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BLOOD-STAINED SWORD™

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IN THE 12TH CENTURY, JAPAN WENT THROUGH A MAJOR GOVERNING CHANGE. THE EMPEROR WAS PUSHED ASIDE IN FAVOR OF A MILITARY RULER, THE SHOGUN.

UNDER THE SHOGUN WERE LOCAL AREA RULERS CALLED DAIMYOS WHO RETAINED HIGHLY SKILLED WARRIORS CALLED SAMURAI.

THE SAMURAI BECAME THE WARRIOR CLASS OF JAPAN AND WERE RENOWNED FOR THEIR UNPARALLELED SWORDSMANSHIP AND BY THE CODE OF HONOR TO WHICH THEY WERE BOUND, THE BUSHIDO.

BY THE MIDDLE OF THE 19TH CENTURY, THE COUNTRY LIVED IN PEACE AND THE NEED FOR THE SAMURAI DIMINISHED.

INSPIRED BY GREED AND HELPED BY WESTERN INFLUENCES, THE EMPEROR WAS RETURNED TO POWER AND MAJOR CHANGES BEGAN.

HONORABLE WARRIORS WERE TO BE REPLACED BY FACELESS SOLDIERS MADE UP FROM THE PEASANT CLASS.

THE PRIVILEGES OF THE SAMURAI WERE OFFICIALLY ABOLISHED, WITH THE FINAL INDIGNITY BEING A LAW BANNING THE WEARING OF SWORDS IN PUBLIC, THE TRADITIONAL SYMBOL OF THE SAMURAI.

AS THE 20TH CENTURY BEGAN, THE SAMURAI WERE NO MORE...

BUT THEIR LEGACY LIVES ON.

A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE STILL BELIEVE IN THE WAYS OF THE SAMURAI. THEY STILL TRAIN THEIR CHILDREN TO FOLLOW THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF BUSHIDO.



義

gi

justice, making the right decision.

勇

yu

courage, bravery tinged with heroism.

仁

jin

benevolence, universal love towards mankind.

礼

rei

respect, courtesy to your elders and superiors.

真

makoto

honesty, to be truthful at all times.



名誉

meiyo

honor, living up to one's moral beliefs.

忠義

chugi

loyalty, faithful to one's master or parents.

BUT IN A WORLD WHERE CORPORATIONS HAVE REPLACED CLANS AND GREED HAS CIRCUMVENTED HONOR, THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR ARE FAR TOO FEW.



KENJI!



YES, GRANDFATHER? AM I DOING SOMETHING WRONG?

NO, YOUR TRAINING IS FINE...

I JUST RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM SEATTLE...



YOUR FATHER IS DEAD.



HOW?

THEY SAID HE COMMITTED SEPPUKU...

HE WOULD NEVER DISHONOR HIMSELF IN SUCH A WAY TO MAKE SEPPUKU NECESSARY.

WE BOTH KNOW THAT. BUT THEY WOULD TELL ME NOTHING MORE.

YOU ARE TO GO TO SEATTLE TO CLAIM HIS BODY AND POSSESSIONS.

PERHAPS YOU CAN ALSO FIND SOME ANSWERS.



I WILL FIND THE TRUTH.

SEATTLE. TWO DAYS LATER.



I AM MATSUSHITA KENJI.

GREAT, I'M FROM HORIGOME ENTERPRISES. I'VE GOT A CAR OUTSIDE. IS THIS ALL YOUR LUGGAGE?

YES.



RIGHT THIS WAY, MR. MATSUSHITA.

PLEASE, CALL ME KENJI... AND YOU ARE?

OH, I'M SORRY, I'M ANDREA RYAN. I WAS YOUR FATHER'S SECRETARY... WELL, NOT REALLY... ONLY FOR THE LAST THREE WEEKS. YOUR FATHER'S REGULAR SECRETARY, DORIS, GOT PROMOTED AND I GOT CALLED UP FROM THE POOL TO FILL IN WHILE THEY DID INTERVIEWS.

I FIGURED I WOULD HAVE BEEN SENT BACK DOWN TO THE POOL TODAY, BUT MR. HORIGOME HIMSELF CALLED ME UP AND ASKED IF I WOULD BE YOUR GUIDE WHILE YOU'RE HERE IN SEATTLE AND I JUMPED AT THE CHANCE.

JUST BETWEEN YOU AND I, I DON'T REALLY LIKE BEING A SECRETARY. BUT IT PAYS THE BILLS, SO ANY CHANCE TO DO SOMETHING OTHER THAN TYPING OR FILING AND I'M THERE.



FORGIVE MY RUDENESS, BUT HOW DO YOU DO THAT?

WHAT?

TALK FOR SO LONG WITHOUT TAKING A BREATH?

IT'S A GIFT.