

The Last of the Mohicans

by James Fenimore Cooper

(Adapted book. Intermediate level)

Chapter 1. The Expedition

Perhaps no other part of the North American wilderness was so difficult to conquer as the area along the Hudson River to the Canadian border. Thick, green forests, with every kind of tree, animal and bird covered the entire region. Numerous lakes and hundreds of rivers and streams formed a labyrinth. Tall waterfalls, high cliffs and hidden caves completed the natural landscape, Snowy winters and hot, humid summers were the typical climate.

It was difficult for the early colonists to settle in this area. It was even more difficult for soldiers to fight a war here. Only the Indians of the different tribes moved quickly and safely in this region.

It had been their home for centuries.

In 1754 the French and Indian War began in this region. In July 1757 Fort Henry was a small Anglo-American fort under the command of General Munro. General Munro's Indian scouts had reported to him that the enemy, the French and the Huron Indians, was numerous. Therefore he asked General Webb, commander of the larger Fort Edward, to send him more soldiers.

General Webb immediately sent a group of soldiers to General Munro. General Webb then asked young Major Heyward to accompany General Munro's two daughters to see their father. Cora Munro, a beautiful young woman with dark hair and dark eyes, was the oldest. Alice Munro, a delicate adolescent with fair hair and blue eyes, was the youngest.

Major Heyward's Indian guide, Magua, led the expedition through the forest. Magua was a tall, young Indian. His strong, muscular body moved like that of a cat - lightly, silently and quickly.

Magua walked ahead, following a secret path, while the others followed close behind. Alice and Cora rode two Narraganset horses. These horses were the most secure for riding in rough country and in forests. Magua moved with ease through the dense vegetation.

Shortly after leaving Fort Edward, the group met a young white man who was also going to Fort Henry. He was a preacher and a singing teacher of religious hymns. He carried a prayer book and a pipe with him. His name was David Gamut.

As they crossed the forest, Alice Munro said to Major Heyward, "I don't trust the eyes of the Indian guide Magua."

Major Heyward replied, "Magua is a friend. He is the only one who knows the secret way through this dangerous forest."

"I still don't like his eyes," Alice insisted.

Chapter 2. Hawkeye and the Mohicans

That afternoon, after having traveled for many miles, Magua stopped and said, "I can't go on. I've lost the way!"

"What do you mean, Magua?" Major Heyward asked, very perplexed.

Magua's cold eyes looked at Major Heyward, but he didn't speak.

"Are we lost? What can we possibly do at this late hour? Who can we ask for help?" Major Heyward said, looking very worried.

Suddenly, he heard a noise in the forest. It was the noise of footsteps. Three men walked out of the dark forest into a small, grassy area. One of them was an American frontier scout called Hawkeye. He wore the typical clothes of the scout: a green hunting shirt, a summer cap of animal skins, buckskin pants and Indian moccasins. In his belt, he had a hunting knife, a pouch and a powder horn. He carried a long hunting rifle.

The other two men were Mohican Indians, the old chief Chingachgook and his handsome son. Uncas. They were good friends of

Hawkeye. The two Mohicans had joined the Anglo-American forces at the start of the French and Indian War in 1754. They wanted to fight their old enemies, the French and the Huron Indians.

The two Mohicans, father and son, were the last survivors of their tribe. The Mohicans had been one of the greatest and strongest tribes of North America. After years of wars, illness and white settlement, thousands of Mohicans died. Chingachgook and Uncas were the last pure-blooded Mohicans!

Major Heyward was glad to see an American frontier scout. He immediately told Hawkeye that they were lost, and that they wanted to go to Fort Henry.

The scout was surprised and said, "It would be easier for you to go to Fort Edward, it's closer."

"What! Closer!" exclaimed Major Heyward. "But we left Fort Edward this morning with our Indian guide."

"You have an Indian guide who got lost in the forest - how strange!" Hawkeye said, shaking his head. "Indians here know every deer-path and every stream of the forest. What tribe does your guide belong to?"

"He is a Huron," Major Heyward replied.

"Your guide is a Huron! But the Hurons are our enemy. They cannot be trusted."

"Our guide, Magua, was born farther north in Huron country. But later he was adopted by the Mohawks. He is now a Mohawk and serves with our armies as a friend and guide."

"No! He's a Huron by birth. They are a dangerous race. They steal. They kill! You can never trust them. He was probably leading you into a deadly trap, right here in the forest. The Delawares and the Mohicans are the only honest tribes that you can trust. They have been great warriors for centuries," said Hawkeye.

“It is getting dark and we need to find our way to Fort Henry. This is dangerous territory. Can you lead us, Hawkeye?” Major Heyward asked.

“Yes, I can lead you to Fort Henry. But first, we must capture your Huron guide, Magua, and make him a prisoner. Listen to my plan. You talk to him, while my friends Chingachgook and Uncas grab him from behind.”

Major Heyward walked over to Magua and began talking to him. Magua, however, heard noises behind him and quickly escaped before the Mohicans could capture him.

Chapter 3. In the Cave

Magua escaped into the forest and was nowhere to be found. It was almost I nightfall. At this northern latitude of 42°, the night follows the day very quickly.

Hawkeye and the two Mohicans would accompany the group to Fort Henry early the next morning.

“We must find a place for the night that is safe and well hidden. The trip to Fort Henry is a long one, and there are enemy Indians everywhere,” Hawkeye said. “If I remember correctly, there is a secret hiding place nearby. We must move silently, and you must promise to keep this hiding place a secret.”

Everyone agreed and Hawkeye led them to the river. They left their horses behind and got into a canoe at the river bank. They went up the river to a small island near a tall waterfall. Behind the noisy waterfall there was a cave, which was their hiding place for the night. There were waterfalls on both sides of the cave.

It was time for the evening meal. Everyone was tired and hungry, but very thankful for a safe resting place. Uncas, the young Mohican, served the meal of venison and water to the two sisters. This attention to the girls was unusual because Mohican warriors never serve women.

Uncas sat next to Cora. His eyes smiled at her. He spoke a few words of English, and she was happy to talk to him. They were able to understand each other, and they enjoyed being together.

Major Heyward ate his meal next to Alice. They talked about a lot of things and laughed together. Major Heyward liked Alice and her gentle, innocent ways.

After the small meal David Gamut, the preacher, opened his hymn book and began to play his pipe. Alice and Cora sang some church hymns, while everyone listened sleepily.

Chapter 4. The Huron Attack

Hawkeye and the Mohicans kept watch, while the others slept. Their sleep was interrupted in the middle of the night by the screaming of the horses. There were wolves nearby and they were howling loudly. But suddenly the howling stopped.

Hawkeye was worried and said, "The Huron Indians are in the area. They know where we are. The ladies can rest a little longer, but we must be ready to leave the cave before dawn."

Cora and Alice looked at each other helplessly. Cora said, "If only we had not asked to visit our father at Fort Henry! We have put the lives of these men in danger. I feel responsible."

Major Heyward replied, "No. Cora. You are not responsible for this. We are soldiers and there is a war. It is our duty to accompany you safely to your father."

Just before dawn, as the group was getting ready to leave, the Hurons attacked them from the river bank. The screams and shouts of the Hurons were wild and frightening. Major Heyward and the other men fought bravely. David Gamut was wounded.

With the first morning light, Hawkeye saw that four Hurons had swum to the island. He and Uncas shot two of them. The other two reached the island, and Hawkeye and Major Heyward fought hand-to-

hand with them. Hawkeye killed one Huron, and Major Heyward had a terrible fight with the other. Heyward was almost thrown off a cliff, but Uncas saved his life.

Major Heyward looked at Uncas with gratitude and respect. Then he said, “Uncas, you have saved my life and I will never forget this. I have a debt with you, my friend.”

Uncas offered his hand to Major Heyward. They shook hands and exchanged looks of friendship and understanding.

Hawkeye smiled and said, “Uncas has already saved my life five times!”

Chapter 5. Le Renard

The fighting went on for some time. The war cries of the Hurons filled the air. Hawkeye shot several Hurons with his long hunting rifle. The Indians called his rifle “La Longue Carabine” because it never missed a shot. The army used short rifles, but the scouts were also hunters. Therefore, they used long rifles which were very accurate.

Hawkeye ran out of gun powder, and he asked Uncas to go to the canoe to get some. Uncas went to the canoe, but to his great disappointment, he saw the Hurons pulling the canoe down the river!

They were stranded on that small island, without ammunition and without a canoe. The only possible solution was for Hawkeye and the Mohicans to swim up the river, and get help from General Munro. It was decided that Major Heyward would stay to protect the girls and the wounded preacher, David Gamut.

Hawkeye and Chingachgook jumped into the river and began swimming. But Uncas stood near Cora and looked at her.

“Your friends are already in the river; isn’t it time for you to follow?” Cora asked.

“Uncas will stay to protect you,” the young Mohican said.

“Oh, no, generous warrior! Go to my father as my confidential messenger.

Tell him to trust you. Tell him to free us! This is my wish, Uncas.”

The calm, warm look of the young warrior changed to sadness. But he obeyed. With a fast step, he crossed the rocks and jumped into the river. He, Chingachgook and Hawkeye swam away quietly.

They hoped to return to the island to rescue their friends soon. Little did they know of the bad luck that was to follow.

Soon after their departure, the Hurons came onto the island! They began to search everywhere. First, they found the rifles that had been left behind. They immediately recognized Hawkeye’s long rifle, and shouted in French, “La Longue Carabine! La Longue Carabine!” Several Hurons stood around the long hunting rifle and looked at it in amazement. They knew that the owner of the rifle was an extraordinary shot.

Major Heyward, David and the girls were hiding silently in the cave. They heard the shouts of the Hurons coming closer. They sat and waited. Cora embraced Alice, who was terrified.

Before long they were discovered by the Hurons. Magua was their triumphant leader! He had betrayed them all.

“‘Le Renard’ is my French name, and I am truly clever and cunning like a fox,” said Magua, his eyes shining with satisfaction. “Now you are all prisoners of ‘Le Renard’,” he laughed.

He took the girls, Major Heyward and David Gamut prisoners. But he had really wanted to capture Hawkeye and the Mohicans.

Magua and the Huron Indians took their prisoners across the river. Then Magua and five warriors went south with the prisoners. The other Hurons went back to the French army camp.

Chapter 6. Magua’s Revenge

Magua led his prisoners through the forest. Late that afternoon, they climbed up a steep hill and made their camp for the night.

Magua went to Cora, put his arm on hers and said, "Listen, you are the daughter of General Munro. You don't know what your father did to me."

Cora looked at him calmly and tried to hide her fear.

"I was born a chief and a warrior among the Red Hurons of the lakes. For twenty summers and twenty winters, I had never seen a white man. I was happy in my tribe.

"Then the white men from Canada came to the forest and taught me to drink firewater. It made me crazy and bad. My tribe sent me away. I lived alone in the forest until the Mohawks took me with them. I then became a Mohawk warrior.

"The white men have driven the redskins from their hunting grounds. Old General Munro, your father, was the great captain of our war party. Everyone did what he said.

"He made a law that if an Indian drinks firewater, he will be punished. I foolishly opened my mouth and drank firewater. Your father discovered me and had me whipped like a dog in front of everyone! Look at these marks on my back! The spirit of a Huron never forgets."

Cora looked nervously at Magua and asked, "Why are you telling me this?"

"Because I want revenge! I want you to live in my wigwam. I want you to serve me. I want you to be my wife. Then your father will live in torment. This is my revenge. If you become my wife, your sister Alice can return to her father."

Cora stepped back in disgust and said, "You want to live with a wife who doesn't love you, and who doesn't belong to your people? It would be smarter to take the rich reward General Munro will give you if you return his two daughters."

“No, the daughter of Munro must get my water, work in my fields and cook my food. Your father’s body will sleep among his cannons, but his heart will lie near my knife - THIS IS MY REVENGE!”

Cora was shocked. “I will never be your wife. I would rather die. You are a monster!” she shouted, running away.

Magua was furious. He watched Cora as she ran towards the other prisoners. “Then die!” he screamed, as he threw his tomahawk at the two sisters. It hit a tree above Alice’s head. She was petrified. As Major Heyward tried to comfort her, another Huron attacked him. The Indian wanted to kill the major with a knife. At that instant, a shot from a rifle killed the Indian.

Hawkeye and the Mohicans had returned! They attacked the Hurons by surprise. They were able to kill them all, except for Magua, who escaped.

Chapter 7. Fort Henry

The group was again together. Cora embraced her frightened sister, and Uncas helped them both. After a while, they began their trip to Fort Henry. When it was too dark to travel in the forest, they decided to spend the night in an abandoned hut. Chingachgook stood guard while the others slept.

Early the next morning, they continued their trip. To avoid leaving their footprints, they walked barefoot along the stream. Then they climbed a hill, from where they could finally see Fort Henry. What a spectacle they saw! The fort was surrounded by General Montcalm’s French and Indian forces. How could they possibly reach the fort?

At this time, Nature became a precious friend. A thick blanket of fog was quickly coming down the lake towards Fort Henry. The fog would hide them as they reached the fort.

Hawkeye led the group carefully through General Montcalm's forces. They were so close to the enemy that they could hear them speaking French and Huron.

Suddenly, they heard a man's voice speaking English. It was General Munro, the girls' father! The fort was next to them. Alice called out, "Father, father! It is I! Alice! Save your daughters!"

He immediately recognized his younger daughter's voice and he ordered his soldiers to open the gates. Tears ran down his pale cheeks as he exclaimed, "For this I thank you, God!"

General Munro was delighted to see his daughters. Cora and Alice were overjoyed to be with their father. He was their only living relative. They had so many things to tell each other. The group was finally able to eat a good meal and to sleep in safety.

However, the military situation at Fort Henry was critical. General Montcalm's forces were much more numerous than General Munro's.

General Munro couldn't understand why General Webb was not helping him. He decided to send Hawkeye to Fort Edward to ask General Webb for help.

Hawkeye returned after a few days and said, "I was able to talk to General Webb, and I explained the desperate situation at our fort. He wrote you an important letter, General, which I carried in my pouch. But on my way here, I was captured by the French and they took the letter. I bring a message from General Montcalm: he wishes to meet you."

General Munro had no choice. He was surrounded by the enemy, he had little food and he had few soldiers to defend the fort. He decided to accept the French general's invitation.

Chapter 8. General Munro's Story

General Munro called Major Heyward to his office and said, “General Montcalm wants to meet me, and I have decided to accept. Since you speak French, will you come with me to this meeting?”

“It will be a pleasure, General,” Major Heyward replied. Then with great hesitation, Heyward said, “General Munro, I have something very important to ask you.”

“Speak up, young man!”

“With your permission, I would like to marry your daughter Alice, sir.”

“My daughter, Alice!” exclaimed the General. “You want to unite our two families? But do you know the sad story of our family? You should know it before you make such a decision. Sit down and let me tell you.

“When I was a young man like you, I lived in Scotland. I was poor, although my family was honorable. I loved and wanted to marry Alice Graham, the only child of a wealthy land owner. I couldn’t marry her because I was poor.

“Therefore, I joined the army of the King and traveled to the West Indies. There I met a beautiful young girl, who became my wife. She was the daughter of a gentleman of those islands. Her mother, though, was a slave and servant. I didn’t care about this. I was proud to marry her. She then became Cora’s mother.

“Some people consider these people of the West Indies inferior to us. You certainly know this. When Cora’s mother died, I was heartbroken. I returned to Scotland with little Cora. After twenty long years, I again met Alice Graham, my first love. She had waited for me to return! We got married and Alice was born. Unfortunately, she died shortly after Alice’s birth. Cora has been like a mother to Alice. Now you know the truth.”

“What a touching story!” said Major Heyward, with tears in his eyes.

After a moment of silence, General Munro asked, “Do you still want to mix your family blood with mine? Do you still want to call me father?”

“Nothing in the world can change my love for Alice - nothing. Yes, I wish to marry her!” Heyward answered with determination.

Chapter 9. August 9th, 1757

General Munro, the major and a few other soldiers were ready to leave the fort to meet General Montcalm. A soldier carrying a peace flag left the fort before them to announce the arrival of General Munro.

General Montcalm was in his tent. There were French soldiers and Indians everywhere. Magua was there too. Montcalm received his Anglo-American guests with respect. He spoke French and Major Heyward translated everything into English. The French general seemed sincere. He told Munro that the Anglo-American position was very weak, and that there was no hope.

He showed Munro the letter that General Webb had written to him.

Munro read the letter several times. Webb wrote that he could not help him in any way. He advised Munro to surrender.

Montcalm admired Munro’s courage and honesty. He respected Munro’s long years of service in the King’s army.

He offered Munro and his forces these generous surrender terms: the Anglo-Americans must leave Fort Henry, but they could keep their lives, their flag, their weapons, and their honor as soldiers.

As Munro listened to the terms, his head dropped to his chest. His was immensely disappointed and sad. He and his forces had been defeated. He had no choice. He was responsible for the lives of the people at the fort. After a long silence, he accepted Montcalm’s surrender terms. He promised to leave Fort Henry the next morning, and the French general promised not to attack the Anglo-Americans.

A peace treaty was then signed. It was August 9th, 1757, a day of victory for the French, but a day of defeat for the Anglo- Americans.

It was a day of anger for Magua, who did not want peace. That night he spoke to all the other Huron chiefs, saying, “There is no peace for us Indians. The peace is for the white men. We must have our revenge. I want the scalps of the English. I want revenge for what General Munro did to me in front of everyone. A Huron never forgets!”

Chapter 10. The Massacre

The following morning everyone was ready to abandon Fort Henry. There had been very little time to prepare for this journey. Soldiers, women and children, with their horses, wagons and few belongings, formed a long line at the gate. There was sadness in the faces of the soldiers and the women. The children were frightened and confused. Major Heyward led the group out of the fort.

No one could imagine what was going to happen. The defeated group had just started its long journey home, when a loud Indian war cry was heard. Magua was leading the Huron warriors, who savagely started attacking everyone! The French forces saw what was happening, but they did not try to stop the attack.

Cries of horror filled the air. One Huron grabbed a baby from its mother’s arms and threw it against a rock. The baby screamed with pain and died. Then the Huron raised his tomahawk and split the mother’s head. This horrible scene was repeated many times. Men, women and children were brutally killed and scalped. Then the Hurons drank their blood. Warriors galloped wildly in circles, killing, scalping and taking the few belongings that were in the wagons. There was mercy for no one. It was a massacre!

Years later, historians called this scene of blood and violence “The Massacre of Fort Henry”. Over 1,000 innocent people were massacred here.

Cora, Alice and David Gamut were taken prisoner by Magua, who led them north into French territory.

Three days after the terrible massacre, General Munro, Major Heyward, Hawkeye and the two Mohicans returned to the battleground. It was a shocking scene. Hundreds of scalped bodies of men, women and children lay everywhere. The five men searched the dead bodies. They could not find their friends, but they found a piece of Cora's green scarf and David Gamut's pipe. Uncas discovered Magua's footprints next to those of the girls and David Gamut.

General Munro examined the smaller footprints carefully, and agreed that they belonged to his daughters.

"Let us follow these footprints and we will find the prisoners. This trail leads north. We must go north!" said Major Heyward.

They traveled up Lake Horican by canoe. The lake had many small islands and they traveled close to them for cover. As they passed an island on Lake Horican, they were seen by the Hurons! The Hurons jumped into their war canoes and began following them. Suddenly, another Huron war canoe appeared in front of them.

Hawkeye told Uncas to change direction. Another small island separated them from the Hurons. The Mohicans paddled as fast as they could, and soon they were ahead of the third Huron canoe. The Hurons shot at them with rifles and arrows, but missed them. Hawkeye shot back at the Hurons with his long rifle and killed one of them. At this point the Hurons stopped their canoes and returned to their camp.

The Mohicans and the other men continued their trip up the lake to the northern end. Then, to trick the enemy, they paddled to the east. After a while, they lifted the canoe out of the water and carried it on their shoulders. They left their footprints everywhere to confuse the enemy. At a certain point, they stopped and walked backwards in their footprints. They then put the canoe back on the lake.

At night, they moved to the western shore of the lake, and hid the canoe in the bushes near the shore. They then continued traveling north

into the forest. They were now in enemy territory, and their lives were in great danger. Each man was careful not to leave footprints that the enemy could follow. After a few miles, Uncas discovered Magua's footprints again. They were moving in the right direction!

Chapter 11. The French Juggler

Major Heyward, who led the group, came to a large clearing. In the distance, he thought he saw an Indian village and a v strange Indian walking towards him. He called Hawkeye, who looked and then laughed.

“Major, that certainly isn't an Indian village. It's a beaver colony!” he exclaimed. “And look, it's David Gamut - not an Indian!” “David, what are you doing here? Where are the girls?” Hawkeye asked.

“Magua captured me and the girls during the massacre. Alice is now a prisoner in a Huron village, two miles from here. Cora was sent to a Delaware village nearby. Since I was always singing my church hymns, the Hurons thought I was mad! The Indian tradition respects mad people, and lets them go and do whatever they want. That is why I am here and free to move about.”

“If you are free to move about, then you can really help us, David,” said Hawkeye. “You can easily go to the Huron village and tell Alice that we are here to help her and Cora escape. No one will suspect you.”

“I'll go with you, David! It will be easier to save Alice if there are two of us,” Major Heyward exclaimed. “I have an idea. Chingachgook has lots of paints and he can make me look like a French juggler from Ticonderoga. You know, there are jugglers and clowns who go from village to village. I speak French perfectly, and the paints will change my appearance.”

Chingachgook painted Major Heyward's face, and soon he was ready to begin his adventure as a French juggler in the Huron village.

Hawkeye and Uncas decided to explore the area around the Indian villages, while Chingachgook and General Munro remained at the beaver colony.

As soon as Major Heyward, disguised as a French juggler, entered the Huron village, he was surrounded by curious children. They looked at him, ran around him and touched him.

Although his disguise was excellent, Heyward was nervous. He looked for the biggest wigwam of the village and quietly entered. It was full of Huron Indians, all seated in a circle. Some were talking, others were smoking a long pipe. He sat down with them.

One of the older warriors, probably the chief, spoke to him in French, "Where are you from, white brother?"

"I come from the French fort of Ticonderoga. I am a juggler, a man of magic," Heyward replied in French.

"An evil spirit lives in my daughter. You are a juggler, a man of magic. Can you frighten the evil spirit away with your magic?"

Heyward knew something about the Indian beliefs and superstitions. He thought this was a good opportunity for him to move around the village. Perhaps he could find Alice! He answered the Indian in a mysterious way, "All spirits are different; some can be frightened away, but others are too strong. However, I will try."

"You will try?" asked the older warrior. Heyward nodded.

"Then let us go to the cave," said the older warrior.

Chapter 12. The Spirit of the Cave

Aloud shout came from the nearby forest. The entire village went to see what was happening. A Huron war party had just returned with several scalps and a prisoner. The prisoner was Uncas!

Magua led him into a wigwam, and put warriors all around to guard him. Magua walked proudly through the village because he had finally captured his great enemy. He told the Ilurons that Uncas was a

Mohican chief and their enemy. They decided to torture and then kill him the following day.

Uncas was tied to a post in the wigwam. He was not afraid of his enemy, who insulted and tormented him. He was a Mohican warrior, the son of a chief. Everyone knew of his courage, strength and honesty. He had always lived like a warrior, and now he would die like one.

The older warrior took the disguised Heyward outside the village, to the cave where the sick woman was. The Indians believed that a cave, with its walls of rock, would protect the woman from the evil spirit that had possessed her.

As they reached the cave, Heyward noticed that a big brown bear had been following him. He didn't worry because he knew that Indians often kept tame bears in their villages.

The sick woman was lying on a bearskin in the dark cave. Lots of Huron women stood around her. Heyward told all the women to leave him alone with her. The squaws left slowly and quietly because they had great respect for "men of magic". Heyward looked carefully at the young woman who gave no signs of life. She was very ill. Unfortunately, she was dying, and Heyward could do nothing to help her.

The big bear had followed Heyward to the cave. It began to growl and to move around. Heyward didn't know what to do with the bear.

Suddenly, the bear started laughing. It took its head off and it was Hawkeye!

Chapter 13. Alice Escapes

Heyward couldn't believe his eyes. "Hawkeye, what are you doing here dressed as a bear?" Hawkeye replied smiling, "When I was in the forest, I saw a Huron medicine man dressing up as a bear. I killed the medicine man and took his place as a bear. This is the perfect disguise. Do you know that I found Alice?"

“You did? Where is she?” Heyward cried.

“She’s in the next cave. She is tied to a post.”

Heyward immediately ran to the next cave and untied her. She was trembling and could barely stand up.

“My dearest Alice!” Heyward cried, embracing her.

“Duncan, I knew that you would never desert me!” Alice exclaimed, her voice trembling.

“We must get out of here now,” said Heyward. But just as he took Alice’s hand, Magua surprised them from behind. He laughed in his evil way. But before he could finish laughing, the “bear” grabbed Magua and threw him to the ground. He began to tie him with long strings of buckskin. First, he tied his arms behind his back. Then he tied his legs together tightly. At last, he gagged Magua’s mouth. He left him on the ground in the cave. Magua was powerless!

Hawkeye then turned to Alice and Heyward, “Alice, if you want to escape from here, put on the clothes of the sick woman, and keep your face covered. Duncan, you carry her in your arms. Tell the Indians outside that you are taking the woman to the forest to eat special herbs. Let’s go now!”

Heyward, with Alice in his arms, and the “bear” walked out of the cave and they found a crowd of Indians. The father and the husband of the sick woman asked Heyward where he was taking her.

“I have driven away the evil spirit. It is now shut in the cave. No one must enter the cave until sunrise. I am taking the woman to the forest to eat special herbs that will make her strong. She will return to her wigwam at sunrise.”

The father and the husband were satisfied with Heyward’s explanation, and let them go into the forest.

As soon as they had entered the forest, Hawkeye said, “At this point, my friends, I must leave you. Uncas is still a prisoner of the Hurons and I cannot leave him here alone. We have lived together and fought together for many years. I want to try to save him.”

“Thank you for your precious help, Hawkeye,” said Heyward smiling.

“There is very little time, Heyward. Take Alice along the northern bank until you come to a waterfall. Then climb the hill on your right and you will see the village of the Delaware Indians. There you will both be safe. The Delawares are related to the Mohicans, and they will help you.”

Heyward and Alice began their journey through the forest, while Hawkeye, still dressed as a bear, returned to the Huron village.

Chapter 14. Hawkeye Saves Uncas

Uncas was inside a dark wigwam, tied to a pole. Some Huron warriors guarded the entrance to the wigwam. He had been tormented and humiliated by the warriors. At sunrise he would be tortured and killed. The hatred between the two tribes was immense.

Hawkeye, still disguised as a bear, returned to the village. There he met David Gamut and explained the reason for his disguise. David was very surprised, but willing to help.

Hawkeye told him about his plan to rescue Uncas. Since David was considered mad by the Hurons, he was free to go where he wanted in the village.

David and the “bear” went to the wigwam where Uncas was kept prisoner. Warriors stood outside guarding the wigwam.

David spoke to one of the warriors who understood a little English. He told him that since he was mad, he had certain magic powers that could make Uncas as weak and cowardly as a Delaware squaw. Becoming weak and cowardly was the worst humiliation for any Indian warrior. It was far better to die a terrible death. The warrior told the others about David’s magic powers and about his cruel idea. They were amused and agreed that this spell would destroy Uncas’ reputation. David entered the wigwam and the “bear” followed. The “bear”

immediately went to Uncas and identified himself. Uncas was glad to see his faithful friend, Hawkeye. While Hawkeye freed Uncas, he quickly explained his escape plan. He took off his bearskin and gave it to Uncas. Uncas was now the “bear”.

David, instead, gave Hawkeye his clothes, hat, glasses and prayer book. Hawkeye was now disguised as the preacher. David agreed to take Uncas’ place and be the prisoner for a short time, until the Hurons discovered the truth. The Hurons would never hurt a mad person, so David was safe.

Hawkeye and Uncas were on their way to the Delaware village, where they would find their friends.

Chapter 15. Magua Declares War

At the Huron village, the real identity of the prisoner in the wigwam had been discovered. The warriors who guarded the wigwam were furious because their prisoner had escaped and they had been tricked. Shouts and cries of revenge filled the air. Fortunately, the Hurons didn’t hurt David Gamut. However, he was worried when he realized what was happening in the village.

The father and husband of the sick woman entered the cave to fight off the evil spirit that was shut inside. Instead of the evil spirit, they found her dead body! They understood that they had been tricked and they, too, were furious. A few moments after their sad discovery, other warriors found Magua, still tied and lying in the other cave.

Magua’s anger was beyond description. He had lost his prized prisoner, and he had been tricked and humiliated by his enemies. He shrieked like a wounded animal. He desperately wanted revenge!

Magua called a meeting of all the warriors, elders and chiefs - it was a war council. Magua had always been a good speaker, and a leader of the tribe. He openly declared war on those who had tricked his people.

The war preparations began: runners were sent in all directions, spies were ordered to approach the Delaware village, warriors were told to meet before sunrise. Women and children were told to hide in their wigwams.

The next morning, well before sunrise, Magua wore his deerskin robe, with the design of a fox, his symbol or “totem”. The war party was ready to leave. They silently followed Magua in a straight line that today is called “Indian file”. As the sun began to rise, they crossed the beaver colony. The warriors saw a few beavers moving about and considered this a good omen. They did not suspect that Chingachgook was hiding in the beaver colony and spying their movements.

It was morning when the Huron warriors arrived in the Delaware village. The morning sun lit up the beautiful summer colors of the forest and the village. The air was fresh, and the sky was a clear blue.

The Hurons and the Delawares were both friends of the French. The Delawares, however, had not taken part in General Montcalm’s campaign.

In the past, the Delawares had been close friends with the Mohicans.

Chapter 16. The Delaware Chief

Magua’s war party was welcomed by the Delaware chief who said, “The wise Huron is welcome. He has come to eat his “succotash” with his brothers of the lakes.”

Magua bent his head with respect in front of the Delaware chief. The chief invited Magua to enter his wigwam and share his morning meal. During the meal, the two discussed Magua’s recent hunt. The cunning Huron avoided talking about the real reason of his visit.

After the meal, the squaws came to remove their gourds. Magua now began to reveal the real reason of his visit.

“How is my prisoner?” he asked, referring to Cora.

“She is well,” answered the Delaware chief.

“Does my prisoner give you trouble?” he continued.

“No, she is welcome here,” the chief said.

Magua wanted Cora back, but he didn’t want to say so.

“Have there been white men in the forest recently?” Magua insisted.

The chief now understood what Magua really wanted. The Delawares had helped Hawkeye, Major Heyward and Alice, but this was a secret. They always protected their guests.

In his heart, the Delaware chief did not like Magua. Magua felt that he was not liked. Therefore, he opened his pouch and gave trinkets as gifts to the chief and his men. These were the same trinkets that had been taken from the dead bodies of the victims at the Massacre of Fort Henry. Magua’s cunning move was appreciated by the Delawares. But they still said nothing about the guests they were hiding in their village.

Magua became impatient and said, “I have come to take back my prisoners: Cora Munro and the others you are hiding here.”

He had just finished speaking, when a strange, old figure appeared in front of everyone. There was whispering in the crowd.

Chapter 17. Tanemund

An old figure slowly approached the crowd. He walked with the help of two warriors. His face was dark and wrinkled. His hair was long and white. He wore a long head-dress of colored feathers. His robe was of the finest buckskin. Around his neck he wore big silver and gold medals. These were gifts from white men he had met in the past. The handle of his tomahawk was made of gold.

This was Tanemund, the venerated chief of the tribe, who was sacred to his people. He was the Father of the Delaware Nation. He was over a hundred years old, and very wise and just.

Tanemund knew about Cora and the other guests in his village. He spoke in a firm voice, “Bring the prisoner and the guests before me.”

The prisoners and guests lined up before Tanemund. He looked at them carefully. Then he said, “Magua, you can take Cora Munro because you asked us to take care of her. Now you can have her back. But the others came to our village freely, they are our guests. Guests here are protected.”

“But they are our enemies! They are all enemies of your friends, the French, and so they are your enemies, too!” shouted Magua.

Alice, Cora and Major Heyward stood together wondering what would happen to them. Hawkeye and Uncas were in the crowd, trying to decide what to do.

Suddenly, Uncas stepped out of the crowd and went to Tanemund. In front of Tanemund, Uncas took off his shirt so that everyone could see the tattoo of a turtle on his chest. The crowd of Delawares shouted with happiness and surprise, when they saw the tattoo. They, too, were “People of the Turtle”. They knew that only the greatest chiefs could wear this tattoo.

“Wise father Tanemund, I am Uncas, son of Chingachgook. I am the last of the Mohicans. I am one of the People of the Turtle. The Mohicans and the Delawares have been true brothers for many years. I ask for your help against the Hurons!”

Tanemund was influenced by Uncas’ sincere words. He turned to Magua and said, “Go and take the girl with you, but only the girl. The others stay here. When the sun is well above the trees, the Delaware warriors will be after you.”

Cora knew the time had come to leave her sister. She looked at Major Heyward with tears in her eyes and said, “I know you love Alice, and I beg of you to protect her always.” Major Heyward held Alice’s fragile hand, but couldn’t speak.

“Alice, let us embrace, perhaps for the last time!” said Cora, her voice trembling. Alice was barely able to stand on her feet, and leaned against Major Heyward.

She couldn’t believe that she and Cora were separating. The two sisters embraced. Suddenly, Magua pulled Cora by the arm and led her away into the forest.

Chapter 18. Uncas’ Battle-Cry

Uncas, who liked Cora very much, was thinking about how to rescue her. He and other older warriors gathered around a traditional Indian post, painted with dark red stripes. They began to do a war dance and danced around the post. Their faces were painted with war paint. Uncas sang an ancient prayer to the Great Spirit, Manitto, asking for strength and courage. At the end of the prayer, he threw his tomahawk into the post. Then he raised his voice in a fierce shout which was his battle-cry.

The battle-cry was heard all through the Delaware village, and it was the signal of war. More than two hundred young warriors ran to the post. They, too, began dancing the war dance and throwing their tomahawks into the post. War on the Hurons had been declared!

Uncas kept his eyes on the position of the sun which was reaching its high point in the sky. It was time to follow Magua, rescue Cora and attack the Hurons.

The Delawares were divided into two war parties. Uncas led the main party to attack the Huron village. Hawkeye and Major Heyward led 20 warriors to the beaver colony, where Chingachgook and General Munro were waiting. Hawkeye’s group would attack from behind to surprise the Hurons.

The two war parties left the Delaware village, and entered the forest that separated them from the Hurons. They moved silently and quickly. The only sound in the forest was the wind.

As they approached the Huron village, Hawkeye heard footsteps coming from the bushes. He immediately pointed his rifle at the bushes, but then he saw David Gamut's friendly face. David was amazed to see an Indian war party approaching. He told Hawkeye that he had just escaped from the Hurons and was seeking help.

"Help?" asked Hawkeye. "We have declared war on the Hurons and we must rescue Cora. We need help, David! Come with us!" David joined the group, and said, "I saw Magua taking Cora into a cave in the mountain. I think he left her there."

"He left her in a cave?" interrupted Major Heyward. "Then we can surely rescue her!"

"I'll take my 20 men and attack from behind the village," said Hawkeye. "Uncas, you and your warriors will attack from the front. In the middle of the confusion, we will go to the cave and rescue Cora."

Chapter 19. The Final Battle

The fighting began in the forest, and spread out to the village. It became a fierce battle. The warriors of both tribes were well prepared for war. There was shooting and hand-to-hand combat. Knives and tomahawks were covered with blood. Arrows flew in every direction. The warriors threw themselves at each other with all the strength and energy of their young bodies.

This was the moment to rescue Cora. Uncas, Hawkeye, Heyward and Gamut climbed to the caves in the mountain. In the distance, Uncas saw Magua with two warriors leading Cora from the cave to the hillside.

"It's Cora, Cora!" exclaimed Uncas, as he and the others moved quickly up the hillside.

The Hurons couldn't move as quickly because Cora was exhausted and could barely walk.

"I will go no farther," cried Cora. "Kill me if you want, you savage! I will go no farther."

The other two warriors raised their tomahawks ready to strike at her. But Magua stopped them. He took his knife and turned to Cora with a look of fierce passion and said, "Woman, choose either the wigwam or the knife of Magua!" Cora didn't look at him. She dropped down on her knees, raised her eyes and lifted her arms towards the sky. Then she weakly said, "Do with me as you think best."

Magua became very impatient, and repeated, "Woman, choose!"

But Cora did not seem to hear him. Magua, trembling with anger, raised his knife, but then hesitated again. Once more he struggled with himself and lifted his knife to strike Cora.

Just then Uncas appeared, jumping down from a rock above. Magua moved back to avoid him. In that instant, one of Magua's warriors took out his knife and stabbed Cora in the heart! She fell at Magua's feet.

Magua was about to kill his own warrior, but Uncas jumped on him and a long, fiery fight began. Magua wounded Uncas with his knife. Although Uncas was severely wounded, he was able to kill Cora's murderer. Then he fell to the ground, looking at Magua straight in the eyes. The Mohican's strength was leaving his body, but his courage was greater than ever. He turned to Magua and looked at him with disgust, as Magua stabbed him in the heart three times. The Mohican was dead! And near him lay Cora.

"Mercy, mercy, Huron!" cried Major Heyward, who had seen the horror.

Magua waved his bloody knife in the air and then leapt across a deep precipice. He hoped to reach the other side of the cliff, where no one could reach him. But his leap was too short. He grabbed a bush on the other side of the precipice. He desperately tried to climb up onto the ledge.

Hawkeye was watching everything from the opposite side of the precipice. He took his rifle "Killdeer", took aim and fired. The bullet hit Magua, who fell to his death in the precipice. Le Renard was dead.

Chapter 20. The Last Mohican

The next morning there was silence and destruction in the Huron village. They had been defeated. The Delawares, who had won the battle, were equally silent and sad. There were no songs of triumph or shouts of success. Everyone in the village mourned Uncas and Cora, the two young friends who had shared a tragic destiny. The entire Delaware village formed a circle around their bodies.

Six Indian girls covered Cora's body with an Indian robe, and sweet herbs and forest flowers. They sang in honor of the dead. Their song said that Cora and Uncas would be together in the happy hunting grounds. Cora's beauty had a serene quality. Old General Munro sat at Cora's feet and cried desperately. Alice, Heyward, Hawkeye and David Gamut crowded together in silent grief.

On the opposite side of the area, there was Uncas' body. He was seated, as in life, covered with beautiful ornaments, medals and bracelets. Colorful feathers were placed on his head. Chingachgook sat beside Uncas, looking at the young warrior, and probably remembering their happy times together.

One by one, the Delaware warriors spoke about Uncas; his courage, his strength and his honesty. He had been an example for them.

A signal was given by one of the older chiefs to the girls. Obeying the signal, the girls began to sing, raised the bier and carried it to the grave under some young pine trees. Here Cora was buried in the brown earth.

General Munro stood by Cora's grave and said, "The Being, that we all worship under different names, will remember your kindness, and one day we will all meet around his throne without distinction of color, class or sex."

David Gamut read several prayers from his prayer book, and then stood silently by Cora's grave.

General Munro and the other whites slowly left the village. Hawkeye remained with the Indians.

Chingachgook stood up and spoke to the tribe saying, “Do not mourn, do not cry. Uncas was a good son. He was courageous. Who can deny it? Uncas has gone to the happy hunting grounds. The Great Spirit needed such a warrior and called him away.

“I am alone now. My race has gone from the shores of the big salt lake and the hills of the Delawares. I am like an old pine tree in a clearing of pale faces. I am alone. I am the last of the Mohicans.”

“No, no!” cried Hawkeye. “God has given us different colors, but I am your blood brother. I will never forget your son Uncas. We fought together in many wars, we hunted together in the great forest, and we shared our meals in peace. You are not alone. I will stay with you now, Chingachgook.”

Chingachgook and Hawkeye shook hands over the fresh earth that covered Uncas’ grave. Tears ran down their cheeks.

Tanemund came to close the ceremony. “My life has been too long. When I was young, the People of the Turtle ruled the world. They were happy and strong. Now the pale faces are the masters of the earth. I have lived to see the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans.”

- THE END -

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