to their last camping place, he would be gone some time yet.

The horses had separated to graze. Little Eagle mounted one of them and drove them into a herd again. He returned to the campfire to wait as patiently as he could. All of the time that he waited, he was wishing that he had taken more lessons from Clawing Bear. The old medicine man would have known the meaning of the sign he had seen in the fire. If Clawing Bear had been with them, he could have told them what to do. Then there would have been no need for Angry Wolf to make that long trip back down the trail.

When Angry Wolf came into sight, Little Eagle knew at once that the other boy had exciting news. He was riding his horse as fast as it could go. Angry Wolf pulled the horse to a stop and jumped off.

“There’s a big war party of Crows back at the last spring we passed,” he announced.

“They may turn back without coming this far,” Little Eagle suggested. “Our trail there is old.”

“They’ll come to this stream,” Angry Wolf stated as positively as if he had heard the Crows planning. “Here they will find the new trail we will make as we leave.”

Little Eagle saw the wisdom of the other’s words. The Crows knew of this stream. Probably they had planned to camp here but had been delayed on the way. If the warrior who had attacked Angry Wolf and him had been able to return to camp, he had reported to them. If the man hadn’t returned to camp, the other Crows had found his body by now. Yes, they would come on.

“We’ll have to leave the horses we have captured,” Angry Wolf said. “We can’t drive a herd of horses and outrun the Crows. They have swift horses and strong medicine.”

“We would have powerful medicine if I had studied more with Clawing Bear,” Little Eagle thought to himself.

Aloud he said, “They may catch us even if we leave the other horses.”

“They may,” Angry Wolf agreed grimly.

Little Eagle looked toward the herd of horses. It had seemed a great victory when he and Angry Wolf had escaped with them. He remembered how he and Angry Wolf had wanted to sing the Victory Song. Now the Crows would get the horses back. It would be a tremendous triumph for them. Little Eagle had pictured in his own mind how proud he would be to ride into winter camp with the herd of captured ponies. But it wouldn’t happen. The Crows were going to win again.

Little Eagle’s face set with determination. He and Angry Wolf

could lie in ambush. They couldn't defeat the big Crow war party, but they could make the Crows pay for their victory.

"If the Crows take our scalps, it will make them an even greater victory," Angry Wolf said as though he were reading Little Eagle's thoughts.

"That is true." Little Eagle had to agree. "However, if Clawing Bear were here, he would think of a plan to defeat them."

"Clawing Bear is a great medicine man," Angry Wolf acknowledged.

Little Eagle gave a start. It was almost as though Clawing Bear had whispered in his ear. Sioux medicine was powerful too. There was a way that might fool the Crows.

"How long will it take the Crows to reach here?" Little Eagle asked.

"They were starting to cook their meal when I saw them," Angry Wolf replied. "They will stop to study the place where we were attacked. We may have until the sun is straight overhead."

"We must build many fires to make it look as though this is a big Sioux camp," Little Eagle explained. "The Crows will turn back if they think many Sioux are camped here."

"They'll see this is no camp when they cross those hills," Angry Wolf objected, pointing back to the hills their trail had crossed.

"They'll see the smoke of the fires before they reach the hills," Little Eagle answered. "They won't cross the hills."

"The plan might work," Angry Wolf agreed doubtfully.

They went to work at once. Fires were laid as they would be

in a Sioux camp. As quickly as a pile of wood was ready, one of the boys brought coals and started it. In a short time they had a score of fires lifting spirals of smoke into the crisp morning air. When the Crows counted those spirals of smoke, they surely would turn back. They wouldn't risk a battle with a large Sioux war party.

As soon as the fires were started, Little Eagle and Angry Wolf mounted their horses. Little Eagle signed for Angry Wolf to take the lead. For a moment he thought the older boy was going to refuse to take the less dangerous place, but Angry Wolf took his place without protest. He set a swift pace, and Little Eagle forced the other horses to keep up with Angry Wolf's.

Each time they crossed a hill, Little Eagle stopped to look back. Every time Little Eagle stopped, Angry Wolf turned his head to watch for a signal. They moved on in this way as the sun crossed the sky and began to sink in the west.

As he rode across a low hill, Little Eagle caught a glimpse of trees ahead. These were the first trees he had seen since morning. He knew that the trees were growing beside a stream. The horses knew it too. They quickened their pace. Little Eagle pulled his horse to a stop and took a long look back. There was no sign of pursuing Crows. Evidently the fires had fooled them and they had turned back.

When Little Eagle turned to look ahead, he smiled to himself. Angry Wolf was so eager to reach the stream that he wasn't looking back for a signal. The smile changed to a look of alarm when he saw riders moving on the other side of the grove of trees. Somehow the wily Crows must have slipped around them and were cutting them off. Then Little Eagle caught sight of other warriors and he gave a triumphant yell. Those riders weren't Crows. They were Sioux.

Little Eagle kicked his heels against his horse's sides and sent it racing around the herd. Angry Wolf hadn't heard Little

Eagle's yell. He looked up in astonishment as Little Eagle raced past. He took a quick look back, but there was no one chasing Little Eagle. When he looked ahead again, Angry Wolf saw the Sioux. He sent his horse racing after Little Eagle's.

The warriors quickly surrounded the two boys. Little Eagle saw that it was a hunting party under Chief Happy Otter. There were shouts of approval from the warriors when they saw the horses the boys had taken.

Little Eagle and Angry Wolf told of the party of Crows that had been following them. The warriors laughed and shouted when Angry Wolf told of Little Eagle's plan to make the Crows think that a large party of Sioux were near.

"We're going to try to surprise those Crows," Happy Otter announced. "You boys wait here."

"We could go with you," Little Eagle suggested. "Our extra horses would stay here and graze."

"Spoken like a true Sioux," Happy Otter praised. "But your horses are tired. We must travel fast."

Little Eagle nodded. He and Angry Wolf had pushed their horses hard. If the Crows had turned back, it would take swift, hard riding to catch them. It wouldn't be fair for Angry Wolf and him to slow the Sioux war party.

As soon as the warriors rode off, Angry Wolf began to cook food for Little Eagle and himself. Although Angry Wolf seemed to be giving all of his attention to his task, Little Eagle could see that his friend's thoughts were far away. It wasn't until the meat was cooked that Angry Wolf spoke of what was in his mind.

"We must take new names," Angry Wolf said. "We are warriors now. We have taken horses from the Crows and you have shot two enemies. You may be made a medicine man."

You healed both of our wounds and you made the plans that allowed us to escape from our enemies.”

Little Eagle gave his friend a startled look. It was true that both of them were entitled to be called warrior, but would he be made a medicine man? He had never heard of a boy of his few summers winning that honor.

“Let’s wait until we reach the winter camp,” he suggested.

“It shall be as you say,” Angry Wolf agreed.

While Angry Wolf fixed piles of leaves for their beds, Little Eagle searched in the grove and the prairie nearby. It was late in the afternoon when he returned to camp with a few berries and some roots in his hands.

Angry Wolf would have liked to sit by the fire and talk about their adventures, but Little Eagle was tired and his wound was beginning to throb. He crawled into the pile of leaves, where he fell asleep at once.

Little Eagle didn’t awaken in the morning until the sun’s rays were striking against his eyelids. Angry Wolf was cooking meat over the fire. He smiled briefly at Little Eagle.

“You are getting lazy,” Angry Wolf said.

Little Eagle gave him an answering smile.

“I’ll work hard when we reach winter camp,” he answered. “There is much that I want to learn from Clawing Bear.”

Angry Wolf loafed about the camping place while they waited for the warriors to return. Little Eagle took his cooking pot and put some of the berries in it. He tended the cooking until it was finished. He poured the stuff he had cooked into one of the bags he had used for water. He cooked another bowlful of a mixture of berries and the roots he had brought into camp. When this was done, he poured it into another bag.

The sun was going down when the warriors finally returned. They weren't driving any Crow ponies and they didn't have new Crow scalps at their belts. As soon as the warriors had cared for their horses and started to cook their meal, they told what they had found. Little Eagle saw the admiration in their eyes as they talked to Angry Wolf.

"You are almost as wise as a medicine man," one of the warriors told Angry Wolf. "Your plan of building those fires completely fooled the Crows."

"We read the trail signs," another warrior explained. "When the Crows saw the smoke of those fires, they turned and rode away. Truly you are a wise warrior."

"The Crows had too much of a start for us to catch them," another warrior said.

"All of the praise goes to Little Eagle," Angry Wolf said, as soon as he had a chance to speak. "It was Little Eagle who thought of the plans."

"Clawing Bear will be proud of his pupil," Happy Otter said. "The whole winter camp will be proud of both of you. You have won a great victory."

In the morning Little Eagle and Angry Wolf rode with the warriors toward the winter camp. For five suns they went on. There had been no more snow, and most of the first snowfall had melted so the party could go swiftly. On the sixth morning, scouts brought word of a herd of buffaloes to the east. Happy Otter decided that the party would kill as many buffaloes as could be loaded on the extra horses.

While arrangements were being made for the hunt, Little Eagle waited excitedly. When Happy Otter held out the straws to decide who should have to stay in camp and tend the horses, Little Eagle was allowed to draw with the others. He was so proud of having a chance to draw, just like the warriors, that he was hardly disappointed when he drew one

of the short straws and had to tend horses with Singing Jay.

As the warriors were preparing to ride out on the hunt, Angry Wolf drew Little Eagle aside.

“I have hunted buffalo and you never have,” Angry Wolf said. “I’ll trade places with you. I’ll watch the horses while you hunt.”

Little Eagle shook his head.

“I had a chance to draw,” he answered. “I lost.”

It was almost midday when Little Eagle and Singing Jay took the horses to the hunters. The warriors had killed as many buffaloes as the horses could carry. As soon as the meat was loaded on the pack horses, the party started on.

At the end of the second day after the hunt, there was a conference around the campfire.

“Tomorrow we shall reach the winter camp,” Happy Otter announced. “The rest of us will ride ahead to prepare a welcome. Later, you two boys will ride into camp.”

The next morning Little Eagle and Angry Wolf kept their horses in a herd while the warriors rode out of camp. As soon as the warriors were out of sight, Little Eagle took the two bags into which he had poured the juices he had cooked the day he and Angry Wolf had waited for the warriors to return from their pursuit of the Crows. He found a small stick and dipped it into one of the bags. With the yellow coloring on the stick, he painted lines on Angry Wolf’s face. When that was finished Angry Wolf painted lines on Little Eagle’s face.

“Yellow for happiness,” Angry Wolf exclaimed, looking at the fine horses they had taken from the Crows.

“And red for victory,” Little Eagle added, as he opened the other bag and began to put red lines on Angry Wolf’s face

beside the yellow ones.

When they started to divide the horses into two groups so that each could lead his captured ponies into camp, Angry Wolf objected to dividing them evenly.

“You were the leader,” he told Little Eagle. “If you had not saved my life, I couldn’t have returned to winter camp at all.”

“Any medicine man would work to save your life,” Little Eagle answered. “We took the horses together and we’ll divide them equally.”

Before they reached the winter camp, a party of warriors rode out to meet Angry Wolf and Little Eagle. The warriors surrounded the boys and chanted the Victory Song. The warriors continued to circle until they neared the first wigwam in camp. Here the warriors changed positions so that there were men ahead, at each side, and behind Angry Wolf and Little Eagle. The warriors conducted the two boys to the council wigwam. Little Eagle noticed the admiring looks that the boys in the camp were giving the captured horses.

When the riders dismounted in front of the council wigwam, Little Eagle turned toward the place where Clawing Bear’s tepee should stand. A few paces from the tepee, he jumped from his horse. He took the halter ropes of the three best horses belonging to him and stepped toward the tepee flap.

“Come in, Little Eagle,” Clawing Bear called.

Little Eagle stepped into the tepee. He held the halter ropes toward Clawing Bear.

“I am pleased,” Clawing Bear said, as he accepted the ropes.

The medicine man stepped out of the tepee to look at the horses Little Eagle had given him.

“Those are fine horses,” he said. “It is a great gift.”

Little Eagle was puzzled to see that Clawing Bear looked worried. It was odd that the medicine man should be worried at the time his pupil had returned with so great a victory.

“I owe you much,” Little Eagle told him. “I will owe you more when you have taught me more.”

A sudden smile warmed Clawing Bear’s face.

“I should have known that you are a real medicine man,” he exclaimed. “You are wise enough to know there is more to be learned.”

Abruptly Clawing Bear turned back into his tepee. A moment later he returned with a mask fashioned from the head of a buffalo hide. The two horns had been left on the hide. When it was worn, it looked as though the horns grew from the medicine man’s head.

“Turn your back to me,” Clawing Bear ordered.

Little Eagle obeyed. Slowly, Clawing Bear lowered the mask over Little Eagle’s head.

“Soaring Eagle,” Clawing Bear said solemnly. “You are now a member of the sacred clan of Sioux medicine men.”

Little Eagle gave a gasp of pleasure. Clawing Bear had given him a medicine-man name, Soaring Eagle. He had really been made a medicine man. He threw his head back and stood as straight as he could.

“There are many things I must learn before I am worthy to be a medicine man,” he said, speaking slowly to keep his voice from trembling. “I will do my best to be worthy.”

“You have learned much,” Clawing Bear answered. “You will learn more. Come, we must report to the chiefs.”



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