

BEHIND THE SWORD



JL Snyder



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MY JOURNEY TO THIS NEW WORLD WASN'T EASY. THERE WERE MANY BATTLES. IT WAS A LONG AND HARD ROAD. BUT . . . THAT IS THE LIFE OF A WARRIOR.

I WOULDN'T CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT IT. IT MOLDED ME INTO A MAN. ONE WHO NEVER LET CHALLENGES OR OBSTACLES GET IN THE WAY OF HIS DESTINY.

To my unborn child,

I'm not sure if I'll ever meet you. I don't know if I'll ever be able to hold you, to teach you, to raise you as a father. I am a stranger in this new land. Men like me are not welcome here. Discrimination, hatred and racism run wild in this new world I live in. It is not like home. Not like Japan. But, home isn't without faults and problems either.

This is where my tale begins . . .

Kyoto

I was eighteen years old, barely a man, when I set out on my journey. My journey was to fulfill the dream of my parents. My uncle told me that it was my father's dream to take me and my mother to the New World, far east of Japan. There we would start a new life. Fate, however, had other plans for my father and mother. This story I now tell you is with the hope of teaching you about your family, heritage and the world that lies before you.

I was young, arrogant, ruthless, skilled and stubborn. The last one, an apparent family trait I inherited, according to Uncle Nobu. I am not a very big man. Average sized, if there is such a thing.

However, that is the only thing average about me. I'm slender built, chiseled, handsome and charismatic, yet fierce and courageous.

My training with the great Kido Nobunaga, my uncle, was complete. There was nothing more he could teach me. My future was unknown. I needed to experience it on my own. It was time to move on and live the life I was destined to live. But saying goodbye to the only family I had ever known wasn't easy. Uncle Nobu, is like my father and mother all rolled into one, like a giant sushi roll. Nobu was a legendary Samurai, but he is also a kindhearted man. His stories have been told to young warriors and children for decades. He is not only my sensei and friend, he is family.

The night before I was supposed to leave, I gathered my belongings and walked through the shadows of the house. Like the stealthy ninja warriors, I tried to leave quietly through the back door. This came as no surprise to Uncle Nobu. He was well aware of my intentions. Uncle Nobu had a sixth sense, one I could never explain. I always thought it was a skill he learned as a samurai warrior. But to this day, I have never been able to duplicate or acquire this trait.

Uncle Nobu left a dowry and provisions on the table for me. But, there was one thing I needed. Something no samurai could be without, a katana sword. The katana is an extension of every samurai warriors' heart and soul. Uncle Nobu gave me his sword as a gift. My katana wasn't ready yet. It wouldn't be ready for another week or so. Instead, It is the greatest gift anyone has ever given me. The katana sword, when wielded by a skilled samurai will protect his master and others from harm. I have cherished it and wielded it as a true samurai would to this very day. A true samurai like Uncle Nobu.

I REFLECT UPON MY LIFE. THE CHALLENGES,
MISFORTUNES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.



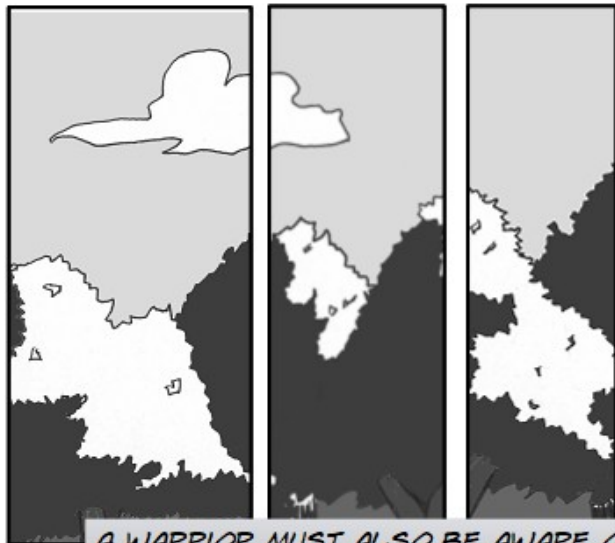
WHAT I HAVE LEARNED IN MY TRAINING AND
EXPERIENCED THROUGHOUT MY LIFE AND JOURNEY, I
NOW SHARE WITH YOU.



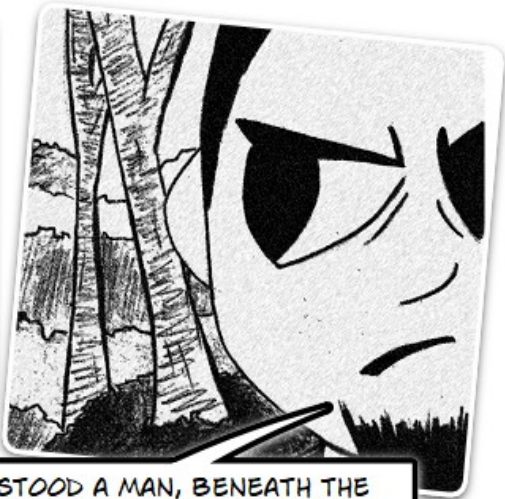
A WARRIOR MUST BE READY TO DIE AT ANYTIME. IF HE
IS WELL PREPARED, A WARRIOR PRACTICES THE
MARTIAL WAY OF LIFE. THIS IS BASED ON EXCEEDING
OTHERS IN ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING.



IN ONE ON ONE COMBAT OR BATTLING MANY, A WARRIOR MUST BE PROFICIENT AND VICTORIOUS. HE MUST PRACTICE THE SCIENCE OF MARTIAL ARTS IN A WAY THAT WILL BE ADVANTAGEOUS AT ALL TIMES.



A WARRIOR MUST ALSO BE AWARE OF THEIR SURROUNDINGS AND ENVIRONMENT AT ALL TIMES. IT IS CRUCIAL FOR THEM TO DO SO.



BEHIND ME STOOD A MAN, BENEATH THE SHADOWS OF THE FOREST WILD LIFE.

HIS BREATHING WAS SLOW. ALMOST NONEXISTENT. I SAW HIM FROM THE CORNER OF MY EYE. HE WAS MOTIONLESS. HIS HAND GRIPPED THE HANDLE OF HIS SWORD. HE COULD MOVE ON ME AT ANY MOMENT.



"RHYTHMIC, RAPID THUMPING SOUNDS BOUNCED OFF THE TREES THAT SURROUNDED ME. I RECOGNIZED THE SOUND. IT WAS VERY FAMILIAR TO ME."

THUMP!



"SCREAMING METAL RUSHED BY ME. I TILTED MY HEAD BACK."

SWOOSH!!!

"RUSTLING LEAVES BRUSHED ACROSS THE GRASS. RAIN BEGAN TO POUR DOWN."

THUNK!

"TREE BRANCHES SHATTERED INTO PIECES."



"I COULD SEE THERE WERE OTHERS
SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE FOREST."



"THE MAN IN THE HOODED CLOAK. HE BLENDED
IN OVER BY THE BUSHES TO MY LEFT. HIS
HEARTBEAT PUMPED AT A STEADY PACE. IT
BEGAN TO INCREASE AS ANTICIPATION GREW."



"THEY HAD ME
SURROUNDED."



HYAH!!!

"I LEAPT HIGH IN THE AIR, UNLEASHING MY KATANA FROM IT'S SHEATH. I AVOIDED THE SWEEPING BLADES OF TWO ASSAILANTS."



WOOSH!!!



"WITH MY EYES CLOSED, I LANDED AND TUMBLED FORWARD. I HELD MY GREAT SWORD IN ONE HAND AND CLENCHED MY FIST WITH THE OTHER."

Behind the Sword
Kyoto: The untold story
JL Snyder

Author's Note: This is a work of fiction. Names, places, characters, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, business establishments, or locales is entirely coincidental.

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