

XXIX

The Assassination Attempt

(Day 218 on Tashoo)

When everyone returned to the Atasho Vaorado, I explained why today was special. I also told them I wanted them to fight a mock battle to show them how my techniques would work. I said that Ka' Kikoo's achohachy would be on defense and everyone else would attack. I also informed them that they were to fight until one side gave up. The sign that would be given would be when every chohachy had either received a killing stroke or threw their dauanka down and lay prostrate on the ground. For the next four ahi'nu, I had them attack using different possible attack formations. When I saw a potential problem, I would stop the fighting, correct the problem and have them return to the battle. I gave them a quarter-hi'nu of rest between each battle. Finally, at the end of the day's training, I called them all together and told them how proud I was of them for their participation and willingness to allow me to show them when they were making mistakes and how to correct them.

The last thing I said was, "Everyone, the Ka'yno and the Ishoo'se Aka'ny have ordered TeRora and me to accompany the hunting party of Ka' Ky-Kikoo's Ka'na when they leave tomorrow morning. While I am gone, I expect all of you to be here on the days that we would normally train. I name the Ka' Mu-Naka to be Huovy Ka' in my absence. I trust him to train you properly because I have been training him almost as long as I have been training TeRora. Now, I would like to speak with the Aka' alone please. Everyone else is free to leave and do whatever they desire. You, too, TeRora."

"Mvilu, I would prefer to stay and wait for you."

"Very well, TeRora. However, what I wish to discuss with the Aka' is private so, if you would like, you can practice your sword moves over there." I pointed to the side of the Atasho Vaorado next to the moat, "Or you can practice walking the boards. I will not be long."

"Yes, Mvilu."

After Rora left, I said to the Aka', "I hope I am wrong, but I am concerned about the solicitousness of the Ka'yno this morning. Therefore, I would like each of you to hand pick one hundred of your best achohachy and include one Genara. If there is trouble, I will have Ka' Kikoo send his fastest chohachy to bring you to our assistance."

Looking around as he spoke, Too-Thaty said, "We will select those achohachy immediately." The rest of the Aka' nodded in agreement.

"Thank you, my friends. Now, I must stop by TaAra's home to retrieve some items before I go to Ka' Kikoo's hunting lodge."

We exchanged the sign of friendship and then Kikoo, Naka, Rora, and I went to Ara's home. When we arrived at Ara's home, I knocked on the door and entered. As I walked through the door, I didn't smell dinner being prepared. As a matter of fact, Ara was walking from the family room toward the door as I entered. Ara saw Kikoo and Naka and gave them the traditional invitation to enter.

I said, "TaAra, why are you not cooking your nakymoty?"

"TaJoola heard that I was going to be alone for a few days. So, she sent Kyta over with an invitation for me to stay with her while you and Rora are gone and I accepted. I have not spent more than two ahi'nu at TaJoola's home since Rora was born because I was so busy being a norotha to him. I believe that I will enjoy my time with her. It will also give me an opportunity to get to know Tyarza better so I can decide if she is good enough for you, Mvilu."

I just looked at Ara while everyone else laughed.

"And now that my escort is here, I will go ahead and start my visit. Perhaps while I am talking to Tyarza, I will tell her about some of your bad habits, Mvilu." She said as she took Naka's arm and left. Rora and Kikoo were laughing so hard I thought they would pass out from a lack of oxygen.

I said, "Rora, I suppose you are enjoying my predicament."

"Most assuredly, Mvilu. You always manage to get the better of me. Now I know someone who has a quicker wit than you."

"Well, while you two are enjoying yourselves, I am going to get my hunting equipment. Excuse me."

I retrieved my bow, quiver, arrows, spear, and atlatl. I walked out of my room and found Kikoo and Rora still grinning broadly. I just shook my head and walked toward the door.

"If you two chuckle heads are through laughing, we need to get to the hunting lodge." As I reached the door, I turned to them and, smiling, said, "But, you have every right to laugh at me because Rora is correct. TaAra does have a quicker wit than I do. But, so did my mother." I paused in thought for a thata before adding, "How do I remember that? I barely remember her. Well, anyway, let us go."

We left and headed to the hunting lodge. Unlike when I first entered Ka' Naka's hunting lodge, the achohachy at Kikoo's hunting lodge knew about me and accepted me. We ate dinner and, afterward, I was asked to join the achohachy in a game of Zocha. Even though I didn't win every time, I won enough that some of the achohachy got a little jealous. Rora and Katoo watched us from the side as I picked the right symbol time after time. Zocha is one of very few

games of chance I had ever been involved in that no one could cheat at. After a few rounds, I had won every wagering disk that had been passed out. I was a bit worried that the jealousy would grow into anger, but, every time I won, I received a round of claps on my back and praises of my luck. (1) The players were more than a little surprised when I told them that I had never played the game before. After I won the game, I thanked everyone for allowing me to play and joined Rora and Katoo.

After leaving the game and joining Rora, Kikoo and Katoo, I sat in a chair, closed my eyes and leaned against the wall. As I leaned against the wall, I could feel three sets of eyes staring at me. I opened my eyes and looked at the three of them. “Ye-e-es?” I said.

Katoo said, “How long have you been playing Zachos?”

“That was the first time. Why do you ask?”

Kikoo said, “What! You rarely missed with your guesses. How did you do that?”

“I am not certain, my Ka'. I just know that quite often I can see things before they happen. That is a helpful ability if you are a warrior.”

Rora said, “You had better not let Kyna know you can win at Zachos. He has rarely won.”

“I know. He played Zachos when I went on the hunting trip with Ka' Mu-Naka.”

Katoo said, “But, what do you mean that you can see things before they happen? Is that how you are such a good hunter?”

“I do not know, Ka'yna. Perhaps saying that I can see things before they happen is a bit of simplification. Let us just say that, sometimes, I have a strong feeling about something happening and it happens. I always seem to know where to go hunting and Rora and I have rarely not gotten something when we go hunting. It could be I can see things before they happen but I do not know for certain.

“Well, we have to get up early in the morning, so I am going to sleep. Sleep well and I will see all of you in the morning.”

The next morning, immediately after the nakvyv, we headed out of Talo-Vy going almost due west. I asked Ka' Kikoo why we were going this particular direction. His response was that it was suggested that we may find good hunting about 20 km in this direction. When I asked who made the suggestion, he replied he didn't know because he had received a note as his Suala Ka'ny two days before with the suggestion. This revelation made me suspicious to say the least.

Everyone was talking, mostly the achohachy; they were boasting about how well they were going to do on the hunt. Rora, Kikoo, Katoo, and I, however, were relatively quiet. I was

scanning the forest, looking for game sign, even though I knew our march to the hunting grounds would take another day. After we had walked for about five kilometers, I stopped short. As I stood there, my eyes were darting back and forth as I tried to see something that was hidden from us. My sudden stop brought everyone else to a halt as well.

Kikoo stepped over to me and asked, "What is wrong, Mvilu?"

"I am not certain, my Ka'. Something is not right; that is all I know for certain."

Katoo said, "How can you be certain?"

"Listen." Everyone got quiet. "Do you hear any animals making noise?"

Rora said, "Errr. Mvilu is correct. It is not normal for the forest to be so quiet. Could it be a dangerous animal, Mvilu?"

I thought, "I see my training in hunting is paying off as well as my sword training."

I said, "Yes, it most assuredly is a dangerous animal, TeRora, but not a four legged one. If it was a four-legged animal, animals would make some kind of noise. But, I've noticed that when hunters are about, the animals become absolutely quiet, like they're afraid the hunters will find them.

"Ka' Kikoo, who is your fastest runner?"

Kikoo thought a couple of athata before replying, "That would be Mon-Shasta. Why do you ask?"

"Send for him."

About fifteen athata later, Shasta appeared. "Yes, my Ka'?" He said to Kikoo when he arrived.

Kikoo said, "TeShasta, Mvilu wishes to speak to you."

I said, "TeShasta, I need you to run back to Talo-Vy as fast as you can. Go to the Atasho Vaorado and tell the Aka' we need their assistance as quickly as possible. They will know what you are talking about. Do you understand, TeShasta?"

"Yes, Mvilu. But, why do you need the assistance of the Aka'?"

"Because we are about to be ambushed. If the Aka' suddenly appear, the attackers may change their minds."

"Then, I should stay and assist. It would be cowardly for me to leave."

“TeShasta, you would be considered a hero if you were to save everyone's life in a battle, would you not?”

“Yes.”

“How about saving the life of the Ka'yna?”

He blinked as he suddenly remembered that Katoo was with us. Then he said, “Yes, Mvilu.”

“If you go, get the Aka' and return in time, you will save everyone's life, including the life of the Ka'yna.”

“Errr. I see your logic. Very well. I shall return as quickly as I can, Mvilu. Thank you for the honor and your trust.” Shasta turned and started running as fast as he could.

Katoo said, “Now, what do we do, Mvilu?”

“Know there is a trap is the first step in avoiding the trap. That is why I sent Shasta to bring the Aka'; however, the trap is there for a reason, so I would suggest that we continue on our way and, since we know about the trap, we should continue with our swords drawn.”

“What good will that do, Mvilu?” Kikoo asked.

“We may force them to spring the trap sooner than they intended and, consequently, catch them off guard.”

Rora said, “That is somewhat like the way we hunt.”

Smiling evilly, I replied, “Exactly, Rora. There is not a lot of difference between hunting for meat and hunting for an enemy.” I turned to Kikoo and said, “My Ka', quietly pass the word to have the achohachy draw their swords without making any more noise than is absolutely necessary.”

After the swords were drawn, we continued down the path. We walked another kilometer and came to the edge of a large clearing which covered about two and a half hectares. I had the achohachy stop and I looked around the clearing to see if I could see any enemy achohachy. When I didn't see any achohachy, I motioned the hunters to proceed.

We were in the middle of the clearing when about 500 achohachy stepped out of the surrounding forest and encircled us. The Ka' of the enemy achohachy stepped forward and said, “You are surrounded and outnumbered by more than ten to one. All we want is your Ka', the Uany and the chohachy who is called My-Rora. Everyone else is free to go.”

Katoo said, “I am the Ka'yna of Talo-Vy. The three you want are under my protection. Therefore, I command you to go and leave us in peace.”

I whispered, “That is a nice speech, Ka'yna; but, if they brought this many achohachy, they have no intention of leaving without us.”

I said out loud, “If any achohachy wish to leave, I will understand. By bringing this many achohachy against our few shows that these achohachy are cowards (2), and dishonorable. Who wishes to leave?” This little speech was a calculated risk, but I felt certain that I would have no takers. I was not disappointed because there were no achohachy who wished to leave. Also, by calling the enemy achohachy cowards, I had implied that our achohachy were heroes.

One chohachy, Kan-Shura, shouted, “Mvilu is correct. You are all cowards and dishonorable to bring such a large number of achohachy to capture two Mory and a Uany.”

The Ka' pointed his sword at me and said, “We have been told this one is capable of killing 15 achohachy of Te'ka-Jy without receiving so much as a scratch. We are no match for the achohachy of Te'ka-Jy. Therefore, we believe it is necessary to have this many achohachy to kill him.”

I asked, “If it is your intention to kill me, why do you want Ka' Kikoo and TeRora?”

“I have my orders, Uany.”

“Then, be honorable enough to allow our achohachy to reconsider their position.”

“I will grant you one-quarter of a hi'nu.”

“Thank you.”

I called the achohachy around and, once again, offered them the opportunity to leave and return with the Aka' when they arrived to avenge our deaths. None accepted. “Very well.” I unslung my bow from my shoulder and strung it. As I was doing this, I said, “Since all of you wish to stay, here is what we are going to do. I will give the command, 'Circle Up!' When you hear this command, form a circle around me and the Ka'yna.” Katoo started to protest, but I held my hand up silencing him. “Ka'yna, we have to protect you and Ka' Kikoo and TeRora know that I am the best swordsman here.”

I returned my attention to the rest of the achohachy. “When you hear me call your name, allow the chohachy you are fighting to enter the circle. Do not worry about doing so. He will not have time to think before he will be dead. When I call two names, I need the first one to step to his right and the next to step to his left. If I am lucky three of their achohachy will fall at your feet with a large dauanka sticking out of them. They may succeed in their attempts to kill Ka' Kikoo, TeRora and me, but I intend to make them pay dearly.”

I had already known that Kikoo's achohachy would stand by him; it was the honorable thing to do. I had requested the time in order to allow Shasta time to return to Talo-Vy and bring the Aka' and their achohachy.

When the Ka' of the enemy achohachy announced that our time was up, I gave the "Circle Up" command. Immediately, all thirty of our achohachy formed a circle around Katoo and me. The precision of Kikoo's achohachy had the desired effect by momentarily throwing the enemy achohachy into confusion thereby buying even more time for the Aka' Talo-Vyny and their achohachy to arrive.

During the circle up maneuver, one of Kikoo's achohachy, Mon-Shasta's brother, Mon-Shonthy, said, "Ka' Kikoo, TeRora, move to the center along with TeMvilu and the Ka'yna. They are here to kill you and out here it will be easier for them to succeed." When Kikoo and Rora started to protest, Shonthy forcibly pushed both of them back to where Katoo and I were standing.

Shonthy called over his shoulder, "Three swords are better than one to protect the Ka'yna."

Just then, the enemy achohachy attacked. While their attack was more organized than normal, it was still pretty disorganized. It was obvious to me that they had very little experience in this kind of attack. I nocked an arrow, looked around the circle to see where the fighting was heaviest and called out, "San-Choosy." He immediately turned to allow his chohachy to enter the circle. The chohachy stopped to look around, dropped his sword and clutched his chest where the shaft of one of my arrows was protruding. Once again, I looked around and called "Thar-Rycha."; once again, the enemy chohachy entered the circle; and once again, he fell dead with one of my arrows in his chest.

A total of twelve times I called names and twelve of their achohachy lay dead inside the circle. Finally, I drew my spear and atlatl. I fit the spear into the slot in the atlatl and then called out, "Ha-Kasha, Zoo-Nosha." Kasha stepped to his right and Nosha stepped to his left just as I threw the spear. Just as I had hoped, three of the enemy achohachy were lined up and the spear pinned all three of them. When the enemy achohachy saw what the spear had done, it got their attention and, once again, they paused, backed up and regrouped.

Suddenly the air was filled with the battle cry of Talo-Vy. I looked in the direction of the cry and saw over 800 achohachy wearing the vest of Talo-Vy falling on the rear guard of our attackers. At the head of the rescuers was Ka' Mu-Naka and right beside him was Mon-Shasta. When our attackers realized their predicament, they turned en mass to face Naka's forces thereby exposing their backs to us.

Kikoo's hunting party was just going to stand there due to the Mory sense of honor until I yelled, "Achohachy of Talo-Vy! Do not worry about showing honor to those who did not show it to you! Remember! They brought 500 achohachy to attack and kill only three! What kind of honor is that! Now, fall upon them and teach them to never attack achohachy of Talo-Vy again! Unless they throw down their swords and surrender, show . . . them . . . no . . . mercy!"

Upon hearing my words, the 25 of us that remained alive attacked with a ferocity that would have put a Kootona to shame. We gave the battle cry of Talo-Vy and attacked their now

exposed rear flank. Before they could react, they had lost 50 of their achohachy. Now, it was the enemy achohachy that fought for their lives. If they gave Kikoo's hunting party their full attention, then Naka and his achohachy would slaughter them from the rear. If they defended against Naka, we took advantage of their unguarded rear. Any leader worth his salt would have realized he was in a losing situation and surrendered; but, this Ka' must have thought that, even though he was outnumbered and outfought, he could still pull off a miraculous victory. He was wrong.

We fought for over a hi'nu before the enemy Ka' realized that he didn't stand a chance of winning. Of course, the fact that his force had been whittled down from 500 achohachy to barely more than 150 while we had only lost 50 achohachy may have had a lot to do with his decision. He threw down his sword and lay prostrate on the ground and was followed by his surviving achohachy. After all the achohachy prostrated themselves, Naka and I found the Ka' and, with help from Rora, we lifted him to his feet.

I drew my dagger, held it at his belly and said, "Give me a good reason that I should not slit your belly open right now."

"It would be dishonorable to kill an unarmed chohachy who has surrendered himself to you."

"Honor!? Honor!? You want to talk to me about honor when you brought over 500 achohachy to murder three achohachy! Do not talk to me about honor when your own actions and words bespeak a lack of honor!"

He reached for my arm, but I drew it away before he could do anything. He said, "I should die for failing to fulfill my mission." Then, he fell to his knees.

Naka, who had walked up during this exchange, said, "Stand up. You are a Mory chohachy and a Ka'. Mvilu is not a murderer, even with those that would murder him. If he wanted to take your life, he would return your sword to you and challenge you; however, I would not put it past him to inflict injury on you, if you do not answer his questions."

I said, "Ka' Mu-Naka is absolutely correct but, I will not just inflict injury, I will inflict insult as well. I will inflict the biggest insult a Mory chohachy can experience."

The Ka' looked fearfully from me to Naka and back before he said, "What are your questions?"

"Your name and village."

"I am called So-Lasho. I am from Taho-Na."

"Why did you try to kill the Ka' Kikoo, TeRora and me?"

“My Ka'yno ordered us to be here on this particular day because the three of you would be passing by here. He said that we were to kill the three he described as a Uany, the friend of the Uany and the Ka' of the hunting party. He said that the friend of the Uany would be close to his side at all times due to a strange quirk of Mory law that required him to protect the Uany with his own life.”

“Your achohachy deliberately avoided engaging the Ka'yna. Why is this?”

“We were warned that the Ka'yna might be accompanying the hunting party and we were not to harm him for any reason.”

“How did you know which chohachy was the Ka'yna?”

So-Lasho produced a piece of paper and said, “Our Ka'yno drew this design on this piece of paper and said that, if we saw anyone with that design on his vest, we were not to harm him.”

I took the paper, looked at the design and handed it to Katoo. It was a perfect representation of the Ka'yna symbol that the Aka' had created during our meeting creating the army of Talo-Vy several months earlier. I saw the shock and surprise on Katoo's face. The Aka', however, had anger on their faces. They knew that Nachoo had hired these achohachy to assassinate three residents of Talo-Vy and Katoo had in his hand incontrovertible proof.

I returned my attention to the captive Ka'. I asked, “How many day's march is Taho-Na from Talo-Vy?”

“It is seven days away.”

“What were you going to do with your dead?”

“What do you mean?”

“You had to expect that, no matter the outcome, some of your achohachy would be killed. You said so yourself when you said you knew I could kill fifteen achohachy of Te'ka-Jy. So, what were you going to do with your dead?”

“Take them with us. It is the way we do things.”

“Uh-huh.” I said in an unbelieving voice. “I believe you are attempting to deceive us.”

“Why would I deceive you?”

“Why indeed. I know that in just three or four days a dead body starts smelling badly. The bad smell would attract scavengers and you would have to fight all the way back to your village, losing even more achohachy to the scavengers. Besides,” I quickly snatched a tool from his Etyma Jivekoo waist band that looked suspiciously like a shovel. “This looks like something for digging a large hole. You were planning on burying your dead. Were you not?”

Everyone, including his own achohachy, looked at him in disbelief. Burying anyone, especially achohachy, is considered one of the greatest physical insults you can heap upon them. By doing that, you are telling that chohachy that he is not good enough to be place in the Tree of the Dead, let alone the Tree of the Dead Achohachy. As a matter of fact, the Mory equivalent of a slap in the face is to throw dirt into someone's face. This act is quite often done if a chohachy has shown cowardice during a battle or if a nohachy wants to let a chohachy how little interest she has in mating with him.

I continued, “The way I see it you have two options. You can carry your dead home to place into your Trees of the Dead Achohachy or you can bury them right here in this large clearing. However, from the looks on your achohachyny faces, I doubt your second option would make you very popular with them. So, which do you wish to do?”

After swallowing hard, Ka' So-Lasho said, “Perhaps I could impose upon you and your achohachy to consider a third option?”

“And that is?”

“You have plenty of achohachy still alive and your village is less than ten kilometers away. Perhaps, you could take my dead achohachy and place them into your Trees of the Dead Achohachy.”

Katoo said, “Are you kidding?! You and your achohachy acted completely dishonorably and you wish us to foul our Trees of the Dead Achohachy with your achohachy? Why would you want us to pollute our Trees of the Dead Achohachy with your dishonorable achohachy?”

Looking at me, Ka' Lasho said, “Please, Uany. You seem to have influence with the achohachy of Talo-Vy. Please consider my request.”

I thought for a few athata before I replied by saying, “I still refuse to pollute our Trees of the Dead Achohachy with your achohachy. However, if there is no law against it, we will take your achohachy and place them into our Trees of the Dead.” I turned to Naka and said, “Ka' Mu-Naka, it is against Mory law to do as I suggested?”

Naka ran the Mory laws through his mind quickly and then he said, “There is no law specifically against such a suggestion, but there is also no law that specifically allows it. Since we are required to allow something that isn't specifically outlawed, then, we can follow your suggestion, Mvilu.” Naka turned to our remaining achohachy and said, “I need enough of you to pick up one of their dead achohachy and return to Talo-Vy with him. Take that chohachy to one of the Trees of the Dead and place him in it. I also need enough of you to pick up our dead and take them to one of the Trees of the Dead Achohachy and place him into it.”

When the dead bodies were taken away, Naka turned back to me and said, “Mvilu, what you asked has been done. Now, what do we do with these—achohachy?”

“I believe we should allow them to return to their village. I also believe that Ka' So-Lasho should tell his Ka'yno what happens when they attempt to assassinate residents of other villages, especially Talo-Vy.”

Naka said, “That is a good idea, Mvilu. Lasho, come here.” Lasho arose and walked to Naka. “You will swear to me that you will give your Ka'yno the message that Mvilu has said you should give. Swear!”

Lasho ducked his head in defeat and said, “I swear. My Ka'yno will receive the message that has been given to me.”

Naka said, “Good. Now, all of you, leave Talo-Vy's territory and never return!” Naka's commanding voice made me think that he would make a great Ka'yno.

Ka' So-Lasho called his achohachy and, after retrieving his shovel from me, placed his right hand on my right shoulder. Then, the surviving achohachy of Talo-Na left and headed back home minus almost 350 achohachy. After they left, Ka' Kikoo and the rest of his hunting party joined Ka' Naka and the achohachy of Talo-Vy and started walking home. As we walked, everyone was quietly thinking. The Aka' were seething at the revelations that Ka' So-Lasho had made.

As we walked, I noticed Mon-Shasta looking at each chohachy and calling out a name. “Mon-Shasta,” I said, “Who are you looking for?”

“I am seeking my brother, Mon-Shonthy. Have you seen him?”

“I know he forced Ka' Kikoo and TeRora into the center of our defensive circle early in the battle, but, I have not seen him since.”

Several athaloo later, I heard Shasta starting to wail. It sounded almost like a caterwaul only much more drawn out. I ran to where he was and I saw something I had never seen before. Shasta was actually crying tears of sadness. When I asked him what was wrong, all he did was point to one of the bodies that our achohachy was carrying. I walked over lifted the head and saw Shonthy's face.

“I am sorry for your loss, Mon-Shasta. If it is any consolation, he fought well and defended the Ka'yna with his life. He was a good chohachy and he died well.”

“I thank you, TeMvilu. Hearing that from you makes my loss that much easier to bear. We were born in Talo-Vy and we were supposed to leave in two months. Now, I will have to leave alone.”

“Perhaps not, Mon-Shasta. Remember, you did protect the life of the Ka'yna by retrieving the achohachy that the Aka' had gathered just in case.”

“It would most definitely make my norotha happy, if I could stay. She is old and has no one to take care of her.”

“Perhaps the Ka'yna and the Aka' will tell the Ka'yno of your brave actions and how they saved the life of the Ka'yna. I will pray to the Great Being that they do.”

“I thank you, TeMvilu.” I walked away to allow Shasta to grieve in his own way. I did notice that he walked close to his brother's side and was speaking quietly to the body.

As we walked, Naka said to me, “Mvilu, it looks like the Aka' have a reason to remove Lo-Nachoo as Ka'yno. Does that not make you happy?”

“No, my Ka'. It does not.”

“What? Why not? He attempted to have you, Rora and Ka' Kikoo assassinated. That gives the Ishoo'se Aka'ny the right to remove him from being Ka'yno.”

“Ka' Naka, would you condemn the chorothy of a chohachy who committed forced mating to fight for his life as well?”

“No. Of course not. He did nothing wrong.”

“Then, answer me this. What happens to the Ka'yna if the Ka'yno is removed?”

Naka thought the laws over before he said, “The Ka'yna would be removed as well.”

“And, is not the Ka'yno and Ka'yna required to leave the village with a penalty of death upon their heads should they ever return?”

“Yes, they are.”

“Do you dislike the Ka'yna?”

“No. He is a good chohachy. I am proud to call him a ju'ra (3). He treats everyone he meets as an equal, even the slaves, both Uany and Mory.”

“Then, why do you wish to remove him from his position and banish him from Talo-Vy? I would rather have a Kootona roaming the village where I know where he is than to meet one in the forest unexpectedly. Would you not agree with this?”

“Errr. You have a point.”

“Besides, who knows what the future holds. Perhaps someone will challenge the Ka'yno and defeat him.”

“That is a tall order, Mvilu. After all, every chohachy that has ever challenged him has had some misfortune happen to him during the fight.”

“I think that we should leave the Ka'yno alone and let him hang himself. Sooner or later, he will make a mistake that will allow the Ka'yna to remain in Talo-Vy.”

“I hope so, for your sake, Mvilu.”

As a group, we took all the dead achohachy to the numerous Trees of the Dead throughout Talo-Vy and “buried” them. After we deposited the achohachy of Taho-Na, we took our dead to the Trees of the Dead Achohachy of their Ka'na. (4) Ka' Naka spoke a few words over each body as we slid them into the trees. He never said anything negative about the achohachy of Taho-Na, although he did say that they were merely following the orders of their Ka'yno and he implied that the Ka'yno wasn't honorable because he attempted to assassinate three achohachy of Talo-Vy.

After we oversaw the “burying” of the achohachy, Naka, Rora and I made our way to Joola's home. Everyone there was more than a little shocked to see Rora and me so soon but, that shock was nothing compared to the concern they felt when they saw all three of us covered in blood. Ara and Kyta rushed up to Rora; Tyarza ran to me; and Joola went to Naka. The three of us were forced to sit at the dining table while the four of them made certain we didn't have any severe injuries. Our clothing and, to a certain extent, bodies were examined. Water and soap was brought out and the exposed parts of our bodies were cleaned to further verify the lack of severe injuries.

As we were being cleaned up, Joola said, “What happened to you?”

Naka said, “After our meeting with the Ka'yno yesterday, Mvilu was concerned because the Ka'yno was being so solicitous towards him. So, Mvilu suggested that the Aka' select 100 achohachy to be ready in case they were needed to defend Kikoo's hunting party.”

Rora said, “This morning, as we walked toward the hunting grounds, Mvilu noticed that there no animal sounds. He had one of Ka' Kikoo's achohachy return to the village and bring the Aka' and the achohachy. The rest of us continued on. When we reached the center of a large clearing, over 500 achohachy stepped out of the forest and surrounded us. Their Ka' demanded that Ka' Kikoo, Mvilu and I be turned over to them so we could be killed. Mvilu said he would not consider anyone who wished to leave a coward. He said the chances of success were slim, but no one even considered leaving. When the enemy achohachy attacked, Mvilu killed fifteen by throwing his adauanka at them. By that time, Ka' Mu-Naka arrived with over 800 achohachy and fell upon the rear guard of the enemy. Ka' Kikoo's achohachy were not going to join because of the Mory Code of Honor until Mvilu reminded them that the enemy achohachy had shown no honor in planning to assassinate three achohachy of Talo-Vy. In less than a hi'nu, between Ka' Kikoo's hunting party on one side and Ka' Naka and the achohachy of Talo-Vy on the other, they

had lost more than two out of three of their achohachy. I do not know for certain, but I would guess that Mvilu accounted for over 50 of their achohachy by himself.”

Everyone looked at me and I replied, “I think Rora is exaggerating. I know I took out the first fifteen that he described, but, I do not believe I killed another 35 with my sword. OW!” I had reacted to Tyarza putting Voocha cream on one of the sword cuts I had received.

She said, “Rothoo.” (5) Everyone laughed at the descriptive, even me.

“Well, it stung.” I replied, causing even more laughter.

Ara, Rora, Naka and I stayed and partook of dinner with Joola and her family. After dinner, we visited a short while longer. During this visit, Naka took me aside and asked me if I was certain that we should ignore what the Ka'yno had done. When I reminded him of what he said would happen to Katoo if we did, he relented.

“We have a saying where I am from. It goes, 'Do not throw the rothoo out with the bath water.’”

Naka looked at me strangely, so I explained, “It means do not get rid of the good along with the bad.”

“Ah, I understand.”

“We have another saying, 'What goes around, comes around.’” He gave me another strange look. I explained, “It means, that every evil you perpetrate, will return to haunt you.”

“I understand. So, you are saying that the Ka'yno will receive a just reward for attempting to have you, Rora and Ka' Kikoo assassinated?”

“Exactly.”

Naka nodded his head slightly with a slightly malevolent smile on his face. Then, he turned and walked back to where Joola was standing with Ara. I walked over and joined the “arothoo”.

About a quarter-hi'nu before sunset, we left and headed home. As I was going out the door, Tyarza caught my arm, turned me around and gave me a hug and a kiss. Then she whispered into my ear, “You are my hero, Mvilu. Please forget what I said on the day we met. At that time, I did not know what kind of chohachy you were. Now I know.”

After several athata, she stepped back from me, smiled flirtatiously, turned, and practically ran to her room. I looked around and saw everyone staring at me. “I didn't do anything.” I said. “She just called me her hero.” Now, feeling a bit of embarrassment myself, I

turned and, after saying a quick “Good night” to Naka, quickly caught up with Ara and Rora. As we walked along, I was thinking that mental revenge was the best kind. Nachoo would be wondering if, and when, Katoo, Kikoo, Rora and I would reveal what we learned from Ka' So-Lasho. I was hoping that Katoo would keep his knowledge to himself.

1-The great thing about the Mory is that jealousy is an emotion that very few of them experience. As a matter of fact, Mory achohachy tend to ostracize any of their number who even remotely exhibits jealousy. The desire to be a part of the group is so strong in the Mory that, in the past, some villagers have died of loneliness after being ostracized for exhibiting what they consider negative actions.

2-Calling a Mory chohachy a coward is one of the biggest insults you can give him.

3-friend

4-Each Ka'na has at least one such tree.

5-Tyarza was calling me a baby. Rothoo is the generic word for cub/baby.