

**Excerpt**  
*Spirit Warrior*  
**Spirit Pass book 2**  
**By S. E. Smith**

**Montana, 1867**

Jacob Tucker pulled back on the reins of his horse and studied the narrow cut of the pass. A shiver ran down his spine as his eyes moved up the jagged rock entrance. He had been up in these mountains, numerous times before, but had never come across this narrow pass. That really didn't mean much. The mountains were filled with things you could walk or ride right by and never see.

Jacob looked over his shoulder and nodded silently to his twin brother, Jonathan. His brother had felt the change as well. Something was definitely unusual about the Pass they were riding through.

Jacob turned back around, lost in thought as he replayed the events leading up to the small group being here. If he thought their lives had changed since a stubborn, unusual female suddenly appeared, it was nothing compared to what it was about to. His eyes flickered to the stranger sitting slightly ahead of him and his brother.

*Billy Clouddrunner*, he thought as he stared at Billy's back.

This was one Indian unlike any he had met. Hell, the man riding on Jonathan's horse was unlike any man he'd ever seen before. He spoke, but Jacob only understood about every three words or so and it wasn't because he was speaking Lakota. No, Billy was speaking English, but it wasn't any English words Jacob had ever heard before. He was talking about things like night-vision goggles, trucks, and something called Monday Night Football on television.

Billy turned in his saddle where he was leading the small group and gave him a crooked grin. The crookedness might have been partially due to the swelling in his jaw where Jonathan had hit him. Still, there was a wry amusement in the man's eye that shouldn't have been there, as if he didn't realize just how much danger he was in.

"It gets scarier once you go in," Billy called out, gazing up at the narrow slit. "My old man isn't going to believe me when I tell him I actually went all the way through the Pass to the other side and came out in one piece."

"How far is it to the other side?" Jacob asked as Jonathan pulled Midnight, the black horse that belonged to his missing wife up beside him.

"I don't know," Billy replied, scratching his left arm. "About a mile or so, I'd say. I was never very good at judging distances."

"Let's go," Jonathan snapped as he pulled back so he could take the back. "The longer we wait, the further the men who took Indy will get."

Billy shook his head. "I'm really sorry about this," he grumbled as he tapped his heels into the horse's side and took the lead. "I like Indy. I didn't know that she was what they were after. Indy got a really rotten deal. Everyone in town thinks her brothers are nothing but a pile of horse shit."

Jacob could feel the tension radiating from his brother. If Billy wasn't careful, and if he hadn't been so needed, Jonathan would've put a bullet through the back of Billy's head for admitting he had been the one to lead the other two men to Indy. He leaned forward in his saddle and patted the neck of his horse when it danced at the entrance to the Pass.

Indiana Wild had shown up at his and Jonathan's ranch several months ago. She'd arrived in just the nick of time to save two of their men and a large herd of cattle from some cattle rustlers. Jake, one of the men that worked on the ranch, had been shot during the attack. Indy had patched up the old man and stayed on to help out. When Jonathan arrived the next day, he had hired Indy on as a cowpuncher.

Fortunately for Jonathan, Jacob hadn't been there when she first arrived. He had to admit that it was probably a good thing. If he had been, Jonathan might've had a bit more of a fight on his hands other than the one he got with Indy.

From what he'd learned before he arrived, Jonathan and every other cowpuncher had thought Indy was a young boy. Hell, Jonathan had even kept Indy out on the range longer than he normally did the other men. It would appear Indy's brisk attitude had

rubbed Jonathan the wrong way. It'd been Jake's frantic tale of discovering a 'naked' woman working on the roof of the old cabin down by the river that had finally revealed that the rude 'boy' was actually a very unusual 'woman'.

Jacob had just returned home and had barely gotten cleaned up when Jake came bursting through the door talking crazy stuff about Indy and the 'naked' woman he had working on the cabin for him. He had almost broken his neck getting dressed so he could meet Jonathan downstairs. Jumping into the wagon, they had charged down to the river only to discover that the 'naked' woman was actually Indy wearing something called shorts and a sports bra.

By the next day, there had been a hasty, hogtied wedding and a lot of shocking revelations. Indy had stunned them with a tale of traveling from the future. Jacob remembered Jonathan telling him about some of the things Indy had brought back with her. Deep down, Jacob knew that his new sister-in-law was different and had quickly believed her story.

Hell, no one could make up the things she said or react the way she did when she found out she was in the past, Jacob thought.

Now, she was gone. This time, though, it was against her will. Billy had brought two men from the future through the pass. Those men had kidnapped Indy and taken her back through Spirit Pass to the future.

Glancing over his shoulder to make sure that Jonathan and Indy's two dogs, Chester and Tweed,

were still behind him, he bit back a dark curse. Behind them, a hazy fog had settled over the canyon blocking his view of where they had entered.

"Tell us what is on the other side," Jacob demanded in a harsh, low voice as he turned back around.

Billy glanced over his shoulders with a confused frown. "What do you want to know?"

"What... What is it like?" Jacob asked as he watched small rocks rained down along the left side of him from the top of the canyon which was covered in a thick mist.

"It's like everywhere else, I guess," Billy said with a shrug of his shoulders. "Poorer on the reservation," he added bitterly. "It's not easy for a man to support his family when the jobs are hard to get. My Rosalie is expecting again. That's the only reason I took this job. When Gent asked for someone to take him up to Spirit Pass, I just figured it would be a quick way to earn a few bucks. How the hell was I to know that he and that other guy were after Indy?"

"What did they tell you?" Jonathan asked in a quiet voice. "I want to know everything they said."

"From what I can figure out, Indy's older brother Hayden wanted her back for some reason," Billy answered in a voice that echoed eerily in the suffocating stillness of the canyon. "I don't know why, he just wants her, needs her. Whatever it is, it can't be good. Gent, the guy that hired me was bad enough, but that other guy named Spencer was downright scary. I thought he was going to kill me."

Jacob watched as a shudder ran through Billy. He turned when Jonathan pulled up closer to him. He raised an eyebrow at him.

"I'm going to kill that bastard," Jonathan muttered in a low voice.

"Who? Gent or Spencer?" Jacob asked.

"Hayden Wild," Jonathan bit out in a deadly tone. "Indy told me what he did. He crossed the line when he took her. She is terrified of what he wants to do with her. I plan on killing him. If he has hurt her..." Jonathan's voice faded for a moment.

"We'll get her back," Jacob replied. "I just hope the hell it doesn't take long. I'm not sure what the hell we're going to find when we get there. Some of the stuff you showed me... Hell, Jonathan, I'm not embarrassed to tell you some of it scared the shit out of me."

"I know," Jonathan agreed as he pulled Midnight back as the canyon narrowed again. "I didn't show you all of it."

Jacob would have closed his eyes in frustration if he wasn't so damn worried about what would happen. The fog, mist, or whatever it was called was swirling around them and the temperature had definitely dropped.

"How much further?" He called out quietly to Billy, who was starting to speed up.

Billy turned in his seat and grinned. "Not much. It's spooky, isn't it?" He asked as he looked around. "I nearly shit my pants the first time my father brought me up here when I was a boy..."

Jacob listened with half an ear as Billy told them about the first time he had come up here. He was supposed to get a feather and bring it back. He had, but it had been the one hidden in his shirt.

Personally, Jacob couldn't really blame Billy. He had goose bumps all over his body and the hair on the back of his neck was standing straight up as if warning him that his life was about to change, in ways he wasn't going to like. A man's sixth sense could keep him alive, so it wasn't something he ignored.

He breathed a sigh of relief as he saw the mist thinning. He heard Jonathan grunt behind him. He could feel it too.

Jacob released the breath he was holding when they finally burst through the narrow cut. Billy was in the lead still, with him in the middle, and Jonathan and the two dogs. The moment they were clear, Chester and Tweed took off to water the nearest row of trees.

*Hell, right now, I could water a few of them,* Jacob thought with a slight grin.

He turned to look back at Jonathan. His brother was looking at the cut into the canyon with a frown. His eyes followed to where Jonathan was staring and he scowled as well. It was almost impossible to tell it was there.

"No one would ever find it unless they had been shown," Billy commented with a grin.

Jonathan nudged Midnight by Jacob until he was beside Billy. "Where to now?" He demanded in a frustrated voice.

Jacob shifted in his saddle and glanced around. If they were in the future, it didn't look much different from the past, he thought in relief. Maybe, this wouldn't be as bad as he feared.