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Watching the old woman's face as she spoke, Walks Alone saw the profound change in her eyes. They were the same huge eyes that he had looked into many times, but in the lingering shadows they rose like lightless moons in a cloudy night sky.

"In the early darkness of this day," he began, "I tried to journey on my own, lying on my mat in the wigwam."

"And did you journey?"

"Yes—at least I think so—but it was very different than anything I have done with you."

Four Bears said nothing. She sat motionless, looking at Walks Alone solemnly.

“I jumped into the weir, but I did not pass through into the animal world . . .” He paused before adding, “. . . at least not at first.” He paused again, as if drifting into a place that was dark and foreboding.

“As I went down into the water it became deeper and deeper, much deeper than any part of the river. Its depth seemed endless. I thought I was going to drown.” He hesitated again, and he might not have continued had Four Bears not spoken to him.

“But you did not drown,” she said. “You passed through into another place.”

“Yes—a dense forest.”

“And it was nearly as suffocating as the depths of the river.”

“Yes.”

“And in that place a path was revealed to you—a path that widened with the rising sun—the brush and fallen trees swept away as if by the hand of the Great Spirit.”

He looked back at Four Bears incredulously. His mind swirled with dichotomies. *How could she know? Of course she knows. How could anyone know? If she wouldn't know, who would?* That which made complete sense to him on one level was utterly mystifying on another.

Sensing his confusion, she continued. “And when the path had widened, three white horses appeared behind you, running straight at you, passing by you as if you weren't even there. And then . . .” Four Bears watched his face as a peaceful understanding filled his eyes. She remembered a similar experience in her own life. She recalled vividly the moment in which she first knew that she would walk a path that few were chosen to walk, and she understood that the boy sitting across from her was experiencing now what she had experienced

then—a maddening combination of boundless excitement and limitless fear. “And then you awoke from your dream.”

“Yes, Looks Back woke me. She said it was past dawn.” He stopped short, his voice dropping, the last of the words passing quietly into nothingness. “No, not then,” he added quickly. “I woke up after I saw the great white animal. It was standing behind me.”

Four Bears said nothing for a few moments, as if wrestling with what the boy had added to the story. “You are blessed, Young One,” she said. “We dreamt the dream together, but I did not see the white beast. Did it speak to you?”

“I heard it in my heart,” came the boy’s reply. “*Such is the path of the Lenape.* That’s what the great white animal told me.”

Four Bears watched as a look of bewilderment crossed the boy’s face. She knew what was happening behind his eyes. A child’s brain was processing truths that few grown men and women could absorb. The physical world with which he was so familiar was crashing full force into the spiritual world that he was only beginning to know. She understood clearly that Walks Around would walk with a foot in each for the rest of his life. Each would be his home, but neither would be a home to which he could fully return.

“What does the dream mean?” he said almost inaudibly. “And why did we dream it together?” Questions began to rush from his mouth almost as quickly as they came to him, and his voice rose with each word. “How was the path cleared? What do the three white horses mean? And why did you not see the white beast? Why did he only come to me?”

“I don’t know the answer to any of your questions,” she admitted. “Perhaps it’s not for either of us to know.” But, in her

heart, she knew that the questions would be answered and that the dark prophecy would be fulfilled.

*Such is the path of the Lenape.* The blood in her veins seemed to roil with each of the words.

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