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It was five years ago that Maya had met Nigel. Nigel was an astute treasure hunter who hailed from across the vast, unpredictable oceans. He had come from England on a search for treasure rumored to be hidden deep in the Amazon. Maya was a young tribe girl in the Amazon civilization whose job was to scout out potential threats to the safety of the civilization.

The two had met when Maya saved Nigel from the bite of a poisonous snake. She allowed him into the civilization kindly and used the medicinal herbs that were in abundance to cure the venom and prevent infection to his wound. When he came to, he thanked her for her kindness and the two began to spend time together while Nigel was on his treasure hunting expedition. While they did, they got to know each other and became friends.

They explored the ruins and Maya introduced Nigel to treasures far more beautiful than any gems he could find. She showed him the true beauty of nature within the tropical wildflowers, the great Amazon River, the majestic animals and the way the Amazon people lived in harmony with nature. This enabled him to see the beauty within nature and within Maya, and the two soon fell in love.

Maya's heart would flutter with joy when she would see him, and likewise with Nigel. They developed an emotional and spiritual bond that could never be broken. Or so they thought. When Nigel's time to return to England drew near, he urged Maya to return to England with him so that they may marry and always be together from then on. But Maya had to refuse. While she loved Nigel, she had a duty to her tribe and couldn't bring

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herself to leave them. When she told him this, at first he was very upset. But he then realized that he loved Maya and then told her that he would go back to England and tell his king that he can no longer serve him if it meant leaving her forever, and that he would return to her.

And so the day came when he had to leave. Before he did, Maya gave him a necklace as a symbol of their love. Maya told him that as long as their hearts retained their love and loyalty to each other, its power would keep him safe and return him to her. They said their goodbyes and he set sail for England. While watching the ship sail off into the vast ocean, Maya was approached by an older woman. She said to Maya “I hope you did not grow too attached to him.” Maya looked at her in bewilderment. “What do you mean?” she asked.

The woman gave a light chuckle and said, “Men like him do not love anyone, though they say they do. Where he comes from, people only love things. They do not know what love is, nor do they know how to give it. They only know greed, and how to try and satisfy it.” Maya was shocked by these words. “You don’t know what you’re talking about. He is a man with a heart and soul that know both love and kindness. He and promised me that he shall return, and return he will,” Maya retaliated. The woman let out a laugh. “Poor child,” she said. “You are so young and so blinded by your ignorance. I have seen men like him lie, cheat and steal for what they want.” She turned her head away from Maya and towards the sea. “As I see it, if you can’t be sold and traded for wealth, he sees no reason to return to you.” Maya looked at her in disgust and said, “You’re just a bitter old woman! You only wish to scare me with your words and you know nothing of the bond that we have! He will return, and when he does, we’ll see who

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is ignorant!” And with that, Maya walked away, not looking back at the woman. “Poor child,” she said as she watched Maya storm off.

That night, to reassure herself, Maya told herself before she went to sleep that her necklace would bring him back to her, like she said it would. She told herself again and again until she had lost all doubt in her mind. She then went to sleep easily. But in her dreams, the woman’s words echoed within her head and she saw herself chasing after Nigel, and yet she couldn’t get to him. She called his name, but he would not answer. She writhed all through her sleep that night.

Before she had known, years passed, and she had seen no sign of Nigel nor had she heard from him. She had become very distraught and melancholy. She thought of what the woman had said. She then told herself once more that as long as the loved they shared remained strong, he would return to her. But then she thought what if it hadn’t? What if Nigel’s love had faded and the necklace could not bring him back? She fell into a heavy depression. She couldn’t believe that she had been lied to and abandoned. She eventually decided that her pain was so great; she would never allow anyone else to suffer the same pain again.

And from that day on, she began to train as an Amazon warrior. She dedicated all of her time to increasing her strength and speed. She used training as an escape from the pain and to forget about Nigel. Eventually, she became the leader of the Amazon warriors. Still remembering the pain she was caused, she became fierce and cruel.

She and her followers would viciously attack anyone who would dare come near their civilization, especially men. They would torch the campsites of outsiders and set traps within the rainforest to keep them out. Maya believed that anyone who came from

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the outside world had a heart filled with greed and would destroy anything in their path to satisfy their selfish desires.

One day, she was especially merciless to a traveler she discovered roaming through the rainforest. He came with a few men from his ship and was drawing too near to the tribe, so she intervened. She let loose a small stream of arrows upon them to intimidate them. Two of the men fled, while one simply took cover and continued on quickly after the arrows ceased. He seemed to know his path well for some reason, and she soon knew why.

He was wearing traditional Amazon charms and must have raided some of the tribe's homes on some previous visit. Maya quickly pursued him until she caught up to him. She leapt in front of him to cut him off. Upon seeing her he first paused for a moment. Then he came towards her with his arms outstretched. Maya aimed at him with her bow and fired. The arrow pierced his chest, and he fell to the ground. "What a foolish attempt at an attack. The fool must've had his judgment hindered by his greed," Maya thought. When he hit the ground, she noticed that a small book had fallen from his hands, and it was open to a page that had shocked her. The page had "Maya" written on it, in large letters.

She quickly picked it up and began reading. It read:

"Dear Maya, how I long to see you again. I wish to once again hold you in my arms and never leave you again, for without you, I am incomplete. I lie here wasting away within a prison cell for my king was not at all pleased with my decision to leave my

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position for you. But whether he wills it or not, the love we share shall return me to you one day.”

And it was at that moment Maya realized her great error. She had assumed that Nigel had abandoned her when in truth; he was imprisoned for his very love for her. She had killed the man whom made her heart rejoice years ago. Maya fell to her knees and burst into tears. “Why? Why did I lose faith in the one whom I loved so deeply?” she cried. Maya then took a small blade and raised it to her chest and closed her eyes. Then she opened them and threw the knife away from her. “No,” she said, still sobbing. “I must warn the others. Warn them as to how a lack of faith can lead to this suffering like no other, so that they may not end up this way.”

And so from then on she did. From that day on, Maya warned those within her tribe of how hard it can hurt when your trust and love wane, and she could only hope that her story never be repeated again.