

The Legend of the Noamo

Necklace

“Child,” Grandma called in her soothing, mysterious voice. “Go get me my Noamo Necklace.” I could see her sitting perfectly still in front of my hut. I rolled my eyes, Grandma was always crazy about her stone necklace. It was like any other necklace you would see everyday. Practically every elder in the tribe had a carved necklace like that.

My hut had four straw mattresses laid out on the back wall. On one of the mattresses lay Grandma’s stone necklace. The necklace had intricate designs scattered around on it. In the middle of the necklace was a tiger. The tiger was sipping water from a beautiful river. There was something special about Grandma’s necklace--I just couldn’t figure out just what made it so special.

I grabbed Grandma’s necklace from Mama’s mattress. My thick black hair swayed as I moved. My dress let a cool breeze flow through my feet. I ran back to my grandma and handed her the necklace.

“If you want to win the country race, then you must wear this.” Grandma held up her necklace, and slowly put it on me. As soon as the necklace touched my cool skin, it spread warmth throughout my body.

“Mali, I am home,” Mama’s voice echoed in our hut.

“Hi Mama!” I ran up to Mama. Mama gave me a big smile. She had been gone with all the other women and men in the tribe to hunt for food.

“Where’s Papa?” I asked. Her smile melted.

H--he, Mama stuttered, p-passed o-on.” Mama broke into tears.

"A tree fell... on *him*," Mama said in a whisper.

"What?" Tears started to spill out of my eyes. I couldn't believe what Mama had just said. Before Papa and Mama left, Papa said he would never leave me. I clutched Grandma's necklace--It made me feel safe.

Mama backed away from me, and gasped. I looked around to see if there was anything wrong with me. Then, I saw what it was. Grandma's necklace was glowing a bright blue color. It was rising up off my chest into the air. I looked at Grandma, she was sitting perfectly still as always.

"Grandma! What should I do? I yelled from across our hut. She didn't answer. The necklace gave one final blast of color, and everything went completely back to normal. "What was that?" I asked surprised. Nothing near exciting ever had happened to me. It was more of my best friend, Cona's kind of thing. She had even traveled to the far land with her parents. The far land is the land beyond our small, little island. I always dreamed that I would live in the far land. But then I would have to leave my small Maki Tribe.

"*Malu kuma!*" Mama swore in Donde. Donde was the language that all Makians speak. I gasped. Mama never swore! I couldn't believe what was happening.

"Child, I think I have found the new owner of my Noamo necklace," Grandma said quietly. A grin took over her wrinkled face. As soon as Grandma said those words, energy surged throughout my body. I touched the necklace carefully as if it was just a little baby.

"I have been looking for the perfect owner for this necklace, but I think the necklace has found itself its owner." Grandma said quietly. She stood up, supporting her weak back with her hand. She came up to me and whispered in my ear: "You will find the secret within it, use it well." With that, Grandma fell onto the bed behind her.

"Grandma, don't go!" I yelled. "Please don't leave me!" I whispered through my tears. I had already lost one person I loved very much, I couldn't bare the thought that I was about to lose two.

"Please don't leave me," I whispered again. It came to no use. Instead of just staying solid, like a normal human does, Grandma turned to dust the minute her heart stopped beating. I had completely nothing left of her. But I knew that everyone, eventually would die and go away.

"FIRE!!!!" Quintos yelled from he and his sister's hut. Mama ran outside with her huge water pail. I stepped outside our hut, I glanced around to see where the fire was. I couldn't see it. Somebody yelled from Sharlo's hut. Sharlo is Quintos's sister. Quintos ran towards the raging fire, hoping that his sister would make it out alive. I ran after Quintos. Quintos was my best friend--I couldn't just let him die. *Please make the fire stop!* I prayed. Suddenly, the raging fire stopped. I looked up. The fire was not more than small, little, embers.

"I have never in my life have seen something so strange before!" Exclaimed Quintos. Everybody stared at me. My face turned bright red like one of Mama's prize tomatoes. Then it dawned on me of what had had happened. I ran inside my hut, and started to cry. I had lost almost everything, and on top of that I was the tribe's laughing stock.

Mama came inside the hut with an empty water bucket.

"Mali, come outside, you saved Sharlo, the whole tribe is waiting to meet you," Mama said gently. I slowly lifted myself up from the cold, hard, dirt floor.

"Really?" I said unsure of myself. I got up to go outside.

The whole tribe was chanting my name. One of the elders came forward and the chanting stopped.

"My, my," the elder said while touching my necklace. He looked up and said,

"Does anybody want to hear the story of the Noamo Necklace?" he asked in his raspy voice. We all gathered around the elder. He began to tell the story.

"Once upon a time, there was a boy who was always giving to other people. One day, he found a little stone on his mattress. He sensed that there was something special about it, so he kept it. The next day, his tribe was attacked by a bunch of thieves. He prayed that the crooks

wouldn't hurt his tribe. As soon as he said that, the thieves surrendered. The boy thought that happened by coincidence. Each and every time the tribe had trouble, the boy prayed that they would be safe. He realized that his stone was causing all this good fortune.

When he became old, he gave the stone to his children, then they gave it to their children. After a few generations, the stone was made into a necklace so it could be carried around more easily. Nobody knows who gave the boy the necklace. The stone now lives on to be a necklace." The elder got up from the ground and slowly walked back to his hut.

I clutched my necklace and smiled to myself--I hadn't lost everything.