



BY
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LOGLINE

A scarred warrior who loss his memory must seek redemption and
confront the betrayer who haunts him,
both in battle and within his soul
while learning of his dark past.

SYNOPSIS

In **1919**, amidst the fading yet persistent tradition of headhunting in Sabah, a young Dusun warrior rises with the promise of becoming his tribe's future leader. Ferocious in battle and bound by custom, he enters his headhunting ritual to prove his strength and secure his place among his people.

But envy brews close to home. Betrayed by his closest comrade during the ritual, the young warrior is forced into a deadly duel. Though he nearly triumphs, an ambush orchestrated by his friend turns the tide. Gravely wounded, he plunges from a cliff, left for dead as his tribe moves on without him.

When he awakens, he finds himself in a British outpost, nursed back to health by a colonial family. His memory is shattered, his name, his tribe, his purpose all forgotten. Struggling through hardship, he discovers new ways of life: kindness, trust, and communities of Dusun who live without bloodshed. Through trials and encounters, he slowly rebuilds himself, torn between the violent instincts of his past and the gentler path unfolding before him.

As fragments of memory return, so does the truth of who he was: a headhunter molded by violence and betrayal. Yet with this revelation comes a choice. No longer the wild warrior who fought only for glory, he embraces his scars as symbols of growth. Guided by newfound bonds, Christian teachings, and his own will, he resolves to use his strength not for power but for protection. His story becomes one of transformation of a man once feared as a hunter of heads, reborn as a shield for others.

CHARACTERS

Katama

Name: Katama (*means “brave” in Dusun language*)

Role: Protagonist / Dusun warrior, future leader candidate

Age:20

Personality

- Fierce, resilient, and disciplined warrior
- Soft-hearted beneath his hardened exterior
- Haunted by betrayal and his forgotten past
- Protective, gradually becomes compassionate and caring

Backstory

- **Early Life:** Katama was born into a Dusun tribe in the highlands of Sabah. From a young age, he was trained in the ways of survival, hunting, and warfare. Life in the village was harsh, and boys were taught to suppress their emotions to embody strength. Despite this, Katama secretly held a soft heart by showing kindness to children, the elderly, and animals, though he masked it to appear fearless.
- **Chosen Warrior:** As he grew older, Katama’s skill in combat and leadership instincts made him stand out. By his late teens, he was chosen as one of the candidates for the **headhunting trials** which is a brutal tradition meant to prove worthiness for leadership and to honor ancestral spirits. Success in these trials would elevate him to a prime candidate for future chief of the tribe.
- **Bond with Goud:** Among his closest companions was **Goud**, a childhood friend he trusted as a brother. Together, they trained, fought, and dreamed of shaping the tribe’s future. Katama believed Goud shared his vision of protecting their people, never suspecting the jealousy festering in Goud’s heart.
- **Betrayal and Fall:** During the headhunting ritual, Katama and Goud set out together. But at the height of their trial, Goud betrayed him by plotting an ambush with others. Katama fought fiercely, nearly overcoming the treachery, until he was overwhelmed. Wounded and exhausted, he was driven over a high cliff, presumed dead.
- **Rescue and Amnesia:** Against all odds, Katama survived the fall but was gravely injured. He was discovered by **Sir Peter Golden**, a British colonial officer, and brought to their base. The British considered executing him as a savage headhunter, but Peter argued for his survival. The reason is partly out of pragmatism, partly out of mercy. When Katama awoke, he had lost all memory of who he was.
- **Life with the British:** Stripped of his past, Katama struggled to adapt in a foreign world where he was viewed with suspicion. Unable to speak English and haunted by fragmented dreams of blood and betrayal, he seemed feral at first. Over time, however, through the patience of Sir Peter, Clarice, and Koronob, he began to learn language, faith, and values beyond violence.
- **Inner Conflict:** Though Katama slowly built bonds and discovered new ways of life, his warrior instincts never left him. In moments of danger, the “headhunter” within would resurface, terrifying those around him and himself. As memories of Goud returned in fragments, Katama realized his greatest battle was not only against his betrayer but against the savage part of himself he once embraced.

Relationships

- **Goud:** Best friend turned betrayer; later main antagonist
- **British family:** His saviors; grows close to them
- **Clarice:** Daughter of the family; love interest
- **Other Dusun tribes:** Forms bonds with communities who live without headhunting

Main Drive (Progressive)

- To **rediscover his identity** after memory loss
- To **overcome betrayal and inner demons**
- To **transform his strength from destruction into protection**
- Ultimately, to **define a new path as a leader guided by compassion, not fear**

Goud

Name: Goud (*shortened from “Goudut,” meaning “liar” in Dusun*)

Role:

- Antagonist / Katama’s childhood friend and betrayer
- Symbol of jealousy, ambition, and corrupted loyalty

Age: 21

Personality

- Charismatic, persuasive, and outwardly loyal
- Deeply envious and insecure beneath the surface
- Manipulative - able to twist truth into advantage
- A natural deceiver, embodying the meaning of his name

Backstory

Childhood and Bond with Katama:

Goud grew up in the same village as Katama, the son of a respected but stern warrior. Though Katama and Goud were close in age, their personalities clashed from the beginning. Katama was admired for his natural strength and bravery, while Goud often lagged behind. Still, the two became inseparable, forging a bond of brotherhood during hunts, games, and training.

Living in Katama’s Shadow:

As the years passed, Katama’s reputation as a warrior grew, while Goud was often overlooked or underestimated. Though skilled and clever, he lacked Katama’s charisma and natural leadership. The elders and even other youths compared them constantly, with Katama often held up as the model Dusun warrior. This constant comparison planted seeds of resentment in Goud’s heart.

The Trials of Manhood:

When the headhunting trials approached, both Katama and Goud were chosen to participate. Outwardly, Goud celebrated, but inside he seethed with fear. The fear that Katama would once again outshine him and secure his path toward becoming the next head chief. To Goud, this was not only about pride but survival and failing in the trials meant being branded weak, unworthy, and forever in Katama’s shadow.

Betrayal:

Driven by envy and desperation, Goud plotted to betray Katama during the trials. He allied himself with others who secretly resented Katama’s dominance, convincing them to strike at the perfect moment. When Katama trusted him most, Goud led the ambush. The betrayal nearly cost Katama his life, and Goud returned to the tribe claiming Katama had fallen in battle, using lies to cover his treachery.

Aftermath:

Goud’s betrayal gained him temporary recognition, but it did not silence the whispers of doubt from the tribe. To prove himself, he hardened, becoming ruthless, cunning, and willing to spill blood without hesitation. He carried the weight of his lies, twisting them into justification: *Katama was too dangerous, too soft, too unfit to lead*. Over time, his jealousy turned into obsession while Goud convinced himself that Katama’s “ghost” haunted him, both in dreams and in the rumors that the warrior still lived.

Haunted Rivalry:

When Katama resurfaces, alive but with no memory of his past, Goud sees it as both a threat and a curse. To him, Katama represents everything he tried to bury which are his inferiority, his lies, and his betrayal. The rivalry is no longer just about leadership of the tribe, but about survival of identity: one of them must fall.

Relationships

- **Katama:** Once a brother, now the living embodiment of his lies
- **Dusun tribe:** Tries to win loyalty by spinning narratives of honor
- **Other headhunters:** Drawn to his charm, but often pawns in his schemes

Main Drive

- To **claim leadership through deception and ambition**
- To **bury the truth of his betrayal** and rewrite his legacy
- To **prove himself greater than Katama**, no matter the cost
- Ultimately, to **live up to his name: liar who bends truth into power**

Peter Golden

Role: Head of the British family; colonial officer; Katama's savior and mentor

Age: 48

Personality

- Man of faith: devout Christian with strong moral convictions
- Pragmatic and cautious, balancing ideals with common sense
- Compassionate but wary -He is slow to trust Katama at first
- Protective of his family above all else

Backstory

Early Life in Britain (1871–1890s):

Born in 1871 in rural England, Peter was the son of a parish vicar. His childhood revolved around faith, discipline, and service. While his peers often sought industry or trade, Peter gravitated toward duty and believing one could serve both God and Empire.

Education and Service Abroad (1890s–1900s):

He studied theology and history but ultimately pursued a military commission. In his twenties, he was posted overseas, experiencing both the harsh realities of empire and the cultural richness of Asia. These years shaped his pragmatism where he remained devout, but he learned faith alone could not govern people and leadership required both strength and mercy.

Marriage and Family (Early 1900s):

During his service in Singapore, Peter married Margaret, a strong, faithful woman who would become his lifelong partner. They had three children: two sons, who later enlisted as soldiers and were stationed in Sarawak, and their youngest daughter, Clarice.

Transfer to North Borneo (1910s):

By the mid-1910s, Peter, now in his mid-40s, was transferred to North Borneo (Sabah) to oversee colonial administration in frontier regions. His mission was to keep order among restless tribes, piracy along the coast, and outlawed customs like headhunting.

The Day He Found Katama (1919):

At age 48, Peter's patrol discovered Katama, broken and unconscious at the bottom of a cliff. His fellow officers wanted to execute the young headhunter immediately. But Peter, guided by both pragmatism and faith, refused to do the execution. To him, Katama could be a source of knowledge about the tribes and by sparing him was, in Peter's eyes, an act of God's will.

From Captive to Protégé:

At first, Peter saw Katama only as a dangerous captive. But as he observed the young warrior, he noticed glimmers of curiosity and humanity beneath the hardened shell. He began teaching Katama English, ethics, and Christianity. What began as an experiment grew into something personal. Peter came to see Katama as a son, despite his doubts.

Man of Faith and Balance:

Now in his late 40s and early 50s during the story, Peter is both strict and compassionate. He is pragmatic enough to protect his family at all costs, yet faithful enough to believe in redemption, even for someone raised in bloodshed.

Relationships

- **Katama:** From wary prisoner to student, then almost family; acts as mentor and father figure
- **Clarice Golden (daughter):** Protective father; careful of her closeness with Katama
- **Mrs. Golden (wife):** Shares a strong bond; family is his anchor and moral compass
- **British colonial officers:** Respected, but sometimes criticized for showing “too much mercy”

Main Drive

- To **protect his family and community** in a dangerous, foreign land
- To **civilize and redeem Katama**, proving even a “headhunter” can change
- To **balance faith and duty**, never losing sight of compassion even in harsh times

Clarice Golden

Role: Daughter of Sir Peter Golden; Katama's companion and eventual love interest

Age: 20

Personality

- Independent, curious, and adventurous
- Practical and unafraid of hard work (farm chores, animals, physical labor)
- Cheerful and talkative and tends to "bug" Katama at first
- Intelligent and imaginative, with a love for adventure stories
- Compassionate and persistent, often seeing potential in others before they do

Backstory

Early Life (1899–1910s):

Clarice Golden was born in 1899 in Singapore, the youngest of three children and the only daughter of Sir Peter and Margaret Golden. With two older brothers preparing for military service, Clarice grew up both sheltered and restless. She was doted on by her parents but secretly envied her brothers' freedom and opportunities.

Life in North Borneo (1910s):

When her father was transferred to North Borneo, Clarice entered her teenage years in a world far removed from colonial high society. Instead of salons and social gatherings, she found herself on the family's estate, surrounded by farmland, jungle, and local communities. She thrived here, taking joy in physical work such as feeding animals, planting, harvesting, and exploring nearby woods. This frontier life gave her independence, though her parents still expected her to uphold the image of a proper English lady.

Curiosity and Personality:

Clarice was spirited, outspoken, and full of curiosity. She loved adventure novels and explorers' journals, imagining herself traveling the world. While she admired her father's strength and faith, she resisted the arrogance of many colonial officers, especially in their disdain for local people. She believed that everyone had worth, and her playful, bold nature often put her at odds with rigid expectations of how a young woman "should" behave.

Meeting Katama (1919, Age 20):

When Sir Peter rescued Katama and brought him into their household, Clarice was immediately intrigued. Where others saw a dangerous headhunter, she saw mystery and possibility. At first, her interest was almost scientific and all she wanted is to study him, understand his ways, and learn what made him different. She teased him relentlessly, pestering him with questions, which made Katama view her as irritating at first.

Friendship to Romance:

Over time, their interactions shifted. Clarice helped Katama with English and Western customs, while he showed her fragments of Dusun traditions and resilience shaped by hardship. The playful annoyance between them evolved into trust, then affection. Their romance blossomed naturally and not as instant passion, but as a slow bond forged through shared labor, laughter, and survival.

Inner Conflict:

Clarice's relationship with Katama forced her to confront deeper questions. She was the daughter of a colonial officer whose duty was to suppress headhunting tribes yet her heart was drawn to a man who had once lived by those traditions. She struggled with loyalty to her family versus her belief in compassion and human dignity, ultimately choosing to believe in Katama's potential for change.

Relationships

- **Katama:** Starts as playful annoyance, evolves into a meaningful bond; slow-burn romance built on trust, humor, and shared growth
- **Sir Peter Golden (father):** Respected and deeply admired; she inherits much of her determination from him
- **Mrs. Golden (mother):** Shares a strong family bond; her mother balances Clarice's adventurous streak with gentleness
- **Brothers:** Though absent, their role as soldiers inspires her sense of resilience and pride

Main Drive (Progressive)

- To **prove that Katama is more than a headhunter**, showing her father and others he can change
- To **guide Katama toward a new identity**, helping him navigate between his violent past and a more hopeful future
- To **stand as Katama's bridge to humanity** -Grounding him in faith, compassion, and companionship
- Ultimately, to **walk beside Katama as he transforms**, becoming both his emotional anchor and inspiration for choosing life over destruction.

Koronob

Name: Koronob (*means “nervous” in Dusun*)

Role: Translator, teacher, and Katama’s closest friend

Age: 17

Personality

- Anxious and easily flustered, especially at first around Katama
- Intelligent and studious; a quick learner with a sharp memory
- Witty, often provides humor in tense situations
- Deeply loyal and compassionate once trust is formed
- Prefers books and knowledge over romantic pursuits

Backstory

Early Life (1902–1912)

Koronob’s birth was celebrated as a rare gift because he is the only boy in a family otherwise filled with daughters. His parents, though poor farmers, cherished him, but his ten older sisters treated him as both their plaything and responsibility. He was teased, fussed over, and often dragged into their games or errands. Growing up in such an environment, he became shy, cautious, and easily flustered.

Unlike other boys in his village, who learned hunting or fieldwork, Koronob was considered too timid and frail for warrior traditions. His father, seeing his son’s bright mind, decided to send him to missionary classes. By the age of 10, Koronob was already showing signs of brilliance where he could read and write in Dusun, Malay, and was picking up English quickly.

Adolescence (1912–1919)

By his teenage years, Koronob had become known as the “book boy” of his village. While other young men were praised for their skill with blades, Koronob’s pride lay in books, letters, and stories from beyond Borneo. His fascination with the outside world are particularly in English history and politics which set him apart from his peers.

He was admired by some girls for his good looks and charm, but Koronob was utterly uninterested in romance. Having grown up surrounded by sisters, he joked that women were “too much work” and preferred the company of books.

Still, being the only boy in his family came with pressure. Koronob often feared he would be seen as weak compared to the warriors of his tribe. His nervousness, combined with his sharp wit, became his shield. He learned to joke about his shortcomings before anyone else could.

Role in the Story (1919 onward)

At 17, Koronob’s language skills brought him to the attention of British officials. When Katama, the injured headhunter, was spared and brought into the colonial outpost, Koronob was chosen as his **translator and English tutor**.

At first, he was horrified. To him, Katama represented the violent, bloody traditions that missionaries and reformists wanted his people to leave behind. Their lessons were filled with tension and awkward humor: Koronob stammering nervously while Katama mocked his fear or ignored his words.

But as days turned into weeks, Koronob began to see Katama differently. Beneath the scarred warrior was a young man struggling with memory loss and identity. Katama, in turn, grew to respect Koronob's intelligence and patience. Their bond deepened into brotherhood and Koronob becoming Katama's **first true ally** after Goud's betrayal.

Relationships

- **Katama:** Starts awkwardly, but grows into a deep brotherhood; their dynamic is a mix of humor, trust, and mutual respect
- **British family:** Respected for his intellect and valued as a bridge between cultures
- **Dusun community:** Admired as an ideal young man because of his intelligent, capability, and well-spoken
- **Women:** Due to his Good looks he unintentionally attracted them, but dismissive of romance due to his chaotic upbringing with sisters

Main Drive

- To **bridge worlds:** connecting Dusun culture and British influence through language and knowledge
- To **support Katama's growth**, serving as teacher, confidant, and brother-figure
- To **pursue knowledge and wisdom**, believing it's the true path to strength and progress
- Ultimately, to **prove that intellect can be as powerful as the warrior's blade**

HISTORICAL TIMELINE FOR WORLD SETTING

● **Pre-Colonial & Early Colonial (Before 1881)**

- **Pre-1800s** – Headhunting is deeply rooted in Borneo’s tribal culture (Dusun, Murut, Dayak, Iban). It’s tied to spiritual rituals, manhood trials, and community honor.
- **1840s–1860s** – British explorers and missionaries begin documenting headhunting in Borneo. James Brooke becomes the “White Rajah” of Sarawak and wages campaigns against Iban headhunters.
- **1870s** – Growing British and European trade interests in North Borneo. Headhunting raids still common in the interior highlands.

● **British North Borneo Chartered Company Era (1881–1946)**

- **1881** – The British North Borneo Company (BNBCC) officially takes control of Sabah (then called North Borneo). Their mandate: administer, “civilize,” and exploit resources.
- **1880s–1890s** – Company enforces laws banning slavery and headhunting. Punitive expeditions launched against tribes who continue raids.
- **1890s** – Christian missions expand, building schools and churches. Some Dusun and Murut communities begin converting, while others resist.
- **1897** – The Mat Salleh Rebellion erupts, led by Datu Mat Salleh, a Muslim leader resisting British rule. Though not a headhunter, this shows indigenous resistance to colonial authority.
- **1890s–1900s** – Reports of headhunting decline, but isolated practices persist in remote villages. British see headhunters as a serious threat to settlers and traders.

● **Early 20th Century (1900–1918)**

- **1900–1910** – Headhunting largely suppressed near coastal and lowland areas but survives in isolated highland Dusun and Murut communities.
- **1905–1915** – British start training local Dusun and Murut men as interpreters, police, and guides. This creates tension between “civilized” locals and traditionalists.
- **1914–1918 (WWI)** – Britain diverts attention and resources to the war, but colonial order in North Borneo remains stable. Some local men serve in labor corps for the British.

● **“Blood Scar” Period (1919–1930s)**

- **1919** – The immediate post-WWI era. British officers and settlers return with new worldviews, while local tribes still cling to old traditions.

*Katama undergoes his headhunting trial around this time.

- **1920s** – Christianity and English education spread deeper into the interior, creating new Dusun elites like Koronob.

Head hunting becomes rare, condemned both by British law and Christian converts.

Still, the memory of it lingers, and young warriors from traditionalist villages (like Katama) continue to see it as proof of manhood.

- **1925–1930** – North Borneo more firmly under British control. Plantations expand, missionary schools grow, and younger natives face pressure to abandon old customs.

- **Later Colonial Period (For Future Reference)**

- **1942–1945** – Japanese occupation during WWII disrupts British rule, but that’s after your story’s timeline.
- **1946** – British North Borneo becomes a Crown Colony, marking the end of Company rule.

WORLD MAP NOTES & LOCATIONS FOR THE STORY

● **Story World in Context (1919)**

- **Coastal Towns (Sandakan, Jesselton):** Colonial order, trade, Christianity, and schools dominate.
- **Interior Villages (Tambunan, Keningau, Tenom):** Some adopting Christianity, others clinging to ancestral traditions like headhunting.
- **Wild Highlands (Crocker Range, Padas River):** Dangerous zones, less controlled by the British, where **Katama's headhunting trial** makes sense.
- **Sacred Landmarks (Mount Kinabalu):** Represent Dusun pride, spirituality, and warrior traditions.

● **Possible Fictional Locations for Story Freedom:**

Katama's Village – Could be placed in the **Crocker Range interior**, near Keningau, isolated enough to preserve headhunting despite colonial bans.

British Outpost where Katama is taken – A small fort or mission station in **Keningau** and **Tambunan Valley**, halfway between Jesselton and the interior. This makes it believable **Peter Golden and his family** would be stationed there.

Ambush Site/Cliff – Set along the Crocker Range ridges or near Padas River gorges -Location for dramatic natural backdrops for Katama's betrayal and fall.

● **Missionary & Education Centers**

Ranau & Tambunan – Sites where missionaries were active among Dusun villages, teaching Christianity and English. Koronob's background as an English-speaking Dusun could stem from here.

Kota Belud – Known as a meeting ground for tribes under colonial supervision. Sometimes called the "Cowboy Town" of Sabah; it was a site of colonial fairs, trade, and negotiations.