

Yo Mama's Right Here

The figure rose out of the water. The wet, black dress pressed in on her bony body. The tattered, black bonnet surrounded what had once been a face. Rotting, gray flesh with teeth and bone showing through now. Empty, dark holes where the eyes used to be. Her hands reached out blindly for her dead child.

“Baby, come to meeeee...” she moaned. “Yo mama’s right heeeeeere.”

With a scream, Jacob Brown woke up from his nightmare.

“Jacob, what’s wrong?” his wife Mary asked.

“Bad dream is all,” Jacob said, wiping the sweat off his face. “Get back to sleep now.”

Tomorrow they would be crossing the Green River. Jacob always had trouble sleeping before crossings. To get an early start in the morning, the wagon train had camped near the river. Jacob could

hear the sound of the dark water that was waiting for them.

“I would sooner rastle a bear than tangle with them waters,” he thought.

But Jacob knew that if the family was going to get to the green farmlands of Oregon, they were going to have to cross this river. They had crossed others, and there would be more ahead.

He got up, pulled his boots on, and walked down to the river. Dawn still felt hours away. The moon did little to brighten the water or Jacob’s troubled mind. After a while he walked back to the wagons.

In the morning a tired Jacob hitched the oxen to the wagon and smiled when he saw his three young children running around. Things were always better in the morning.

“Git on up here, you rascals,” he told them. “It’s time to go.”

In the distance, dark clouds colored the sky. But overhead it was blue as the first wagons began to cross the river.

One behind the other, the heavy wagons moved slowly through the water, each making it safely to the other side. Finally it was their turn.

“Yaw!” Jacob shouted to the oxen. “Do work!”

By now the sky above had turned much darker and the water had begun to rise. The river was moving faster than when the first wagons crossed.

At first Jacob thought it was just his tired mind playing tricks on him. He could barely hear it above the noise of the rushing water.

“Baby, come to meeeeeee...” it moaned softly. “Yo mama’s right heeeeeere.”

Jacob swallowed hard and continued to drive the team. The animals did their best, but to Jacob it felt like giant snails were pulling the wagon. The force of the water made it harder and harder to keep on course. It started to rain.

And then Jacob heard it again. She was closer and louder now, and Jacob had no doubt she was real.

“Baby, come to meeeeeee...” she called again. “Yo mama’s right heeeeeere.”

Through chattering teeth, Jacob urged the team forward.

“Y-y-y-yaw!” he ordered in a shaky voice. “G-g-g-git going!”

The minutes seemed like hours, but through the now-pouring rain Jacob could see the shore ahead getting closer. He almost smiled at the thought that they would make it.

And then it happened. It happened just like in his dream.

Something rose out of the water right in front of the oxen. The wet, black dress pressed in on her bony body. The tattered, black bonnet surrounded



what had once been a face. Rotting, gray flesh with teeth and bone showing through. Empty, dark holes where the eyes used to be. Hands reaching out blindly in front of her.

“Baby, come to meeeee...” she moaned loudly. “Yo mama’s right heeeeeere.”

Suddenly, as Jacob screamed, the wagon hit a **submerged** boulder and rose in the air. Then, as Mary and the children screamed, the wagon tipped over. Jacob fell into the water and was carried downriver.

The last thing he saw before disappearing forever under the cold, black water was the woman floating above the wagon.

“Baby, come to meeeee. Yo mama’s ri...”

[Now quickly shout: AHHHHH!]

Crossing rivers along the Oregon Trail was dangerous. Hundreds of pioneers drowned trying to cross the Kansas, North Platte, and Columbia Rivers – among others. In 1850 alone, 37 people drowned attempting to cross the Green River in Wyoming.

submerged: beneath the surface of the water.