

On the Wings of an Eagle

by Christine Kohler



Illustrated by Giuliano Aloisi

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Spring 1863

Dear Diary,

I saw an eagle soar above the Merrimack River today, and it was a majestic sight. Still, I wished he were a carrier pigeon instead, bringing a letter from my brother Ben. The last we heard, the Fifth Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers had marched in the rain all the way to Pennsylvania. I wonder how Ben is doing after such a long trip.

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Level Q

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Dear Diary,

Mama frets without news from Ben. I miss Ben, too, and not because I do his chores, but because I miss talking to him. He would be so proud of how I harness our mule to the plow. I would chop the wood, too, but Mama won't allow it.

Dear Diary,

Hurrah, a letter arrived! Ben wrote, "Mud, mud everywhere in Virginia! Even the stew tastes like mud." I laughed, thinking of the mud pies we've made together.

Dear Diary,

My hand is shaking as I write. Ben's sergeant wrote to say my brother had a frightful cough that rattled his chest. So, Mama and I knitted wool socks. Mama stuffed them with herbs and mailed them to Ben's sergeant.

"They march him in the rain, that fool army," she said. "Let's hope he gets better fast."

I fled to the river bank and collapsed, blinking back tears. That's when I saw the eagle again! I wanted Ben to soar like that eagle, so I made a wish that he will regain his health swiftly. I hoped the eagle would carry my wish straight to Ben.



Dear Diary,

You are never going to believe what I'm about to write! Ben just wrote back, and my wish came true! While it may have been confusion from his high fever, he believed he saw an eagle soaring, and his fever broke the next morning. The cough cleared up, too. I'm sure that Ben's sergeant helped him get better, because he'd been spooning Mama's herb broth into Ben every day. But I just know his recovery had something to do with the eagle that I sent to Ben! When he comes home, we'll watch our eagle soar over the river together.



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Literary

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