

It must have been when the sun had just passed its highest position in the sky. The heat in the valley was heavy and there was little movement in the encampment. The tipi-covers were rolled up at the bottom to catch any small breeze and the only sounds were the happy shouts and laughter of the children splashing in the river. I was with my father at the time, in Yellow Eagle's tipi at the northern edge of the Hunkpapa circle. Yellow Eagle was my uncle. He had just lit his long pipe with its polished red stone bowl. The women, bent over pale flames, were preparing food and the baby was hanging in his cradle from the tipi-poles, out of the sun. It was then that we first noticed it.

A long distance up the valley a dust cloud hung in the dancing haze which divided the sky from the prairie. It did not seem to be a cloud of approaching danger. It could have been raised by frightened stampeding buffalo or a sudden hot wind twisting dust from the hot earth.

But suddenly we heard the far-off sound of the bugle and underneath the cloud of dust there was steel flashing in the sun and a long thin line of blue separated from the haze.





