

*This is a true story
but the names,
where used are fictitious.*

Toy Kioko.

Toy Kioko was lost. Oh he knew where he was,. He lived in Winnipeg with his Uncle and Aunt. His body was not lost, it came and went from school each day and did very well in carrying Toy around. But inside himself, where his mind lived, ah that was a different matter.

His mind was very perplexed. Everything was so different, so very different. This great city was so different. One could walk out to the edge of it, past the houses and streets and look around and see for miles nothing but flat prairie. So different from his city of Tokyo in Japan. In Winnipeg there were no markets where people sold their wares only big buildings with not too much light and where a boy of thirteen, especially if his skin was a different color, was more often than not looked upon with suspicion and distrust. Toy still remembered with hurt how he had gone into one of these stores to buy a little candy. He had patiently waited and waited while others came and went buying things and chatting to each other and all the while the salespeople ignored him standing quietly there with his dime clutched tight in his hand. This was such a strange country! At home in Japan he would have been served in his turn he would not have had to shove himself forward to buy what he wanted. "Here young fellow, you'd better get out, you've been hanging round here long enough!" Toy jumped, this man was talking to him and he did not look very nice. "Plissss sir I wiss buy....." Toy held out his hand with the dime.. "Go on get going we don't understand your kind of talk round here, learn to speak properly, now beat it!" Toy turned and went out. He wished he could ask his father questions but his father was a long way off at a town called Ottawa. Anyway he still had his little piece of money and perhaps he was as well off without it. Anyway the boys at the school he attended said that more often than not the storekeepers sold candy that was made half of soap, and come to think of it it sure tasted like it. Just like the tooth paste he used on his teeth at his uncles.

It would not be so bad thought Toy if the boys at the school he went to liked him but he was sure they did not and it was very lonely. They teased him about his lisping speech and mimicked him at every chance. They called him "slant-eyes" and "yellow boy", all that would not have mattered had they ever included him in their play, but although very athletic Toy felt it was not polite to boast about what he could do. But somewhere inside he hurt, and he was perplexed, very perplexed. Had his father not told him that they were coming to a Christian country where everyone was kind to one another, just like the old kindly Christian man that taught at the mission school he attended in Tokio.

It was not much use talking things over with his uncle either. His aunt understood better than his uncle for she was Japanese like Toy, but his uncle was a Canadian and his aunt was trying very hard to adapt herself to the ways of this new country, anyway in Japan one seldom went to the woman of the house to discuss man problems, so Toy remained perplexed. He felt that he could not really stand things much longer but his father had told him he was to go to this school and study hard, learn the language and above all not to forget the country he came from. He must always be a credit to his country "You understand Toy that you are something like me", his father had said, "You are an ambassador from Japan to the school which you will attend, just as I am an ambassador to the Canadian Government at Ottawa."

But how could one be an ambassador when no one would play with you, wondered Toy. He had tried to be polite to those who teased him but found that he was only teased worse, not only that, he knew worse was to come because some of the bigger boys had started to push and shove him around and the masters if they knew about his tormentors never stepped in to interfere. This pushing round was making him mad and more perplexed and worried than ever. In Japan one did not push one's classmates round too much not if one was wise and Toy knew that he could retaliate in ways that these Canadian boys never dreamed of.

The days dragged by and they were long and lonely for Toy. He quickly learned to speak the language and although he had trouble with that letter S still he could usually manage. He was still worried and unhappy though. The boys seemed to tease him more and he guessed it was because he understood their language better. But he found himself getting mad now and felt that the time might come when something really bad might happen.

One day in one of the stores Toy examined a peculiar looking knife. It had a long slim handle and when one pressed a little button on the handle a long slim blade whipped out all ready to use. He had heard the other boys talking about these knives and one of the senior boys at the school had one but Toy knew it was against school rules to ever carry one. There were other school rules too but he had found out very quickly some of them were not too strictly observed. For some unknown reason from deep within Toy found himself handing over the seventy five cents to the storekeeper for this wonderful and somewhat fearful knife. He kept it clutched within his hand and his hand in his pocket as he walked out of the store.

In the ensuing days, whenever he had privacy of his own, Toy would practice flipping open the blade of his new possession. He became so proficient at the art that the knife was often in his hand and open before he realized it himself. He had read stories in the paper magazines one could buy at the stores about American boys called cowboys who could snatch a revolver out of its holster and fire at a target before one could blink and in his mind Toy often pretended that he was a cowboy and that his knife was a revolver.

Then it happened. One spring day when the boys of the school were out playing tennis, something that Toy was very proficient at playing in Japan, he asked shyly if he might be permitted to play. One of the larger boys laughed and gave him a shove "Aw run along Jap, get lost, wha da ya know about tennis, scram, beat it!" He reached to give Toy another shove and something snapped in Toy's mind. Quick as a streak of lightning he grabbed the outstretched wrist of his tormentor and with a quick pull and a turn of his hip Toy sent the bully flying over his head to fall stretched out on the grass. If Toy had only known it and stopped there he would have had the respect of the whole school. But the badgering and bullying had done its work and like a flask Toy was upon his opponent, knees holding him to the ground one hand twisted in the bullies hair and the other holding that wicked looking knife at his throat.

Things might have gone very badly had not one of the boys grabbed Toy and pulled him off. The badly scared bully scrambled to his feet and tore off to the locker rooms while Toy stood among a group of boys who now looked at him with hostility in every feature. Things might have been different had not a master passed by and strolled over to see what the trouble was. Toy knew then that in the eyes of this man, a man like his own father, he was forever disgraced. He knew too how his father would feel about this when he heard and that he had disgraced his father as well, something that in his far off country of Japan people often took their own lives for doing. He knew he would have to leave the school right away because doubtless he would be expelled and thus disgracing his own country in a foreign land. Slowly he walked over to the master holding out to him the offending knife "I am sssorry sssir" was all he said and walked slowly back to the locker room. The next day Toy was not back at school and the incident was forgotten but not before the whole school heard a thorough lecture from the head master on the danger of teasing and hazing classmates beyond endurance, especially those from another land with customs much different from ours.

This not the end of the story.