



THE WRECKAGE OF WAR

PART 2

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He ran toward the swamp, its familiar terrain home to his struggling rice farm, where harvests were always poor due to the sinking ground. Along the bank, his feet sank into the thick moss with a rhythmic plop, splash... plop, splash.

Shrubs and mangrove leaves smeared his bare chest as he trudged into the swamp.

Senator Onkle's voice echoed through the swamp.

"Honourable Kajo, I warned you not to enter politics as a stranger in this land, but you ignore my warning," Senator said, a grain warming his sweating face.

"I did not stand in your way, Senator. I owe my people a duty."

"What duty? It was a dangerous tread you took. Now you have lost everything. Don't say I didn't warn you."

"My constituency has been living here for more than hundreds of years, feeding this land. They called me into leadership to improve of what they do which is farming and I obliged them. It is our constitutional right. Senator, the innocent blood you spilled cries against you." Raising his voice he said, "You could have rather killed me!"

Onkle sneered, "You groomed your kin to take over our fatherland. We are no fools. Walahi, we got to do what we had to do. They're dead because of your evil dream."

Kajo faced Onkle, who sat on an Okada, cleared his throat and spat saliva into his face. Onkle's face froze as he touched the slime.

"Get him! Slaughter the beast," Onkle ordered.

A young man leaped into the swamp, cutlass glinting. Unknown to him, Kajo and his kin wrestled under the moonlight, when they played Swange music. He grabbed the attacker's hand, and a crack resounded as the cutlass flew into the mire. Another assailant charged, cutlass aimed at Kajo's head, but Kajo heaved the first attacker just in time, and the blade sliced through the latter's chest. Blood rained down on Kajo, its acrid taste filled his nostrils and mouth.

Kajo hurled the body into the mud, where it sank deeper. He seized the second assailant by the collar, and they both crashed into the mire. Confronted with death's inevitability, Kajo felt a surge of determination, knowing he'd saved some of his community from the bloodthirsty attackers.

Refusing to surrender to evil, Kajo grappled with the assailant, and they submerged into the swamp's depths, mire bubbles erupting to the surface. Once the attacker was incapacitated, Kajo relaxed his grip and groped for his own life.

His hands sliced through the cold water, his windpipe drying and hurting. He navigated past thermocline rocks, his back crashing against them, numb pain weighing down his spine. Exhausted, Kajo paddled until he reached the shore and sprawled onto a giant rosewood root beside the forbidden road, breathing heavily as a cold smile crept onto his lips.

To be continued next week...