



The
Village of
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By Emily

Okay, focus. Ready, attack! Thoughts were running through Firefly's mind. Be still, and listen. There he is. Jump! Firefly was just ready to pin Monsoon down, when Master Hie shook his head. Firefly jumped up.

“Manoe, gymba majacku,” Firefly apologized, which means I'm sorry master in Ronga langue of warriors.

“That's all right, little Firefly.” Master Hie reassured Firefly. To Monsoon, he commanded, “Get up and I'm going to tell you two a story of a village.”

“Not this this story again; it's SO boring,” grumbled Monsoon.

“Shhhh, this is an important legend,” hissed Firefly. Master Hie fixed Monsoon with a deadly stare. He flinched.

Master Hie continued. “There was a village that fell on hard times. An evil Giant had attacked the village with an army. The people were dying of starvation because no one could go out of the city to trade or food. Watcha, a wise master, went to see a voodoo man in another village against strict orders. When he returned all of the local children came running.

“Master, Master, did you find an answer?” they chanted while jumping around.

“Yes, little ones. I believe I did,” After he ruffled their hair, he quickly returned to the other masters. The children stood nearby but they couldn't understand anything they said, for of course they spoke in Ronga. After a quick meeting, Watcha went

to town square where a large crowd had assembled. “Fellow people”, he stopped there and smiled, “I come with news. In 35 summers, a girl and an immature boy will be born. The girl will have a scar of a firefly by the age of 2. They will be our heroes. Watcha went on a mission 17 years ago to try and take down the monster but he never returned.” You see, Master Hie continued, after exclusive studies, I have come to conclusion that those people are YOU. Firefly just stared while Monsoon jumped around.

“You mean there was a legend written about me?!” exclaimed Monsoon too energetic to sit still. Firefly stood up.

“Master, this is what I’m hearing. We,” there she paused and pointed to Monsoon who was busy picking his nose, “are the warrior children. That means we have to cross the Desert of Death, the Plain Plains, and the Mumbling Mountains of Macaroni and Cheese to reach the Giant’s lair. Many died, but we are supposed to make it? The only man who ever made it was made prisoner and soon got his memory taken away. Right?”

Monsoon, who had been staring into space for quite some time, asked blankly, “Firefly how did you get your name? I mean I got Monsoon because ‘I cry up Monsoons’ as my mom would say. What about you??”

“Well, when I was 2, my Dad was trying to teach me how to do karate, but an army general came to our door. He had heard

about my Dad being a master, and apparently, he had done something illegal. He drew his sword and attacked. Without thinking, I jumped in front of my Dad, and placed myself in a battle position. He charged, and started to attack. I hadn't learned very many moves, but I was still pretty good. It all came naturally to me. He jabbed at me with his sword and I guess he got a lucky shot. It somehow carved a Firefly. That is how I got my name. A week later my Dad went on a trip and never returned." As Firefly finished you could see tears in her eyes.

"Whoa," Master Hie and Monsoon said in unison.

"Master Hie," questioned Firefly after she had recovered, "Do you think I have trained enough to go to the Giants lair?"

"Yes, I believe you have. You must take one other person on the Training Island to make sure you are safe. There is one thing you will have to keep in mind. There is the season of Heat coming in 3 days. If the journey takes any longer than that, you will perish from the heat," added Master Hie nervously.

"Oh oh, will you take me with you? I've always wanted to go on a dangerous mission!" chirped Monsoon clapping his hands like a 3 year old that just got a new toy. Master Hie and Firefly just stared, "What, Monsoon asked do I have any food on my face?"

Firefly was not convinced, "Seriously, you want to go? I was thinking Volcano could come with me."

“Well, I was just thinking that yah know I’m in the legend so I was thinking...I could come. Is that cool with you?” Monsoon asked.

“Monsoon is right,” confirmed the Master, “He must come. We’ll have you start the journey tonight at the shadow hour. Would you like me to tell your parents?”

“I would appreciate it if you didn’t tell my Mom,” pleaded Firefly.

“Same here. I had a hard time convincing my Mom I could walk over here by myself!... I probably shouldn’t have said that, right?” Monsoon blushed.

“Go pack. If your parents ask what you’re doing, tell them it’s for training and you might be gone for a while. It’s not too honorable but it’s for an important cause.”

Firefly ran off leaving Monsoon in the dust. Firefly crossed the bridge that separated the Training Island from the rest of the village. Firefly looked down and felt dizzy. The drop appeared down long and black. Firefly’s grandma had told her that the drop was more than 5,000 ft. When she got to her hut (they we’re a little short on money being widowed. Richer people lived in fancier houses) she ran into her room. Her purple bamboo mat was right next to her table. Firefly took her time choosing what to pack. She picked a backpack that’s **PURPLE** (what else!) and started packing. In went a flashlight, cooking pan, 3 canteens, 7 chicken legs, 7 apples, How to Survive if you are Faced with a

Challenge, a sleeping mat, and a picture of her Dad. It all went into her bag, and she walked back to the Island, making sure not to look down crossing the bridge. As she walked, Firefly noted the beautiful cherry blossoms, the crystal clear creek, and how everyone smiled when someone passed by them. Getting to the Island took longer than usual but, when she got there, Monsoon still hadn't arrived! Finally (it had only been 4 minutes) Monsoon slipped in, panting.

“Sorry, I saw my Mom on the bridge and had to go around her! I didn't want to explain why I was leaving,” finished Monsoon gasping for breath.

“You could just wait for her to pass”

“She was talking to Ms. Hudki,” explained Monsoon.

“Ick,” she groaned, “The last time I talked to her, she asked me what my favorite lipstick flavor was. I don't even know what a lipstick flavor is!?”

Master Hie walked in.

“You must leave now,” he said solemnly. The young warriors stood up, ready to begin their journey.

“Good luck. I know you will do well.”

“Doalv Master,” bowed the warriors. (“doalv” means bye in Ronga)

The twosome started out the door.

“Well I guess were off to the giant’s lair,” Monsoon was scared and excited at the same time.

“Yeah I guess we are,” Firefly sighed.

Chapter 5: The Desert of Death

“Are we walking on the face of the sun or something?” panted Monsoon.

Firefly looked up and smiled. Sweat was running from her tan face. Monsoon grinned back, showing his yellow teeth.

“We aren’t. This is the season of heat warning us. It will be here at sundown tomorrow,” answered Firefly.

“Well it feels like it’s here already,” moaned Monsoon.

“Chill! You need to relax. If you get too worked up, you’ll overheat. Literally,” said Firefly smoothly. She kept walking. Monsoon was now limping with heat and exhaustion.

“Firefly,” Monsoon whimpered, “I don’t know if I can make it any farther” and he fell to the ground.

“MONSOON!!” screamed Firefly. She thought ‘Should I give him C.P.R? No not a good idea. Master Hie gave me a D- in C.P.R. Maybe I should get him to shade. Yeah, that sounds right. But how will I get him there?’ Firefly stood there for a minute, hesitated, and picked Monsoon up. ‘This isn’t going to work,

carrying him for 10 miles.' Firefly adjusted to Monsoon on her shoulder. 'Much better. I hope nobody sees me.'

Firefly began her long hike across the Desert of Death. She had been walking for what seemed like forever, a figure appeared on the horizon.

To be continued...