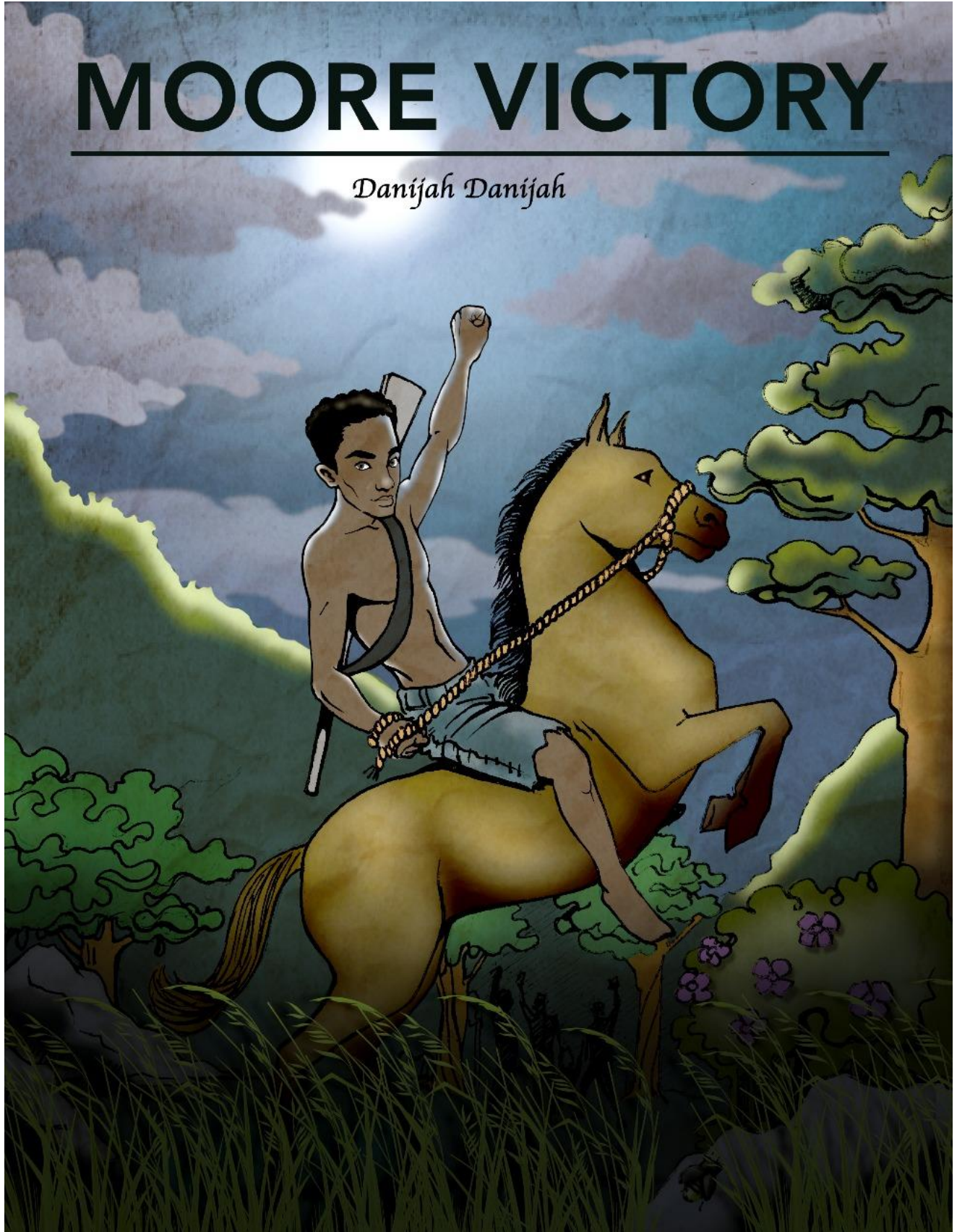


MOORE VICTORY

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FOR MY FRIST READERS GRATITUDE

Other stories by Danijah Danjiah

Orlando Jack

Magic Feet

Pedal Patrol

CHAPTER ONE

The morning sunrise slowly rose above the hills behind Papine, gently caressing and lighting the wet lawns of the University. Creating a scene of both peace and calm, the students in their numbers gradually streamed in from the main entrance; all occupied with the current task at hand. However, all this was about to change.

The sound of dancehall music broke the silence, and in no time, you could see the black BMW coming in from the training track corner, driving well above the campus' speed limit, with all its windows down. With a sudden tire screeching turn, the car parked into its regular spot. The moment of excitement caused by the hyped entrance was enjoyed by the students at the beginning of the school semester. After a few weeks the students began to feel it was unnecessary, and paid it little attention, ensuring only that they were not in the way of the car when it was coming around the corner.

The car door opened and out came the shirtless Jose' Lewis, the former World Junior Athletes' Decathlon champion, and the current favourite of the same event heading into the Olympic Games later that year. Jose' was a 23-year-old final year undergrad History and Archaeology student on a full sports scholarship. Jose' opened one of his car's back doors and took up his shirt and school bag. He placed the shirt over his muscular body and closed the windows and doors.

A Wednesday morning would normally mean another boring lecture with Dr. Peter Laboda, but today was going to be different, it was field day and the class was going to visit Moore Town in Portland. A trip Jose'

was excited about not just because of the opportunity to leave the classroom, but also because his Great Grandfather was a descendent of the parish. He wanted to use the trip to visit home, help clear his mind, and build a positive self-vibe for the Games to come later that year. To make things even more interesting Jose' overheard Candice King and her friend speaking yesterday about going on the trip. Candice was a lovely girl who he had his eyes on, but he was never lucky enough to see her outside of class, so he could give her a talk. He was smiling from cheek to cheek as today was the day he would finally be able to get her in a conversation, which he felt would lead to him scoring.

Jose' stepped onto the JUTA bus that was transporting the class to Moore Town. As soon as he did that, he was greeted by Dr Laboda.

"Why, Mr. Lewis glad you could make it. I was not expecting you today."

"And miss the best part of the course, or so I have heard. Right ladies?" Jose' replied aloud.

His answer caused an uproar of laughter from the boys. Dr. Laboda marked him present in his register and sent him to his seat. The bus was almost full and Jose' scanned through the air-conditioned bus and he could not believe is luck. Candice was in a corner seat sitting by herself, and he moved with the opportunity to sit beside her.

"This seat is already taken" Candice said with a serious look on her face.

"Yes, I can see that, by me," Jose' replied with a smile.

"It's Sasha's seat, please excuse yourself," Candice said.

“Alright, but only if Sasha comes, if not you’re stuck with me for the trip,” Jose’ replied.

“Or you could just find a next seat,” she said.

Candice kissed her teeth and they both went into their bags and took out their phones. Jose’ checked his Instagram and Candice texted Sasha, after a few minutes she still did not receive a response and the bus was now full and ready to go. Candice was in disbelief, she checked her phone again and Sasha still did not respond; in fact, she did not even read the WhatsApp message yet. Jose’ was smiling the whole time at Candice’s behaviour and burst into laughter when Dr. Laboda announced that the bus was ready to leave.

“What you laughing at?” Candice said, while sitting back hard in the chair in frustration.

“Nothing, just browsing through my IG,” he replied and continued, “Looks like a me and you fi the day.”

Candice placed her phone in her bag and took out a large book and began to read. The bus left Mona for Moore Town at 8:00 a.m. with 28 students.

CHAPTER TWO

They were travelling for an hour now, and José tried all he could to get Candice's attention out of the book she was reading so they could have a conversation. She just pretended not to hear his words while she read and skipped through the pages of her book as she went along. José now out of ideas just decided to speak along the journey because it was obvious that she was hearing what he was saying and was just ignoring him. José finally got a response when he said,

"This trip is very important to me, it's like I'm going home. My family is from Portland."

"Really!" Candice shouted and continued, "My family is also from Portland, and that is why I'm so upset with Sasha. She knows this trip is important to me. My family are actual Maroons from Moore Town."

"My grandmother is from that parish, not sure of the exact area, but really and truly this trip for me is about clearing my mind for the Games come August," José said.

"Just as I thought, it's always about the Games," she said.

"And what do you mean by that?" José asked.

"Life is just a big game for you, but what else can I expect from a sack of overgrown muscles, high on testosterone?" replied Candice.

"It's the duty of the man to score!" José exclaimed and continued "So it helps to have skills," raising his arms and kissing both his biceps.

"It's the duty of a man to be a man," Candice responded.

"And what is the definition of a man in your book?" José asked.

"A man is someone who takes responsibility for his actions and is not just about the hype," she answered.

José burst out into laughter again, took out his phone and proceeded to check his IG for the second time.

"Same thing, you laugh at my opinion without even providing a proper answer and just leave our conversation for that phone," Candice said.

"Just answering a few messages, 51k is a lot of work you know," he said.

"Well that's me going back to my book," she said.

The bus drove through the winding hilly roads of the Eastern Parishes looking over the lush green valleys. The bus soon came to a stop.

"Welcome to Moore Town, Portland!" Dr. Laboda said.

This got the attention of the students and they all stared through the tinted bus windows to see for themselves a true Jamaican rural town, with a large sign that read "Welcome to Moore Town."

Dr. Laboda stood up and told his students to exit the bus so the tour could begin, the students all picked up their belongings and exited the bus. By the time everyone was off the bus, a strong and built man looking to be in his forties, dressed in a long khaki pants and a white polo shirt sounded an abeng, that rocked the atmosphere.

"That sound!" Candice said with a giggle and continued, "It gives me goosebumps."

"Yes, the sound of war will do that, I feel that way every time the gun goes for the beginning of one of my events," José said.

The man walked over and introduced himself to the students and Dr. Laboda.

"Welcome to Moore Town, home of the Windward Maroons, my name is Matthew Morgan, the senior tour guide and in my hand is..."

Before Mr. Morgan could finish all the students shouted, "ABENG!"

Mr. Morgan laughed "I see, well taught."

That was when Dr. Laboda stepped in.

"Yes Mr. Morgan well taught, but we are not just any ordinary visitors we are guests of Ms. Beckfort."

"Okay, from the University!" Mr. Morgan replied.

"PEPE!" shouted a nice-looking, bow-legged lady who had the most beautiful head of grey hair. She walked over to the group, Dr. Laboda had a huge smile on his face, a language his face seldomly spoke, leaving his students in total shock as both Dr. Laboda and the lady hugged and exchanged kisses on their cheeks.

"Looks like the Dr. still has some venom in him," José remarked as the whole class erupted into laughter. After the greeting, Dr. Laboda while holding her by the hand introduced her to the class.

"My students, this is my good friend Ms. Beckfort."

Ms. Beckfort smiled a beautiful smile exposing her pearl white teeth.

"Good Morning class," she said.

The class was immediately drawn to her charisma, and with all smiling faces they replied, "Good Morning!"

Ms. Beckfort continued, "Welcome to Moore Town home of the Windward Maroons once led by the only Jamaican heroine, Nanny."

Ms. Beckfort went on talking about the rich history of the Windward Maroons and what was expected of the students on the tour. Some students began taking notes, while others began to make their social media pages active with pictures and posts about Moore Town. All this time José was talking to Candice trying to convince her to give him her number, but she blocked him from every angle.

"Today we're very lucky, as we will be treated to something very special by Ms. Beckfort. She called me three days ago with some interesting news" said Dr. Laboda.

"Yes, I did and let me share" said Ms. Beckfort. She continued, "I've been the Head Historian of the Moore Town Maroons for many years and I've spent all my life living in this place; however, for six nights now a strange event keeps happening at about the same time every night."

All the students were now looking directly at Ms. Beckfort, with José letting out a fearful laugh. She continued, "Over years of studying the journals of the British Commissionaires assigned to Moore Town after the signing of the Peace Treaties, I found that one particular Commissioner mentioned the Maroons constantly telling tales about a legendary horse riding Maroon war hero."

"HORSE RIDING MAROON!" the whole class said in shock.

"Yes!" said Ms. Beckfort, "About a year ago we found this, it may have some answers to the event that started a few nights ago."

Ms. Beckfort told the class to come this way as she took them along a trail leading behind a few village houses to a cave that was covered with a thick green bush like a carpet.

"The thick bush has hidden this cave for years, we found it last year." Ms. Beckfort stated as she stepped inside the cave, turned on the lantern she had, and told the class to enter. Dr. Laboda was the first to accept the offer while his students slowly made their way inside one by one.

"You feel that?" José asked.

"Feel what?" Candice asked sounding very scared.

"The moment I stepped into the cave a strange feeling came over me, I felt it mostly in my head," José replied.

"Stop!" Candice said, "You are making me nervous, it's all about jokes when it comes to you."

"Candice, I'm serious!" he said.

Candice just kissed her teeth and Ms. Beckfort continued,

"The images you see drawn on the cave walls appear to be a man riding a horse, am I right?" All the students in amazement answered "YES!" while staring at the cave drawings of the Maroon man riding a horse.

"Now, back to the strange event that started six nights ago, every morning at about 2 a.m. or so we hear the sounds of a horse running through the village. It has been happening every morning for the past six days," Ms. Beckfort said.

"And you're not afraid?" asked Andre Blake.

"Not afraid my dear, just amazed," she answered.

"Okay, okay enough of this scary cave lets go back to seeing the trees please," Camila Davis said to the agreement of the other students.

"Alright, back to the original tour," Ms. Beckfort said.

They all exited the dark cave and started the original tour. That took them into the hills overlooking the Rio Grande valley with Ms. Beckfort talking away with very few paying attention.

"PING!" Candice's phone went off, she went into her bag and checked who was messaging her. It was Sasha finally replying to her message, Candice could not bother to answer and just placed the phone back into her bag.

"So why you not answering the message, is you man that?" asked José.

"It's not, it's Sasha just answering my message; she stood me up," answered an angry Candice.

"No better way to repay her than to send her a few pictures of how exciting the trip is, and I will take them for you," José said smiling.

"That's a good idea you know José, take my phone and take a few," Candice said.

She passed her phone to José and began to pose for the pictures. Jose' took a few pictures and smiled, then in a sudden moment ran off with the phone saying, "I well be getting your number for sure now."

"Give me my phone José!" Candice shouted at the top of her voice. She dashed after him in anger, but she was finding it difficult to keep up with him because the forest ground was littered with large stones and tree roots which she had to avoid with each step. Candice stopped and picked

up a few stones and started to throw them at José but he somehow managed to avoid them while laughing as hard as he possibly could. José began to hear in his head a strange sound, and when he stopped and listened closely it sounded like a horse running, and it was getting louder and closer. Him stopping caused Candice to get extremely close and her stones nearer to hitting him. He quickly ran off, but with him hearing the horse in his head while also looking to avoid the stones Candice was throwing, he lost sight of the road ahead and fell over an exposed root. Hitting his head on a large stone, José was knocked out cold. Candice ran over and saw that he was unconscious and belted out a loud scream.

CHAPTER THREE

José was awoken by a sudden shake, when he opened his eyes and regained consciousness he saw the face of the most terrified man he had ever seen. The man shouted to José in a mixture of Spanish and broken English, an English which José could not understand. The only words spoken that José could recognize were “amigo” and “rapido”. José raised himself up off the floor and was dumbfounded by the clothes that he had on. His pants were torn and dirty, and the material was like that of khaki, his shirt was opened having only one button and it reeked of sweat. The smell of his clothes was soon overpowered by the smell of the building, the smell of urine, and faeces that filled the air.

The man continued to wake everyone that was sleeping. As soon as he woke someone up they ran straight for the door at full speed. The man had now awakened everyone and was about to exit the room himself when he looked at José in the eyes and shouted, “Amigo rapido, mas rapido!”

José still in shock, stood looking blank until he heard a single gunshot followed by a loud scream. He grabbed a pair of old looking shoes that were laying on the dirt floor and ran for the door. When he got outside José could not believe his eyes; it was total chaos. There was a large wooden building on fire and the sounds of gunshots echoed everywhere, and he was right in the middle. The air was then shocked by the sound of a horn, a very loud and powerful horn causing the sounds of gunshots to increase. A group of 5 White Men all armed with guns were running towards the sound of the horn. When one of them saw José standing, he stopped, came to him, and pointed his gun at him saying.

"Nigga boy, Nigga on the ground now!"

"What did you just call me?" Jose' answered.

With Jose's words the White Man selected the gun to shoot. In that moment a shot went off and the White Man fell dead to the ground. When José turned around he saw what looked like a person covered from head to toe with bush, and with it being night it was very hard to see the face. The person then pointed to the direction that the many black men and women were running. José still in fear and shock also ran in that direction.

José soon found himself running with a group of four, all running towards what looked like the hills. At the hill top he looked down and saw for himself his first 19th Century English Plantation; from the Great House to the fields of sugar cane. The sight froze him. The man that woke him was passing him and shouted to him again, "Amigo Rapido!" and pointed into the thick forest ahead.

José snapped back to reality, turned around and continued running ahead. He was now running for about 30 minutes nonstop into the hilly forest. The sound of the loud horn echoed from the forest causing all the runners to stop in their tracks. The trees and bushes around Jose' began moving; revealing that they were being watched. The fast-paced running soon slowed down to a steady walk. Walking through the dark forest you could feel the eyes in the bushes watching the group, when they reached to an open area, they joined a larger group of runners that went ahead of them, all standing and looking about nervously.

José waited in silence with the moon as the only source of light. After ten minutes a figure of a human appeared from behind the leaves high in the

tree top, and with a massive jump from about 30 feet in air, the person hit the ground with a loud thump that sounded like they were wearing heavy duty footwear. The person then lit a handheld torch. To Jose's surprise it was a woman; the most powerful woman he had ever seen. Her eyes burnt with an unbelievable fire. She stood over six feet tall with ripped muscles, you could tell she was very strong, and she was armed with a small machete. Saying nothing, she took the torch and threw it into the heap of wood located in the middle of the open area, causing a massive fire. The fire provided the light José needed to see his surroundings completely, revealing everyone that was present. José was surrounded by at least 400 individuals, all armed with various weapons.

The woman in the centre waved her hands, and the sounds of drumming immediately filled the air, complimented by singing and dancing. José and the waiting group just stood and watched. Two of the dancers then came over to the waiting group and placed them in one straight line facing the powerful looking woman. Drummers then started to beat the rhythm faster and louder creating vibrations that hit José's body, sending chills up his spine. The woman then took out a wooden instrument from her waist and waved it in a circle three times in the air. She spoke a few words which José could not understand, and then he began to feel a strange feeling that ran through the bottom of his feet, through his body, to his head. His tongue then started to burn, followed a tingling sensation in his throat. José soon found himself unable to hear anything because of the pain he was feeling in his ear, and by the reactions of the others waiting in the middle, José could tell that they were feeling the same thing. They all soon fell to their knees, and in one abrupt moment all the drumming, singing, dancing, and even the pain stopped.

"GET UP!" she ordered, the words from her mouth shocked his ear drum, bringing everyone instantly to their feet at once. She continued, "Now that the communication problem is over, welcome my family to Nanny Town, a free town, I am Mama Nanny. Now that you are here I suggest you get with the system of your new home if you interested in surviving."

José was dumbfounded "The Maroons! it could not be, the broken language that me could not understand, now me understand clearly. Nanny village and Mama Nanny, but it could not be?" he thought to himself.

Mama Nanny walked to the end of the line of the newcomers and placed her hand on the head of the man at the front and shouted "JACKY!"

The whole village repeated the name. She moved down the line repeating the ritual but always gave a different name. Now standing in front of José, she was looking him deep in his eyes, and instead of placing her hand on his head, Mama Nanny said,

"Let me see your hand."

José quickly raised his hand and she looked in the middle of it for a few seconds and said, "Mmhm."

Mama Nanny smiled and took out the wooden instrument, placed it on his head, and took a deep breath and said,

"QUASHI!"

Using his new understanding José figured out that was now his name as the whole village repeated it. After naming all the newcomers, Mama Nanny turned her back and disappeared into the forest. Out of the crowd of villagers came a tall muscular man. He said,

"Woman and children, you can all leave and do make bed."

The women and the children then left the group and were greeted by a few women already in the village. He continued,

"Now that we are all men here I must say, the men of Nanny Town are all warriors, and your survival will depend mostly on that skill." "You all will begin training tomorrow morning, so I suggest you all get some sleep and get ready to fight for your new life."

All the men were then led to the sleeping area and were given a bed. Jose's mind was all over the place thinking about all the events that had just happened and the fact that he could hardly remember anything that happened on the trip to Moore Town. He only remembers arriving and exiting the bus, everything else was a blur. José just closed his eyes and decided he was going to sleep and awake from this nightmare.

CHAPTER FOUR

José was awoken once again by a shake, and when he opened his eyes, "Candice!" he said.

"Candice, what's a Candice?" asked the smiling young lady that woke him.

"Where am I?" José asked.

"Quashi, you are still in Nanny Town, we helped you escape from the hands of slavery last night you don't remember?" she replied.

"Yes, I remember but I also remember my life before" José said.

"So, they all say that, I was born free here in these hills to my mother Mama Nanny." She paused, as José stared at her full eyed.

"You sure resemble Candice, it's almost like she is your twin," he said.

"Well I'm no Candice, I'm Ziki South Zone's Sub-Chief and daughter of Mama Nanny," she said. Then asked, "Quashi the way you are looking at me, this Candice was she your wife?"

"Wife! No way at my age and status" Jose replied laughing.

"What is your age?" She asked.

"I'm 23" he answered.

"And without a wife! What was your status a slave or a eunuch, is this life you long to return to?" Ziki laughed.

"None! Answered a smiling José lying with his hands behind his head looking up at Ziki." He continued, "I was a champion from the age of nineteen years and was now going into my greatest battle yet. Leading into the advances, I had a following of 51k."

"51k?" she asked.

"51 thousand," José replied.

"Yet with all that greatness you still got sold into slavery and had to be saved from being killed for being too slow?" she said.

"Saved from being killed for being too slow?" he asked.

"Yes, I was the one who shot the White Man that raised his gun to kill you last night" Ziki said.

José was at a loss for words, and in shame asked,

"That was you?"

"Yes champion, that was me and it seems you need to touch up on your skills; you are already late for training, so I suggest you get up," she said.

With that, she gave José a hard kick on his rib cage that caused him to cry out in pain.

She laughed and said, "That will help you realize that this is not a dream." That was when José noticed that she was barefoot.

José got up off the ground and asked, "So what will we be doing for training today Sub-Chief?"

"Quashi I'm not your Sub-Chief, Quao is and with you not in training today because of over sleeping I can tell you this, you will be serving

some form of punishment later this evening. But until then I will show you around the village." Ziki said.

"Let's get going then," he said.

She took him all about the Maroon Village showing him their day to day life, the life which will soon become his day to day life. She explained to him their system of growing food, and how education was passed down through generations, as well as the importance of fighting to survive in a world that sees them as just animals.

The journey then took them high in the mountains overlooking the Rio Grande valley.

"Ziki, this scene is breath-taking; so much untouched beauty," José said.

"This river is our blessing, I come here often just to meditate and clear my head," she said.

In the moment they both looked and smiled at each other, as the sunrays hit the green trees and the Great River flowed producing a natural symphony. Jose's eyes stared above the canopy until he saw a single man in a tree top looking out.

"Is that a look out?" he pointed in the direction and asked.

"Yes, the village is divided into four areas, these areas surround the living area; the North Zone led by Bodak, the East Zone led by Tapa, and the West Zone led by my uncle Quao who commanded the plantation raids last night. You will join his group in the protection of freedom. Then, you have the South Zone led by myself, I take pride in the art of ambushing. "If you look," she pointed and continued, "Just below my Zone of Protection you will see a road, it links the ports and plantations. So,

every now and then White Men travel the route. I want Mama Nanny to make it officially my duty to ambush the White Men; but it's sometimes difficult to do because they are riding horses at high speeds, and with the village shortage of ammunition we are only allowed to use guns during a plantation raid, or when the village is under attack. Although they do get away often, we do have successful ambushes. Come, let me take you to my Zone of Protection."

That moment made José realize this just may be his life for now, and that fighting with the Maroons was his destiny.

"Yes, take me," he answered.

They descended the high mountain and came upon a thick bushy area.

"This is where my Zone begins; the South Zone. Once we step foot into a Zone we are being watched by the best eyes of the village," Ziki said.

"You don't have to tell me, you can just feel the eyes," José said.

"The key is to stay hidden and to be alert, so what you feel and can't see is my work," Ziki said.

"Ziki this is a large area, how does one become a Sub-Chief, or is it because you are Mama Nanny's daughter?" he asked.

"That's far from it, being the daughter of Mama Nanny has nothing to do with my responsibilities. I had to prove myself in training and on the battlefield several times. When the previous Sub-Chief dies or decides he or she is no longer strong enough to lead, a new Sub-Chief is chosen by the people. Normally it's the strongest fighter at the time, I was the last to be chosen as Sub-Chief and the youngest," Ziki replied.

"You just don't fit the image of a warrior," José said.

"I can't believe you doubt my fighting skills, and saying a warrior is judged by looks, okay then we shall see!" Ziki said.

"WHAT?" José asked.

"Let's see if I'm a warrior or not. This will be your first training exercise, the machete will be your weapon of choice, so let's practice," Ziki said.

She walked over to a tree, and with a strong pull broke a piece of the branch and split it into half. Each piece was the length of a machete. She threw one to José and said,

"Alright, champion let me see what you have."

"What am I supposed to do with this?" José asked.

"It's your weapon to see if I'm a warrior or not. We will be fighting, just come at me with all your strength and don't hold back because I won't," Ziki said.

"Alright but you're sure doing to regret this," José said with a laugh.

He juggled the stick a few times in his right hand, and with a step forward, reserving some of his strength he swiped the stick at Ziki. With a simple swing of her hips she avoided Jose's blow, and in the same motion she used her foot to trip José. Before he could fall, she used her stick and hit José hard over his back, sending him to the forest floor. José cried out in agony.

"Are you serious! You almost broke my back," he said.

"I told you not to hold back because I wasn't going to, plus you're a champion, so show me the champion," Ziki said laughing.

José now burning with anger, charged full speed and strength at Ziki. She swung her stick at him and he blocked it with his stick. Using his left hand, he tried to grab Ziki, but before he could get hold of her she quickly raised her foot, kicking him hard on the same spot she kicked him earlier. José fell to his knees in pain, Ziki was cackling loudly, and soon even the trees and bushes joined in on the laughter.

"Enough!" Quao shouted, "Quashi, you missed your first day of training to be beaten and laughed at."

José looked up in shame to see Quao and three other Maroon men standing over him. Ziki helped José off the floor while telling him sorry for such a hard first lesson.

"That's fine I get the picture now, plus where I'm from that's the usual case, you get the test then the lesson," Jose said.

"That's life itself," Ziki responded.

"Since he's already started to train with me let him join my group, the South Zone, I'm already undermanned," Ziki said to Quao.

"No way, I oversaw the raid, so I get the freed able fighters," Quao said and continued, "What I'm thinking about is his punishment."

"Quao this is not up for discussion Quashi will join the South Zone under my leadership," Ziki said.

Ziki words caused Quao's face to burn in anger.

"LET'S HEAR WHAT MAMA NANNY HAS TO SAY, I'M CALLING A VILLAGE MEETING NOW!" Quao shouted.

Quao and his men turned around immediately and marched off. Quao walked and summoned all the women, children, and off duty men to an emergency village meeting at the village's centre. Most of the village members were present, and Quao ordered the drummers to play the Beat of Injustice.

"MAMA NANNY, MAMA NANNY, O MAMA HEAR MY CRY!" Quao shouted at the top of his voice.

Still in pain from the beating he received José arrived at the village's centre with Ziki by his side. The winds started to howl through the forest causing chills all throughout Jose's body again. Suddenly, we heard the voice of Mama Nanny.

"Why have you called this meeting at this time Quao?" Mama Nanny asked as her voice shook the air.

José looked up in the trees and at about 50 feet in the air stood Mama Nanny on a branch.

" Quashi missed his first day of training to be humiliated by your rebel daughter, and when I planned on assigning punishment, I was told by your daughter that he is no longer my trainee but hers," Quao answered.

With hearing Quao's words Mama Nanny jumped from the branch and then her feet hit the ground. It made the same sound Jose' had heard the night before. However, seeing it now it was even more spectacular. Just as Mama Nanny was about to speak the loud blow of an abeng echoed in the sky coming from the East Zone; the area closest to the plantations.

"The White Men are coming!" Quao shouted.

"Must be retaliation for last night's raid on the plantation," Ziki said.

"ALL FIGHTERS IN ARMS!" Quao shouted. He then grabbed José by the neck and said to him, "Now you're going to wish you had attended training today."

He took up a machete from out of a small pile of about 15 and gave it too José as his personal weapon.

"They chose the right time to attack," Mama Nanny said laughing.

The Maroon fighters ran and started to arm themselves with various weapons. Mama Nanny gave the word to take up battle positions. Quao's Zone had the most physical fighters, skilled in using the machete. They were responsible for most of the man-to-man fighting. In most cases the British soldiers outnumber the Maroons, so José was sure to be involved in battle today.

CHAPTER FIVE

Quao's men ran through the forest to assume their positions for the battle. José's heart pounded through his chest as he made his way through unknown territories. While running, José was pulled into the bushes by three pairs of hands. When he looked he saw Ziki and two other young ladies all covered in bushes.

"Where you running to, to get yourself killed?" Ziki said with a laugh. "Quashi you're not ready for a man-to-man battle", she continued. Let's take some time to understand your opponent first. By the way this is Yaki and Katifa, we are the best in what we do."

"Ziki I need to get into the fight, I'm already in trouble for missing training, something I never do, and now you want me to run away; that's even worse", José said.

"Trust me you're not running away you're just fighting smarter", Ziki said, and continued, "Look, Mama Nanny developed a liquid poison, and I came up with the idea to tip the ends of sharp fish bones with the poison, and then blow them through short sticks of bamboo. When the point of the bone hits someone who is not a Maroon they will die immediately".

"Poison Darts!" José said.

"And with Mama Nanny involved in the fight, it won't last long. The White Men will be retreating on the road south of my Zone. The moment of fear will provide the perfect opportunity for us to ambush them", Ziki further explained.

"You're just determined to make me one of your own", José said.

Ziki smiled and they all agreed on the plan of action, dashing through the forest heading towards the South Road. While running through the forest the presence of Mama Nanny sang in the distance, and the screams of the British soldiers filled the air. Shortly after Quao shouted, his set of Maroon warriors attacked the British soldiers.

In the bushes next to the South Road the four of them set themselves in the planned positions; Katifa climbed the tallest tree that overlooked the entire valley, so she could easily see the full length of the road from East to West. She was perfectly camouflaged with Ziki's bush and leaf garments. José, Ziki and Yaki listened for her signal in the bush next to the road. Armed with loaded bamboo darts, patiently waiting for a British soldier or rider to pass by. With them being extremely silent they could hear the battle cries of the British soldiers get louder and louder.

"Three horses with riders coming east from the plantation", Katifa said.

"Bless our ancestors", said Ziki.

The sound of horses running cracked the air, and the waiting group could now see the riders coming towards them. The first rider slowed to a stop when he saw the sight of the dead snake hanging from a tree, the other two riders did not stop and as soon as they were in range, Ziki and Yaki blew their poison darts hitting the riders in the neck. They fell to the ground, dying instantly.

"BLACK MAGIC!" The first rider shouted in fear, as he saw no other movements, except the two other riders falling dead.

It was now José's turn to blow his poison dart before the scared rider galloped away. José blew a dart, and missed.

"Focus Quashi! Take those stupid things off your feet and connect with your home and freedom", Ziki shouted to José.

The shouting caused the rider to turn his horse around in an attempt to dash back to the plantation. José was extremely disappointed in himself, and the competitor inside of him came to life. He took off the old pair of shoes he found inside the plantation house, and placed his bare feet on the ground, feeling an energy unlike any other fill his body. He looked to the floor and saw a solid stone that filled the palm of his hands, and with a massive throw, José hit the escaping rider directly in his head, flooring him dead to the ground. The horse he was riding came to an immediate stop, turned and began to run in the direction of the other horses that ran away. Jose quickly climbed the tree next to him, and as soon as the horse was under him, he jumped from the tree onto the horse's back, saddling it and bringing it to a halt.

The girls looked on in amazement.

"I guess he was really a champion in his past life", Ziki said.

"A GREAT ONE!" Yaki responded.

José rode over to them.

"What is the matter?" José asked.

"You can ride a horse?" Ziki asked.

"Now look who's asking stupid questions José replied and continued, "Yes, I'm sure you can see that".

"Only the great men of the past could ride horses. We will have to show Mama Nanny and the village your greatness".

They started to search the belongings of the three dead riders, taking their guns and ammunition, after hiding the dead bodies. José was given the gun and the ammunition of the rider he killed with the stone.

"Now back to the village!" Ziki said.

José slowly rode the horse into the village to the amazement of every Maroon that saw. The children of the village all started to run behind the horse cheering José on with his Maroon name, "Quashi, Quashi, Quashi!"

Ziki looked up at José riding the horse and smiled; as they would soon reach the village's centre they began to wait for the return of Mama Nanny and the rest of the Maroon army. The sounds of singing and drums beating gave rhythm to the trees, it was Mama Nanny returning with the army in songs of victory. The returning party was shocked into silence when they saw José sitting on a horse with a gun across his chest. Mama Nanny ran quickly over to José, and with all the Maroons still in silence she touched the head of the horse.

"Today is indeed a great day for freedom!" Mama Nanny said.

The Maroons all started to cheer, and the drumming and singing started again, until Quao stepped forward and said,

"What about his punishment for missing my training this morning."

"What life did you live before you were stolen?" Mama Nanny asked José.

Before José could answer Ziki responded.

"He was a brave champion for his people and he led an army of 51 thousand men but got captured because of womanizing."

"The spirits spoke to me about your greatness before they named you yesterday. Mama Nanny said and continued, "Now great Maroon Quashi, what do you have to say about your punishment?"

José dismounted the horse and spoked in the presence of Mama Nanny for the first time.

"I have observed the operations of the village and I'm impressed, it has also made me want to join the fight for freedom. Earlier today Ziki showed me a road just south of her Zone of Protection that the White Men use to make trips to transport goods, weapons, and ammunition. With the ambushing techniques developed by Ziki, she has already managed a few successful ambushes and gained supplies. However, it is proving difficult to ambush them, because the White Men travel on horses. With me having this horse I can assist in ambushing. Instead of just sitting and waiting for the war to come we can win a few battles daily and gain valuable supplies."

José's words caused Ziki to smile but it also sent the whole village into chatter.

"A few hours ago, you were being beaten by Ziki without her even breaking a sweat and now you are this great Champion," Quao stated.

José mounted his horse, spun around the rifle and pointed it to a breadfruit, high in a tree; with one shot he hit the breadfruit, bursting it into pieces.

"Give us a chance, I fired one bullet just now, give us seven days and we will return with 200 rounds of ammunition," José said.

"Unachievable, impossible!" Quao shouted and laughed.

"You challenge yourself, let's see if you can master yourself. If not see to his punishment Quao. May the ancestors go with you my child," Mama Nanny said as she gave José and Ziki permission to ambush along the South Road.

That evening straight into the night the Maroons partied not only celebrating the victory over the British soldiers, but also gave thanks to the ancestors for sending such a skilled fighter in, "Quashi" the horse riding Maroon, to help in the fight against slavery. The Maroons developed the horse dance in his honour.

With Mama Nanny only giving them one week to gather 200 rounds of ammunition, Ziki arose just before sunrise to awaken José, but to her surprise he was already ready and waiting in the saddled horse.

"Ready for the day my Sub-Chief?" Jose asked as he looked down at her smiling.

Ziki smiled, "Yes I'm ready to go."

With one motion José held out his hand and pulled Ziki onto the back of the horse, powering off into the forest. They rode until they arrived at the central location in Ziki's Zone of Protection. They were met by Yaki and Katifa. The four of them planned and organized all the details for the ambushes on the South Road. After they loaded their weapons and set off, they headed there.

Ziki on arrival started to mark a few trees with Maroon markings as planned to create mental instability in the riders, enabling the ambush to be easier and more effective. They all took their places and waited for the British riders; they waited for about two hours. Katifa shouted.

"Something is coming around the corner of the village road heading to the plantation, I'm sure it's what we have been waiting for!" from the tree top, she waited for a moment and continued, "It's four White Men all riding horses, with an extra horse carrying two boxes at its side coming very fast!"

"LET'S GET THIS!" Ziki shouted.

They all waited silently in their positions for the moment when the unsuspecting victims arrive. The four soldiers stopped at the entrance of the boundary, when they saw the blood carved markings carved on the trees.

"This place stinks with the smell of the animals," one of the soldiers said.

"It's that black magic that they were telling us about," said another soldier, "There is no way we are making it through this tunnel of blood markings alive."

"No way! We can't turn back," the first soldier said.

"Just send the horse through first and see what happens," another soldier said.

The four British soldiers held their ground and sent the horse with the boxes forward. As soon as the horse reached the middle, it was hit by poison darts fired by Ziki and Yaki. The horse after a few more strides fell over dead with a loud thump; that was José's signal for him to ride onwards.

The four soldiers looked on in disbelief and started to turn their horses around.

"I told you, no way we are making it through alive," a soldier said, he continued, "Wait! You hear that it sounds like a horse coming hard."

The sound of the horse coming caused the British soldiers to wait, but fear shocked their eyes to the sight of José, a black man, riding a horse. They were dumbfounded. José rode on and fired two shots hitting two of the soldiers in the chest, killing them. That provided enough time for Ziki and Yaki to move further along in the bushes to fire poison darts, also killing the two remaining soldiers. The three females then began to search the belongings of the dead soldiers. Ziki was just about to scold José about the bullets he fired when she found 10 rounds of ammunition in one of the soldier's carrying bag. Yaki and Katifa also found ten bullets each plus an additional ten on the fourth soldier.

"Good start to a day's work," Ziki said.

José rode over to the dead horse that had fallen with the boxes. He fired a single shot to break the lock. When he opened the boxes, ammunition just started pouring out, José was speechless. The girls noticed and came running over. They started counting the bullets immediately. The loot totalled 2214 bullets, and 10 guns. With one ambush they had surpassed the target of 200 bullets set by Jose' and agreed upon by Mama Nanny. They hid the bodies of the dead soldiers and horse and set off back to the village to show the rewards of their first ambush on the first day.

José shared the 10 guns between the four of them with each of them carrying two and the remaining two were put into the box, and onto his horse. They sang great songs of celebrations, singing about the great victory and the Maroon blessing of the horse rider. This started to get the attention of the villagers and the abengs started to sound off. They made their way to the centre of the village; the whole village gathered

to see the loot. Quao was on the scene and the winds started to blow with the presence of Mama Nanny, and just like that she appeared.

"Quashi why the need for this celebration?" Mama Nanny asked.

José stepped forward guiding his horse along.

"Mama Nanny, Ziki and I have collected 2214 rounds of ammunition and 10 guns in just one ambush on the South Road. His words were met with loud cheers from the villagers.

"Yes, my great son, and with that your debt to the village has been repaid and you can now choose the path you wish to take," Mama Nanny said.

José took a short look inside his head and in everyone presence.

"That choice is simple, I will be under the guidance of Ziki working the South Road." José said.

His answer caused Ziki to smile. She ran over and hugged him causing him to cry out in pain.

"You hurt?" Ziki asked.

"The only pain I'm feeling is because of you and the beating you gave me on my ribs," José replied.

"You're still feeling pain from that, alright later I will fix it," Ziki said with a smile.

The village drummers all came out in full force and began playing the sounds of victory. Quao was still burning inside by José's decision to join the ranks of Ziki and in moments of the celebration he said to his sister Mama Nanny,

"Mama Nanny, forgive me but you know a boy with a skill like that should not be out robbing the goods of the White Men, he should be here in the village teaching the skill, so we can preserve this gift from the ancestors."

"That boy has a special energy, I felt it the moment he stepped foot in the village. He seems to have lifted the spirit of Ziki, she is actual smiling again, plus just look at his eyes when he looks at her. Somehow, I feel that he is not from here and we need him, so I feed his spirit hoping it will decided to stay, just let it flow brother," Mama Nanny replied.

"Then let it flow the correct course. He should be in my ranks," Quao said.

"Quao, I'm doing just that letting it flow, you know she was the one who saved him from the plantation. Just give her a chance." Mama Nanny replied.

"Let's see!" Quao said.

The Maroons continued their celebrations all afternoon, straight into the night. During the celebration when no one was paying attention Ziki went over to José and pulled on his shirt, and they both went off into the moon lit forest. As they made their way, the drumming soon became a distant beat and the voice of the night forest spoke loudly.

"Where are you taking me Ziki?" he asked.

"Just follow the leader, I told you I was going to get rid of the pain, just follow along," Ziki replied.

She took him deep into the forest until they came upon the entrance of what José thought was a cave. The entrance was made up of three large boulders, one on each side with the smallest one on top leading to what seemed like underground. They were now right in front of the open and

he decided to look, he placed his head into the opening and looked down. José saw a body of water glowing in the moon light.

"Is that water?" José asked.

"Yes, it's a healing water, down there two bodies of water meet; a hot spring and an underground river both are filled with minerals, and a bath in it will get rid of your pain," Ziki replied.

"How do you get in and it sure looks deep?" asked a concerned looking José.

"Just relax, we enter from here and yes, it's deep, but can't you swim?" Ziki asked.

"Swimming was just something I never mastered," José answered.

"Quashi can't actually do everything." Ziki said as she slowly undressed herself, causing José's eyes to open wide in attention as he stared at her gorgeous body. She noticed that he was staring at her as if he was in a trance, and she moved causing him to follow until she had him positioned right in front of the opening to the underground springs. She walked over to him and with Jose' standing still she gave him a push sending him straight through the entrance into the underground springs.

Jose' was yelling in fright as he fell and made a huge splash, Ziki dived in right behind him. He was struggling and crying out for help, but she was quick to act as she calmed him a little.

"Just like shooting the dart, swimming is about merging with the water and creating that peaceful balance" Ziki told him.

After about fifteen minutes of motivation and lessons from Ziki, Jose was swimming in the deep springs by himself. She began to massage the spot he was feeling the pain. She used the hot mineral water to work the spot and Jose' was enjoying the massage as the pain was being worked away by her hands.

"You hurt he with your feet and heal the pain with your hands," Jose' said.

"I'm a woman, I can give, and I take away pain, just like how I can also destroy and create," Ziki responded.

They looked each other deep in the eyes, and with a strong tug Jose' pulled her close to him, and the both of them locked arms around each other, kissing a heated kiss under the shining moon light that was beaming in through the entrance above.

CHAPTER SIX

The South Road ambushes overtime became extremely successful and Jose' and Ziki were now village heroes. The tales of the horse riding Maroon patrolling the South Road stealing valuable goods and weapons started to reach Spanish Town. This caused a drastic cut back in the weekly number of British riders that used the South Road.

Jose' was now moving into his 171st day living in Nanny Town, and this week was the slowest week ever. It was now six days since the last rider.

"Can we go home?" Yaki asked.

"Let's just wait until sundown and then we can signal Quashi and let him know it is time to go home," Ziki replied.

"A lone rider coming very fast!" Katifa shouted from the tree top.

Yaki ran across the road to the other side holding a rope, which Ziki was also holding the other end. The sounds of galloping started to break the air, and soon the rider was in sight. He was riding extremely fast and did not notice the snake warning. As soon as he was about to pass, Ziki and Yaki lifted the rope causing the rider to be thrown from his horse; the impact of the fall killed him immediately.

Ziki and Yaki ran over to the dead rider and started to search his belongings. To their disbelief they found nothing only a sealed letter. Jose' was quick on the scene as always, and he rode slowly over to them and asked,

“What did we get?”

“NOTHING! Ziki replied. “Just a sealed note, which is useless to us,” she continued.

“Let me see it,” he said.

“Trust me Quashi it’s useless,” Yaki said.

Ziki handed him the note and in a few seconds Jose’s eyes lit up in amazement.

“It’s English, I can read it,” Jose’ said.

“READ,” Ziki asked puzzled, “WHAT IS ENGLISH?”

“I can understand what is written on the paper, and English is the name of the White Men’s language,” Jose’ answered.

“I know what read means,” Ziki responded, “what I’m asking is how can you read it?”

“Quashi just gets more amazing every day,” Yaki said.

“What does it say?” Ziki asked.

Jose’ removed the seal and began to read:

Greetings, may the Lord God continue to bless our great King in England. The animals have begun to affect our profit margins greatly. Ever since the plantation raid 5 months ago, the animals seemed to have mastered an amazing art of killing our horsemen

on the South Road that leads to Spanish Town. Even now, I know not if this letter will reach Your Greatness. For the past five months, these attacks have cost a total for of 90 horses, 54 British soldiers, 27 riders, 7110 rounds of ammunition, 63 rifles, and 4 caravans. With these numbers, and us fearing the worst, the animals are fully armed, and the plantation owners all fear any impending attack that they may stage. We the United Group of Planters have bought the services of Sir Keystone; a man most famous for defeating three African war kings. With his expertise and the fleet of ammunition, we will have all the ingredients needed to exterminate the animals. The General and his family will arrive in a week's time. The last letter we received on the shipment of weapons and ammunition stated it will arrive in three days. We have initiated a major effort to keep its arrival a secret, and it will be transported under guard by an army of 200 armed soldiers. We have started to cut a road linking the plantation and the port to the east of the plantation, which places it between the ammunition, and the animal's village and their road of death. We assure you victory and the death of the wild animals.

*Phillip Taylor,
Plantation Owner.*

“Bless the ancestors,” Ziki said.

“Are you thinking what I’m thinking, this will be the greatest ambush ever,” Jose’ said laughing.

“But it’s 200 soldiers, no way the four of us can defeat so many men,” Yaki added.

“This is not a normal everyday ambush, we will need the help of the whole village, and maybe even Mama Nanny because I have a plan,” Jose said.

“Alright, lets share the news, we only have three days,” Ziki said with a smile.

The moment Ziki got to the South Zone, she signalled to her abeng blower to call a village meeting immediately. The sound of the abeng echoed through the village, causing a chain reaction with the other blowers sounding the call of listening ears. By the time Ziki and company got to the village’s centre, all the village members were present even Mama Nanny.

“My child what is the reason for you calling his emergency meeting?” Mama Nanny asked.

“Mama Nanny, Quashi has amazed us again, he revealed he can read the language of the White Man and he has a very important message he would like to share with the village,” Ziki replied.

Ziki’s response sent the whole village into chatter.

“YES, AND WHAT IS THIS NEWS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE?” Quao asked.

Jose’ stepped off his horse and the village immediately became silent.

“Earlier today after an ambush we found this letter on the rider. The letter stated there was a large shipment of guns and ammunition all needed for a war with us. Led by a man called Sir Keystone, the White Men will be moving the shipment of weapons in three days and it will be guarded by 200 soldiers. This will be the perfect opportunity to ambush them and gain more weapons for the war that is coming,” Jose’ explained.

“War that is coming, I fear no man and no war. Let them come we are ready to destroy them,” Quao said.

“Quao this will take more than just brute force to win,” Jose said.

“What do you say we do Quashi?” Mama Nanny asked.

“The shipment of weapons will be to the west of the plantation so...” Jose’ gave his instructions.

The village listened to Jose’s every word and as soon as he was finished sharing his plans all the village got to work to execute the largest ambush in Maroon history. The first stage of the plan was to gather as much information as possible about the enemy. Jose’ selected two front

runners; Yaki and Cuffi to go spy on the enemy, returning with information to share with the village, the both of them left right away. The whole village got to work, from preparing food for the journey, making bush garments for the moving army, and gathering the weapons. They worked all through the day and night. Yaki and Cuffi returned on the night of the first day. The day before the movement of the shipment they went to Jose' and Yaki told him this.

“The journey is a 10-hour trip which is quickest along the river bank, plus the noise of the river will aid in our cover while marching. The White Men have finished building the road connecting the plantation, and the ports and are now building a bridge to cross the Great River which will cut out the need to use the South Road.” She continued, “The White Men are also very afraid of you Quashi, they speak about the coming war but are in fear and calling Sir Keystone their only hope of winning.”

“You hear that sister, we should not be planning an ambush we should be attacking and claiming victory over the plantation now that they are weak and in fear,” Quao said to Mama Nanny silently.

“Quao, change comes with youth let's just help them bring their ideas to life.” Mama Nanny replied.

“It seems even you in all your power, have being blinded by this boy,” Quao said in anger.

“That is just the news we want to hear Yaki, we march forward tomorrow midday,” Jose’ shouted out aloud to the ears of the village, received by cheers of celebrations in the air.

The following day came, and all the Maroon warriors started their journey along the bank of the Great River to assume their positions for the ambush. Jose’ had a three-part attack planned led by Mama Nanny. They arrived and waited for the arrival of the British soldiers.

It was the day of the planned movement and the Maroons all waited in silence and just as it was written in the letter that Jose’ read, the sounds of British soldiers broke the forest silence.

“We’re now fully equipped to deal with these animals!” a British soldier exclaimed. This was followed by loud hooting and cheering from the 200 soldiers protecting the shipment of weapons.

“I hear they have black magic, and guns have no use against black magic,” a fearful soldier said.

“Have you ever seen this black magic before?” asked another soldier.

“NO!” he answered.

“Until then stop the crying, plus we will have Sir Keystone leading the fight. Man up and let’s kill some animals!” The soldier said.

The 200 British soldiers had now walked right into a trap, as they were now surrounded by Maroon warriors. The winds of Nanny started to blow as cold as ice causing the British soldiers to both tremble from fear as well as the sudden chill.

“Death is me,” she said with a whisper, but still all the British soldiers heard.

“YOU HEAR THAT MEN, SHOOT ANYTHING THAT MOVES!” a terrified soldier shouted.

The tree tops above them started shaking, and the 200 soldiers all raised their guns and started to fire. The sporadic firing lasted for about three minutes until the winds died down and it was silent again.

“DEATH IS YOU!” the voice of Mama Nanny shouted, as the winds started howling again, but this time not of ice, but of the bullets fired by the soldiers. The bullets hit the soldiers sending some dead to the ground while some took cover. The bullets were now accompanied by a downpour of poison darts fired from the mouths of the hidden Maroon warriors that surrounded the British soldiers. The storm of death killed a third of the soldiers and when it subsided the horn of the abeng rang out. Quao and his men rushed forward killing the remaining soldiers.

On that day the Maroons celebrated a great victory over the British soldiers without the loss of any Maroon lives. They captured the shipment of weapons and headed back to their village singing sweet songs of victory.

Back at the village they lit a large fire by which dancing, and the singing continued into the night. Jose' was honoured and named a village general for his knowledge of greatness used to capture the large shipment of weapons. They all sat and ate around the fire and Quao got up and raised his cup to Jose'. Jose' then raised his cup and saluted him saying,

"Maybe now is the right time to plan that final plantation raid."

"Yes, freedom for my brothers and sisters," Quao said, with the whole village shouting "FREEDOM!"

The following morning Ziki awoke Jose' and her team, reminding them of the importance of getting up early after a major success like that of yesterday's.

"The White Men will be in need of communicating, it will be a busy day," she said.

The four of them immediately got up and went off to the South Road, they took up their positions and waited. Just like Ziki predicted Katifa shouted from the top of the tree,

"Caravan with one driver coming really fast, he looks really scared!"

"Let's go!" Ziki shouted.

Yaki quickly rolled a large log onto the road to stop the caravan on impact. As soon as the caravan was in sight, the driver was hit by poison darts killing him causing the speeding caravan to crash into the log. Katifa jumped from the tree onto the caravan, and Yaki and Ziki both ran over. Yaki opened the door of the caravan and was greeted by several lit boxes of dynamite. With a loud explosion the three of them were sent flying. Katifa fell dead on the spot, Yaki was shaking and gaping blood until her movement stopped, and Ziki fell hitting her back and was crying in pain.

The sudden explosion caused Jose' to be extremely quick to the scene, and he was in total disbelief as he saw his teammates all laying hurt on the ground. He jumped off the horse, throwing his gun to the ground to check the bodies. Yaki and Katifa where dead but to his surprise Ziki was still alive and conscious, she was just unable to move. With tears all over her, she began to ask him about Yaki and Katifa, but before he could answer, the sound of horses coming filled the air. It was three British soldiers riding towards them and firing shots. Jose' threw Ziki across his back and ran towards his horse. He placed Ziki on its back and jumped on, powering into the forest.

The soldiers were now right behind him and he had no time to collect his weapon from off the ground. The bullets of the soldiers seemed to be getting closer and closer. Ziki whispered into Jose's ears to ride deep into the forest and he did just that. At the same moment he was turning into the forest, Ziki cried out in pain. She got shot in the shoulder and was now bleeding heavily.

She belted out tears of agony and she whispered once again

“Quashi ride into the cave ahead it the Cave of Safety. Mama Nanny always tells great tales of this cave, it will protect us; and just so you know, if I don’t make it out alive, QUASHI I LOVE YOU!”

Jose’ started crying out loud as he powered the horse forward into the cave shouting,

“HOME!”

The soldiers rode in after him, but upon their entry Jose’ could hear the soldiers screams, and their horses crying in pain as they suffered the Curse of Death from the cave.

Jose’ awoke in the hospital suffering from a painful headache. His head was completely wrapped and all his classmates and Dr. Laboda surrounded him, cheering.

“Ziki?” He asked.

“Who is Ziki?” Candice asked.

Jose’s headache slowly started fading and he realized he was back home.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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