

They arrived at the entrance of Grand Canyon National Park around four in the afternoon, and were slightly upset about not having more daylight left. Still, neither would have missed or shortened their time at Hopi.

“We’ll just make the most of the time we have,” Cosmo said to Silvia optimistically.

“Yeah,” Silvia agreed, looking out the window with eagerness.

“We’ll catch the best part anyway,” he said. “Sunset.”

They drove right to the south rim as the park ranger who greeted them had instructed. The magnificent Canyon opened itself up to the sky, which was half deep blue and half filled with clouds. The clouds hung around the mountains as if they were formed to each other. Light came through the cloudless spaces in thick, bright strips and turned the Canyon iridescent shades of pink, red, brown and orange. Each time the light shifted, the picture changed dramatically. Cosmo thought it wouldn’t amaze him, but he was wrong.

As he stood and stared out at the wonder, a bald eagle flew by him, only a few feet in front of where he stood. He couldn’t believe that the creature had flown so close to him. It landed on a ledge for a few seconds and then took off again, its wingspan reaching across nearly the whole of Cosmo’s field of vision. Silvia stood right beside him, watching the eagle as it flew over their heads. Neither spoke a word until it flew away and disappeared behind a cloud.

“Wow!” Silvia said. “An eagle. I love eagles!” She looked like she wanted to start jumping up and down.

“Yeah,” Cosmo said, still staring at the final trace of the majestic bird. “I don’t think I’ve ever seen one so close.”

“Don’t you want to know why I love them so much?” she said, disregarding her brother’s comment.

“Why?” Cosmo asked as if humoring his sister. “Because you’re such a patriot?” He laughed, knowing well that it wasn’t the correct answer.

She looked back at him snidely and said, “Because of what they mean.”

He didn’t say anything. He knew he didn’t have to. He knew his sister would tell him the answer without being prompted to do so.

“Strength, courage, immortality, spirit, divinity,” she said, gazing into the spectacular gorge below.

He knew about eagles symbolizing courage and strength, but not about immortality, spirit and divinity. The picture of the eagle was still fresh in his mind, gracefully sweeping over the earth, its wings spread like an angel. Divinity seemed to fit just right as something that this phantom bird should symbolize. It shows itself to the world for very short periods of time, here and there. It glides along with unearthly grace to remind everyone that our own journey can be as smooth or as rocky as we chose to make it. It appears and then it disappears as if by some divine magician, and in its brief appearance, it gives the world a flash of revelation. It transcends this world as a reminder that everyone has the potential to rise above.

He thought of Clay writing his songs and of Silvia painting. He saw the strength in the dying woman’s eyes in the truck stop and the love in Crazy Ted’s eyes for his wife. He saw the near death accident that he and Silvia had less than a week ago. The truck that almost killed him; the truck that opened his eyes. He knew that his openness to all of their experiences in the past few days wouldn’t have been without this fortunate incident. He knew that without that occurrence, he wouldn’t have discovered the eagle that lived within him.

He looked into the sky that had bluish pink light coming through the clouds, and felt grateful for the beauty before his eyes. Then he felt grateful for having the sight to see it, and for having a tenacious little sister who dragged him out here. He looked over at her to see her staring back at him, almost as if she didn't recognize him.

“You've changed, Cosmo,” she said, looking up at him, admiration in her eyes.