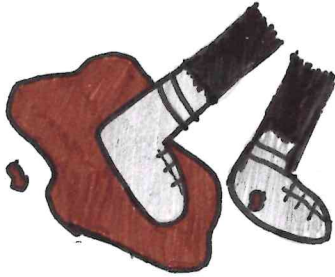


Hopes and Dreams

By Evelyn Daniels



Mud squelched under the soldiers' feet as they crept through the dark forest. There were only ten of them, but they were all good fighters and loyal to their general, Horatio Gates. They had been hiding in a forest in Saratoga after winning the Battle of Bemis Heights, and General Gates had found them and was now leading them away from the remaining British. They were headed back to General Washington so they could continue to help the Americans.



After several hours of walking, General Gates paused and said, "This will do for now. Three of you set up camp, five of you hunt for food, and you two scout for British soldiers."

Later that night, the soldiers sat around the campfire, eating the deer that they had caught and roasted. General Gates interrupted the quiet chatter and told them, "State your name and why you joined the war. You go first," pointing at a soldier who was sitting at the end of the fire. He looked young, around eighteen or nineteen.

"Me?" he stammered, "Okay. My name is Nicholas Corfaunt. I joined the war so that we could live in a free country and have a better life." The forest was so quiet that you could hear a cricket from a hundred yards away.

"You next." said General Gates waving a deer leg in the direction of the next person.

The soldier took a deep breath and said, "My name is Jackson Morts. I joined the war so that we did not have to pay ridiculous taxes and be allowed to follow our own religion. I wanted a better life for my family."

Every soldier spoke quietly as though speaking any louder would make it so the reasons they were fighting would never come true. They each went until one last person was left... General Gates.

"My name is General Horatio Gates. I joined the war because I wanted to help you all have a better life. I served in the French and Indian war and now I am serving in your war after befriending General Washington."

"But sir," one soldier spoke up. "Why did you choose to help us even though we are severely outnumbered?"

"Let me ask you this, why did *you* choose to join the war even though you knew how outnumbered we were?" General Gates countered. Silence. Then...

"Because I would do anything for my country." One soldier confessed. "Agreed" said another soldier, then another, then another, until every soldier had agreed.

"This is why you will win the war. You all would do anything to help your country and the British only want to take control over you again." General Gates said, "Your hopes and dreams for America are infinitely more powerful than anything they throw at you." The soldiers looked around the fire at each other; they all knew that what General Gates had said was true, and they all believed with all their heart in it.

