**In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse**

**Joseph Marshall**

**Reviewed by: Aahnix Bathurst, 23**

**Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity**

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Jimmy Mclean is Lakota, but his mixed ancestry means that kids at his school tease him for looking different. One summer, his grandfather Nyles takes him on a road trip through the upper Midwest. The two trace the steps that Crazy Horse walked over a century before. Along the way they stop and explore historic sites.

The story of Jimmy acts as a frame; the story of Crazy Horse is told as Nyles narrates what Crazy Horse did at each location. Although Crazy Horse is the clear protagonist in these stories, Nyles acknowledges the bravery and humanity on both sides of the conflict, and successfully conveys the feelings of hopelessness and heartbreak at the conclusion of Crazy Horse’s life.

As a Citizen Potawatomi with mixed ancestry, I understood Jimmy’s frustration at not visually belonging a certain group, and wish that Joseph Marshall addressed the issue further. Nyles resolves this conflict by noting that Crazy Horse also had lighter hair and a lighter complexion. After hearing about this fact and Crazy Horse’s troubles, Jimmy has the self-confidence to face his bullies at school. This lesson—that your appearance doesn’t define who you are—is well received, but this book would have been more powerful if it had more deeply explored Jimmy’s thoughts as he came to this conclusion in is mind and his heart.

*In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse* packages a short overview of Crazy Horse’s life in a story well suited to young middle schoolers (around 11 years old) while giving lessons of confidence and courage. Worth reading, the underdeveloped characters and underdeveloped environment make *In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse* a book best checked out from the library.

**Recommended Titles:**

Amee-Nah by Kenneth Thomasma

Squanto by Clyde Bulla

The Boy Who Made Dragonfly by Tony Hillerman