

# Kin



From Revolution to  
evolution in reuniting  
the peoples of America

**Zachary Comeaux DO**

author of *Fire on the Prairie* and *The Healer's Heart*



*Kin* is a researched retelling of the Virginia side of the beginning of the American Revolution with a Shawnee Indian bias. A spiritualist theme conveyed through dreams gives contemporary characters access to the experience of their ancestors. But history repeats itself and those figures find themselves involved in a political intrigue of global scale. An action romance, *Kin* conveys a humanistic view of history and current American foreign policy without being dry.

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# Kin

## Chapter 1

The comatose young woman was ready for transfer to the intensive care unit. With a sense of guarded relief, John Strong DO attended to finishing writing his orders. A well-earned peace fell over the tile walls and curtained cubicles of the Emergency Department. Nights were unpredictable and this one had been rough. Amid the stream of serious yet typical flu patients, many needing rehydration, the ambulance brought in the young woman. Twenty-five, pretty, yet her atrial fibrillation, the erratic beating of her heart, was desperately atypical for her age. She showed no response to the attempts at the usual electrical cardioversion or routine drugs. Dr. Strong suspected a metabolic cause, some toxicity of the blood. Drug screen ruled out overdose but rapid serum analysis supported his suspicion as lab values for electrolytes and liver enzymes were extremely elevated. The serum potassium values alone could account for the erratic firing of her heart muscle. But what was the underlying cause? That remained a riddle. He thought to send samples, both blood and buccal scrapings, for reference lab analysis hoping to get clarification. The doctor suspected some genetically passed abnormality.

For now she was in stable condition, but could she be saved? Strong checked her one more time. The form under the sheet was that of a slender and very attractive young woman. All life was to be saved, if possible. However the staff worked hardest when a younger life was on the line. But besides the usual urgency Dr. Strong felt especially intent over the case. He asked himself why? Her dark hair and skin tone; could she be kin? Not hardly, she had a light Negroid skin, not that of a Native American. Still, the feeling...

Hydrated and with supplemental oxygen, for now she was supported. Morning would tell more about the extent of any brain

damage from the ischemia associated with the sustained arrhythmia.

“Good work, John. No one could have done better.”

Strong did not take the nurse’s seeming familiarity as disrespect. Joyce was a twenty year veteran of this scene; John in turn was merely beginning his residency.

Joyce, for some reason, had taken a special liking to this young doctor. There was a distinct spirit about him, something atypical in addition to his being very attractive. He had energy. He seemed a leader despite his relatively young age. His dark hair and broad shoulder made him a handsome specimen and she wished she were young enough to take advantage of a relationship. But she was well into accepting the mothering role with these fledgling physicians.

Tammy in personnel had shared that Dr. Strong was originally from Oklahoma and was of Indian blood. If his overall physique did not confirm it, his profile certainly did. But he was fitting in well in West Virginia.

“There. That should do it,” Strong commented with a tone of assurance and relief as he finished entering the orders to be transmitted to the unit. “Let’s see how she does. Can one of you nurses get Miss Julie down the hall?”

That case done, John stepped into the small lounge off the nurses’ station. He needed a few minutes to compose himself before returning to their last patient.

Though ER work could be exhausting, something in his blood drew him to this battle of life and death. It seemed to suit his nature. There was a special sense of meaning that came from being on the front line of existence for many of these patients. However something made him feel especially involved with this case. As soon as he saw the face he felt a connection, a familiarity. Had he known her before? This was his second week in West Virginia and he knew very few people outside the hospital circle. Her hair and skin were more African American than Native American but he got the feeling she also had some Indian blood. That feeling was the queer feeling

of kinship common among native people. Furthermore seeing her and being close also evoked a tenderness, as if she were family.

"So, how are you enjoying our little hospital in Greenbrier Valley?"

Joyce came in to check out how the doctor was doing. Though technically he was her superior in the medical hierarchy, she felt charged to tend to him as the more vulnerable one. To do so, she needed to know him better. What could he take?

"Checking me out, eh? I appreciate it. Come on and sit down," Strong replied. "Thank you for your help this evening, especially with that last patient. It was touch and go for a while there. I hope she does OK."

"Yes," Joyce replied, "you never want to lose the young ones with so much life ahead of them."

She had noted that there had been more to the exchange than typical ER intensity but, not wanting to get into anything sticky, let it ride. For now she decided to change the subject.

"Coffee?" she offered as she already began to pour.

"Sure, good idea." John accepted the cup. He realized he would be working many hours with Nurse Joyce. He sat back and continued, "So tell me, were you born around here?"

"Yes, except for going away for schooling, I've been here. It's a nice enough place, not too exciting, but good people," Joyce replied.

She let the young resident enjoy a bit of silence but curiosity prodded her on also. She wanted to know this man. "So, you are from Oklahoma?"

"Yep, I'm an Okie," Strong quipped as he stirred his coffee. "Actually I am from what they still call there the Indian Territory. My family, all the way back, are Shawnee."

"Indian Territory? Is that part of the United States?" The nurse was surprised.

"Yes and no, I guess, is the proper answer." Dr. Strong searched for words. "Our people pay taxes, support the armed forces, but the Absentee Shawnee Nation, as it is called, is somewhat autonomous. We have a governor, an executive committee, a constitution, the works. Most people are not aware of it but Oklahoma has a strange history. It was formed from the early Oklahoma Territory and the lands eventually given to those of Native American blood in place of the vast lands west of the Allegheny Mountains taken from them during colonization. Not a very good deal. Ironically, the law which established the Indian Territory was called the Indian Intercourse Act of 1834. Yes, indeed, we Indians did get screwed. So, the Shawnee have a small corner in the northeast of the territory."

"Oh, that's interesting," the nurse reflected. "So what got you here?"

"Well, in Tulsa I attended an osteopathic medical school, Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine."

"Yes, obviously you know then we have an osteopathic school here?" remarked the nurse.

"Yes, actually I interviewed here when choosing a school. For in-state students the tuition was very much lower at the Oklahoma school and so I went there but had always heard good things about this West Virginia school. Then during third and fourth year assigned clinical rotations I started to hear more good things about this area. So when I started trying to match for a residency, I checked out Lewisburg."

The doctor considered being more guarded with his personal thought and reflected a moment. He decided to go on. It seemed a safe relationship in which to share more. "As I started interviewing I felt drawn to this area and interviewed at the hospital at Virginia Tech and over at Paint Valley Hospital in Chillicothe, Ohio. As I did, I remembered the fact that our people, the Shawnee, once called this region home. So, I wondered if I was being called home for some reason." He felt a little silly sharing this level of intimate thought but Joyce seemed to show an interest in him almost as a big sister.



"Curious; yes, coming home is a good thing," reflected Joyce. She was certainly glad he had made the choice. Then she continued, "Are you married, or...you know...committed?" She was amazed to hear herself asking the question.

"No," John replied. "I guess I just haven't met the right woman, and with medical school, well, you know, it keeps us pretty busy. We will see what happens in the next couple years. I am in no rush, though."

John was not sure if Joyce was beginning the easy, cozy, familiarity which comes from the hours of working together in a high stress job or if she had other ideas. She was probably fifteen years his elder, but attractive.

"And you?" John returned, mostly to be polite.

"No; I'd been married during nursing school and I had a son; he's eighteen already. The years fly. The marriage didn't last long and I've been mostly a single mom. Work, child, keeps you busy." She smiled shyly, also amazed to be sharing so much.

John finished his coffee. Both of them felt they had probed as deep as was comfortable for now and that to go further so fast would be awkward.

"It's almost four AM. I want to check some details on the patient in bed number four then I may try to get an hour's sleep before shift ends," Strong volunteered.

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The mattress felt good and John dozed. Then it began, the old familiar, enigmatic dream.

The tall man entered what appeared to be a traditional Indian lodge. It was night. The woman knelt and arranged the dying embers of a fire and turned to spread skins over the sleeping children.

*Kin*

In the fire-glow the scene had an atmosphere of extreme peacefulness yet there was also an intensity in the air. This seemed to be a moment of great significance.

The two sat and faced each other. John's eyes seemed to be the man's eyes but he got, as usual, only a fleeting glance at the woman before the scene faded.

Before he knew it, someone gave him a nudge. "Dr. Strong, time to give report. Dr. Miller is here."

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The morning air was crisp as John drove the back road toward Muddy Creek Mountain, toward his new home. Although he had only been here a matter of weeks, he felt an attachment to the land. He could not get used to the idea that no land was flat in West Virginia and that narrow windy roads were the rule. As he climbed the north flank of the mountain he could look out over rolling cattle country, a landscape once called the Big Levels. Local old timers had started to share tales with him. Although he wanted to hear more, most of it he felt he already knew somehow.

He needed to get some more sleep. He was off until Tuesday and expecting his brother, Randy, in this evening. Little brother would be more than likely into carousing than sitting still and John wanted to make him feel welcome. Somehow, deep inside John felt guilty over his personal success. Yes he had worked hard, making sacrifices Randy could not imagine. Still, John's accomplishments and position far exceeded the dreams of most Native American young men. So, he felt a bit odd, distanced from his childhood peer group.

Randy, the younger brother by two years, was more typical. He was bright and well proportioned. Yet, he did not have the same drive or expectations. Not finishing high school he had taken a string of janitorial jobs. Luckily he acquired, apprentice style, some welding skills and eventually landed a job as a rigger, working commercial fabrication of towers as are used in cross country electricity transport and communication networks. He was doing OK. But with the time on the road, the long evenings away from family, his first

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marriage crumbled in the confusion of his flirting with alcoholism. A series of dead end relationships characterized the next ten years. The bottle had become his closest and most constant companion. But John enjoyed his company and both the memories and the sensitivity to life they both shared. Yet on another level he grieved for Randy and felt awkward about his own vocational success.

A few chores and emails complete, the morning had slipped away and John realized this was his last chance for a nap. He laid across the bed and let himself drift. The sound of a vireo out somewhere in the May woods lulled him quickly into slumber.

The dream repeated:

The tall man entered the traditional lodge. It was night. As usual, the woman kneeling arranged the dying embers of a fire and arranged skins over the sleeping children.

In the fire-glow the scene had the familiar peaceful atmosphere, a feeling of home, balance by the feeling of intensity in the air. Yes, this was a moment of great significance. But, as usual, the significance was not apparent.

The two sat and faced each other. John's eyes again seemed to be the man's eyes as he got his usual fleeting glance at the woman. But his time here was a sense of recognition, a curious sense of familiarity, yet without confirmation as to her exact identity. Then, as usual, the scene faded.

The void of timeless sleep enveloped him.

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The familiar sound of tires crunching gravel then came the knock at the door and Randy was standing in the living room. His shoulder length hair and rock band tee shirt captured his spirit. "John, you here? Is the doctor in?"

"Yes, I worked last night and was just finishing a snooze," John replied, as he appeared at the bedroom door, still in scrubs, rubbing

the back of his neck. "You want something to eat, or a cup of coffee, maybe?"

"I sure could use a drink, but I doubt you have my brand in stock," replied his brother.

"Oh, Randy, still married to the bottle, I see. Here, have some coffee and I will make you a sandwich," John commented as he poked around the kitchen. "So, did you drive straight through from Tulsa, what is it, twelve hours?"

"More like fifteen. Then I stopped for a couple of hours at a road side rest with the truckers and got a little shut eye. You know, it's not a bad drive until you hit the mountains; I never could get the hang of driving those mountains. Give me the plains." Randy sipped his coffee.

"Well, this was home once, don't forget. These mountains are in your blood," John teased.

"Yeah, yeah; you know the details of history; I just know the medicine," the younger parried, referring to his study of the old ways.

"Yes, I wish I knew more of our heritage, the traditional healing and ways of the spirit world," added John. "I feel like moving to West Virginia will give me more of that opportunity somehow. Now here, eat this; man does not live by drink alone."

"Very funny but you are right; I am hungry and this smells and looks great." For a moment, Randy ate in silence and John let him have the space. He sipped his coffee. It seemed like an eternity since he and Randy had been able just to sit together. As youths, they had all the time in the world. Then came medical school and John might have been living on another planet though he had been close enough to commute from home.

Randy was handsome. His long, thick black hair, his arms well-muscled from physical labor, accented with the chief tattoo on this left upper arm.

"So how do you like it here," Randy mumbled through a mouthful, "and are you sure you don't have a beer around here somewhere?"

"No, I need to do some shopping. Doctor's schedules you know. I am just coming off of five twelves. I have some catching up to do on housekeeping." John paused. "As far as your first question, hospitals are hospitals, mostly the same, but yes, I am getting along OK, getting to know a few people. I think this is going to work, these next three years."

John watched Randy's sandwich disappear and realized he would need another. As he prepared that the two fell again into in a comfortable silence. It was good to be together. Randy reflectively eyed his brother as he worked at the kitchen counter. He was proud, so proud. Brother John was making good in a way unheard of for most of his clan. Randy could not understand the details of his brother's life but he knew it was the right thing for him even if it took him away.

"So, do you think you will ever come back and take care of our people, I mean, come back to Oklahoma?" Randy was up front with his feeling of loss.

"Oh, you miss me already, do you? Well, I miss you too, Little Brother." John paused as he set down the second sandwich, then continued with a more serious tone. "Say, maybe you can help me. *Your* medicine study might make you more understanding of the spirit world than *my* medicine study." John was alluding to Randy's interest in traditional Shawnee medicine and his association with several of the elders in Indian Territory.

"So, what is it?" Randy looked up from his sandwich with a new interest.

John felt a little foolish as he usually played the role of the wiser. "Well, it's this dream. I have had it for years but it seems to be more frequent...but it's not a full dream, only a piece."

"The spirits speak only as much as is needed at the time...but go on." Randy did not want to appear too pedantic but enjoyed the reversal of roles.

"Well in the dream it is certainly in the old times as described by the elders. A man enters a lodge in the quiet of the night. A woman, probably his woman, is tending the dying fire..." He searched for the right words to convey the feeling images. "There is a sense of peace...children are sleeping but there is something very intense and special going on between these two. As it goes, I become aware that I am somehow the man, or seeing through the man's eyes. I look with feeling at the woman, but her features fade...except for this last time; I saw her face. I know that I know her but so far I can't place her."

Randy reached out and placed his hand on the back of his brother's hand. "Surely, there is a message here, but as I said, the spirits speak only as much as is needed at the time. There will be more, be patient." Changing tone abruptly, "Now, if we had some booze and maybe a little marijuana, I think we could solve this dream more quickly."

John playfully pushed his brother backwards in the same spirit, reminiscent of boyish playfulness. Randy's chair tipped and the two scrambled on the floor like a couple of schoolboys, the two they remained at heart. Randy, more physically fit from rougher work soon took the advantage, rolling this older brother into an arm lock.

"There, Doctor, do you concede?" Randy queried with a chuckle of irony.

"Yes, yes; you win!" John admitted as his brother broke the hold. He rose and dusted himself off as Randy sat grinning. "But, don't be too smug. There will be a next time. Watch your back."

The two caught their breath and Randy looked around at John's small but comfortable house. "You're doing OK, Big Brother; you're doing OK."

John accepted the tacit admiration then asked, "Say, do you have a fishing pole in the car? I still have mine. There's a small stream down the side of the mountain, Mulligan Creek. They just put some trout in there, I hear. Maybe we can go tease them."

Randy nodded and grinned.

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They parked at the covered bridge under an overhanging oak. Randy took another sip.

"Thanks for stopping at the convenience store. I was running on empty," Randy commented as he gripped the red and white can. "Old Milwaukee ...Indian name....must be good medicine."

John only shook his head as he reacclimated to the realities of male Indian culture. Randy flipped the back door and tailgate of the old capped pickup and the two rummaged through their gear.

"So you're still using ultra-light spin tackle for trout. Is that real fishing?" John teased his brother.

"And I see the sophisticated doctor has become an accomplished fly fisherman; not exactly suiting an Indian but we will see who lands the fish. Besides, I would ask you with all your natural bug gear, are hatchery trout real fish?" After a pause, and threading the line through the eyelets of the rod, Randy added, "Spin casting, especially light tackle, lets you fish trout, small mouth bass; it's versatile. It suits me."

Despite the development as pasture of the land over the crest of the hill, the valley was wooded, verdant and pristine, a trace of silt the only evidence of life beyond the stream. The May morning sun streamed through the budding greenery adding to the sense of freshness.

"Let's leave the pool under the bridge to the loafers and fish downstream," John suggested.

"Sounds good to me. We can wade wet but let's get a ways below the bridge before we start working the water," Randy added.

The water level was moderate and the two hopped the rocks along the bank amid the sycamore roots until they found a streamside fishermen's path. A small group of warblers flitter furtively through the tree tops, their melody gracing the sunlit greenery. Randy eyed the water. John watched Randy, such a spirit of nature. It was so good to have him visit; it made him finally feel rooted here.

The gorge narrowed a bit and the pools between riffle deepened. These should hold a fish. Randy took a cast, trailing a small spinner near the far bank and some overhanging tree roots. John moved downstream, drifting a stonefly nymph through several small riffles. Freshly released fish would suspend in the middle of the current; naturalized fish would hide near the current behind a rock he thought. John tried to alternate presentations.

Randy watched John's grace with the rod, the smooth arcs, accommodated in side arm fashion to the confines of the canopy tunnel over the creek channel. Just the right timing. Then a roll cast; John was more than an amateur with his gear.

Proceeding in leap frog fashion, the brothers gave each other room as they worked their way downstream.

"Our Cherokee sisters would appreciate this patch," Randy remarked as they came to the base of a small island and a dense clump of river reed. The lime green towering patch reached twenty feet high. Randy was referring to their cousins' use of the split bamboo-like river reed in traditional basket making. John nodded as he came around from the other side of the island.

"You getting any hits?" John queried.

"No, haven't seen a fish," replied Randy. "DNR must be stingy with their stocking schedule. Lovely spot though; a tropical Eden compared to eastern Oklahoma."



Randy's comment paid tribute to the lush greenery all around. The stream flowed under an arch of slippery elm, young maple and sycamore. The south bank on the right was shaded with a sharp slope of over a hundred feet of elevation up the side of the ravine. The floor was carpeted with a collage of stonecrop, foamflower, fern and a creeping phlox; hepatica and bloodroot were fading, over-mature and interspersed with Jack-in-the-pulpit. Intermittently there were stands of May apple like clusters of tiny umbrellas. A single strand of fallen wire from an ancient field fence reminded them of man's presence.

A deep primal feeling of rightness and bond with the land enveloped the two brothers.

Soon they came to a long pool with sharp banks cut in the clay. A low-head dam below appeared to be man-made and an old graded lane, bounded by a fencerow wound down the north side of the valley, betraying the purpose. The pool was for livestock watering.

"This looks like a better place for a spinner; why don't you lead," John suggested to his brother, Randy.

Without a word, Randy started working the pool. First a long cast downstream along the near bank, retrieved slowly with intermittent jerks to animate the spinner-fly. No response. Next a pair of parallel cast to the middle of the pool. Still nothing. The water looked good. Were there any fish here at all? Working the far bank, still no response.

Near despair, Randy moved down and cast across the pool along the upper edge of the low dam, targeting the shade beneath a honeysuckle bush on the far bank. In a flash there was a connection. The fish ran to the middle of the pool.

The tag and run, the tension, the alacrity, Randy judged it to be a stocked rainbow, perhaps ten to twelve inches. Yet, he had been fooled before by a red-eyed rock bass. Yes, it was slack water but the season was early, so, probably not the bass. But then, the fish leapt and he could see it was his trout. Randy gently brought him to

the bank, leaving him in the water, using a hemostat to skillfully release the fish before tiring or stressing him too much.

"Good etiquette; I am impressed," remarked his brother.

"I wasn't that hungry, were you?" Randy commented wryly and the two grinned. It was just nice to be out. They fished a while longer but it was obvious that conditions were not optimal for catching fish.

Finally, John took the initiative, "What do you say?"

"Yep, good day for a walk but as they say, the fishing was great, but the catching was just not what you'd expect," Randy replied.

"Well, do you want to fish our way back upstream or just walk out?" John continued.

"Let's just walk it; the water seems dead. A bit of silt, not so many bugs; I think this stream is almost totally dependent on the stocking and I bet the locals follow the truck and fish out a good many at the bridge."

John agreed and they took up their slack line and looked for the path on the bank. Initially it followed the stream. As the rock face along the creek rose higher, the path had to go above. The vegetation was thick on the path, including some barbed multifloral rose, yet the contour of the ground suggested long use, a well-worn path.

"I wonder if we are following the cattle, or if this trail is much older," John questioned.

Randy stopped and got a feel for the place. "I think it is much older, used by the people, the long inhabitants of this valley." "The people" was a familiar way the Native Americans referred to their kind.

"Let's sit a bit," Randy suggested.

After a silence John took it up again. "I think you are right. I have been reading, as much as the emergencies of the night will allow, some of the old history of the region. Of course it is written from a white point of view, but it tells a lot when you see it from another side. When the Shawnee lived in the Scioto Bottoms across the river in Ohio, this was their hunting territory. The rocky ground did not support crops as well as the river land but the game was plentiful here and valued for the winter hunt. They shared it sometimes with the Cherokee, the Tuscarawas, the Delaware but actual contact between tribes was infrequent. There were wars but in those days war, even among Indian peoples, was fierce but the damage was held in control by the great distances between nations. To do battle, a tribe could only afford to risk a small band and these must live off the land while on a campaign. They may accomplish a surprise attack and take intended revenge for a prior attack by an adversary. But to avoid total loss, they needed to strike quickly then disappear into the forest, retreating as far and as fast as possible. The small size of the group was essential to make it possible for the raiding party to disappear quickly. But it limited their impact. And so, war was rarely calamitous to a tribe."

"The whites who first came here saw this open land and therefore interpreted it as of no account and not owned, as was their way of interpreting land use. For them, in Europe, ownership was essential for mastering the land. Ownership was bestowed by the king and rarely was transferred outside of patterns of inheritance. Small patches were marked by stone walls. So, when settlers came here and the king charged the colonial governors to claim land, it was a big deal, a unique opportunity. The latter then divided it up, set up their own rules for this wilderness as they called it. This in turn created imbalance and disorder among all the native tribes, either defending their own territory from the whites, or warding off their red cousins who were themselves displaced. The Shawnee were originally a southern people, pressed by the Creek Nation to move north. The latter were created as a remnant of the southern tribes which had been devastated by the Spaniards, their appropriation of their crops, their enslavement, and their smallpox two hundred years before. For a time, the Shawnee lived in northern Virginia and in Pennsylvania along the Susquehanna Valley on the western edge of the Delaware land. The Delaware were the dominant eastern

tribe and were not threatened by their Shawnee cousins. Eventually, when Keigh-tugh-qua, known as Cornstalk to the English, was a child, pressure from the colonist from the east encouraged the Shawnee to move to the Ohio country, establishing villages in Kinnikinnick, Chillicothe, and the mouth of the Scioto River."

"So, when are we talking, now?" Randy asked.

John resumed, "Well, my recent reading tells about the settler's experiences from about 1730 to 1780. This area was the far Virginia frontier in those days. The English were audacious enough, once they landed on the coast at Jamestown and Williamsburg, to claim for their crown all the land between there and the Pacific Ocean, although they had never seen it or sensed the vast amount of territory involved. So, when they pressed west, they did it with a sense of ownership, even though they had not purchased it as was their custom at home. Greed overtook them. The Europeans had long discounted any rights of Indians. They considered the Indians heathens, even sub-human, since they did not share the same religion, language or culture."

"So, this would have been hunting territory," Randy commented. "Was that the extent of the reason to fight over this land?"

"Well in part," John continued. "The European presence here destabilized the Indian culture in many ways. Besides the displacements, traders induced Indian peoples to use their goods, to become dependent on them, things like sugar and alcohol, pots, metal knives and above all guns, which also meant a continuing need for lead and powder. Culture changed more when the dependency on trade goods required a rate of hunting far in excess of previous patterns to meet the people's sustenance needs. So, agriculture was devalued over hunting and trapping for skins. Soon the game was depleted; the elk disappeared, the bison of the eastern forest, and then the deer. The economy was in ruins; respect for the old ways and the order they brought had been lost. And besides dependency, the guns changed the face of warfare and the extent of damage caused by war."

"I can see what's coming," Randy mused.

"So, here we are. We already have our own politic, as it were, our customs and practices, a complete lifestyle. Along come the whites bringing an accelerated economy, powder, alcohol and greed, all the young braves began to see a different world than that passed on from the elders. They started to act on their own, without counsel, and did some terrible things. The whites also were greedy. Both sides murdered, maimed, scalped and retaliated. It was a terrible time for everyone made worse by a great cultural divide. It is difficult to tell who was most responsible for the patterns of raids."

Randy reflected, "So, it's not just that's we lost our land and our lives. In a generation, a whole way of life was gone."

"Yes," John lamented, "and we feel this today in the Oklahoma territory and feel abused, as if it is something new. But already by the year 1770, the process was devastating," John continued. "What made things even more confusing was the overwhelming power of the whites, their numbers, but also this notion of their serving different kings. To the North, the French colonized the land now called Canada, convincing the Huron, the Ottawas and others to fight for them. The Indians had become dependent on the gifts and the revenue from the fur trade. You see, as the French landed in the north, they claimed all the land along the course of the Mississippi River down to the Spanish claim in Louisiana. Along with the main river, they claimed all its drainage. This conflicted with the English and the Spanish claims and so they included this dispute in each of the wars in the European theatre. However, each invading power in turn tried to recruit the native peoples to allegiance to their cause. And so, on behalf of various European powers, Indians fought the different white groups, along with their fellows as European allies. Most of the wars depended heavily for their success on this Indian element. However, as wars were settled in Europe, nothing was really ever settled here in North America. Indians were never included in the negotiations and the deals."

John paused then refocused. "Let me share more about happenings in Virginia. In the 1750's the Shawnees had fought to some degree

for the French. Besides defending the country as their hunting lands, the young Cornstalk and his band came through this territory on occasional raids on English white settlers. After 1763 the English king, George the Third, in order to decrease tension on the frontier, made a treaty that stated that no more whites would come to settle west of the Allegheny Mountains, generally interpreted as the Blue Ridge. But the settlers, known as Virginians, did not agree with their king and there was no regulating them so they kept coming."

"The Indians were incensed. For one, they had never lost a battle in their fighting for the French. So, a treaty which did not include them, but that ceded all their land, just as the French land had been transferred to the English, seemed to them unfair. Then the breaking of the treaty by the English colonists was a further outrage. The Shawnee had been pressed to move many times. They felt with the wave of white incursion, they needed to resist or perish. They were desperate. When the Ottawas and others to the north under Chief Pontiac reacted on rebellion to the new British administration after assuming the rule of Canada and attacked Detroit, the Shawnee caught the spirit of resistance as it spread south."

"The English colonists pressed on, thinking they had rights to the land by treaty. The Iroquois, who kept allegiance with the British, had 'given' the Ohio and Virginia lands to the British based on an old conquest, considering the Delaware and Shawnee who now lived on the land their subjects as subordinate tribes. However, there was no consensus among the nations as to the Iroquois' right to do so. To complicate things further, some of the other tribes, notably the Delaware, accepted white ways and were converted to Christianity and to farming in white style. Mostly these settled in the Susquehanna Valley then in the northern Ohio territory near Gnadenhutten and Coshocton. But as the whites could not discriminate one tribe or people from another, treating all as savages, these were treated poorly by the frontier whites, were never respected and sometimes persecuted."

"So, very near here at Fort Springs on the Greenbrier River, on the other side of this very mountain, Cornstalk's Shawnee exercised a skillful tactic, horrendous to the whites but no less effective. Having

no qualms about cleansing the country of its white invaders, he allowed his band to be entertained as 'friendly' Indians by settlers along the river bottom. After the meal, at a given signal, the party massacred their hosts, at least the men, taking the women and children hostage. They then continued across the country to the next settlement just to our east, the Clendenin farm. They may have used this very trail on returning home as they returning across the river with several of the women captives. It was common in those days of Indian warfare to take such captives, especially those with children or of childbearing age. These were intended to replace parts of the tribe's population lost in battle. Around the same time there is a tale of just such a woman, Mary Draper Ingles who was taken to Scioto Bottoms from Virginia and managed to escape and return, making the treacherous journey along the rivers to her home. There is so much to recount. Let's talk more over supper."

The two men resumed their walk and made their way to the road, tediously guiding their rod tips through the tangle of vegetation.

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"You hungry?" questioned John.

"Hungry, but frustrated at the fishing. I had heard great things about trout fishing in West Virginia," replied Randy.

"Well, remember that oldies song by John Denver. 'West Virginia...almost heaven.'? You just experienced the 'almost' part."

The two grinned and John continued, "Come on. I know a place where you can still get your fish."

In a couple of minutes they cruised into Lewisburg from route 60 west, greeted by a Civil War soldier cast in bronze on their left.

"Whites are big on war and honoring the memory of war, remember. Don't start anything this evening you don't think you can finish," John quipped.

Randy smirked but had nothing to say. John knew him well.

The quaint town retained the sense of a small intact community. The downtown was preserved with working businesses interspersed with art and tourist shops. There was a live theatre and even a Carnegie Hall.

John directed Randy to pull over.

"This place is pretty good. Some of my work colleagues have had me over here a couple of times already. Sometimes it gets crowded with tourists but the food is good, if you can wait for it."

The sign beside the sidewalk's waiting benches announced "Food and Friends". The hostess was friendly, Randy removed his brimmed hat and they were soon seated.

"The food's good," remarked Randy after the meal was underway. "I got my trout after all. John, I was really impressed about how much of the history you have picked up and been able to piece things together from our peoples' point of view. It is hard going very far back through an oral tradition as in our culture. You have to sort out the memories, the historical facts, and the disappointments and emotional grudges turned into myth."

John replied, "I find the history intriguing but not just from a family or an intellectual point of view. There seems to be something eating away at me wanting to know more, a passion almost. It is hard to describe. There seems to be some sort of higher purpose behind it but I don't have a clue as to what."

Randy was curious, "So what came of the raids? How come we lost Ohio and wound up in Oklahoma?"

"Let me tell you, there are more pieces that the typical history books or PBS programs tell you about. Take the American Revolution and its relationship to the Indian."

Randy was surprised, "The American Revolution? What stake did we have in it?"



"To begin with, the idea that it all started at Lexington and Concord is a myth. Some say the first battle of the Revolution was fought near here, at Point Pleasant, West Virginia."

"Really, how's that?" Randy continued with interest.

"Well, besides the dissatisfied merchants in Massachusetts and New York, the colonists in this region were feeling the drive to cut the king out of their business and to continue to accrue land and wealth. Remember, Virginia was colonized very early by investors from England, intent on accruing the wealth they had heard about from the Spanish. Originally they too were looking for gold and other treasure. But when they began to find a market in beaver and tobacco, they were more than satisfied with their investment and wanted more. But not all the common folk shared this fortune. For them, the real gain was an independent lifestyle and the ability to own, develop and work land. Virginia gave them that opportunity. But as there came to be more of them, and explorers such as Daniel Boone told tales of richer lands to the west, many of them caught the fever to look for better and better prospects. The pressures drove them west."

John continued, "All this is fairly common knowledge; what is not so well appreciated is the risk they took, underestimating the strength and tenacity of the native occupants, the difficulty in converting the forest to arable land, the fragility of the environment and the progressive depletion of game as they arrived in numbers. They suffered much and felt that, having paid for their property with their blood, they had a higher right to it than those claimed by the king, far away, detached, and comfortable. So, by the mid-seventies, seventeen-seventies that is, there was a growing sense of rebellion against foreign rule."

"Since whites knew their own pressing west was aggravating the situation with the Indians, they anticipated war. There were small skirmishes, many of them instigated unilaterally by the whites. Many peaceable tribes were attacked, unprovoked, simply to get them out of the way. So, by 1774 greater action was imminent. The Virginians, under Lord Dunmore, their governor, intended to collect a larger force right here in Lewisburg, then called Camp Union, and

march the hundred and fifty miles to attack the main Shawnee village at the confluence of the Scioto and the Ohio Rivers.”

“But how could a force that large move through Indian country undetected,” Randy pondered.

John continued, “Well, of course, you know that in the forest, the trees have ears as it were. Hunting parties monitored their every step, harasses them and killing any that separated in small hunting groups. But they kept the Counsel well informed of developments. The Shawnee, and a larger confederation of tribes, were ready for them.”

Randy again interrupted, “So, what does this have to do with the actual American Revolution?”

“I am getting to that, Brother, if you will just be patient. Let’s pay up, let this waitress have her tip and turn the table over and we will walk the town.”

Up Washington Street and taking a turn on Jefferson, they passed a restored log house marked ‘1774’ and came to the small sign announcing ‘Site of Fort Savannah’. Across the street lay a modest but beat looking motel of the same name.

“Yes, this elevated plateau was once called the ‘Big Levels’; savannah, levels, you get the idea. So, several militias mustered here before the march. Not much to look at now, except for the spring house, which may have been the reason for choosing this site in the first place.” John referred to the simplicity of the stone lined sunken court yard with some shrubbery and parking for the Sheriff’s department which was housed in the courthouse on the bluff above the site.

“Let’s walk,” John led on.

Past Bella, the gourmet chef shop, then the theatre and a land development office, the Greenbrier Theatre and the Honalee Toy Store, Cooper Art Gallery, The Open Book, and Edith’s Health and Specialty Store, John guided Randy up the hill. Past the post office,

amid a neighborhood of vintage homes, a stately antebellum mansion-like establishment was set back from the road.

"That's the General Lewis Inn," remarked John. "Let's go read that historic roadside plaque."

Randy read with some interest,

"Site of Fort Savannah, built in 1755. Here at Camp Union Gen. Andrew Lewis mustered troops which participated in the Battle of Point Pleasant, 1774. Lewisburg was incorporated in October, 1782, by the Virginia Assembly."

Randy exclaimed, "Yes, we talked about that but what about the Revolution?"

John explained, "What the plaque does not describe is the fact that Lewis's forces were only part of the expedition. Dunmore, the royal governor, sent word that he would leave Fort Pitt and the two groups were to meet at Point Pleasant, the confluence of the Kanawha and the Ohio. Lewis, then a colonel, assembled various local militias from across southern Virginia as a force. Once at the river, they would meet Dunmore's men and then jointly their forces would attack the Shawnee. But here is perhaps the first action involving not a direct fight between the British and the colonist but the first military action with them at opposed purposes."

"What do you mean? They were to join forces, yes? That's cooperation, not working at opposed purposes," Randy protested.

John explained, "Some say that Dunmore anticipated the colonists' coup as it were. He never did join them but left them to face the Shawnee alone, while he intended to make a separate treaty with the Indians and convince them to fight further for the British."

"Dirty dog! So what happened?"

"That's most of what I've read about so far; but while you are here we should go down to Point Pleasant and get the vibes as we talk about more of the story," John suggested.

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Randy was frustrated but resigned. He knew his brother to be a hard head once he made up his mind about something.

John compromised, "Since you're a good listener and a good sport about it, let me buy you a beer. There's no Shawnee honk-tonk here but there is an Irish pub which has a fair selection of good brew."

## Chapter 5

As John began to experience the recurring dream, tonight the dream had full detail.

The tall man entered the traditional lodge. It was night. As usual, the woman arranged the dying embers of a fire and arranged skins over the sleeping children.

"Does Great Chief Keigh-tugh-qua have fear?" chided his wife, Julia, as they sat in the quiet firelight. Cornstalk, the chief of the Shawnee and the Northwest confederation, continued peering into the bed of coals. The bright embers were but a doorway to his thoughts; he read them like runes, seeing the future.

In the near distance was the sound of the drum, the dance and song, a preparation for war. Yet peace reigned in the lodge.

Though she knew him well, her man had a face which was impossible to read. As a seasoned leader, he knew how to read men's minds but remain himself inscrutable until he spoke. That is how strategy is worked. Now his woman's words stirred him from his reverie, pulling back to the moment where she sat beside him on the blanket on the earth floor. He would not speak of the counsel, but she knew.

The fire had comforted them against the chill of an October night in the Scioto Bottoms. As the children slept in the shadows, the flicker of the dying fire played upon the walls of the lodge. All was still. Now he realized the futility of any mental rehearsal. Today had been a decisive day; the counsel of tribes decided on war, against his advice. But he committed to lead and execute the nation's will. Tomorrow was tomorrow. This evening he enjoyed Julia's teasing smile and attention. And it should be so. Though for him each military engagement was to be taken seriously, that was the work of the next days. For her part, Julia had seen him prepare time after time but always return from the rain of bullets. Yet before each

engagement his own mind played upon the incomprehensible mind of the whites.

His face still stern, the great man raised a mighty arm to grasp her. She did not flinch. The muscled arm was prepared, with the dawn, to kill. But he softening his gesture, caressed her cheek, then slid his hand to take a lock of hair. As if they were children he rolled her playfully to the dirt floor of the lodge, settling beside her in silence.

For the moment their eyes locked on each other in the stillness. "I will wait for you. Many will suffer but you will do well," she prophesied. The great chief looked deep into her eyes framed in wrinkled cheeks. She meant much to him. Then his gaze returned momentarily to that far distant scene of the morrow.

Theirs was an unusual relationship. Though she was now his companion of thirty- three winters, she was not the customary squaw. Julia was not Shawnee born, but a captive, the booty from an early raid on the whites in the Shenandoah, taken as was the custom to bear children and increase the number of the Shawnee. So many of the tribe had been lost to war and disease spread from the whites. War parties took prisoners, sometimes as hostages, sometimes to increase their numbers. Julia on her part enjoyed the relationship. Born of a slave mother to John McClain, a Scottish settler to the Virginia territory west of the Alleghenies, she now had a place. She had been but fourteen at the time of her capture in 1741 but already she had recognized her bleak future. Among whites, she was considered black. A mulatto, among blacks she was not accepted either. In the Shawnee camps, travelling with her husband, now at Chillicothe, she always had a place. She was the wife, but the wife of a Chief, and not only any chief but the great chief of the Northern Confederation of Shawnee peoples.

Cornstalk, for his part, enjoyed the spirit of this faithful one. She was observant and bright, and her behavior which varied from typical Shawnee custom was refreshing. And he knew her loyalty.

"No, I have no fear," he finally volunteered as he stroked her hair. "I have concern. War, after war, raid after raid, the Shemanthes, the long knife whites, and their armies continually advance. They hunger for land; nothing stops them. The French, the English, the

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Virginians, there are too many of them and they will stop at nothing to rob us of the land given us by the Creator. Our young ones want to fight. I see that if our people are to live, we must find a way of making a peace acceptable to both sides. But tomorrow we march... then the people will speak with the tomahawk and the guns as they have decided."

He realized the answers were far from simple. He had tried to impart this opinion to the counsel. As the English and French had engaged in fight for the northern lands, those called the French convinced the First Nations of the north, and the Three Fires Confederation, to fight on their side. Indians were divided. The Iroquois fought with the English. The Shawnee had joined their Algonquin kin and Ojibway. They fought for the French, driving back the English whites coming west across the Allegheny Mountains and the Ohio River. They fought well, yet in a decisive battle on the field before the fort across the great river to the north, General Montcalm surrendered to the English. In the treaty that followed, the talk was made far across the seas. No Shawnee, Iroquois, Ottawa or Tuscarawas were part of the decisions. Yet, all the land now named America, Indian land, was given to the English as if the whites owned it all. For the Shawnee, the war accomplished nothing. Although they had not lost a battle themselves, the English acted as though the French loss had disenfranchised them also. The whites renewed their infiltration of western lands.

Early in the day, the council had convened with the customary cheer and greeting. Yet this was almost a play. The business would be serious, deadly serious. The runners had come from Piqua and the Scioto Bottoms. Although several had begun to smoke, Keigh-tugh-qua packed his bowl with sumac and tobacco and the pipe was passed. Each would speak in turn, hoping for consensus. The squaws had provided venison and yams to sustain the council members and they would sit until a decision was reached.

At the appropriate time, Keigh-tugh-qua began.

"My Brothers, you see the two armies coming toward us. Do I go forth to propose peace talk or do we fight? This is what we are here to decide. As we have seen the elk and the buffalo become so few before the guns of the whites, so we and our children will become if

we do not find another way. I wish to make the peace. I will speak more of this but let you have your thoughts."

He addressed his captains, Cataheccassa (Black-Hoof) particularly but also, Red-Hawk, Elinipsico his son, Scopathus, Chiyawee and Puckeshinwa. As chief he must lead the counsel but decisions and implementation of war were the charge of his captains who spoke for the people. He must also, as representing the confederation, hear and respect his guest Tarhe of the Wyandotte and Tah-gah-jute of the Mingos.

Initially the young, such as Se-pet-the-ke-na-the (later known as Blue Jacket), held their tongue. With fire in their hearts they listened to the old war chiefs although they did not accept all that was said. Kishkalwa, of the age of Cornstalk, lay down a string of wampum, his ballot as it were, and dared to speak. "Your words are wise in wanting to spare the women and children and all of us the cost of war. Yet unless we send the long knives back across the great water there will be no lasting peace. After the French lost, Pontiac, of the Ottawas, saw also that treaties of whites with whites brought no advantage to The People. He roused the nations and encouraged them to continue, to unite and fight against the white incursion. Finally in Ha'shimini khiithwa, the Pawpaw moon of late summer, the Great Chief of the English, one called George the Third, called for peace and made a promise that no whites would settle west of the Allegheny Mountains. But as we see, here are the whites, pressing across the Ohio River into our villages and hunting lands."

He continued. "Despite the promises, soldiers followed to protect the settlers as they stole our land from us. Promises. Some of our warriors, without our counsel, killed some of these whites. But those then continued to kill our people, whoever they found. I say we must prevail or die."

Big Fish of the Piqua Shawnee placed his wampum and spoke. "Brothers, you know I have taken many scalps. I have watched our brothers the Kickapoo and the Delaware be pushed further and further west and know the sadness and trouble this causes. I see the white men come, as many as the grains of sand by the sea. It troubles me but I hear the wisdom of Keigh-tugh-qua. The Chief



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Dunmore comes from the north to talk; I think we must talk with him and find a way for us all to be on the land."

Many spoke; most described concern but caution. Still the young awaited their turn. Finally a guest brought forth a wide belt of wampum. It spoke before the chief spoke, for all recognized the pattern, the black with red markings. It was a war belt.

The Mingo Chief, Tah-gah-jute, known to the English as John Logan, began in low tones. "I must speak," he began solemnly, "I have always shared my lodge and my hunting ground with the white men. Many are honorable but they are like children. And they do not know how to live on the land. They cannot see the spirit of the game they kill and they disrupt the harmony of the forest. Their children go hungry and they come alone, do not know how to make a tribe, a people." He spoke uncomfortably. "Two moons ago some whites entered my village. I was away hunting. They killed my wife, killed my sister who was carrying an unborn. They cut my sister open like a slaughtered deer, and drove a stake through her baby on the ground." He paused, overwhelmed. "I have been a friend to these whites but they have no honor. They must die."

Se-pet-te-ke-na-the felt he had allowed a respectful time to pass. He rose without a word then drew out his own string of wampum, laying it before the chiefs. He bowed to the great chiefs, those who had spoken plus Black Hoof, Black Fish, Puckashinwa, in their position at the center of the counsel. "My Grandfathers and Fathers, I ask permission to speak."

Keigh-tugh-qua nodded in acknowledgement.

"I am but young but I see a history also. As the peoples have passed down, this is the way it has been since the times of our grandfathers when whites first came to this land in their ships. Now, after the declaration of the Great Father across the waters, that no more whites would come on our land, nothing has changed. I fear these Virginians have a mind of their own and see land near and this Great Father so far away. They do not listen to him. It is said, they will soon try to separate themselves from his will. But already we have seen our own fathers, the fifteen chiefs under Lawoughqua, try to make a treaty at the fort at the three rivers

they call Fort Pitt. They acknowledged the defeat by the English and negotiated a peace. But as our Mingo Brother, and Bald Eagle who can no longer be among us, had shown, the whites do not act as one and there is no making peace with them. What is more, they think it is their right. They believe the Iroquois in their making the peace at the treaty at Fort Stanwix in which they gave all the land south and west, which they claimed as theirs from an old battle, to the English. But it is our land, not that of the Six Nations, to use or to give away. Now, as the Virginians are thinking to fight against their English Fathers the British will ask the Shawnee to fight with them against their own kind, the very white settlers which were pushing west. After the last war, who is the Indian to believe?"

He allowed his words to sink in then continued, "I see Shawnee here, Mingo, Cayuga, and I say we, as Indian peoples, must unite and defend our homeland. We have lost many of our proud warriors, and many others of our families to these newcomers to our land. I say we fight, and I believe I speak for many of my younger brothers."

Now a great tumult arose as the younger warriors added their support to the words Blue Jacket spoke. Keigh-tugh-qua could read the will of the people.

As chief of the confederation he must declare the will of the people. Yet, he sat in silence, allowing the din to subside. He had other knowledge. The hunting parties had been keeping him informed of the movement of the long knives across the mountains from the east. Likewise, he had received a messenger that the white chief, Dunmore, was coming from the north, from the land of the three rivers. Was he seeking war or peace? Keigh-tugh-qua's heart was heavy. Then he spoke in strong but solemn tones.

"I see your will. But consider. You see in the night sky, how many stars? So are these whites. We will kill many but we will not kill them all. I hear your hearts, our injustices received. But this is not the way."

All sat in silence as he paused. "In the dawn, I will lead you, if that is your will; there will be no compromise. It is the people who speak. We shall be brave and fight well. If anyone runs, I will kill

him with my own hand. We will prevail, for the day. But then, we will see.”

The power of the man was intimidating, even if they did not accept his judgment. There was a reverent silence.

Keigh-tugh-qua reached behind. He drew forth the tomahawk and passed it to Black Hoof. The meaning was clear. He continued, “Now, we will do it! Light the fire; warriors may dance if you wish. The hog has been killed, so feast. I will retire and prepare. The march to Tu-Endue-Wei will be swift but long. We will meet the long knives there. Take a portion of provisions with you; we will march and not stop to hunt. We will scalp but take no prisoners. I will send for you as the sky shows the first rim of light. Only my war chiefs remain and we will make strategy.”

So went the counsel. The warriors had come from several tribes. Their enthusiasm alone would not conquer the whites. With the chiefs, Keigh-tugh-qua developed his plan. It would take nearly two days to march to Tu-Endue-Wei where the enemy had camped. He knew the land well as it was the gateway to their hunting lands. He knew where and when to cross the river, the cover of the bank, and the opportune place to circle behind. It would be a long march, as they would eat and sleep little before the fight. But if they were brave and determined, the battle would be theirs.

Now in the lodge it was past the middle of the night. Julia slept. The Chief knew he must get some little sleep himself, if his mind would allow.

But his mind returned in wonder to the behavior of the whites. He had observed it for many years. They continued to amaze him.

To begin, they seemed to have no awareness of the nature of the land and its creatures. They did not see the spirit world, the spirit of the animals they killed and wasted game in such large numbers. When hunting, they only took, sometimes skins only, allowing the meat to rot. They showed no reverence for the spirit of the creature they took.

Their chiefs acted as if they were gods. Although they claimed to worship the Creator, they were not aware of how the Creator had

given out the land for use by The People. It was as if they were creating all over again, their chiefs giving out rights to the land to each man, instead of the tribes sharing the land. When the whites did make a fort of more people, they seemed to fight among themselves for the goods of the land. Sharing did not seem a virtue.

Their medicine men would encourage the Indians to accept the worship, as the whites, of a loving God, but then would come and rape and kill our women and children in the name of this loving god. All this seemed to serve to feed their undying hunger for land. But when seizing the land, they felled and burned the forest, drove away the deer, the elk and the buffalo until they were no more in the near forest. Thus they destroyed as much as built. Then after some winters of hunger they moved yet further west.

They seemed blind to the rules among the tribes. War among peoples was inevitable. To avoid frequent conflict, tribes remained at a distance. The great land between the mountains was difficult to use to raise corn. So it remained a hunting ground for many tribes. The Algonquin and Tuscarawas from the north, the Delaware and Narragansett from the east, the Cherokee and the Creek of the south used it in turn. Encounters led to bloodshed. Yet, rarely were many killed or captured. Wars were as much strategic and ritualistic as much as about eliminating a people. If incursions were serious enough, there was time for a smaller tribe to retreat and resettle further away. The land was vast.

However the whites seemed intent on driving out all others, of farming the poor land, of killing all the creatures. This was largely possible by their numbers, their lack of respect for their enemy, and the power of their guns and their long knives. Keigh-tugh-qua's dream thoughts hovered on his determination to try to understand these strange people and to work out a reciprocally acceptable solution.

Further into the night he recalled his own coming to this Ohio land. He was ten. His name then was Wynepuechsika. Before that his clan lived in the upper part of the Shenandoah Valley with other Shawnee nearby along the lower waters of the Susquehanna River. The elders of the tribes met in council and had talked; they would

make a journey to a new land. Pressures and uncertainty from the western movement of the English and their allies the Iroquois were on their hosts and grandfathers, the Delaware. The Delaware themselves had begun moving west. Some had already gone. It was wise to seek more open country, distant from the traders, the alcohol and the pressure to steal their land. Shawnee cousins in the Scioto Bottom had long told of the fertile land north and west of the Ohio. There they would be safe and welcome.

All this was nothing new. The Shawnee, as a relatively small nation, had been travelers, susceptible to the pressures around them for a long time. Ohio may have been their beginning place, in the area now called Fort Ancient. However, even in his father's time, they had found themselves in the south, among the Creek nation along the Savannah River valley. Their name in Algonquin actually meant 'the southerners'. Predatory enslavement pressures from the Chickasaws and the Catawbias drove them again north.

His father, Paxinosa, was well respected, a member of the owl clan. He would lead. By his mother's lineage, he was part of the Mekoche division. By tradition they were healers, negotiators, counselors. But the population now among many local communities was a mixture of Chillicothe, Thawekila, Mekoche, Pekowi, and Kispoko all. The tribe readied and mother prepared for the journey. His brothers Nimwha and Silverheels and sister, Nonhelema, were anxious to see a new home. They had heard stories of adventures, of hunters and warriors. But the journey would not be easy.

Initially they followed the river. There was a hunting path and they went single file. As they got several days north, the river trail became narrow, dispersed in the scrub brush. Often they would step out onto the wide stony plain at the river's edge as the waters of summer receded. The boys could run to the water's edge in search of frogs and small fish. But they were chided to stay close, as the territory was unknown and the presence of whites always suspect, besides the cougar and bear.

Each day several of the young braves went ahead to hunt for the party. Wynepuechsika watched. One day he wanted to hunt, to provide. He listened to the men's stories, of the fleet deer, of the

fearsome bear. His eyes widened as he listened to the dangers retold around the fire at night.

After many days he could see from the sun that the river, as it narrowed, veered slowly to the east. He knew that their destination was to the west. Scouts were sent ahead to discover a place to first cross over then to enter the mountains on the far side.

From there the journey became more difficult, especially for the elderly and the women. Now they were mostly traveling along game trails and their legs and footing did not always match the deer and the elk. An elder had advised that the Delaware had spoken of an ancient trail, that used by the migrating buffalo. Although that game was now very scarce, the trail could still be found. They advised the scouts and at last the trail was found. Everyone was relieved. It made traveling much easier, following the animal's wisdom through the mountains. It went due west.

Finally, they came to the Ohio Valley. The river, great like the Susquehanna, made them feel at home. Once across, the travel became much easier. The mountains were now merely hills; the rivers had a wide and grassy floodplain which made travel much easier. Game grazing on the plains seemed more plentiful. Furthermore, they were beyond the reach of the whites. Everyone became more relaxed. Soon they found a suitable place to reestablish themselves, to prepare for the winter and begin clearing for planting the following spring.

All this played through the mind of a tired yet watchful Keigh-tugh-qua on the eve of battle. The Shawnee people had a long and difficult history. They had strong will and determination to survive. In the next days they would be tested again. He was glad to have allies, yet he was still concerned about the people's decision.

Eventually he was disturbed from his reverie. "The sun will rise soon. We must go. Shall I call together the warriors?" It was Black Hoof, his first war chief.

"Yes, call them. We will march before the sun shows over the great oak at the east side of the village."

This was it. The scouts and hunting parties had been monitoring both columns of the long knives, the one under the man named Colonel Lewis coming down the Kanawha, and the one under the white father, Dunmore coming from the land of three rivers. He had originally expected that the two would join but then the change of route of Dunmore seemed even more worrisome. Keigh-tugh-qua must strike first while the two were yet divided; he was accustomed to the tricky talk of the whites. They were intent on taking the traditional lands. Seeking of peace seemed the only fitting stratagem to the old chief. However, the young braves had popular support. The reports suggested the column under Lewis were intent on destroying the Lower Scioto town by a surprise attack. They would be stopped and destroyed. In the meantime, he dispatched Se-pet-te-ke-na-the, Blue Jacket, to see what he could learn of the intent of the Lord Dunmore.

The seasoned warriors went first, setting the mood and the pace. The march was swift and silent, crossing the low hills between the Scioto and the Kanawha. No hunting was done. All slept lightly during the first night. The second night was one of action. There was no moon; the night was dark. Scouts located the long knives' camp very much at the point of the confluence of the two rivers. Under the cover of the darkness Keigh-tugh-qua led them across the river two miles above the long knives' encampment. Scouts were sent to survey the perimeter of the enemy encampment. Then his war chiefs were advised to be ready to distribute the men across the neck of the peninsula formed at the confluence. In the morning, by surprise, they would attack, cutting off the whites and either mowing them down or driving them over the high bluff into the river.

The warriors would be hidden behind the logs of driftwood from the creek above and in the bushes creating a barricade stretching from river to river. As the daylight approached, all were still in camp, ready and awaiting the signal to move to the barricade. Keigh-tugh-qua waited, sensing the optimum moment.

In the Virginian camp, the enemy were rousing. The clink of a coffee cup here, the noise of boots on gravel gave evidence of activity. Events changed when two from the long knives' camp, apparently intending to hunt, came up the river, coming in sight of

the Indian encampment. Alarmed, they turned to report what they saw. But they, too, had been seen and one was shot, the other narrowly escaping.

The warriors were mobilized to their post, ready for the encounter.

The alarm spread though the colonists' camp and a large body of the main force, in two lines, were set in motion, led each by a brave chief. The warriors fled their cover and advanced to meet them, with whoops and war song. Keigh-tugh-qua led.

As the warriors ran forward they met the first line. Men began to fall. One young warrior appeared overwhelmed by the fray. He turned to retreat. Keigh-tugh-qua was near. With his tomahawk he cleaved the skull of the fearful one.

"Does anyone else want to follow *him*?! Do you want to follow *me*?! Be strong! Let us go and fight!"

The warriors broke the first line of the long knives; their leading Colonel fell from a bullet. Keigh-tugh-qua was near, leaned over the fallen man, his eyes dull with the look of death. Though a familiar scene, he reflected, why did it have to be this way, the bravest and strongest dying? He respected the fallen man's bravery; he left his scalp and left him lay.

"Be strong! Be strong!" he continued to implore his warriors as they pressed forward.

The main body of long knives now rallied from the camp. Black Hoof called for the warriors to retreat to the protection of the logs and shrubs, their original plan. There they stood their ground. It was to be a long day.

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At their night vigil in Tu-Endie-Wei Park, Randy was watchful; he was aware of the approaching dawn. Yet he did not intrude on his brother's trance. The rim of white on the horizon grew brighter and changed to a slightly rosy glow. The sun peaked over the housetops. It was day.



An unsuspecting junior park guard whistled a tune as he opened the gate in the accustomed silence of the cool of the morning. He proceeded across the lawn, anticipating the raising of the flag. His routine was interrupted by the sight of two seated figures on the side path.

"Hey, what are you doing here?"

Randy answered for the two of them as John slowly roused himself from the dream world.

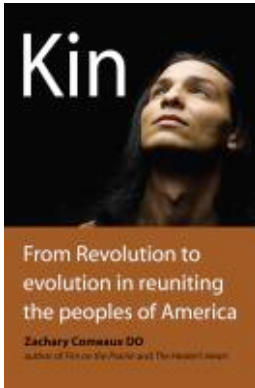
"We are visiting with our grandfather."

"Your grandfather? Does he live near here...but what does that's have to do...?"

"Keigh-tugh-qua is our grandfather. We are Shawnee. He is important to us. This place is also important to *us*."

The young guard was flustered, "I see, but this is highly irregular, you can't..."

John, now oriented, interrupted, patting Randy on the arm. "It is OK." Then turning to the officer, "It's OK, Sir, we will go. No harm has been done. All is just as we found it. This is your history too. We respect that. We will go." Then again to Randy, "Oh, yes, much has been revealed. We can go now. We will discuss it later."



*Kin* is a researched retelling of the Virginia side of the beginning of the American Revolution with a Shawnee Indian bias. A spiritualist theme conveyed through dreams gives contemporary characters access to the experience of their ancestors. But history repeats itself and those figures find themselves involved in a political intrigue of global scale. An action romance, *Kin* conveys a humanistic view of history and current American foreign policy without being dry.

# Kin

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