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Six Nations, Grand River Territory  
Age 24

### **Honorable Sacrifice**

The wind blew harshly through the valley whipping the young Warrior's hair into his eyes. Bearing through the pain, the young warrior stared blankly down at the village that was once his home. It was now only a burning husk of his people's labour and love they used to carefully build their village. Each tepee was a home to a family member or friend. It now stood awkwardly against the violent winds that served to feed the hungry flames that relentlessly consumed the village.

With tears blurring his eyes and a feeling of utter desperation eating into his heart the young warrior ran to the village with all speed hoping beyond all hope that someone survived. Entering through the south of the village his fears were met with stark horror as the bodies of his people piled high were burning sending clouds that looked to him like black demons rising in triumph. Roaring his defiance and anger, the young man fell to his knees, his sobs came slow and painful as the sadness of what he was seeing filled his heart.

Mere moments passed when he was brought from his inward contemplations. The sounds of soft crying quickly reminded the young warrior to arm himself. Not too far from a fallen warrior's hand, at the bottom of the burning heap, a tomahawk lay waiting for him.

Silently approaching a nearby tepee, the sounds grew louder and clearer. Repeatedly over and over a voice could be heard saying. "It shouldn't be like this, its' not suppose to be like this." The young Warrior glanced around a pole that was still intact loosely shrouded with what little cloth hung to the structure. Seeing the colours of a U.S. Cavalry soldier the young man charged with all the hatred and rage that possessed his soul, as he rapidly closed the ground between him and his intended victim. The young warrior realized there was a young Native girl cuddled in the arms of the soldier. Shifting

his weight to his left side, the young warrior leapt over the soldier's legs. Quickly stepping to his right to get his body's weight under him, to turn he skidded to a halting stop with his weapon already raised. The young Warrior tried to look as menacing as possible till he could tell what the soldier's intent was. In the rough English that he could speak, the young Warrior coldly stated "Give her back, she is all I have left, release her or die." As if he had not even spoken the soldier continued to ramble about the horrors he had witnessed. The young Warrior thought to put the soldier's life to an end but decided not to bring his tomahawk down on the man. Seeing the broken eyes of the soldier, the young Warrior would spare his life if he got the girl back in return. Roughly grabbing the soldier by his sandy brown hair, the young Warrior put the blade of the tomahawk to his neck "give me the girl or die." A small glint of acknowledgment entered the soldier's eyes. With a violent shake the young Warrior said "Give me the girl or die." Seeing the streaks of tears that openly rolled down the soldier's face, the young man looked down without even thinking, noticing the bright red blood. He was already too late.

Waves of nausea washed over the young Warrior as he realized everyone he knew was dead, loosening his grip and falling back in disbelief the world faded to black. Everyone he had loved and grew up with had been murdered in cold blood for living in a land that was there home, no man had a right to own the land, it was a gift to be cherished from the Creator. All the realizations hit the young man like the onslaught of strong river currents washing his vision in blur of tears. Distantly strong hands clasp his shoulders and pull him close. Without realizing who it was, the young Warrior embraced that hug and wept for his fallen loved ones.

*Many days have passed since the burning of my home and finding my new friend Samuel. Together we were able to slip past the patrols that the cavalry had set up. I think they are planning to make a larger village. At least that is my greatest fear for. The other native villages may meet the same fate my people met that black day. This foreign language English has come to me easily with the help of my tutor Samuel. He says "if you want to defeat your enemy, you must first understand their ways." I still wonder at times,*

*what that means, and if it will help me bring the fight back to the army's door steps. Survival has been harsh, not wanting to go near any of the surrounding villages in fear of leading the patrols there. We have made ourselves the scavenger dogs that feed upon old corpses from past hunts or ones killed for sport by the U.S. Soldiers. The way the cavalry hunts us is as if they were looking for more than a survivor and his American friend, I feel that there is more to the tale of Samuel then he lets on.*

*Katayo,*

Both the sun and Katayo found waking difficult, rising lazily to greet the day, Katayo set to work. With the last bits of heat holding on from last night's fire, Katayo rose and began to dig a groove into the ground that would serve as his cooking pot. Gently wrapping the hunk of deer roast in leaves and placing the stones from last night's fire into the groove and setting the meat in place, the area quickly became filled with the aroma of food which roused Samuel from his slumber.

After the last scrap of meat was consumed Samuel looked to Katayo "The meal was excellent my friend, who taught you to cook so well?" Samuel inquired. "I was taught by my father who told me that the meat of the animal was a gift to us and was to be respected and treated well, so I take care in cooking and preparing it." Katayo's Reply was choked back with memories. "Then your father was a wise man and a good cook." Samuel said with solemn respect.

The thunderous roar of hooves in the distance tore them from their reverie. Katayo had his bow in his left hand in a flash while his other hand fingered his quiver for an arrow to knock on its string. Quickly they were off in the direction where the clamour of hooves met the earth. Samuel drew a long blade, which he called a sword from its scabbard; with looks of determination they crested the hill to take full view of their enemy.

Looking down into the glen, the two friends saw that a Battle was already taking place. “That small band of native hunters must have been dragging their catch back to their village when they were attacked upon by soldiers and horses bearing the American flag.” Katayo Observed. The hunters were sorely outnumbered two to one.

Katayo drew back his string and let an arrow soar at the soldier closest to him; it thudded home firmly in the back of the rider’s neck pitching him forward to lay lifeless in his saddle. Three more shots hummed into the air before some riders turned to regard the lone archer on a steep hill. Only two riders saw the archer for the others would see no more, their horses sprinted for the open fields while the living riders took to closing the ground between them and the deadly archer. With the rider’s rifles spent, their only hope was to get close enough to shoot the archer with their pistols.

Katayo, being no novice to the cavalry’s methods, allowed them to rush closer. Before the riders ever fell into range they were doomed. Katayo shot over their heads to take another rider in the thick of battle.

Cavalry numbers decreased and the hunting party went on the offensive hacking ferociously at the legs of the mounted soldiers the hunters managed to form a defensive ring around their fallen and wounded brethren keeping the riders at bay.

Scruff parted as a deadly grin appeared on the face of the closest rider to Katayo. So fixed on his prey the soldier gave no heed to the flying spear which struck true, ripping the rider from his mount the second rider looked down at his comrade as he rode past. Raising his head all he could see was well honed muscles of Katayo dropping from his higher position to plant his tomahawk into the head of the distracted rider together they crumpled to the ground but only one would stand.

With Katayo rising unsteadily to his feet, Samuel ran up panting. “Katayo, I think the warriors will be fine, the last of the soldiers flee like scared children back to the west.”

“It only means they will return with more riders and more guns. Face it Samuel these warriors are dead, they stand no chance against the force that comes for them.” Replied Katayo with open vehemence.

“Then we will stay and help them.” Said Samuel “You once helped me, and for that I owe you the truth; I am the colonel’s son, I could no longer stand the needless killing.”

“With your friendship I have found new purpose to help the ones I knew were being wronged, I see now all that will come of our presence here is the extermination of your people.”

Katayo stood there looking down at the warriors as they quickly made preparations to haul the fallen home on makeshift stretchers. They watched as the warriors sent out a messenger to the village to call for assistance.

Without saying a thing, Katayo started to walk out to the warriors in the glen. Approaching the group Samuel noticed the slight movements of a wounded soldier off to his right, veering in that direction and drawing his blade he dropped it effortlessly into the ground beside the soldier’s head “I will ask my questions only once. If you answer them I will send you into the next world with honour. If you do not your passing will be slow I assure you.” The coldness in his voice told the wounded soldier it was no lie.

“First tell me of the intent of this patrol.” Samuel asked sharply.

“We are the advanced party to drag out an ambush. There are more coming from the west only a day away.” The dying soldier stammered. Rising, Samuel hefted his blade high into the air then driving it down with as much force as he could muster so it would pass through quickly. With his dirty job done Samuel jogged to catch up to Katayo.

He arrived as words were exchanged between the hunters and Katayo. The leader clasped hands with Katayo. “Thank you friend. Without your help we would have went to the Creator surely,” the well honed leader of the hunting party said gracefully in his native tongue.

Katayo’s reply came quickly; “I would not wish another tribe to face the fate of my own.”

Samuel interjected stating; “There is more coming from the west only a day’s ride out.” The large native looked to Katayo “I must return to my village,” said the battle hardened leader.

“I will head west to slow them with my bow as much as I can.” Katayo said solemnly.

“That would mean your death Katayo.” Samuel pleaded.

“Thank you friend, your bravery will be remembered.” With that farewell the hunters left. As the warriors left a hand landed gently on Katayo’s shoulder. “I will not let you face this alone.” Samuel softly spoke. Katayo replied by clasping his friends wrist and together they ran west to face their honourable sacrifice.