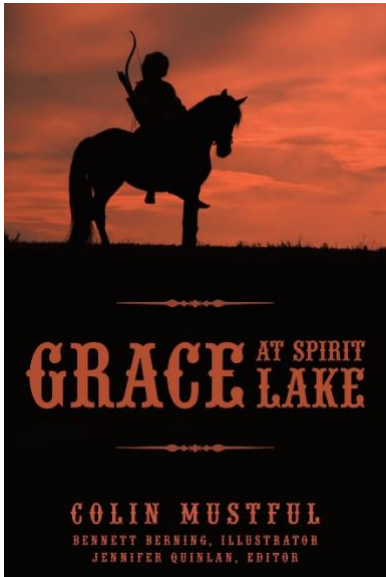


Grace at Spirit Lake



Along the wintry landscape of a pristine and hopeful frontier, tragedy struck and strife followed.

Joseph Campbell is a thirty-one year old, mixed-breed interpreter who finds himself helplessly intertwined in the real life actions, events, and people of a harrowing, but largely unknown struggle in the history of Minnesota. Joseph grew up along the expanding western frontier and he developed an intimacy for the people and places along with a deep seated knowledge of the varying cultures and languages. Following a massacre incited by Inkpaduta and the Wahpekute Indians in March of 1857, Joseph becomes torn between his duties as a U.S. Interpreter and his deep understanding, compassion, and kinship ties for his Dakota brethren. Joseph struggles desperately to uphold the rights of the Indians while at the same time seeking to capture and punish the guilty party. All the while, Joseph discovers a brooding conflict within himself that he longs to understand and finally overcome.

The event known as the Spirit Lake Massacre of 1857 was not an isolated incident, but rather a deeply complicated issue that involved many conflicts and various parties. Throughout the story, Joseph finds himself in the middle of these conflicts and parties as he constantly seeks understanding and resolution. Included alongside Joseph's profound experience, is mixed a second narrative that follows a love story between two real-life participants who find themselves longing for the hope they once had and the future they still cling to. In the end, Joseph cannot solve the perpetual struggle between the whites of the frontier and the Dakota of southern Minnesota, but the grace of one captive girl propels him forward as he finally discovers who he is and the value of his own identity.