**Guns, Germs and Steel**

**Episode Two : Conquest**

**On November 15th 1532, 168 Spanish conquistadors arrive in the holy city of Cajamarca, at the heart of the Inca Empire, in Peru.

They are exhausted, outnumbered and terrified – ahead of them are camped 80,000 Inca troops and the entourage of the Emperor himself.

Yet, within just 24 hours, more than 7,000 Inca warriors lie slaughtered; the Emperor languishes in chains; and the victorious Europeans begin a reign of colonial terror which will sweep through the entire American continent.**

Why was the balance of power so unequal between the Old World, and the New?

Can Jared Diamond explain how America fell to guns, germs and steel?

**Two Empires**

Spaniard Francisco Pizarro has gone down in history as the man who conquered the Inca. Leading a small company of mercenaries and adventurers, this former swineherd from a provincial town in Spain managed to demolish one of the most sophisticated Empires the world has ever seen.

From Pizarro's home town of Trujillo, Jared Diamond pieces together the story of the Spaniards' victory over the Inca, tracing the invisible hand of geography.

On the surface, the Spaniards had discovered a foreign empire remarkably similar to their own. The Inca had built an advanced, politically sophisticated, civilization on the foundations of successful agriculture. They had ruthlessly conquered their neighbors in South America, and by 1532 governed a vast territory, the length and breadth of the Andes.

But as Jared discovers, the Inca lacked some critical agents of conquest.

**Horses vs Llamas**

Eurasia boasted 13 of the 14 domesticable mammals in the world as native species. Among these was the horse.

As Diamond learns, the horse was fundamental to the farming success of Eurasian societies, providing not only food and fertilizer but also, crucially, load-bearing power and transport – transforming the productivity of the land.

The only non-Eurasian domesticable animal species in the world was the llama – native, by chance, to South America. The Inca relied on llamas for meat, wool and fertilizer – but the llama was not a load-bearing animal. Llamas can't pull a plow, nor can they transport human beings.

And unlike horses, llamas could never be ridden for war.

Spanish horsemanship, based on principles of cattle-herding, was famous throughout Europe for its manoeuvrability and spontaneity – skills learned by Pizarro's conquistadors in their youth. Horses could charge, mounted soldiers could slay with brutal efficiency. Diamond realizes that, to a people like the Inca, who had never seen humans ride animals before, the psychological impact of these alien mounted troops must have been huge.

**Steel vs bronze**

**But Pizarro's men only brought 37 horses to Peru. So where did the rest of their shock value lie?**

Well, once again, the Europeans had something the Americans didn't – they had steel.

For thousands of years throughout Eurasia, metal-working technology had evolved from the simplest ore-extraction of the first Neolithic villages, to the highly-sophisticated forging of steel, in cities like Toledo and Milan. Geography had endowed Europe with rich sources of iron and wood, and a climate conducive to high-temperature metallurgy.

Thanks to the geographic ease with which ideas spread through the continent of Eurasia, discoveries like gunpowder could also migrate thousands of miles, from China to Spain.

And political competition within Europe fuelled a medieval arms race. Pizarro's conquistadors were armed with the latest and greatest in weapons technology – guns, and swords.

The Inca, by comparison, had never worked iron or discovered the uses of gunpowder. Geography had not endowed them with these resources. Nor had they received technologies from other advanced societies within the Americas. This included a technology even more critical to Spanish success than their weapons, writing.

**Writing**

On the eve of battle, Pizarro and his men discuss how to tackle the vast army of the Inca. It seems an impossible task. But they have a secret weapon up their sleeve – the weapon of past experience.

Jared Diamond travels to the library of Salamanca University, to read for himself the published accounts of Hernan Cortes' conquest of Mexico.

Only twelve years before Cajamarca, Cortes and his men had faced similar odds against the vast army of the Aztec Empire. But somehow Cortes had captured the Emperor and conquered the land for Spain.

Cortes and his soldiers sent their written accounts back to the general public in Europe, where they were widely published. Diamond discovers a repository of dirty tricks at Salamanca – a collection of handbooks for would-be conquistadors. And on the eve of battle, it was the printed lessons of Cortes that inspired Pizarro and his men.

By contrast, the Inca Emperor Atahualpa had never heard of Cortes, or even of his own neighbors, the Aztecs. Thanks to the geography of the Americas, it was practically impossible for any ideas, technologies, or even news, to spread from north to south. So whilst the Mayan civilisation of Central America had invented a form of written communication, it had never got as far as Peru. The Inca were isolated – and Atahualpa had never even seen a book before.

**Lethal gift of livestock**

The Spanish conquered land and people in the Americas with guns and steel but Diamond learns that up to 95% of the native population of the entire Americas were wiped out after the conquest. Genocide alone can't account for this number.

Instead, he discovers, native Americans fell victim to European germs – infections which they had never encountered before.

And Diamond realizes that European diseases like smallpox were a fatal inheritance of thousands of years of mammal domestication – the lethal gift of livestock.

European farmers, rearing cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, horses and donkeys, lived in close proximity with their animals - breathing, eating and drinking animal germs. Eventually some diseases crossed over to the human population and the resulting epidemics wiped out millions of Europeans.

But each time, a few people would survive and the immunities they'd developed passed through their genes to the next generation. The conquistadors who sailed to the Americas carried immunities like these.

But in Peru, the llama was never brought indoors, and never milked so the prospect for the spread of disease was severely reduced.

But then the Europeans arrived and a single Spanish slave arrived, infected with smallpox and the consequences were devastating. The disease emptied the continent, killing millions of indigenous people who lacked any prior exposure, and therefore any immunity. The European triumph was complete.

**For each of the FIVE sections above, storyboard the information with two scenes each.**