

Escape
By: Bradley Perkins

The bare tree branches slashed my forearms while they shielded my face as I ran recklessly through the forest. The wind carried some of the afternoon rain down on me from the trees. An open field was in sight and so was freedom from these woods. As the forest thinned, the sun started to peek from behind a gray cloud, briefly brightening up my surroundings, until it hid once more.

The open field seemed somehow more-bleak than the lifeless forest that I was hurled out of. I slowed my run to a stumbling halt. I slumped over, gasping for air when further down the valley, two figures emerge from the tree line. Suddenly, a sharp scream comes from that direction. More screams were made all around me. The Iroquois caught up fast.

I hit the ground and push forward. My bloodied forearms and hands scraped and pulled my body against the terrain beneath. I cut the beaver pelts free from a leather band cord around my waist, so that I may glide easier towards a large oak near the end of the meadow. When I reach the tree, I lay quietly near its base, resting and listening. I hear the faint sound of moving water. I slowly rise, risking to get a better sense of direction. There was a slight downward hill that led to a river. Just as I lower myself, an arrow whizzes by my ear and pierces the tree where I once stood. Another shrieking scream filled the air, followed by more calls all around me. The Iroquois were closer.

Arrows hiss by from behind, as I rush downhill. When I reach the bottom, my momentum carries me over the edge of a bank, planting me in mud, just feet from the river. The river marks the territorial line, and French camps lay just ahead. The rushing river flowed with intensity. Dangerous as it is, it was still the lesser of the two evils.

The war cry echoes again loudly. I start to shove a log, that was washed ashore, into the water. Arrows once more came raining down. A few punctures the log as I give one final shove to push it into the river. The current quickly pulled at the log and swept it downstream. I fell when I tried to grab the log before it floated away. As I look down at my leg, a single arrow had impaled it. They were above me on the ridge now, surrounding me. Paying no mind to the pain, I made one final lunge into the river.

The current carried me quickly downstream, finally catching up to the advancing log. Arrows still came from above until I was out of sight. I try to hold on with my remaining strength, but my grip is failing. My hands began to slip until the log came to a stop. I now lay at the shallow edge of the river. No war cries. No one in sight. I had escaped.