

Brothers

As I stare at the sun rising over the hills of the valley, I wonder what will happen to this beautiful land once this war is over. More importantly, I ponder what will happen to my people. Where we will go and how will we survive? How many wars between the white men will we be dragged into? My people tried to stay neutral, but the British came along with their treaties and deals, like they always do. We have heard the Americans are also making deals with the Seneca. Agreements are made, pacts formed, and then we shall fight, forced to battle against our brothers from the other nations. Brothers fighting against brothers, for a cause we do not support, and in a war we want no part of, but it is our only choice. We must fight to secure the futures of our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. We can only hope that the British hold up their end of the deal. "Tekahonrake," my brother says, snapping me out of my daze. "We are moving soon so pack up and get ready." As I start to pack supplies, I dread the fact that in a few days the fighting will start. I am the youngest in the war party, and have never seen battle, so I am not sure if I am ready. Either way, I will find out in the next few days, but right now I find peace in the fact that we still have a few more days of travel before we meet the enemy.

We march along in the crisp winter air with the sun high above us, shrouded by clouds, following the orderly British troops. I can't help but think how different we are from the British when it comes to war. My people only go to war when it is necessary, over issues such as land, food, and other things that make the difference between living and dying. The white men, however, go to war over odd, what I consider to be trivial things, that do not determine the difference between life and death. No matter who is fighting though, I still despise war. I have never fought, but I have seen the horrors of war, and I find it hard to convince myself that no matter who is fighting, there is no justification for war of any kind. Yet, even though I dislike war, I am still going to fight, for it is my duty to my people and my family. If there is anything the white men fear, it is our warfare tactics, which are very different from the white men. They fight in lines, facing each other, and taking turns discharging their weapons. I have even heard that they have rules of war, which I find very odd, because with my people there are no rules; anything goes. We find it much more effective to set up ambushes and use the forests to our advantage; not stand out in the open completely visible and take turns shooting at each other. I almost find the thought of it funny. Perhaps that is why both the Americans and the British try so hard to form alliances with us.

I look around at some of the warriors I am with. They vary in age from very old to a little older than I, but I am still the youngest. We number about one hundred warriors,

compared to the three hundred British soldiers. I spot my brother at the front of the group talking to one of the warchiefs. My brother is 4 years older than me, and has seen battle before. From what I have heard he is a very fierce fighter. When he is done talking, he jogs over to me and tells me that they sent scouts ahead to look for ambushes, but none have returned, and he is starting to get worried. "Stay alert," he tells me.

We march for the rest of the day, and finally decide to make camp by the river. After I finish unpacking all the supplies the sun is setting, so I decide I should probably get some sleep. As I start to fall asleep, I notice movement at the edge of the bush. I sit up to get a closer look, and my brother waves me over. He is talking to a British soldier about the disappearance of the scouts. I try to pay attention but I am still trying to figure out what was in the bush. Eventually, I brush it off as my imagination and try to pay attention to the conversation, until I see it again, but this time I am sure it is not my imagination. It is moving fast, closer every second, and almost seems to be coming right towards us. I only have time to yell, "AMBUSH!" before the British soldier next to me is struck by the tomahawk of an Seneca warrior who had jumped out of the cover of the brush moments before. My brother is next. He backs up but has no weapon to defend himself. In the corner of my eye I can see other Seneca warriors fighting with some of our other warriors, but right now I try to focus on saving my brother. I look around as the warrior moves toward my brother, and I notice a tomahawk laying on the ground next to me. The warrior has his weapon raised now, ready to deliver the final blow, and it feels like my feet are frozen to the ground. Yet, I force myself to move, and in one swift movement I pick up the tomahawk, spin around, and raise it just as the warrior's tomahawk comes slicing through the air towards me. The blade of his tomahawk deflects off the handle of mine, which throws him off balance. I take my chance, and slice my tomahawk in a wide arc low to the ground, sweeping his feet out from under him. I raise my tomahawk and with a defiant yell, slice downward, ending his life.

I bury my head in my hands as I try to get the lifeless face of the warrior I killed out my mind, but I just cannot. For the next few days after the attack, I find it difficult to deal with. I just have to deal with the blood on my hands. The worst part is that we still have to march forward and capture Fort George, and I do not think I am ready to go to battle again. We attack the fort tomorrow, so I have to decide soon, and that's when it hits me. It is either us or them. The Senecas decided to side with the Americans, and we the British. The warrior I had killed went into battle knowing he would have to fight his brothers and maybe kill them. He knew he might die, and he accepted that. He did

it for his people and so shall I. Life can never wipe the blood off my hands, but I can learn to accept it.

The next day, during a meeting of warriors, I sneak silently to the back of the group. Nobody notices me, except my brother, who looks at me and gives me a nod of approval, and then goes back to his meeting. I listen well to the plan, and we take our positions to wait for the war cry, signaling to move. We wait for what seems like ages, when finally I hear the loud cry and watch as a hundred screaming warriors emerge from the brush and charge towards the fort. I follow and as I'm running, I think about all my brothers from my own and other nations who have sacrificed their lives for their people, and I realize I would do the same again, as would all the warriors around me; all my brothers.