Throughout the early chapters of A Land So Strange, I was met with a bit of confusion. This may have been brought on by the writing style of the book, or possibly me omitting a vitally important piece of information – Cabeza De Vaca was merely one of the four survivors of the excursion, not the leader of it. For quite some time this seemed to elude me until some of the later chapters when it was the only possible explanation to what was going on!

His journey was ‘miraculous’ at best, beating every odd and somehow living to tell the truth. To begin, surviving a hurricane on land is difficult enough; let alone being stuck on a cramped ship in the middle of hostile waters. All while still on the waters and encountering gross navigation errors and becoming lost I am sure it was a breath of fresh air when they finally stepped onto dry land. Or so they thought.

Once on land, one would expect easier times were ahead with ample food, water, and more space to live in, but in fact the misfortunes somehow continued, and to my surprise were much worse than I expected. Pretty much everything that could have still gone wrong ended up happening! First and foremost, their goal was to colonize Florida. With as much land as they had I would have thought this would be an easy task, but the Indians were more than capable of standing their ground when needed, especially after getting off of an extensive journey on a ship weakening the crew. Next, the crews inexperience and unfamiliarity with the land created havoc as they moved across the land. Many of the crew died from drowning from various causes and misfortunes, they lacked the ability to gather a sustainable amount of food, and water was scarce for them. I think the most shocking part of the book for me was their turn to cannibalism. I can understand the predicament was difficult, but I personally couldn’t imagine eating another human. Overall I was intrigued, disturbed, yet impressed with the situation, especially the ingenuity that came out of the few people given their inexperience, misfortune, and health troubles. I just wonder why they didn’t abandon the mission sooner and try to save some lives instead of pressing on into a worse situation. They seemed to find their ships pretty easily when they needed to!