

## New Story America

The great ball of fire rose up from behind the horizon. Illuminating the land around me. The black darkness of the night, disturbed by the orange sphere invading its territory. The stars, hiding behind the clouds, waiting to show itself in the night again. The orange sand around me brightens up, the wind whistling in my ears. I take in the view. 'Life is great' I thought. I took a deep breath, the air flowing into my nostrils relaxed me. I never knew my parents. They died when I was very young. I had to live with many families over the years. The routine is the same every day. We hunt for food, when we have too much, we sell it at the market. We all help each other out, like one big community. Apparently, we live on some block of land called Keya. The adventurers of the tribe have told many stories of white skinned men roaming around the land, puffing smoke out of their mouths like a dragon. I long to be an adventurer, all the amazing things I could find. All the fame I could get. Everyone always loves the adventurers; everyone always wants to hear their stories. No one wants to hear mine.

I closed my eyes, the light breeze whistling in my hair. The rays of sun warming up my face, greeting me. The noise of the town reaches my ears. Everyone else had woken up too. Opened my eyes and turned around at my tent. Well, it's not much of a tent. It's some cloth I wove wrapped around some sticks I scavenged for. But the view I get greeted with makes up for this. At dawn I can see the sun rise, making intricate patterns in the sky. In the night I look up and see hundreds of stars looking back at me. Two of those stars are my parents. But I can never find which ones. I stroll to my tent and enter. I locate the patterned bowl and look inside. There were only two silver coins. 'This will only last me till the afternoon.' I thought. My stomach rumbled. I grabbed the bowl and ventured down the mountain and to the town. The smell of roasted peanuts and cow greeted me. Many stalls were erect in the centre of the town. The booming voices of the shopkeepers trying to get everyone's attention. However, I ignored everyone and waked straight to my favourite breakfast stall. 'Hey Ahanu.' I said.

'What can I get for you today Ahote.'

'Please could I get my regular.' My regular was called Sofkee. Which was cornmeal, olive oil and salt mixed together in a mush. I also added honey onto it for sweetness. This usually got me through most of the day since money was tight. Ahanu served it to me. I hand him one silver coin and grinned at him. He grinned back. I sat at the table and devoured it. 'You are hungry.' Stated Ahanu. I smiled at him with my mouth full. He started laughing. I joined in too. Life was good.

I wipe my face with the back of my hand and set off to the lake to catch some fish. I was taught how to fish by an old couple I was staying with a few years ago. After that, I started to fish to get some money. This was a good way to get food too. I started my journey to the lake. I look left and right, it was eerily quiet. Normally at this time, there would me many people bustling around, living their own lives, trying to survive. However, there is no one here. I shrugged and carried on. I reach the lake and see that everything is normal. The local fisherman waved at me, I am a regular. I always come here and fish if I am short of money. I walk to my usual spot and sit down. I pick up my fishing rod that is under the seat and attach the bait to it. I then throw the hook into the water. The ripples

start to form. Bobbing the hook up and down. Then the lake goes still. I wait. Wait. Wait. Finally, I feel some tension on the rod. I pull, but it pulls back harder. I stand up and dig my feet in the ground and pull even harder. It finally gives up and I beam with pride as I caught a massive 20-inch fish. This would get me enough money to last me a month! I beam with happiness.

I look around at the surrounding fishermen, beaming at them. They all give me a thumbs up and smile back. This is the biggest fish I have ever caught. I place down my fishing rod in its spot and start to walk back to the village. I am so excited to sell this fish. On the walk back, the path is still deathly quiet. I look all around me, no one there. Not a single human. 'Where is everyone.' I thought. The wind whistled in my ear. An ominous sound. The blades of grass swaying left and right, warning me not to carry on. I look up, the clouds rolling in, blocking all the sunlight. I walk a bit more. A raindrop falls onto my face, rolls onto my crooked nose where it rests. A few more steps and I start to run. Something is wrong. I can feel it. As I run, the fish slips out of my hand. This was the least of my worries. I carry on running. I stumble. I fall to the ground. I put my hand up to my face. Blood. Ignoring the pain, I carry on running. The rain is in full force now. I run the back of my hand across my forehead. Lots of blood. I start to feel light headed. This is when I see. My town. My home. My tribe. My life. Everything has been burned to a crisp. Everything I have ever known has gone. Every. Single. Thing.

I run as fast as I can through the village, I want to see if my hut is still standing. I have to go back. As I run through the debris that is left I see the breakfast stand I was at in the morning. I glance at it and my blood runs cold. On the floor, all black and burnt is Ahanu. My good friend Ahanu. Every single day for 3 years he has been serving me breakfast. He was my best friend. Now he lays on the floor, black with soot. Dead. Never to see the light of day again. I look at his face. His eyes are wide open in shock. He looks like he had just seen a ghost. There have been many ghost stories told in this tribe. I look at him, drenched in the water from the storm. Among those droplets of water is a single tear. Flowing down my face and onto Ahanu. I look at him for the last time and close his eyes.

I start to breathe heavily. I want to run away from all of this. Run away from everything. Everything has fallen apart right before my eyes. Tears streaming down my eyes, I run as fast as my legs can take me to my home. Praying that my home is not destroyed in this inferno. Finally, I reach my house. As I turn my head up towards my house, a smile comes across my face. 'Thank God.' I think. My house was fine. I go inside and sit on my bed. My head far, far above in the clouds. I sit still for a few minutes. But the grief came in massive waves. I realise the magnitude of this situation. My whole village is burned. Everyone is dead. My friend is dead. What am I going to do? How can I fend for myself? For years, I have always relied on the goodwill of my village to help me. Now everyone has passed. It is only me by myself. All this thinking is making me drowsy. So I decide to take a nap. Even before my head touches my pillow, I fall into a troubled stupor.