

The afternoon sun beat down from high above the Ionian countryside. It was a hot summer's day, and the only sound that permeated the fields was the wind in the crops, and the soft pitter-pat of young feet. Katu had decided: he was running away from home. He had taken his homemade wooden sword, truly a mighty weapon, and a light lunch which felt heavier every minute he walked. He was thinking that it might be time to release his burden when a voice pierced the quiet. "Aren't you a little young to be out on the road?" Katu jumped in surprise, then made what he imagined a tough face would look like. He turned to face the voice, and the wind changed. "Hey, watch your tone! I'm going to become a great hero, and save Ionia from the dirty Noxians!" The man wore blue robes, and carried a long blade by his side. Under a cowl, he had a warrior's hairstyle, albeit an overgrown one. "Hey, are you a soldier?"

"A soldier?" The man chuckled. "No, not quite. My name is Yasuo. Where are your parents, little one?"

"I'm Katu, and I'm a- well... my father says we're farmers, and we shouldn't try to change that. That's stupid, right? I think that--"

"Your father is a wise man- the sword's poor company for a long road."

What did that mean? Was the man going to bring him back to the farm? Katu's grip on his sword tightened. He wouldn't go without a fight.

"But, I felt the same as you when I was much younger." Katu relaxed. "If you truly think your place is with the army, I'll help you along." His voice hardened. "Just know that your journey may not be a happy one."

Katu devoured the vegetables and meat Yasuo had bought for him. It was no great meal, but the mushy gruel Katu was accustomed to was certainly no substitute. Despite his oddities, the man had sort of grown on Katu- mostly because of the free meal. As the pair left, a group of soldiers, imbibed with weapons and liquor walked by. Yasuo stepped out of their way, bowing low out of respect. One of the soldiers spoke in a drunken outburst, "Hey you! Did you get your clothes out of a trash heap?" His compatriots all roared with laughter, and Katu had faith his new friend would beat them senseless for that disrespect. He waited smugly.

"I'm sorry that my clothes don't hold up to your standard." The man apologised, of all things! The soldiers shuffled to an empty table, chuckling and looking back smugly. Katu wanted to stand up for Yasuo, but felt a firm hand on his shoulder, and followed it outside, confused. Maybe the man was a bandit- or worse, a coward! After all, a true warrior would surely have stood up for his honor. Yasuo was walking away. Clearly, he thought Katu was following. Was someone who runs so easily from a fight really a good role model? Katu easily decided the answer was no. He watched the man walk away, then went into the inn to join the soldiers.

Two lunches in one day, and Katu still had the one he packed! This was great! The soldiers asked him where he came from, but Katu was sure he could make them believe his father had let him off to join the army. They drank and sang, and drank more. They talked almost endlessly of their bravery, and feats in battle against the Noxians, and Katu knew they had to be telling the truth. They asked Katu who his friend was and where he was going, and Katu replied that he was some coward who he barely knew. After mentioning Yasuo's name, the soldiers froze in surprise, one of them nearly spitting out his wine. They demanded Katu tell them more. Perplexed, Katu gave the soldiers a direction, and they staggered to their feet and rushed out of the inn. 'Weird people, but they were pretty nice!' Katu thought, still imagining his what own valiant deeds could be.

But... what if they were going to hurt his friend? He might be a coward, but he did buy lunch. The man, of course, would need Katu's help explaining to the soldiers, so he hurried off. They had left only minutes ago, so Katu was sure he could catch up. As he ran, the gentle breeze became more and more rough, violently stirring the fields.

Until it wasn't.

Katu burst into a clearing, and stopped, staring, unable to comprehend the scene before him. The soldiers' mangled bodies were strewn across the field, limbs and blades as cleanly separated from their owners as a crop might be harvested. Seemingly untouched by the chaos, one man was standing in the center. His tattered blue robes sharply contrasted the blood surrounding him. The coward. The man turned and spoke, but Katu could not hear. He grasped at words, but fear had muted him. If the man would do that to his own country's soldiers, what would he do to Katu?

Yasuo asked the wind to clean his blade, and it answered, as always. Every kill was another burden upon his soul, and these unnecessary deaths didn't help. He had even lost the child. Why had he tried to help? Perhaps to ease some sense of duty he still held, or perhaps to stop another from repeating his mistakes. Yasuo grimaced. It was shaping up to be a bad day. Suddenly, he heard a rustle behind him. Reinforcements? He twisted around fast as lightning, ready to strike, but it was Katu, wide-eyed and slack jawed. Yasuo relaxed, sheathing his sword. "I was getting worried without my backup-" he started, but the boy was already running back the way he came, his wooden blade hitting the ground with a dull thud.

Yasuo smirked.

It appeared as if a peasant's life was not so bad after all.