



## Winoa's Journey

Once there was a teacher named Winoa. She was teaching her first grade students to write down their names in Cree at their school in Birmingham, England when suddenly the windows smashed and the door crashed down!

In walked an army of heavy-set Germans. They yelled, "Get in the bus before we shoot!"

The students and Winoa were forced to get into the bus and were driven to a Military camp. They were sent to a line-up where their names were changed and

they were checked for belongings. If belongings were found they were sent to a room. No-one knew what was in it but Winoa and her students could hear a lock and scarce cries.

Suddenly it was Winoa's turn and luckily she had nothing but when she looked behind her she saw one of her students being dragged into the room. She followed the guards as they led her to a small hut where a group of people looked towards her as she was shoved over to her bed. Her bed was small with a mattress made from dirty strings of hay and for blankets, a limp cloth. She decided that she would take a nap so she fell onto the bed, wrapped herself in the limp cloth and closed her eyes.

“Should we wake her?”, Winoa heard someone whisper.

“No we need to try the ritual again,” said another quiet voice.

Winoa woke up and asked, “What ritual?”

The prisoners she was staying with awkwardly explained to her that they were trying to recreate the rituals that they used to do in their village. Winoa asked them where they left off and they said that they were having trouble starting. She told them that when she was a girl she went to ceremonies and participated in Cree rituals and could help them. Winoa remembered all of the times that she had danced and listened to and told stories in her own village. Winoa decided that she would help them she started with the Cree songs. The group struggled and Winoa asked why. They said that they had been at the camp so long that they had forgotten their language. Since Winoa was a Cree teacher, she said that she could help them.

Winoa started off with the basics; just everything they needed to know and started the ritual once more.

Suddenly a German came to check on them. When he saw what they were doing and he looked at one of the people he said, "Was this your idea?" while dragging him away.

The others shivered, they had fear written all over them. Winoa said that they would all be okay as long as they continued with the ritual somewhere secretive. They decided to do it at night, after curfew and when security was slim. They would slowly finish a session of ritual in about a week. They thanked her every class but they started getting tired of having to do it in such secrecy. They dealt with it for a long time. Eventually it was too much so they talked to Winoa about it. Unfortunately she couldn't do anything other than stop teaching them so they thought of another way.

They decided to escape. They made a plan and told Winoa. Winoa hesitated and she decided that they should stay in the camp. The others hesitated because they might inspect the building to see if anyone was there.

Winoa disagreed and said that they can get out after they've inspected the building. They persuaded her to go with it and finally got her to agree. They asked, "When would we leave?"

She said "We'll leave when we all go for supper. It'll be so dark and busy that no one will notice and after that we'll sneak into the prisoner lines and sneak to the end where the buses are when no is looking. We'll quickly and quietly find our hiding spots on the bus."

It was almost supper but they decided to do it the next day. They did have a lot of information and they would be able to practice at their own free will. Winoa also decided to make a few small changes to the plan. They decided to sneak onto one of the prison buses and hide behind the seats and when the bus stopped they would blend in with the prisoners getting on and hide well because it was a dark night.

Everyone worried about getting caught and having to live in worse conditions than they do now.

In the morning they prepared. They scavenged for anything they would need for the plan. It was boring to wait but eventually it was supper time and the guards came to pick them up. They were all excited but tried to keep the smiles off their faces.

When they got to the Mess Hall they all gathered as much food as they could but at a camp like that you could never get a lot. They also looked around to see all of the guards and if any of them were guarding the doors. There were a few but none of them were near the doors. They all knew that the guards would still see them. Winoa thought hard until she realised that at that very second none of the guards were looking in that direction, so she quickly grabbed everybody and with them at her heels, she ran out the door, found a line and snuck into the back. They saw the bus and ran onto it just before the guards started it again.

Winoa and the group almost screamed with joy as the bus started moving. Winoa silently whispered to the prisoners “We’ve done it. We’ve finally escaped that horrible place.”

One of the prisoners spoke up. “We can go back to our families and our friends.”

As he said that Winoa thought of all the people who cared about her. All the people she cared about.

Another prisoner broke the silence, “We’re almost there,” he said.

The bus stopped and Winoa and the prisoners listened as the guards threatened the prisoners and led them off the bus. Winoa did a quiet countdown, then she and the prisoners ducked down and ran off the bus into a forest nearby.

They hid there until the bus left and thought of what to do next. They decided to stay there for the night and then continue with the plan in the morning.

Winoa decided to look around. There was a river and tall trees with green leaves and white flowers. She was so tired that she just let herself fall and rest on the wet grass. She thought about her family and how happy she would be to see them again. She heard the prisoners calling for her and decided to return to them.

Winoa went over to where the other prisoners were and saw them building a tent out of the resources around them. About half of the prisoners were using twigs, leaves, stones and weak branches to hold things up. Others were taking leaves, scooping up water with them and tying the top with more bendy branches. Lastly, people were making spears to go fishing in the river nearby.

Winoa grabbed one of the spears and walked up to the river. A few salmon were swimming up and down the river. She thrust the spear into the river and pierced a fish right through the middle. Winoa pulled the spear out and put it into a leaf to take back to the others. They decided to eat it for dinner. They started a fire, put a leaf on a stick and let the fish roast over the fire.

Eventually the fish was ready and they caught another and put it on the stick. The process kept going until all the fish were ready and they all dug into their delicious meal.

After they ate they partnered up for sharing tents and Winoa was partners with a young girl named Ava, who was about eighteen years old. Ava had blue eyes, short dark brown hair and ripped clothes. She also came from a Cree background. She had lost her parents at the age of seventeen and was glad to be with Winoa, who made Ava feel safe and comfortable about losing her parents.

Winoa said to the girl that she would teach her some cree.

“That sounds wonderful!” said Ava, “But what if those mean people find out?”.

“They won’t.” said Winoa.

“Ok then,” said Ava “Teach me.”

So for two hours that night Winoa taught Ava the more common Cree like “Hello”, “Goodbye”, and “Thank you”.

Over the few next weeks, Winoa would teach Ava some Cree, and she would learn.

One day Ava told Winoa that she had been taught enough Cree. Winoa then stopped teaching Ava and focused on teaching the other people around her Cree instead.

One afternoon, Winoa heard Ava calling out to her, “Winoa, come quickly.”

Winoa ran over into their shared tent and bent over Ava, who was lying on the makeshift mattress in the middle of the tent. She looked pale and tired.

“Ava, what has happened to you?” asked Winoa nervously.

“I don’t know.” answered Ava quietly.

One of the ladies staying with them came over and asked what was wrong.

“She’s sick!” cried Winoa.

The lady explained that she was a Medicine Woman before being taken to the prisoner camp and started to examine Ava. She concluded that Ava had Scarlet Fever.

“How do we cure her?” asked Winoa.

“She needs bed rest, lots and lots of bed rest.” said the Medicine Woman, whose name was Adsila.

Winoa stayed with Ava in the tent while Adsila brought them food, water, and clean clothes from time to time.

One day Ava was able to sit up and talk normally, “ I think I've started to recover, although I am still a bit tired,” Ava said.

Winoa was relieved to hear this, as she would be moving them to a different location very soon. Winoa left Ava to rest and planned for when she would move them.

Over the next month, Ava was better except for a cough and some sore arms and legs.

Winoa started to pack up her things and told the other people to pack their things as well. Then they started off on their long journey towards the eastern part of England. They hiked for about four hours and then took a break because everybody was tired and sore, especially Ava.

After the break, they started off again, and this time, they only stopped when the sky had turned a dark shade of blue.

Winoa set up the camp and told everyone to just go to bed. She went to check on Ava, who said that she felt fully recovered.

The next day, Winoa told everyone that they had to keep going. They all hiked for another day, rested and then kept on hiking.

They repeated this for three days until finally it was late and getting dark, they came upon a rustling bush. "What's in that bush?" yelled one of the ladies.

"I'd like to know that for myself." replied Winoa.

She cautiously stepped toward the bush and all of a sudden she heard a loud howl. Just then, a grey blur ran out of the bush.

One of the men looked behind them and then screamed. There was a grey, menacing coyote right behind Winoa and Ava.

"Um g- guys..." whispered the man "There's a coyote right behind us."

Winoa knew that coyotes weren't good climbers, so she told the rest of the scared people, "Climb the trees but walk very slowly."

All the people did as they were told .

"I can't climb!" said Ava.

"Get a stick and hit the coyote! Aim for the head!" yelled Winoa.

Ava slowly picked up a stick and walked towards the coyote.

With one large whack, she hit the coyote and it let out a loud cry while falling to the ground.

Suddenly, a group of soldiers walked up to the group of scared people.

“Who are you?” asked Winoa.

“My name is Officer Davies, and we’re not going to hurt you,” said the soldier in the front.

“How do we know for sure?” asked the people.

“We have badges that we can show you,” replied one of the soldiers.

The soldiers showed them their badges and Winoa said that they could trust the soldiers entirely.

Ava started to tell them that they had escaped from a military camp and were looking for a place to stay.

“We’ll help you,” said Officer Davies.

He traveled with Winoa and her new friends until they came to a large yard with many buildings and there was a sign that said “Refugees Welcome.”

“Oh, we should probably go inside,” said Winoa.

“I agree.” said Officer Davies.

The soldiers escorted the girls to their cabin and the boys to theirs.

The rooms in the cabins had two comfortable mattresses per room. They also had fireplaces and bathrooms with floral curtains in front of the doors. They all felt glad to finally be in a safe place.

Winoa soon realized that they couldn't stay in the Refugee Camp forever. They moved out after about two more weeks and started their own civilization in the woods.

They were near a river with freshwater and tons of fish to catch and eat. There were also lots of strong trees for building and tons of rich soil for farming.

The people all agreed that it was a nice place to start a village. They started to build their village, building and building until the village was finally built.

They had a wonderful rest of their lives in their new homes and decided to stay there for eternity.

**~The End~**