

# THE Search for Water



BY Marnie

## Preface

This story is set in Arizona in Canyon de Chelly where Little Mug and Strong Legs first lived in a cliff dwelling. This story is set around 1200 A.D. They took a long journey to Chaco Canyon in New Mexico and in the end found a home there.

## The Search for Water

Little Mug stood at the edge of the alcove in the cliff. She peered into the horizon searching for her 16 year old brother Strong Legs.

Then she saw two dots it was her brother and father back from their trading trip with the people of the north. Little Mug raced down the cliff trail to welcome them home. She was so excited to see what goods they had brought back from their long journey.

They all sat around the fire at supper while father handed out gifts to Grandma and Grandpa. He gave

Grandma a beautiful bone necklace and for Grandpa a new knife of flint. The pack was almost empty and Little Mug was getting worried there was nothing for her. Then she heard her name, it was father speaking to her. On his arm was an amazing parrot full of endless colors. Little Mug was dumbstruck, she had never seen anything so grand as that bird. It's for you said her father she was so grateful she rushed up and gave him a big hug.

The next few days went by smoothly until the water spring got lower and lower. Mother kept saying there was enough water, until one day there was nothing left but a small puddle.

They had a meeting in the Kiva that night, the eldest people in the cliff village said they must go and find water. Still there were consequences; the elders said only Little Mug and Strong Legs could go on this journey because it would make them stronger and more capable. Mother didn't want them to go alone, but she had to listen to the elders. Little Mug and Strong Legs were going to set out on their journey the next morning. That night Strong Legs couldn't sleep because he knew he had to return himself and his sister home safely.

They rose early in the morning had a quick breakfast and were all set to go since they had packed what they needed last night. On the way they were told to trade with the Navajo for a new rug that be put in the Kiva.

Little Mug and Strong Legs walked down the cliff trail wondering how they would find water on miles of Indian trading routes. Also it would be harder because they had to find a spring unoccupied by other people. If they succeeded they would have to move out of there village in the cliff and move to where they had found water.

Their feet pounded down the trail for two days and they still hadn't reached the end of their hunting grounds. It would take four more grueling days on the trail to reach the Navajo villages. They often had to rest for Little Mug had never walked any farther than the other side of the canyon they lived in.

Finally after six days of walking through uneven terrain they were welcomed at the Navajo village. They traded five pottery bowls made by Little Mug for a beautiful rug. They rested at the Navajo village for two days and then walked on searching for water.

One blazing hot day on the trail Little Mug and Strong Legs stopped to rest under a shaded boulder. They took out their pinyon nuts and started snacking. A rattle came out of the silence and they both jumped to their feet. They had been sitting on a rattlesnake's home, and the rattlesnake was pretty mad. It leaped out at Little Mug, and with a flourish bit her on the leg. She slowly fell to ground in agony. Strong Legs knew he was next. He scooped up Little Mug and her pack in his strong arms and sped down the trail. He barely escaped the snake when it struck again.

Strong Legs got about a hundred yards down the trail before he collapsed with exhaustion. Little Mug was sixty five pounds alone and her pack thirty five, that made a grand total of one hundred pounds.

Little Mug was out cold for most of the afternoon While Strong Legs loped down the trail with his heavy load. He had no idea how far the next village was, all he knew it could be miles away or very close.

It was in the evening when the sun slowly dipped down behind the mountains and left an amazing blazing orange afterglow. Strong Legs had been walking for a long time and he was tired. He carefully lay Little Mug down at the side of the trail and examined the bite. Strong Legs didn't know much about medicine but he could tell if the bite was bad.

The bite was really bad, in fact it was terrible. So much venom was injected Little Mug could be paralyzed for the rest of her life. Strong Legs knew he had to act fast but where could he go. To the next village? Or stay where he was? He was sure the elders didn't mean for this to happen on the journey.

Finally after pondering over it for a long time he had made a decision, he had decided to go to the next village. He left the packs where they were, he could get them later. Strong Legs ran on through the night.

About midnight he saw the gleam of a fire ahead. It wasn't a village but at least it meant people. Strong Legs approached the camp. Four strong men about the age of twenty were sitting around the fire. They warmly greeted Strong legs and told him to sit down. He told his story,

although he rushed through it. Then he asked them if they could cure Little Mug.

An old man emerged out of the tent. He said I can cure your sister but for one thing you will study medicine with me for a week. Then I will let you continue your journey.

The man was up all night curing Little Mug while Strong Legs Slept. The week went by quickly and soon they were back on the trail.

One day they were plodding down the trail in the scorching heat. They were going through a canyon and noticed an in the cliff. They went up to explore it and found out it had a spring and all the essentials to live there. They recovered their strength there and then went home and told the good news. It took two years to move in but it was definitely worth it.