

THE CURSE OF DEAD HORSE CANYON SAGA

READER'S GUIDE

Book 3

*The Revenge of Dead Horse Canyon:
Sweet Medicine Spirits*

--Novavose--



The Sweet Medicine Spirits - NOVAVOSE

REVENGE

of Dead Horse Canyon

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Book 3 of the Curse of Dead Horse Canyon Saga

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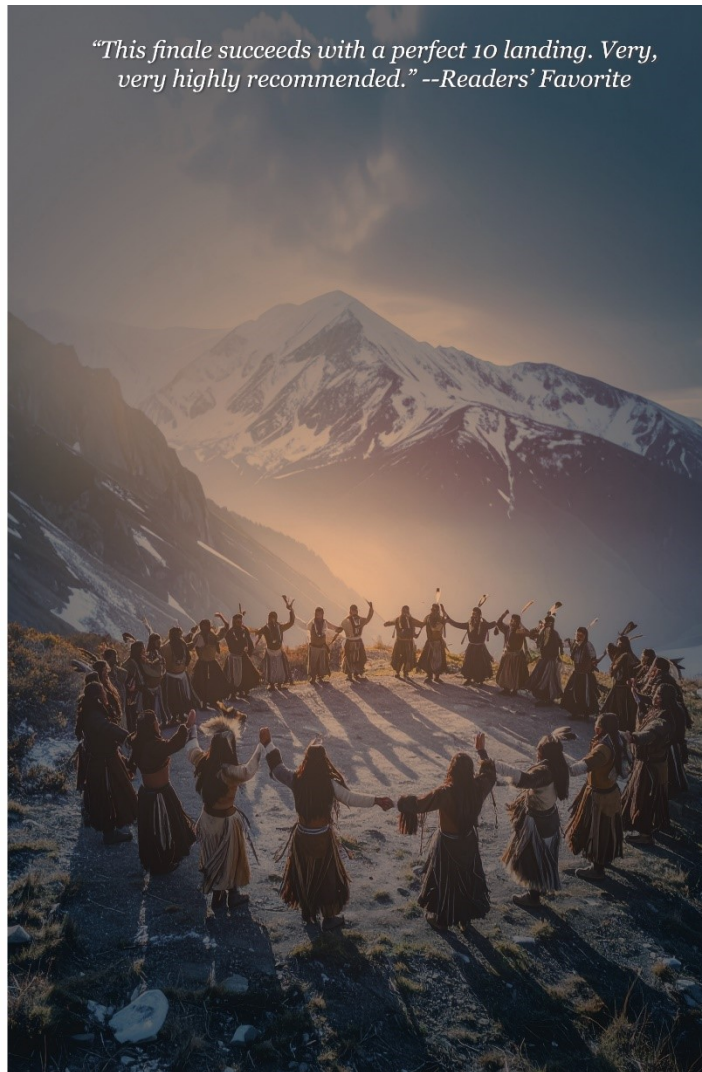
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Welcome

Welcome to the grand finale of *The Curse of Dead Horse Canyon Saga*! The story culminates in this volume in multiple ways, some of which may surprise or even shock you. This is where everything ties together from Bryan Reynolds' untimely death to Charlie's ceremonial fast on the Sacred Mountain, *Novavose*. Be prepared for a deep dive into elements driving the story at both the conspiracy, historical, cultural, and ceremonial levels. The purpose of this guide is to highlight those things you may have missed and nudge you to deeper understanding of the depth contained in this epic story.



"This finale succeeds with a perfect 10 landing. Very, very highly recommended." --Readers' Favorite

About the Book

This third and final volume expanded significantly with the research conducted by myself (Marcha Fox) and my coauthor, Pete Risingsun. While we had a general idea of where it was headed with Charlie's ceremonial fast on *Novavose*, how Cheyenne and Native American historical events would contribute was nothing short of serendipity as it dove-tailed with the plot.

Why it Was Written

This volume is what this saga has been aiming for all along, Charlie's full transformation. From the first book, where he was forced to accept Eaglefeathers' teachings, through the second where he experienced traumatic injuries while helping Lone Star Operations (LSO) find oil in the pristine Rocky Mountains, he has been on a journey the scope of which he was unaware. When he returned to the

Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana, Whitewolf dropped numerous hints, but left it to *Maheo* to fully reveal his destiny.

Sara, likewise, is on a transformational journey, having also suffered greatly as a result of being poisoned. Are hers and Charlie's respective destinies diverging or converging? Stay tuned to find out.

Prologue - Chapter 10

Discussion Questions

Prologue

The prologue follows the revelation in the previous book's epilogue that revealed more about who and what Jason LaGrange really is. Were you surprised to find out those seemingly "minor walk-on" characters were in numerous cases all him?

Sara may think she's out of danger with Eddie Johannsen dead, but is she? What mistakes might she make thinking she's safe?

Did being distracted by her debilitated condition cause her to be less diligent regarding her personal safety? Or something else?

Chapter 1: Cars

Cars as symbols can represent a person's life, particularly in dreams. In this chapter, we find Sara gazing upon the traffic on Boulder's Diagonal Highway, which has been a meditation device for much of her adult life. While on "the other side" her mother told her she had to return, much as Bryan had in the first book, again finding her in a physically and emotionally traumatized condition.

What does Sara's perception of "each driver pursuing their own destination amid troubles, triumphs, and tragedies. Yet, from this perspective, just another car" say to you about her mental state?

Charlie's focus is on more practical matters, *i.e.*, obtaining a reliable car for their trip to Colorado and later to the Sacred Mountain. How does this compare symbolically with Sara's ruminations?

Chapter 2: Gifts

How does Charlie's determination to compose an honor song for Sara fit with the theme of "gifts?"

Star loves gift-giving because it "brought a feeling you couldn't get any other way." Do you experience such a feeling? How does a "gift" differ from a "present?"

What did Charlie shopping for a car symbolize at a deeper level?

Compare the irony of Charlie embracing the "new car smell" to White Wolf telling him they should smudge it because it "smelled funny."

What did it represent when Charlie caught himself speeding and nearly plowed into a small herd of deer?

Chapter 3: Déjà-vu

Any comments on White Wolf's admonition, "You must respect your position as one chosen to serve *Maheo* with as much dedication as you give this truck?" Are indigenous people more respectful toward their elders and their advise than those from other cultures?

Charlie feels closer to Patrice than he did to his own mother. Have you ever felt closer to someone you just met compared to a family member?

Why were Sara and Connie surprised when Will welcomed Patrice so warmly?

Would you have agreed to proceed upon learning the effects of bitter root?

Chapter 4: Expectations

The scene switches to Washington, D.C. where new character, Ingrid Thorsen, is planning the open house gala to celebrate the completion of the first phase of PURF. As Myron Bentley's executive assistant, what does this tell you about her?

Did it surprise you that Bernie Keller was Ingrid's son-in-law? If you have a spectacular memory back to book 1, what kind of dog does Ingrid have? ;-)

Does her flippant attitude toward charging attendees to attend the gala remind you of anything?

If Charlie has a special mission for the Cheyenne people why do you think his parents were from different tribes?

As Charlie and White Wolf head to Dead Horse Canyon to smoke and pray, it's a moonless night, suggesting a new moon. What does this tell you?

Chapter 5: Bitter Root

Trey keeps hoping they'll be able to get Charlie to come back to LSO. Do you think that's possible?

Maheo and the Earth Mother provide healing herbs and minerals for their children. Why do you think such a powerful remedy as bitter root is so unpleasant? How does this relate to detoxing metaphorically?

How does this chapter's title relate to Guy Allison at the FBI going through Sara's file?

Chapter 6: Prayer Cloths

Contrast the bitter root experience with that of the prayer cloth ceremony. Why were they both necessary?

Did Charlie and White Wolf really fail to heal Sara? What did Charlie forget?

When they return to the ranch, numerous things have gone wrong which they needed to resolve. While they were away helping Sara why wouldn't *Maheo* protect their home in Montana? Were mischievous spirits responsible? Or was there another lesson there?

What did Charlie's vision of the dove during the sweat imply?

Chapter 7: Flashback

Calvin Nielsen appeared briefly in the prologue to book 2. Additional information is provided regarding PURF beyond what the president declared when he justified it. Are Calvin's concerns valid that he may not be included as a future resident?

As an author I thought this chapter was boring but necessary. I was surprised when a reader told me she found it fascinating. What did you think? Did you learn anything new about the lawmaking process?

Chapter 8: Wake-up Calls

What's your opinion of Jason's plan? What could go wrong?

What do you think Sara will do first now that she feels better?

Should Trey be more concerned by the tremors?

Chapter 9: Liberation

What did Bryan's \$3M life insurance policy tell you about him?

Personal data breaches occur more and more frequently, enabling unscrupulous people to commit fraud. However, what about what Bryan uncovered and other government whistleblowers? Should hacking be illegal under all circumstances? Does the public have the right to know? How much transparency is appropriate for taxpayers to have?

Jason has Sara in the sights of the scope on his rifle. What now?

Chapter 10: Revelations

Should Charlie sell *Tah-Hó'nehe*?

Why was it important for Charlie to have the vision of Myron Bentley establishing the Lobbyist Opportunity League? What did the man's red eyes tell him?

Were you surprised when LaGrange couldn't pull the trigger? What do you think he'll do now?

Trivia

Ice Was a Real Person

The Cheyenne name their children, but later in life they may choose a different name for themselves to honor something they did or a relative or ancestor. Ice was a real person in Cheyenne history. Coauthor, Pete, chose that name to honor the original Ice, whose was also known as White Bull, to whom Thunder had appeared and whose name appears frequently in the books we researched.

White Bull was remembered as a great holy man who performed miracles as well as making a war bonnet that protected Roman Nose in battle until he violated a condition associated with its power. On page 334 of *Sweet Medicine*, Volume I by Father Peter John Powell, to whom *Revenge of Dead Horse Canyon* was dedicated, he explains how White Bull became known as Ice.

A man known as Little Fish was conducting a sun dance. On the fourth day, he collapsed on a buffalo robe from the heat, fasting, and exhaustion. White Bull told him to sit on the tail end of the buffalo robe, to look him in the eye and open his mouth. According to Powell, "Suddenly cold objects were hitting Little Fish in the face and mouth. They were hailstones; the ice from which White Bull had received his second name."

Little Fish was revived enough he completed his pledge to Maheo and the Sacred Powers.

White Bull also had a deep hole dug big enough to hold him. He got inside and two large stones that required two men to carry them were placed over the opening. At one point they removed the stones to check on him and he was gone. Sometime later they checked again and he was back. (That story is recorded on page 105 of *Cheyenne Memories* by John Stands in Timber and Margot Liberty.)

Giving

The psychology of giving explores why people give to others and the emotional and psychological benefits they experience in the process. Research shows that giving activates areas of the brain associated with pleasure, satisfaction, and reward, creating a "helper's high." People often give because it boosts their sense of self-worth, fosters social connections, and promotes feelings of empathy and compassion. Giving can also be driven by a desire to create positive change, strengthen relationships, or meet societal expectations. Ultimately, the act of giving not only helps others but also provides a sense of fulfillment and well-being for the giver.

Recipes

Bitter Root Detox Potion

(Just kidding)

Connie's Cabbage Soup with Smoked Sausage

Ingredients:

- 1 lb smoked sausage (such as kielbasa or andouille), sliced into rounds
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and diced
- 3 cups cabbage, shredded (about half a medium head)
- 4 cups chicken broth (or vegetable broth)
- 1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes (with juice)
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika (optional)
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)

Instructions:

1. **Cook the Sausage:**
 - Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the sliced smoked sausage and cook until browned, about 5-7 minutes. Once browned, remove the sausage from the pot and set it aside.
2. **Sauté the Vegetables:**
 - In the same pot, add the chopped onion and carrot. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables begin to soften.
 - Add the garlic and cook for another minute until fragrant.
3. **Add Broth and Other Ingredients:**
 - Stir in the shredded cabbage, diced potatoes, diced tomatoes (with their juice), chicken broth, dried thyme, smoked paprika (if using), and bay leaf. Bring the mixture to a boil.
4. **Simmer:**
 - Reduce the heat to low and let the soup simmer uncovered for 30-40 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender and the cabbage is cooked through.
5. **Add Sausage:**
 - Return the browned sausage to the pot and stir. Let the soup simmer for another 10-15 minutes so the sausage can heat through and flavor the soup.
6. **Season and Serve:**
 - Taste the soup and add salt and pepper as needed.
 - Remove the bay leaf before serving.
 - Garnish with fresh chopped parsley and serve hot.

Enjoy it with some crusty bread for an even more satisfying meal!

Play List

Bridge Over Troubled Water (*Simon & Garfunkel*)

Sucker (*Jonas Brothers*)

Healing (Shattered Heart) (*Kygo, Jonas Brothers*)

Strong Enough (*Jonas Brothers*)

Chapters 11 - 21

Discussion Questions

Chapter 11: Homecoming

Now that she's feeling more like herself, even if she still can't walk, Sara gets a service dog and moves back to her condo.

Is there anything symbolic in Sara's fear of heights? Have they been prophetic in the past?

Now Charlie's spirit helpers have a name: *maiyun*. How does this make perfect sense in the indigenous worldview that we are all connected and everything is alive in some way? Has a *maiyun* ever helped you?

Elaborate on White Wolf's statement: "Every time another of our people completes a fast [on Novavose] it increases its power. It binds us together as brothers. To each other as well as Sweet Medicine."

Were you surprised by Ice's advice? What do you think he saw or knows?

Chapter 12: Errands

Sara's relentless spirit emerges again as she returns home to her condo with her new roomie, a pit bull terrier service dog named Blossom. She runs numerous errands, then goes to visit Patrice while the dog was at the groomer's. A series of unfortunate events occur that end with her being abducted. How much of it was orchestrated by LaGrange and how much just part of a bad day that dove-tailed with his agenda?

Chapter 13: Missing

Did Jason mean it when he said, "I haven't decided whether you're worth more alive or dead" or was he just trying to scare her?

What if any significance does bringing Eaglefeathers' medicine bundle have with their excursion to the sacred mountain?

Chapter 14: Arrivals

The trip to the Sacred Mountain involved substantial preparation. When Charlie was there before it had the quality of a field trip to an interesting location. This time it felt different. Why?

Chapter 15: Novavose

In this chapter Charlie learns more about the *maheyuno*, the sacred persons who guard the four directions. These directions are not north, south, east, and west, but tied to astronomical events. These directions are often marked in ancient sites such as Stonehenge and others. Why do you think ancient peoples noticed these locations?

Chapter 16: Captive

This chapter is another one of my favorites. Sara confronts LaGrange, not only about abducting her but as the purveyor of the poison. I never know what my characters are going to say or do but I have to admit that LaGrange's line, "At some point we get too far down the rabbit hole. It's a tight place to turn around" is one of my favorites. What are your thoughts on the dynamics between these two?

Charlie's first vision makes no sense, then Whistling Elk, a great Cheyenne elder from the past, invites him to follow him deep into the cave. His *Novavose* experience is about to begin.

Chapter 17: In Plain Sight

Sara calls her father, but is not allowed to speak with him for long, only telling him about the ransom. Connie calls Patrice and asks her to do a horary chart to see what it might tell them about the situation.

It's becoming apparent why Charlie needed Eaglefeathers' medicine bundle as he finds something within he previously missed. What do you think of Charlie's question regarding how to get it to her?

Patrice's interpretation of the situation suggests a few surprises. What do you think will happen? (I have to admit as the author writing this story that at this point I had no idea myself.)

Chapter 18: Ponderings

What is happening between Sara and Jason LaGrange?

Chapter 19: Revelations

Connie and Will along with Blossom drive around Boulder to see if they can figure out where Sara might be, based on Patrice's reading. At a certain point Blossom indicates they may have found her. Have you ever experienced a dog or cat seeming to have psychic powers?

Chapter 20: Dreams

Sara waking up after having a spectacular dream represents a world unknown to most steeped in western culture. The dream state is one cloaked in mystery, yet to indigenous cultures, while such events are unusual, they're nonetheless possible. In the context of the story was it credible? What strange, perhaps prophetic dreams, have you had?

Why was healing Sara essential to Charlie's fast?

Chapter 21: Visions

Why was it important for Charlie to experience the Dead Horse Canyon massacre when he already was familiar with the story?

What meaning does being the seventh generation carry for Charlie? (Hint: See the quote in the book at the beginning of the next chapter.)

What did you think of Jason's reaction to his condition?

Trivia

Service Dogs and Their Training

- **What They Are:** Service dogs are specially trained to assist individuals with disabilities, providing support that enhances their independence and quality of life. They can help with physical, mental, or emotional conditions, such as mobility impairments, PTSD, or epilepsy.
- **Training:**
 - **Basic Obedience:** All service dogs undergo basic obedience training to ensure they can follow commands and behave appropriately in public.
 - **Task-Specific Training:** Depending on the individual's needs, service dogs are trained to perform specific tasks, such as guiding a blind person, alerting someone to an impending seizure, retrieving objects, or providing tactile stimulation during a panic attack.
 - **Socialization:** Service dogs are exposed to a variety of environments and distractions so they can remain calm and focused in public spaces.
 - **Certification:** While not legally required in all places, some service dogs undergo certification processes to confirm their skills and abilities.

Kidnapping versus Abduction

While "kidnapping" and "abduction" are often used interchangeably, they can be legally distinct crimes, with abduction often referring to taking a child from a parent or guardian. Kidnapping generally involves taking someone against their will, often with force or threat, and potentially for ransom or other harmful purposes. Abduction, on the other hand, can involve deception or persuasion, and is frequently used in situations involving family relationships, such as one parent taking a child from the other.

Occupational Therapists

As a Physical Therapist (PT) Sara was aware of what Occupational therapists (OTs) do to help people with disabilities or injuries regain or improve their ability to perform daily tasks. While PTs help their patients recover or compensate for physical injuries, OTs help individuals deal with their limitations by developing, recovering, or maintaining the skills needed for everyday activities, such as dressing, cooking, and work-related tasks.

OTs assess a person's physical, mental, and emotional abilities and create personalized treatment plans to improve independence. They may recommend adaptive equipment,

teach new strategies, and work on building motor skills, sensory processing, and cognitive functions to help clients achieve their goals and enhance their quality of life.

Recipe

Sara's Homemade Popcorn

1/3 cup organic popcorn

1 tbsp avocado oil

Salt to taste

Coat bottom of a large skillet with avocado oil and place over high heat. Add popcorn, then cover. When the pauses between pops are five seconds long, turn off heat and carefully remove cover. Place in large bowl and add salt, butter, or other toppings as desired.

Playlist

Eyes Closed (Imagine Dragons)

Leonore Overture No. 3 (Ludwig van Beethoven)

Ride of the Valkyries (Richard Wagner)

Chapters 22 - 33

Discussion Questions

Chapter 22: Directions

Charlie learns more about the significance of the seventh generation. Do you believe ceremonies contain a unique energy different from that found in "normal" life or even celebrations?

Why is peace and tolerance more important than having the same beliefs?

Does the Sacred Mountain house a portal where time advances at a different pace?

Why did Jason tell Sara about LOL?

Why did one of the sacred persons deliver that message to White Wolf and his son?

Chapter 23: Sweet Medicine

Sweet Medicine, the Cheyenne's culture hero, teaches Charlie more about their traditions that have been lost. Why was it important for him to hear it directly from the prophet?

Cheyenne sacred objects include the Sacred Arrows (*Mahuts*) and Sacred Buffalo Hat (*Is si'wun*). Name some objects considered sacred by major religions. What is their purpose?

Chapter 24: Conversations

Sara ruminates on the information Jason told her, seeking her father's advice on what to do. Did his conversation with Jason go as expected? Or contain a few surprises?

She returns to the cabin with Blossom to work on her plan, the first she's been back since before she was poisoned. Have you ever had to say goodbye to a home or place that had tremendous sentimental memories attached?

Chapter 25: Massaum

Winter Hawk joins Charlie on the mountain and they share a vision of the Massaum ceremony. How significant is the location where it was performed the first time? What ceremonies can you think of that replicate a sacred event?

Did Sara's confrontation with Bob Bentley surprise you?

Chapter 26: Stars

Why did ancient cultures use the heliacal rise of certain stars to time events? Does it make sense that the Bighorn Medicine Wheel was part of the Massaum ceremony?

Is Charlie's confidence crisis to be expected?

Trey is in "Hog Heaven" as the drilling site expands to full production mode. Thoughts?

What did you think of Charlie's visit from *Amasani* and her comment "They trust you, *Naalnish*. Why do you not trust yourself?"

Chapter 27: History

What does the bench seat represent in all three books? Is it an inanimate object or a character of sorts?

Chapter 28: Surprises

Porcupine, another important figure in Cheyenne history, comes back to tell Charlie about another sacred ceremony that involved dancing, an important element in indigenous cultures. The historical information in this chapter is based heavily on documented research. What was your reaction?

Is it surprising that Davis Jenkins wouldn't talk to Sara? Why?

Star is preparing to meet them at *Novavose* and bring a feast to celebrate Charlie completing his fast. Do you think her theory that a trickster *maiyun* is taunting her in White Wolf's absence makes sense?

Chapter 29: Descent

Why did the government outlaw indigenous ceremonies? What deeper, more insidious meaning lurked behind the ban?

Chapter 30: Synthesis

How did Charlie's, White Wolf's, and Winter Hawk's respective experiences during the sweat provide a figurative benediction to the *Novavose* experience for them all?

Chapter 31: Returning

Why did Charlie forget to mention healing Sara to White Wolf and Ice? Do you think Ice was surprised? Or expected it?

Thoughts on Harry Truman's quote, "Show me a man who gets rich by being a politician, and I'll show you a crook?"

Chapter 32: SuPURFluous

Ingrid is busy checking on invitees who didn't RSVP for the PURF Gala, providing a few more insights into the facility.

Do you think Angela Bentley is aware of her husband's sketchy situation?

What did Thomas Martin's ruminations tell you about PURF that you didn't know before?

Chapter 33: Plans

As the significance of the Peace Gathering begins to dawn on Charlie, he's concerned about two people. Whom do you think they are? Any ideas on what diversion *Maheo* might provide?

Recipe

Lakota Fry Bread

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup sugar
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup water (or enough to make a soft dough)
- Oil or lard for frying

Directions:

Mix all the dry ingredients together. Add water, mixing carefully. Divide the dough into four pieces and pat each into a round, flat shape. Add 1-2 inches of oil to a large skillet and heat to 350° F. Fry each round until crisp and brown on both sides.

Indian Tacos: Top fry bread with seasoned ground beef or buffalo, cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, salsa and sour cream.

Trivia

The Bench Seat

Astrologically, the bench seat is firmly placed in the Plutonian archetype. Pluto represents dark secrets; matters from the past that are deliberately hidden and unresolved; exposing corruption; and conversely, healing and rebirth. What unresolved issues lurk in your past?

Playlist

Creation Chant (*R. Carlos Nakai*)

Mysteries of the Past (*R. Carlos Nakai*)

Spiral Passage (*R. Carlos Nakai*)

Chapters 34 - 44

Discussion Questions

Chapter 34: Gone

Bryan's life insurance policy bequeathed \$3M to Sara and now her assets are gone. Whom do you think is responsible? How will her life change without it? Can her mission continue to fulfill Bryan's last request?

Did the circumstances surprise you?

Chapter 35: Deals

Can Jason be trusted? What do you think he's up to? Did you learn anything new or surprising about anyone during their road trip to Montana?

Chapter 36: Sweating

What did you think of Jason's sweat experience? What does it tell you about his background?

What about Sara's, Will's, and Connie's sweat experiences? Consider the parallels between modern healing modalities such as saunas, aroma and sound therapies, and meditation with the sweat lodge ceremony.

What was the most surprising thing for you in this chapter?

Chapter 37: Visitors

Were you surprised to meet Naomi? Can you guess where she's headed in this saga?

And what about that kiss?

Chapter 38: Rides

Thoughts on Charlie and Sara's encounter?

Why would Charlie's statement "It's as if your place were designed specifically for what we have planned" give her goosebumps with a flash of déjà-vu? Consider the history of the property.

What did the elk herd's appearance say to you?

In this chapter Charlie and Sara were never closer or farther apart. Thoughts?

Chapter 39: LSO

Was it a good idea for Charlie to go by LSO and see how much it expanded? Would his thoughts and feelings be conflicted?

Chapter 40: Coincidences

Sara's visit with Connie and Patrice relieves some of her concerns. Jason drops by, surprising her in more ways than one. What about you? What was he thinking?

Was it a coincidence the Massaum will begin on the six month anniversary of Bryan's death?

Chapter 41: *Maheonox*

The Massaum begins with Star the female pledger and her husband the male pledger. Playing a role in a religious pageant or movie often affects people deeply. How might it cement participants to their heritage and ancestors?

The first day of the Massaum is dedicated to obtaining the world tree, then building the Wolf Lodge where much of the activity takes place. Its construction is steeped with symbolism, such as the seven branches left on the tree that watch over the lodge. What else did you detect?

Meanwhile, Sara, Will, and Connie commemorate the six month anniversary of Bryan's death by scattering chrysanthemums and autumn leaves along the path where his ashes were scattered.

Chapter 42: *Maheyuno*

Charlie represents *Maheo* as he figuratively goes through the motions of the creation. What similarities were there to the Biblical creation? What differences?

Why would a buffalo skull be used to represent Grandmother Earth?

As the Cheyenne honor the Creation and Earth Mother, a massive storm descends on Texas and delivers a strong message to the Bentley brothers. Coincidence?

Chapter 43: *Ehyophstah*

Having trouble pronouncing these ancient Cheyenne words? Sorry, I can't help. They are as hard to type as say aloud. My best guess for this chapter's title would be Eh-YOF-stah.

What does the English translation "Yellow Haired Woman" tell you about the appearance of the person created from a young buffalo to help the Cheyenne?

Trey's dream job just evaporated. Why is this a good thing he does not yet recognize?

Chapter 44: *Heszepoxsz*

The Massaum is a long and detailed ceremony. It's easy to see why it took so long to prepare and involved so many participants. While Christmas Pageants remind Christians of the birth of Christ, the Massaum reminded the Cheyenne of the creation and their origin story. As the Earth Giving Ceremony it was a covenant between them and *Maheo* that they could occupy the land as long as they followed Sweet Medicine's teachings. Hunting by driving animals into pounds was a major component.

Why is emotional involvement essential to faith and belief? Is logic alone sufficient for a person to live in a certain manner, especially if it involves sacrifice?

Recipes

Eggplant Parmesan

Ingredients:

- 2 large eggplants, sliced into 1/2-inch thick rounds
- Salt (for sweating the eggplant)
- 2 cups all-purpose flour (for dredging)
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- 2 cups Italian-style breadcrumbs
- 1 1/2 cups marinara sauce (store-bought or homemade)
- 2 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 2 tbsp fresh basil, chopped (optional for garnish)
- Olive oil (for frying)

Instructions:

1. **Prepare the Eggplant:** Sprinkle the eggplant slices with salt and place them on a paper towel-lined tray. Let them sit for about 30 minutes to draw out excess moisture and bitterness. After 30 minutes, wipe off any moisture and salt with a clean paper towel.
 2. **Bread the Eggplant:** Set up a breading station with three shallow dishes.
 - First, place the flour in one dish.
 - In the second dish, beat the eggs.
 - In the third dish, place the breadcrumbs.Dredge each slice of eggplant first in the flour, then in the eggs, and finally coat it with breadcrumbs.
 3. **Fry the Eggplant:** In a large skillet, heat about 1/4 inch of olive oil over medium heat. Fry the eggplant slices in batches until golden brown on both sides, about 2-3 minutes per side. Remove from the pan and drain on paper towels.
 4. **Assemble the Dish:** Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). In a baking dish, spread a thin layer of marinara sauce. Place a layer of fried eggplant slices on top. Spoon some marinara sauce over the eggplant, then sprinkle with mozzarella and Parmesan cheeses. Repeat the layers until all the eggplant is used up, finishing with a layer of cheese on top.
 5. **Bake:** Bake in the preheated oven for 20-25 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and bubbly, and the top is golden brown.
 6. **Garnish & Serve:** Sprinkle fresh basil over the top, if desired, and serve hot with a side of spaghetti or a fresh salad.
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Star's Ham Hocks and White Beans

Ingredients:

- 2 ham hocks (or smoked ham hocks)
- 1 lb dry white beans (such as Great Northern or Navy beans)
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika (optional, for extra smokiness)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 6 cups chicken broth (or water)
- 1 tbsp olive oil

Instructions:

1. **Prepare the Beans:**
 - Rinse the beans thoroughly and pick out any debris.
 - Soak the beans overnight in plenty of water, or use the quick-soak method: bring the beans to a boil in a large pot with enough water to cover them, boil for 2 minutes, then remove from heat and let them sit covered for 1 hour. Drain before cooking.
2. **Cook the Ham Hocks:**
 - In a large pot or Dutch oven, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add the ham hocks and sear them until browned on all sides, about 5-7 minutes. Remove the ham hocks and set them aside.
3. **Sauté the Vegetables:**
 - In the same pot, add the onions, carrots, and celery. Sauté for 5-7 minutes until softened.
 - Add the garlic, thyme, paprika, bay leaf, and cook for another minute until fragrant.
4. **Simmer the Beans:**
 - Add the soaked beans to the pot, along with the ham hocks. Pour in the chicken broth (or water) and bring the mixture to a boil.
 - Once boiling, reduce the heat to low and let the beans simmer, uncovered, for 1.5 to 2 hours, or until the beans are tender and creamy. Stir occasionally and check the water level—add more broth or water if it gets too low.
5. **Finishing Touches:**
 - Once the beans are tender, remove the ham hocks and shred the meat off the bones. Discard any fat or bones and return the meat to the pot.
 - Season the beans with salt and pepper to taste.
6. **Serve:**
 - Serve hot with cornbread or on its own as a hearty dish.

Trivia

Cheyenne Paints

Paints in Cheyenne culture are considered sacred and used for numerous ceremonies besides going to war. The symbols on a person's body indicate their intent and identifies them to spirit helpers as one of the Morning Star people. Each mark has spiritual significance, similar to some individual's tattoos, but the paint is only worn for the duration of the related ceremony. Paints also provide protection from bad spirits. They are earned by showing faith and participating in ceremonies. Each color is prepared in a specific way from natural sources.

Abductor - Abductee Relationships

The relationship that can develop between a kidnapper and their victim, often referred to as Stockholm Syndrome, is a complex psychological phenomenon. It occurs when a victim forms an emotional bond with their captor, sometimes even defending or identifying with them. This bond often develops in situations of extreme stress, isolation, or dependence, where the victim may perceive acts of kindness, or lack of violence, as signs of care. Over time, the victim might feel gratitude or sympathy for the captor, and the captor may even begin to see the victim as a tool to maintain control or gain validation.

In the case of Patty Hearst, her kidnapping by the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) in 1974 is a prime example of this. After months of captivity, Hearst began to show signs of Stockholm Syndrome, participating in criminal activities with her captors, including bank robberies. Her transformation from a wealthy socialite to a member of the SLA raised questions about psychological manipulation and trauma. Over time, victims of such situations can become psychologically entwined with their captors, sometimes making it difficult for outsiders to understand their behavior, as it becomes tied to survival instincts, fear, and a distorted sense of connection.

In the case of Sara and Jason, there are shades of this, except she had a stronger influence on him than vice versa. Her courage and helpless state brought out his male protective instincts, something he had never experienced before, generating the Stockholm Syndrome in reverse.

Playlist

What's Love Got to Do With It (*Tina Turner*)

Believer (*Imagine Dragons*)

Chapters 45 - Epilogue

Chapter 45: *Nanov Meohotoxc*

Consider what an elaborate spectacle the sacred hunt would be. What reminders might it impress upon the participants as well as its audience? With people of all ages, how would it become a bonding experience? Why were they directed to hold one every year?

Chapter 46: Departing

At last Charlie meets Leaping Elk, the Lakota medicine man who performed a healing ceremony for him while he was unconscious following his accident, creating a spiritual bond between them. Can you explain the connection between true healers and their patients?

Why did they pause in their long journey to stop by the Little Bighorn Battlefield?

Divine promises always have conditions attached. What is their purpose? Obedience? Or something more?

Chapter 47: Storms

Why did *Maheo* not provide clear weather along the way?

Chapter 48: Prelude

Thoughts on Sara's statement, "The past is based on fact, while history is subjective, recorded by those who prevail?"

Were you surprised that potatoes and tomatoes originated in the Americas while it was Spain who brought horses to America?

Chapter 49: Changes

Ingrid adds a few additional guests to the list, much to the Head Chef's distress. It seems strange, yet she speculates, "What could possibly go wrong?" Do you agree?

Jim Hudson's intuition is nudging him something is brewing and Patrice sees ominous indicators somewhat literally on the horizon. What is about to happen?

Chapter 50: Dancing

Do you think that people as evil as Myron truly exist in high positions? Why or why not?

Why would indigenous people be given a sacred ceremony that included dancing? What emotion does it generate? How are emotions and intent related?

Chapter 51: Retribution

Did the occupants of PURF get what they deserved?

Chapter 52: Aftermath

What did you think of Jason's grand finale? Why do you think he went in that direction?

Chapter 53: Conspiracies

Was Jim Hudson's conversation with the Pentagon and their reaction what you expected?

Why was Charlie rattled by what the Navajo elder from New Mexico told him?

Chapter 54: Reclamation

Do you believe that prophecies uttered by holy prophets will be fulfilled?

Are you aware of any that have been?

Chapter 55: Tectonics

The Badlands Guardian is an fascinating geological formation. Or is it? Is it perhaps a mark on the land, possibly even the result of a Massaum some time in the distant past? Native American connections to the land are epic. Could it be?

Did Sara and Charlie fulfill Bryan's dying request?

Epilogue

So much to wrap up! Coauthor Pete wanted a happy ending. Is it? Will the saga continue? There is certainly plenty to build upon. The Earth Mother is already in the fight. Should the Star People be recruited?

Trivia

Native American History

If you're interested in learning more about Native American history, an excellent source is the course "[Native Peoples of North American](https://www.thegreatcoursesplus.com/)" from *The Great Courses Plus* streaming service (<https://www.thegreatcoursesplus.com/>) or from Audible with some courses available through Amazon Prime Video. (This course is the source of the information about potatoes, tomatoes, and horses.)

MK-Ultra

Bill Yarborough's book, "[Memories of MK-Ultra: A Journey of Discovery from Darkness to Deliverance](#)," provides detailed insights as a survivor of this insidious program. I read it after writing this book, pleased when it validated what I had assumed about its influence on the relevant characters in this book.

The Massaum

The Massaum was a monumental endeavor that required months of preparation to say nothing of a huge cast to represent the animals in the Sacred Hunt. Wars against the U.S. Government and their attempted annihilation of native people reduced the number of people in all tribes. When the Cheyenne were separated into the Northern and Southern tribal units, it further impacted the logistics of holding a Massaum and contributed to the tradition being lost. The last one was held in 1927, nearly a century ago. It was



an abbreviated version and it was reported that the participants really didn't understand the ceremony. Reinstating it would be a huge undertaking. Might they make the effort if they understood it's significance as the "Earth Giving Ceremony?"

Ceremonies

Ceremonies play a crucial role in shaping and reinforcing the identity, values, and social cohesion of a culture. Psychologically, they provide structure and meaning to significant life events, such as births, marriages, rites of passage, and deaths, helping individuals navigate transitions and challenges. Ceremonies offer a sense of belonging and continuity, linking individuals to their community, heritage, and the larger world.

They also help individuals process emotions and make sense of life's milestones by creating a shared experience that fosters solidarity. The collective nature of ceremonies strengthens social bonds, reinforcing shared beliefs, rituals, and traditions that promote cultural continuity.

Psychologically, ceremonies can offer comfort, reduce anxiety, and provide a sense of control in times of uncertainty. They also allow people to express their values, beliefs, and identities in a meaningful way, often creating lasting memories and emotional connections with both the event and the culture itself. Ultimately, ceremonies serve as a powerful tool for social, emotional, and psychological well-being within a culture.

Recipes

Marcha's Mulled Wine a.k.a. Gluhwein

Ingredients

- 1 tsp whole cloves
- 1 tsp whole allspice
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 star anise
- 1/4 cup concentrated frozen orange juice
- 4 cups red wine
- agave syrup or sugar to taste
- 1/2 cup brandy

Preparation

Simmer everything except agave, orange juice, and brandy for at least 30 minutes being careful it does not boil. Cover and stir occasionally. When sufficiently infused with spices, add orange juice, brandy, and agave or sugar to taste. Strain out the spices, pour into mugs, and enjoy!

Playlist

- Buffy Sainte-Marie — *Starwalker*
 - Robbie Robertson — *Ghost Dance*
 - Don't Stop Believin' — *Journey*
 - Eye of the Tiger — *Survivor*
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Suggested Reading

- Blaisdell, Bob (Editor); *Great Speeches by Native Americans* ([My Review](#))
- Sandweiss, Martha A.; *The Girl in the Middle: A Recovered History of the American West* ([My Review](#))
- FourEagles, Russell; *The Making of a Healer: Teachings of My Oneida Grandmother* ([My review](#))
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall; *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* ([My review](#))
- Saunt, Claudio; *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory*