

Weather Or Not

A true account by Cynthia Crisp

I dreamed about going on this trip ever since I got a horse five years ago. My friend (who owns the stable where I board my horse Beau) and I were taking a trailer an hour away to attend a trail ride with people in Delaware County. These kinds of events were casual and *usually* full of fun. The weather had been hot, wet, and humid most of the summer of 2003, but this Saturday promised to be a good one. I spent three hours on Friday, cleaning my tack, grooming Beau, and packing up ahead of time so we could get an early start the following morning. I slept fitfully, so as not to miss the 6:00 AM alarm. We loaded the horses and left by 7:30, downing coffee and doughnuts.

We drove for almost *three* hours over winding back roads and across state highways. Beau seemed nervous and couldn't settle down at first. I guess he wasn't as thrilled about this "adventure" as I was. When I went to check on my gear on arriving, the cast iron door handle fell down and hit me right across my forehead. I applied some ice as the swelling was coming on, but it hurt like hell. This was the ride I had been waiting for, swollen brow and all! I took Beau out and saddled him up. He was a little jumpy in the new surroundings, but I gentled him down. He seemed good as ever and willing to go.

The local riders weren't ready yet, so we waited *another* hour while two horses were shod and latecomers arrived. I was too excited to let another delay bother me like it might have. And just as the eight of us started to mount up, the sky opened and poured rain, with thunder and lightening everywhere that you could see.

I heard our hostess muttering, "Well, the radio *did* say there's gonna be rain and stormin', off and on all day." Now she mentions it.

Boy, was I disappointed! Usually I am the kind of person who goes with the flow, but this was absolutely unacceptable. I was determined to ride no matter what. I mean, so far I had spent seven hours preparing for this trip, after fantasizing about it for several years, not to mention the cost and the sleepless night. I hadn't come this far to be stopped by a little rain.

I could feel the tension growing in the group. Quietly I got off Beau and walked a short distance away. I was drenched when I faced the woods where we planned to ride. The sky was completely overcast and gray as far as you could see, which was pretty much 360 degrees. I quickly called to the local Spirits of the Land. I spoke out loud with unusual conviction:

“Spirits of Weather. Hear my plea. I have made a big effort to be here today. I’ve come from far away. And now I have been hurt on the head. (Spirits really listen if you are suffering.) So, please, I ask you, if it is your will and in the way of harmony with Nature to grant my wish, please clear up the skies. Take away the thunder and the rain and the lightning for, say, about 3 ½ hours so we can ride safely. I promise to bless the land and the creatures as I go. I send to you, oh Spirits of Weather, much gratitude and humility, if you will but grant my request.”

Within three minutes, the sky began to change in all directions. The rain stopped and the gray changed to blue. Within five minutes, the area was completely clear of precipitation and stormy clouds. My companions were surprised. I kind of told them what I had done, without any of the details. They laughed and thought I was joking. But I didn't care. The ride was on. We quickly headed out for the trail.

We had a long ride along the deep forest floor. It was beautiful. There was no sign of anyone else about, not even wildlife. The trail led through a thick forest, around a pond, and along paths that were rocky and wet. I silently called out to the Spirits of the Forest as I went, sending blessings. After two hours we stopped for a picnic lunch. Beau was glad for the rest. It looked gray again and you could just begin to feel the moisture gathering. On the way back I asked our guide how far away home was, with only 30 minutes remaining in the time I had asked for the

weather to be clear. She said we were an hour from the barn. I asked if we could pick up the pace a little. So, we trotted and loped home, making it back at exactly 3 ½ hours from when we left. Within three minutes, it started to rain.

Now, I guess I could end the story here. But that wouldn't be telling the whole truth. A long trailer ride home to Youngsville followed and it was just getting dark when we put away our tired horses. I stumbled on home to my place, just making it in time to rush out for a special evening I had planned a long time before.

Two weeks later it was clear that Beau was lame. His back was all spasmed up and he couldn't put weight on his back leg. We tried everything to figure out what was wrong. The other horse from the trail ride came up lame too. Turned out they both had abscessed feet. To make a long story short, it took about six weeks and over \$1,000 to find out Beau also had inflamed stifles (knees).

Now I'm sure the long trip and the difficult trails were to blame as much as anything else. But I also wonder if Spirit hadn't been trying to tell me something with that rainstorm - that maybe I shouldn't be riding my horse that day. Sometimes it takes an act of Nature to get through my hard head that my plans aren't always going to work out, no matter how much they mean to me. And if I had listened that day...but, I didn't. I chose to override what the Spirits had planned. After all, I had waited a long time for that ride and a little rain wasn't going to ruin my day, now was it? I was so proud of myself, communicating with Nature like that. And then, wham! I paid for it. And Beau suffered.

Beau is fine now and as eager as ever for a good ride. And I've learned a big lesson. There is my time and real time and No Time. And I must learn to live in all three places at the same time. Weather permitting, of course.

