

EXAMPLE SHORT NONFICTION STORY BASED ON RESEARCH

Prompt: Write an interesting journalistic story that might appear in a magazine about a famous person or animal. Show the challenges that were faced and how they were resolved. Make sure that the story contains at least five paragraphs and all the elements of a story. Provide at least three references in a reference list. Use the MLA style.

TITLE OF THE STORY: Comanche

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Comanche

The Battle of Little Big Horn, also known as “Custer’s Last Stand” and the “Battle of the Greasy Grass,” was part of the Great Sioux War of 1876. It occurred near the Little Bighorn River in Montana on June 25, 1876 (“Battle of the Little Big Horn” 1). On one side of the battle were the Lakota, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapahoe Tribes. On the other side was the U.S. Army led by Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer. In the end, the Lakota were victorious against the soldiers. Custer and several of his relatives were killed along with more than 200 soldiers (“Battle of the Little Big Horn” 1). One of the most famous participants in the battle is celebrated today despite some pretty mysterious events that occurred 110 years after the battle.

To begin the story about these most recent events, the famous participant in the battle was a horse named Comanche. He was ridden into the Battle of Little Big Horn by Captain Keogh. Unfortunately, Comanche’s rider was killed in the battle. Comanche was wounded, and he had been left to die. Fortunately, he was found by people who were looking for survivors. They decided to nurse him back to health and gave him special treatment for the rest of his life. He was celebrated as the only survivor of the battle. After his death, the Army donated his body to the Museum of Natural History in Lawrence, Kansas. His body was stuffed, and he was put on display as the centerpiece of the main

entrance of the museum. For decades, museum visitors filed past the horse and marveled at the story of his life.

However, in 1986, several strange events occurred in sequence that altered Comanche's story. During the day on March 6, the remains of a large bird called a rhea had been delivered to the museum (Lawrence 53). To prevent deterioration, the specimen had been frozen for shipment. That night, the rhea was thawing near a large laboratory sink on an upper floor of the museum. Drip, drip, drip went the rhea as it slowly warmed to room temperature. As the ice melted, the bird's center of gravity shifted until it began to tip. Sometime after midnight, the bird tumbled gracelessly into the sink. One of the rhea's feet struck the cold water lever, which started the water running. (Seriously, this really happened!) The running water itself would not have been a problem, but when the rhea landed in the bottom of the sink, it covered the drain and plugged it. Around one o'clock in the morning, the sink overflowed onto the floor, and the water found its way through cracks in the floor and into the ceiling of the floor below.

Directly below the overflowing sink stood Comanche as part of the museum display. The water from the sink poured through the floor and onto Comanche. It soaked through his hide and into his stuffing. The next morning, the museum staff discovered the disaster. They wondered what to do about the problem of a famous but drenched stuffed horse. Because Comanche was such a famous part of the museum's exhibits, the museum staff decided to get the damage repaired. When the taxidermists removed Comanche's hide to repair the damage, they found all kinds of previous stitching that nobody had ever seen. They discovered that Comanche had been wounded seven times in several battles, so he

had a battle-scarred hide. The repairs to Comanche and the museum required a year of work.

Today, Comanche is on display on the fourth floor of the museum in a waterproof case. He can be easily seen by anyone entering the museum. People continue to be amazed by the stories of his strength and ability to survive. Because he took part in many battles and was wounded several times, he is known as the most famous horse in America. Nobody talks about the rhea, though, because it played such an embarrassing role in Comanche's story and the life of the museum. The conclusion drawn by the museum staff is that they should always be ready for the unexpected and that they should protect their exhibits as much as possible.

Works Cited

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