

THOUGHTAUDIO



GREAT AMERICAN INDIAN STORIES

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# GREAT AMERICAN INDIAN STORIES

## THE GRAVE OF THE DOG

**T**he full moon was just clear of the high mountain ranges. Surrounded by a ring of bluish haze, it looked almost as if it were frozen against the impalpable blue-black of the reckless midwinter sky. The game scout moved slowly homeward, well wrapped in his long buffalo robe, which was securely belted to his strong loins; his quiver tightly tied to his shoulders so as not to impede his progress. It was enough to carry upon his feet two strong snowshoes; for the snow was deep and its crust too thin to bear his weight. As he emerged from the lowlands into the upper regions, he loomed up a gigantic figure against the clear, moonlit horizon. His picturesque foxskin cap with all its trimmings was incrustated with frost from the breath of his nostrils, and his lagging footfall sounded crisply. The distance he had that day covered was enough for any human endurance; yet he was neither faint nor hungry; but his feet were frozen into the spay, the snow-shoes, so that he could not run faster than an easy slip and slide.

At last he reached the much-coveted point—the crown of the last ascent; and when he smelled fire and the savory odor of the jerked buffalo meat, it well-nigh caused him to waver! But he must not fail to follow the custom of untold ages, and give the game scout's wolf call before entering camp. Accordingly, he paused upon the highest point of the ridge and uttered a cry to which the hungry cry of a real wolf would have seemed but a coyote's yelp in comparison! Then it was that the rest of the buffalo hunters knew that their game scout was returning with welcome news; for the unsuccessful scout enters the camp silently. A second time he gave the call to assure his hearers that their ears did not deceive them. The gray wolves received the news with perfect understanding. It meant food! "Woo-o-o-o! woo-o-o-o!" came from all directions, especially from the opposite ridge.

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Thus, the ghostly, cold, weird night was enlivened with the music from many wild throats. Down the gradual slope, the scout hastened; his footfall was the only sound that broke the stillness after the answers to his call had ceased. As he crossed a little ridge an immense wolf suddenly confronted him, and instead of retreating, calmly sat up and gazed steadfastly into his face.

"Welcome, welcome, friend!" the hunter spoke as he passed. In the meantime, the hunters at the temporary camp were aroused to a high pitch of excitement. Some turned their buffalo robes and put them on in such a way as to convert themselves into make-believe bison, and began to tread the snow, while others were singing the buffalo song, that their spirits might be charmed and allured within the circle of the camp-fires. The scout, too, was singing his buffalo bull song in a guttural, lowing chant as he neared the hunting camp. Within arrow-shot, he paused again, while the usual ceremonies were enacted for his reception.

This done, he was seated with the leaders in a chosen place. "It was a long run," he said, "but there were no difficulties. I found the first herd directly north of here. The second herd, a great one, is northeast, near Shell Lake. The snow is deep. The buffalo can only follow their leader in their retreat." "Hi, hi, hi!" the hunters exclaimed solemnly in token of gratitude, raising their hands heavenward and then pointing them toward the ground. "Ho, kola! one more round of the buffalo pipe, then we shall retire, to rise before daybreak for the hunt," advised one of the leaders. Silently they partook in turn of the long-stemmed pipe, and one by one, with a dignified "Ho!" departed to their teepees.

The scout betook himself to his little old buffalo teepee, which he used for winter hunting expeditions. His faithful Shunka, who had been all this time its only occupant, met him at the entrance, as dogs alone know how to welcome a lifelong friend.

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As his master entered, he stretched himself in his old-time way, from the tip of his tail to that of his tongue, and finished by curling both ends upward. "Ho, mita shunka, eat this; for you must be hungry!" So saying, the scout laid before his canine friend the last piece of his dried buffalo meat. It was the sweetest meal ever eaten by a dog, judging by his long smacking of his lips after he had swallowed it! The hunting party was soon lost in heavy slumber. Not a sound could be heard save the gnawing of the ponies upon the cottonwood bark, which was provided for them instead of hay in the wintertime. All about Shell Lake the bison were gathered in great herds.

The unmistakable signs of the sky had warned them of approaching bad weather. The moon's robe was girdled with the rainbow wampum of heaven. The very music of the snow under their feet had given them warning. On the north side of Shell Lake there were several deep gulches, which were the homes of every wanderer of the plains at such a time at this. When there was a change toward severe weather, all the four-footed people headed for this lake. Here was a heavy growth of reeds, rushes, and coarse grass, making good shelters, and also springs, which afforded water after the lake was frozen solid. Hence great numbers of the bison had gathered here.

When Wapashaw, the game scout, had rolled himself in his warm buffalo robe and was sound asleep, his faithful companion hunter, the great Esquimaux wolf dog, silently rose and again stretched himself, then stood quiet for a moment as if meditating. It was clear that he knew well what he had planned to do, but was considering how he should do it without arousing any suspicion of his movements. This is a dog's art, and the night tricks and marauding must always be the joy and secret of his life! Softly he emerged from the lodge and gave a sweeping glance around to assure him that there were none to spy upon him. Suspiciously, he sniffed the air, as if to ascertain whether there could be any danger to his sleeping master while he should be away. His purpose was still a secret.

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It may be that it was not entirely a selfish one, or merely the satisfying of his inherited traits. Having fully convinced himself of the safety of the unguarded camp, he went forth into the biting cold. The moon was now well up on the prairies of the sky. There were no cloud hills in the blue field above to conceal her from view. Her brilliant light set on fire every snow gem upon the plains and hillsides about the hunters' camp.

Up the long ascent he trotted in a northerly direction, yet not following his master's trail. He was large and formidable in strength, combining the features of his wild brothers of the plains with those of the dogs who keep company with the red men. His jet-black hair and sharp ears and nose appeared to immense advantage against the spotless and jeweled snow, until presently his own warm breath had coated him with heavy frost. After a time Shunka struck into his master's trail and followed it all the way, only taking a short cut here and there when by dog instinct he knew that a man must go around such a point to get to his destination. He met many travelers during the night, but none had dared to approach him, though some few followed at a distance, as if to discover his purpose.

At last he reached Shell Lake, and there beheld a great gathering of the herds! They stood in groups, like enormous rocks, no longer black, but white with frost. Every one of them emitted a white steam, quickly frozen into a fine snow in the air. Shunka sat upon his haunches and gazed. "Wough, this is it!" he said to himself. He had kept still when the game scout gave the wolf call, though the camp was in an uproar, and from the adjacent hills the wild hunters were equally joyous, because they understood the meaning of the unwonted noise. Yet his curiosity was not fully satisfied, and he had set out to discover the truth, and it may be to protect or serve his master in case of danger.

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At daybreak the great dog meekly entered his master's rude teepee, and found him already preparing for the prospective hunt. He was filling his inside moccasins full of buffalo hair to serve as stockings, over which he put on his large buffalo moccasins with the hair inside, and adjusted his warm leggings. He then adjusted his snowshoes and filled his quiver full of good arrows. The dog quietly lay down in a warm place, making himself as small as possible, as if to escape observation, and calmly watched his master. "Ho, ho, ho, kola! Enakanee, enakanee!" shouted the game herald. "It is always best to get the game early; then their spirits can take flight with the coming of a new day!" All had now donned their snow-shoes. There was no food left; therefore no delay to prepare breakfast. "It is very propitious for our hunt," one exclaimed; "everything is in our favor. There is a good crust on the snow, and the promise of a good clear day!"

Soon all the hunters were running in single file upon the trail of the scout, each Indian closely followed by his trusty hunting dog. In less than two hours they stood just back of the low ridge which rounded the south side of Shell Lake. The narrow strip of land between its twin divisions was literally filled with the bison. In the gulches beyond, between the dark lines of timber, there were also scattered groups; but the hunters at once saw their advantage over the herd upon the peninsula. "Hechetu, kola! This is well, friends!" exclaimed the first to speak. "These can be forced to cross the slippery ice and the mire around the springs. This will help us to get more meat. Our people are hungry, and we must kill many in order to feed them!" "Ho, ho, ho!" agreed all the hunters.

"And it is here that we can use our companion hunters best, for the shunkas will intimidate and bewilder the buffalo women," said an old man. "Ugh, he is always right! Our dogs must help us here. The meat will be theirs as well as ours," another added. "Tosh, kola! The game scout's dog is the greatest shunka of them all! He has a mind near like that of a man.

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Let him lead the attack of his fellows, while we crawl up on the opposite side and surround the buffalo upon the slippery ice and in the deceitful mire," spoke up a third. So it was agreed that the game scout and his Shunka should lead the attack of the dogs. "Woo, woo, woo!" was the hoarse signal from the throat of the game scout; but his voice was drowned by the howling and barking of the savage dogs as they made their charge. In a moment all was confusion among the buffalo. Some started this way, others that, and the great mass swayed to and fro uncertainly. A few were ready to fight, but the snow was too deep for a countercharge upon the dogs, save on the ice just in front of them, where the wind had always full sweep. There all was slippery and shining! In their excitement and confusion, the bison rushed upon this uncertain plain.

Their weight and the momentum of their rush carried them hopelessly far out, where they were again confused as to which way to go, and many were stuck in the mire which was concealed by the snow, except here and there an opening above a spring from which there issued a steaming vapor. The game scout and his valiant dog led on the force of canines with deafening war cries, and one could see black heads here and there popping from behind the embankments. As the herd finally swept toward the opposite shore, many dead were left behind. Pierced by the arrows of the hunters, they lay like black mounds upon the glassy plain.

It was a great hunt! "Once more the camp will be fed," they thought, "and this good fortune will help us to reach the spring alive!" A chant of rejoicing rang out from the opposite shore, while the game scout unsheathed his big knife and began the work which is ever the sequel of the hunt — to dress the game; although the survivors of the slaughter had scarcely disappeared behind the hills. The dogs had all run back to their respective masters, and this left the scout and his companion Shunka alone. Some were appointed to

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start a camp in a neighboring gulch among the trees, so that the hunters might bring their meat there and eat before setting out for the great camp on the Big River.

All were busily skinning and cutting up the meat into pieces convenient for carrying, when suddenly a hunter called the attention of those near him to an ominous change in the atmosphere. "There are signs of a blizzard! We must hurry into the near woods before it reaches us!" he shouted. Some heard him; others did not. Those who saw or heard passed on the signal and hurried toward the wood, where others had already arranged rude shelters and gathered piles of dry wood for fuel. Around the several camp-fires the hunters sat or stood, while slices of savory meat were broiled and eaten with a relish by the half-starved men. "Ho, kola! Eat this, friend!" said they to one another as one finished broiling a steak of the bison and offered it to his neighbor.

But the storm had now fairly enveloped them in whirling whiteness. "Woo, woo!" they called to those who had not yet reached camp. One after another answered and emerged from the blinding pall of snow. At last none were missing save the game scout and his Shunka! The hunters passed the time in eating and telling stories until a late hour, occasionally giving a united shout to guide the lost one should he chance to pass near their camp. "Fear not for our scout, friends!" finally exclaimed a leader among them. "He is a brave and experienced man. He will find a safe resting-place, and join us when the wind ceases to rage."

So they all wrapped themselves in their robes and lay down to sleep. All that night and the following day it was impossible to give succor, and the hunters felt much concern for the absent. Late in the second night the great storm subsided. "Ho, ho! Iyotanka! Rise up!" So the first hunter to awaken aroused all the others. As after every other storm, it was wonderfully still; so still that one could hear distinctly the pounding feet of the jack-rabbits coming down over the slopes to the willows for food. All dry vegetation was

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buried beneath the deep snow, and everywhere they saw this white-robed creature of the prairie coming down to the woods. Now the air was full of the wolf and coyote game call, and they were seen in great numbers upon the ice.

"See, see! the hungry wolves are dragging the carcasses away! Harken to the war cries of the scout's Shunka! Hurry, hurry!" they urged one another in chorus.

Away they ran and out upon the lake; now upon the wind-swept ice, now upon the crusted snow; running when they could, sliding when they must. There was certainly a great concourse of the wolves, whirling in frantic circles, but continually moving toward the farther end of the lake. They could hear distinctly the hoarse bark of the scout's Shunka, and occasionally the muffled war-whoop of a man, as if it came from under the ice! As they approached nearer the scene, they could hear more distinctly the voice of their friend, but still as it were from underground.

When they reached the spot to which the wolves had dragged two of the carcasses of the buffalo, Shunka was seen to stand by one of them, but at that moment, he staggered and fell. The hunters took out their knives and ripped up the frozen hide covering the abdominal cavity. It revealed a warm nest of hay and buffalo hair in which the scout lay, wrapped in his own robe! He had placed his dog in one of the carcasses and himself in another for protection from the storm; but the dog was wiser than the man, for he kept his entrance open. The man lapped the hide over and it froze solidly, shutting him securely in. When the hungry wolves came Shunka promptly extricated himself and held them off as long as he could; meanwhile, sliding and pulling, the wolves continued to drag over the slippery ice the body of the buffalo in which his master had taken refuge.

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The poor, faithful dog, with no care for his own safety, stood by his imprisoned master until the hunters came up. But it was too late, for he had received more than one mortal wound. As soon as the scout got out, with a face more anxious for another than for himself, he exclaimed, "Where is Shunka, the bravest of his tribe?"

"Ho, kola, it is so, indeed; and here he lies," replied one sadly. His master knelt by his side, gently stroking the face of the dog. "Ah, my friend; you go where all spirits live! The Great Mystery has a home for every living creature. May he permit our meeting there!" At daybreak the scout carried him up to one of the pretty round hills overlooking the lake, and built up around him walls of loose stone. Red paints were scattered over the snow, in accordance with Indian custom, and the farewell song was sung. Since that day the place has been known to the Sioux as Shunkahanakapi — the Grave of the Dog.

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## THE FAMINE

**O**n the Assiniboine River in western Manitoba there stands an old, historic trading-post, whose crumbling walls crown a high promontory in the angle formed by its junction with a tributary stream. This is Fort Ellis, a mistress of the wilderness and lodestone of savage tribes between the years 1830 and 1870. Hither at that early day, the Indians brought their buffalo robes and beaver skins to exchange for merchandise, ammunition, and the "spirit water." Among the others there presently, appeared a band of renegade Sioux — the exiles, as they called themselves — under White Lodge, whose father, Little Crow, had been a leader in the outbreak of 1862.

Now the Great War Chief was dead, and his people were prisoners or fugitives. The shrewd Scotch trader, McLeod, soon discovered that the Sioux were skilled hunters, and therefore he exerted himself to befriend them, as well as to encourage a feeling of good will between them and the Canadian tribes who were accustomed to make the old fort their summer rendezvous. Now the autumn had come, after a long summer of feasts and dances, and the three tribes broke up and dispersed as usual in various directions. White Lodge had twin daughters, very handsome, whose ears had been kept burning with the proposals of many suitors, but none had received any definite encouragement. There were one or two who would have been quite willing to forsake their own tribes and follow the exiles had they not feared too much the ridicule of the braves.

Even Angus McLeod, the trader's eldest son, had need of all his patience and caution, for he had never seen any woman he admired so much as the piquant Magaskawee, called The Swan, one of these belles of the forest. The Sioux journeyed northward, toward the Mouse River.

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They had wintered on that stream before, and it was then the feeding ground of large herds of buffalo. When it was discovered that the herds were moving westward, across the Missouri, there was no little apprehension. The shrewd medicine-man became aware of the situation, and hastened to announce his prophecy, "The Great Mystery has appeared to me in a dream! He showed me men with haggard and thin faces. I interpret this to mean a scarcity of food during the winter." The chief called his counselors together and set before them the dream of the priest, whose prophecy, he said, was already being fulfilled in part by the westward movement of the buffalo.

It was agreed that they should lay up all the dried meat they could obtain; but even for this they were too late. The storms were already at hand, and that winter was more severe than any that the old men could recall in their traditions. The braves killed all the small game for a wide circuit around the camp, but the buffalo had now crossed the river, and that country was not favorable for deer. The more enterprising young men organized hunting expeditions to various parts of the open prairie, but each time they returned with empty hands. The "Moon of Sore Eyes," or March, had come at last, and Wazeah, the God of Storm, was still angry.

Their scant provision of dried meat had held out wonderfully, but it was now all but consumed. The Sioux had but little ammunition, and the snow was still so deep that it was impossible for them to move away to any other region in search of game. The worst was feared; indeed, some of the children and feeble old people had already succumbed. White Lodge again called his men together in council, and it was determined to send a messenger to Fort Ellis to ask for relief. A young man called Face-the-Wind was chosen for his exceptional qualities of speed and endurance upon long journeys. The old medicine-man, whose shrewd prophecy had gained for him the confidence of the people, now came forward.

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He had closely observed the appearance of the messenger selected, and had taken note of the storm and distance. Accordingly he said, "My children, the Great Mystery is offended, and this is the cause of all our suffering! I see a shadow hanging over our messenger, but I will pray to the Great Spirit — perhaps he may yet save him! — Great Mystery, be thou merciful! Strengthen this young man for his journey, that he may be able to finish it and to send us aid! If we see the sun of summer again, we will offer the choicest of our meats to thee, and do thee great honor!" During this invocation, as occasionally happens in March, a loud peal of thunder was heard.

This coincidence threw the prophet almost into a frenzy, and the poor people were all of a tremble. Face-the-Wind believed that the prayer was directly answered, and though weakened by fasting and unfit for the task before him, he was encouraged to make the attempt. He set out on the following day at dawn, and on the third day staggered into the fort, looking like a specter and almost frightening the people. He was taken to McLeod's house and given good care. The poor fellow, delirious with hunger, fancied himself engaged in mortal combat with Eyah, the god of famine, who has a mouth extending from ear to ear. Wherever he goes there is famine, for he swallows all that he sees, even whole nations! The legend has it that Eyah fears nothing but the jingling of metal: so finally the dying man looked up into McLeod's face and cried: "Ring your bell in his face, Wahadah!"

The kind-hearted factor could not refuse, and as the great bell used to mark the hours of work and of meals pealed out untimely upon the frosty air, the Indian started up and in that moment breathed his last. He had given no news, and McLeod and his sons could only guess at the state of affairs upon the Mouse River. While the men were in council with her father, Magaskawee had turned over the contents of her work-bag. She had

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found a small roll of birch-bark in which she kept her porcupine quills for embroidery, and pulled the delicate layers apart.

The White Swan was not altogether the untutored Indian maiden, for she had lived in the family of a missionary in the States, and had learned both to speak and write some English. There was no ink, no pen or pencil, but with her bone awl she pressed upon the white side of the bark the following words: MR. ANGUS McLEOD: We are near the hollow rock on the Mouse River. The buffalo went away across the Missouri, and our powder and shot are gone. We are starving. Good-bye, if I don't see you again. MAGASKAWEE.

The girl entrusted this little note to her grandmother, and she in turn gave it to the messenger. But he, as we know, was unable to deliver it. "Angus, tell the boys to bury the poor fellow to-morrow. I dare say he brought us some news from White Lodge, but we have got to go to the happy hunting-grounds to get it, or wait till the exile band returns in the spring. Evidently," continued McLeod, "he fell sick on the way: or else he was starving!" This last suggestion horrified Angus. "I believe, father," he exclaimed, "that we ought to examine his bundle." A small oblong packet was brought forth from the dead man's belt and carefully unrolled. There were several pairs of moccasins, and within one of these Angus found something wrapped up nicely. He proceeded to unwind the long strings of deerskin with which it was securely tied, and brought forth a thin sheet of birch-bark.

At first, there seemed to be nothing more, but a closer scrutiny revealed the impression of the awl, and the bit of nature's parchment was brought nearer to his face, and scanned with a zeal equal to that of any student of ancient hieroglyphics. "This tells the whole story, father!" exclaimed the young man at last. "Magaskawee's note — just listen!" and

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he read it aloud. "I shall start to-morrow. We can take enough provision and ammunition on two sleds, with six dogs to each. I shall want three good men to go with me." Angus spoke with decision. "Well, we can't afford to lose our best hunters; and you might also bring home with you what furs and robes they have on hand," was his father's prudent reply.

"I don't care particularly for the skins," Angus declared; but he at once began hurried preparations for departure. In the meantime affairs grew daily more desperate in the exile village on the far-away Mouse River, and a sort of Indian hopelessness and resignation settled down upon the little community. There were few who really expected their messenger to reach the fort, or believed that even if he did so, relief would be sent in time to save them. White Lodge, the father of his people, was determined to share with them the last mouthful of food, and every morning Winona and Magaskawee went with scanty portions in their hands to those whose supply had entirely failed.

On the outskirts of the camp there dwelt an old woman with an orphan grandchild, who had been denying herself for some time in order that the child might live longer. This poor teepee the girls visited often, and one on each side they raised the exhausted woman and poured into her mouth the warm broth they had brought with them. It was on the very day Face-the-Wind reached Fort Ellis that a young hunter who had ventured further from the camp than anyone else had the luck to bring down a solitary deer with his bow and arrow. In his weakness he had reached camp very late, bearing the deer with the utmost difficulty upon his shoulders.

It was instantly separated into as many pieces as there were lodges of the famishing Sioux. These delicious morsels were hastily cooked and eagerly devoured, but among so many there was scarcely more than a mouthful to the share of each, and the brave youth

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himself did not receive enough to appease in the least his craving! On the eve of Angus' departure for the exile village, Three Stars, a devoted suitor of Winona's, accompanied by another Assiniboine brave, appeared unexpectedly at the fort. He at once asked permission to join the relief party, and they set out at daybreak. The lead-dog was the old reliable Mack, who had been in service for several seasons on winter trips. All of the white men were clad in buckskin shirts and pantaloons, with long fringes down the sides, fur caps and fur-lined moccasins.

Their guns were fastened to the long, toboggan-like sleds. The snow had thawed a little and formed an icy crust, and over this fresh snow had fallen, which a northwest wind swept over the surface like ashes after a prairie fire. The sun appeared for a little time in the morning, but it seemed as if he were cutting short his course on account of the bleak day, and had protected himself with pale rings of fire. The dogs laid back their ears, drew in their tails, and struck into their customary trot, but even old Mack looked back frequently, as if reluctant to face such a pricking and scarifying wind. The men felt the cold still more keenly, although they had taken care to cover every bit of the face except one eye, and that was completely blinded at times by the granulated snow. The sun early retreated behind a wall of cloud, and the wind moaned and wailed like a living creature in anguish.

At last they approached the creek where they had planned to camp for the night. There was nothing to be seen but a few stunted willows half buried in the drifts, but the banks of the little stream afforded some protection from the wind. "Whoa!" shouted the leader, and the dogs all stopped, sitting down on their haunches. "Come, Mack!" (with a wave of the hand), "lead your fellows down to the creek!" The old dog started down at the word, and all the rest followed. A space was quickly cleared of snow, while one man scoured the thickets in search of brush for fuel. In a few minutes the tent was up and a fire kindled

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in the center, while the floor was thickly strewn with twigs of willow, over which buffalo robes were spread.

Three Stars attended to supper, and soon in the midst of the snapping willow fire a kettle was boiling. All partook of strong tea, dried meat of buffalo, and pemmican, a mixture of pounded dried meat with wild cherries and melted fat. The dogs, to whom one-half the tent was assigned, enjoyed a hearty meal and fell into a deep sleep, lying one against another. After supper Jerry drove two sticks into the ground, one on each side of the fire, and connected the two by a third one over the blaze.

Upon this all hung their socks to dry — most of them merely square pieces of blanket cut to serve that purpose. Soon each man rolled himself in his own buffalo robe and fell asleep. All night the wind raged. The lonely teepee now and then shuddered violently, as a stronger blast than usual almost lifted it from the ground. No one stirred except from time to time one of the dogs, who got up snarling and sniffing the cold air, turned himself round several times as if on a pivot, and finally lay down for another nap. In the morning the travelers one by one raised their heads and looked through the smoke-hole, then fell back again with a grunt.

All the world appeared without form and void. Presently, however, the light of the sun was seen as if through a painted window, and by afternoon they were able to go on, the wind having partially subsided. This was only a taste of the weather encountered by the party on their unseasonable trip; but had it been ten times harder, it would never have occurred to Angus to turn back. On the third day the rescuers approached the camp of the exiles. There was an ominous quiet; no creature was to be seen; but the smoke which ascended into the air in perpendicular columns assured them that some, at least, were still

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alive. The party happened to reach first the teepee of the poor old woman who had been so faithfully ministered to by the twin sisters.

They had no longer any food to give, but they had come to build her fire, if she should have survived the night. At the very door of the lodge they heard the jingle of dog-bells, but they had not time to announce the joyful news before the men were in sight. In another minute Angus and Three Stars were beside them, holding their wasted hands.

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## THE CHIEF SOLDIER

**J**ust outside of a fine large wigwam of smoke-tanned buffalo-skins stood Tawasuota, very early upon an August morning of the year 1862. Behind the wigwam there might have been seen a thrifty patch of growing maize, whose tall, graceful stalks resembled as many warriors in dancing-dresses and tasseled headgear.

"Thanks be to the 'Great Mystery,' I have been successful in the fortunes of war! None can say that Tawasuota is a coward. I have done well; so well that our chief, Little Crow, has offered me the honored position of his chief soldier, ta akich-itah!" he said to himself with satisfaction.

The sun was just over the eastern bank of the Minnesota River, and he could distinctly see upon the level prairie the dwellings of logs, which had sprung up there during the year, since Little Crow's last treaty with the whites. "Ugh! They are taking from us our beautiful and game-teeming country!" was his thought as he gazed upon them. At that moment, out of the conical white teepee, in shape like a newborn mushroom, there burst two little frisky boys, leaping and whooping. They were clad gracefully in garments of fine deerskin, and each wore a miniature feather upon his head, marking them as children of a distinguished warrior.

They danced nimbly around their father, while he stood with all the dignity of a buck elk, viewing the landscape reddened by sunrise and the dwellers therein, the old and the new, the red and the white. He noticed that they were still unmingled; the river divided them. At last he took the dancing little embryo warriors one in either hand, and lifted them to his majestic shoulders. There he placed them in perfect poise. His haughty spirit found a

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moment's happiness in fatherhood. Suddenly Tawasuota set the two boys on the ground again, and signed to them to enter the teepee. Apparently all was quiet.

The camps and villages of the Minnesota reservation were undisturbed, so far as he could see, save by the awakening of nature; and the early risers among his people moved about in seeming security, while the smoke of their morning fires arose one by one into the blue. Still the warrior gazed steadily westward, up the river, whence his quick ear had caught the faint but ominous sound of a distant war-whoop. The ridge beyond the Wahpeton village bounded the view, and between this point and his own village were the agency buildings and the traders' stores.

The Indian's keen eye swept the horizon, and finally alighted once more upon the home of his new neighbor across the river, the flaxen-haired white man with many children, who with his white squaw and his little ones worked from sunrise to sunset, much like the beaver family. Ah! the distant war-whoop once more saluted his ear, but this time nearer and more distinct. "What! the Rice Creek band is coming in full war-paint! Can it be another Ojibway attack? Ugh, ugh! I will show their warriors again this day what it is to fight!" he exclaimed aloud. The white traders and Government employees, those of them who were up and about, heard and saw the advancing column of warriors. Yet they showed no sign of anxiety or fear.

Most of them thought that there might be some report of Ojibways coming to attack the Sioux, — a not uncommon incident, — and that those warriors were on their way to the post to replenish their powder-horns. A few of the younger men were delighted with the prospect of witnessing an Indian fight. On swept the armed band, in numbers increasing at every village. It was true that there had been a growing feeling of distrust among the Indians, because their annuities had been withheld for a long time, and the money payments had been delayed again and again. There were many in great need.

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The traders had given them credit to some extent (charging them four times the value of the article purchased), and had likewise induced Little Crow to sign over to them ninety-eight thousand dollars, the purchase-price of that part of their reservation lying north of the Minnesota, and already occupied by the whites. This act had made the chief very unpopular, and he was ready for a desperate venture to regain his influence. Certain warriors among the upper bands of Sioux had even threatened his life, but no one spoke openly of a break with the whites. When, therefore, the news came to Little Crow that some roving hunters of the Rice Creek band had killed in a brawl two families of white settlers, he saw his opportunity to show once for all to the disaffected that he had no love for the white man.

Immediately he sprang upon his white horse, and prepared to make their cause a general one among his people. Tawasuota had scarcely finished his hasty preparations for war, by painting his face and seeing to the loading of his gun, when he heard the voice of Little Crow outside his lodge. "You are now my head soldier," said the chief, "and this is your first duty. Little Six and his band have inaugurated the war against the whites. They have already wiped out two families, and are now on their way to the agency. Let my chief soldier fire the first shot. "Those Indians who have cut their hair and donned the white man's clothing may give the warning; so make haste! If you fall to-day, there is no better day on which to die, and the women of our tribe will weep proud tears for Tawasuota. I leave it with you to lead my warriors." With these words the wily chief galloped away to meet the war-party. "Here comes Little Crow, the friend of the white man!" exclaimed a warrior, as he approached. "Friends and warriors, you will learn to-day who are the friends of the white man, and none will dare again to insinuate that I have been against the interests of my own people," he replied.

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After a brief consultation with the chiefs he advised the traders, "Do not hesitate to fill the powder-horns of my warriors; they may be compelled to fight all day." Soon loud yells were heard along the road to the Indian village. "Ho, ho! Tawasuota u ye do!" (He is coming; he is coming!) shouted the warriors in chorus. The famous war-chief dismounted in silence, gun in hand, and walked directly toward the larger store.

"Friend," he exclaimed, "we may both meet the 'Great Mystery' to-day, but you must go first." There was a loud report, and the unsuspecting white man lay dead. It was James Lynd, one of the early traders, and a good friend to the Indians. No sooner had Tawasuota fired the fatal shot than every other Indian discharged his piece. Hither and thither ran the frantic people, seeking safety, but seeking it in vain. They were wholly unprepared and at the mercy of the foe. The friendly Indians, too, were taken entirely by surprise. They had often heard wild talk of revolt, but it had never had the indorsement of intelligent chiefs, or of such a number as to carry any weight to their minds.

Christian Indians rushed in every direction to save, if possible, at least the wives and children of the Government employees. Meanwhile, the new white settlements along the Minnesota River were utterly unconscious of any danger. Not a soul dreamed of the terrible calamity that each passing moment was bringing nearer and nearer. Tawasuota stepped aside, and took up his pipe. He seemed almost oblivious of what he had done. While the massacre still raged about him in all its awful cruelty, he sat smoking and trying to think collectedly, but his mind was confused, and in his secret thoughts he rebelled against Little Crow.

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It was a cowardly deed that he had been ordered to commit, he thought; for he had won his reputation solely by brave deeds in battle, and this was more like murdering one of his own tribesmen — this killing of an unarmed white man.

Up to this time the killing of a white man was not counted the deed of a warrior; it was murder. The lesser braves might now satisfy their spite against the traders to their hearts' content, but Tawasuota had been upon the best of terms with all of them. Suddenly a ringing shout was heard. The chief soldier looked up, and beheld a white man, nearly nude, leap from the roof of the larger store and alight upon the ground hard by him.

He had emptied one barrel of his gun, and, if he chose to do so, could have killed Myrick then and there; but he made no move, exclaiming, "Ho, ho! Nina iyaye!" ("Run, run!") Away sped the white man in the direction of the woods and the river. "Ah, he is swift; he will save himself," thought Tawasuota. All the Indians had now spied the fugitive; they yelled and fired at him again and again, as if they were shooting at a running deer; but he only ran faster. Just as he had reached the very edge of the sheltering timber a single shot rang out, and he fell headlong.

A loud war-whoop went up, for many believed that this was one of the men who had stolen their trust funds. Tawasuota continued to sit and smoke in the shade while the carnage and plunder that he had set on foot proceeded on all sides of him. Presently men began to form small parties to cross the river on their mission of death, but he refused to join any of them. At last, several of the older warriors came up to smoke with him. "Ho, nephew," said one of them with much gravity, "you have precipitated a dreadful calamity. This means the loss of our country, the destruction of our nation. What were you thinking of?" It was the Wahpeton chief who spoke, a blood-relation to Tawasuota. He did not at

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once reply, but filled his pipe in silence, and handed it to the man who Thus, reproached him.

It was a just rebuke; for he was a brave man, and he could have refused the request of his chief to open the massacre. At this moment it was announced that a body of white soldiers were on the march from Fort Ridgeley.

A large body of warriors set out to meet them. "Nephew, you have spilled the first blood of the white man; go, join in battle with the soldiers. They are armed; they can defend themselves," remarked the old chief, and Tawasuota replied, "Uncle, you speak truth; I have committed the act of a coward. It was not of my own will I did it; nevertheless, I have raised my weapon, and I will fight the whites as long as I live. If I am ever taken, they will first have to kill me." He arose, took up his gun, and joined the war-party. The dreadful day of massacre was almost ended.

The terrified Sioux women and children had fled up the river before the approaching troops. Long shafts of light from the setting sun painted every hill; one side red as with blood, the other dark as the shadow of death. A cloud of smoke from burning homes hung over the beautiful river. Even the permanent dwellings of the Indians were empty, and all the teepees which had dotted with their white cones the west bank of the Minnesota had disappeared. Here and there were small groups of warriors returning from their bloody work, and among them was Tawasuota. He looked long at the spot where his home had stood; but it was gone, and with it his family. Ah, the beautiful country of his ancestors! he must depart from it forever, for he knew now that the white man would occupy that land.

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Sadly he sang the spirit-song, and made his appeal to the "Great Mystery," excusing himself by the plea that what he had done had been in the path of duty. There was no glory in it for him; he could wear no eagle feather, nor could he ever recount the deed. It was dreadful to him — the thought that he had fired upon an unarmed and helpless man. The chief soldier followed the broad trail of the fleeing host, and after some hours he came upon a camp. There were no war-songs nor dances there, as was their wont after a battle, but a strange stillness reigned. Even the dogs scarcely barked at his approach; everything seemed conscious of the awful carnage of the day.

He stopped at a tent and inquired after his beautiful wife and two little sons, whom he had already trained to uphold their father's reputation, but was directed to his mother's teepee. "Ah, my son, my son, what have you done?" cried his old mother when she saw him. "Come in, come in; let us eat together once more ; for I have a foreboding that it is for the last time. Alas, what have you done?" Tawasuota silently entered the tent of his widowed mother, and his three sisters gave him the place of honor. "Mother, it is not right to blame our brother," said the eldest. "He was the chief's head soldier; and if he had disobeyed his orders, he would have been called a coward. That he could not bear."

Food was handed him, and he swallowed a few mouthfuls, and gave back the dish. "You have not yet told me where she is, and the children," he said with a deep sigh. "My son, my son, I have not, because it will give you pain. I wanted you to eat first! She has been taken away by her own mother to Faribault, among the white people. I could not persuade them to wait until you came. Her people are lovers of the whites. They have even accepted their religion," grieved the good old mother. Tawasuota's head dropped upon his chest, and he sat silent for a long time.

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The mother and three sisters were also silent, for they knew how heavy his grief must be. At last he spoke. "Mother, I am too proud to desert the tribe now and join my wife among the white people. My brother-in-law may lie in my behalf, and say that my hands are not stained with blood; but the spirits of those who died to-day would rebuke me, and the rebuke would be just. No, I must fight the whites until I die; and neither have I fought without cause; but I must see my sons once more before I go." When Tawasuota left his mother's teepee he walked fast across the circle toward the council lodge to see Little Crow. He drew his blanket closely about him, with his gun underneath. The keen eye of the wily chief detected the severe expression upon the face of his guest, and he hastened to speak first.

"There are times in the life of every great man when he must face hardship and put self aside for the good of his people. You have done well to-day!" "I care little for myself," replied Tawasuota, "but my heart is heavy to-night. My wife and two boys have been taken away among the whites by my mother-in-law. I fear for their safety, when it is known what we have done." "Ugh, that old woman is too hasty in accepting the ways of the stranger people!" exclaimed the chief. "I am now on my way to see them," declared Tawasuota. "Ugh, ugh, I shall need you to-morrow! My plan is to attack the soldiers at Fort Ridgeley with a strong force. There are not many. Then we shall attack New Ulm and other towns. We will drive them all back into Saint Paul and Fort Snelling."

Little Crow spoke with energy. "You must stay," he added, "and lead the attack either at the fort or at New Ulm." For some minutes the chief soldier sat in silence. At last he said simply, "I will do it." On the following day the attack was made, but it was unsuccessful. The whole State was now alarmed, and all the frontier settlers left alive had flocked to the larger and more protected towns. It had also developed during the day that there was a large party of Sioux who were ready to surrender, thereby showing that they had not been

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party to the massacre nor indorsed the hasty action of the tribe. At evening Tawasuota saw that there would be a long war with the whites, and that the Indians must remove their families out of danger.

The feeling against all Indians was great. Night had brought him no relief of mind, but it promised to shield him in a hazardous undertaking. He consulted no one, but set out for the distant village of Faribault. He kept to the flats back of the Minnesota, away from the well-traveled roads, and moved on at a good gait, for he realized that he had to cover a hundred miles in as few hours as possible. Every day that passed would make it more difficult for him to rejoin his family. Although he kept as far as he could from the settlements, he would come now and then upon a solitary frame house, razed to the ground by the war-parties of the day before.

The members of the ill-fated family were to be seen scattered in and about the place; and their white, upturned faces told him that his race must pay for the deed. The dog that howled pitifully over the dead was often the only survivor of the farmer's household. Occasionally Tawasuota heard at a distance the wagons of the fugitives, loaded with women and children, while armed men walked before and behind. These caravans were usually drawn by oxen and moved slowly toward some large town. When the dawn appeared in the east, the chief soldier was compelled to conceal himself in a secluded place. He rolled up in his blanket, lay down in a dry creek-bed among the red willows and immediately fell asleep. With the next evening he resumed his journey, and reached Faribault toward midnight. Even here every approach was guarded against the possibility of an Indian attack.

But there was much forest, and he knew the country well. He reconnoitred, and soon found the Indian community, but dared not approach and enter, for these Indians had

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allied themselves with the whites; they would be charged with treachery if it were known that they had received a hostile Sioux, and none were so hated by the white people as Little Crow and his war-chief. He chose a concealed position from which he might watch the movements of his wife, if she were indeed there, and had not been waylaid and slain on the journey hither. That night was the hardest one that the warrior had ever known. If he slept, it was only to dream of the war-whoop and attack; but at last, he found himself broad awake, the sun well up, and yes! There were his two little sons, playing outside their teepee as of old.

The next moment he heard the voice of his wife from the deep woods wailing for her husband! "Oh, take us, husband, take us with you! let us all die together!" she pleaded as she clung to him whom she had regarded as already dead; for she knew of the price that had been put upon his head, and that some of the half-breeds loved money better than the blood of their Indian mothers.

Tawasuota stood for a minute without speaking, while his huge frame trembled like a mighty pine beneath the thunderbolt. "No," he said at last. "I shall go, but you must remain. You are a woman, and the white people need not know that your little boys are mine. Bring them here to me this evening that I may kiss them farewell." The sun was hovering among the treetops when they met again. "Atay! atay!" ("Papa, papa!") the little fellows cried out in spite of her cautions; but the mother put her finger to her lips, and they became silent. Tawasuota took each boy in his arms, and held him close for a few moments; he smiled to them, but large tears rolled down his cheeks. Then he disappeared in the shadows, and they never saw him again.

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The chief soldier lived and died a warrior and an enemy to the white man; but one of his two sons became in after-years a minister of the Christian gospel, under the "Long-Haired Praying Man," Bishop Whipple, of Minnesota.

**THE END**