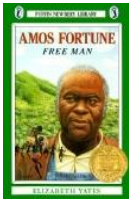


Passages

Reading Level 6



Title: Amos Fortune Free Man

Author: Elizabeth Yates

Sample From The Book

The drums and flutes began again to build up an air, and the people began again to sway in time with it. At-mun, young, strong, tireless, leapt into their midst, leading the At-mun-shi in a tribal dance until the whole clearing seethed with joyous ecstatic motion. Dawn was still far distant and this was the night of the year when no one would sleep.

Dawn was further off than the invaders creeping silently through the jungle, a hundred black men commanded by three whites. Stealthily they surrounded the village, making sure that their line was within the piles of knives and spears that the At-mun-shi had left.

Dropping to their knees at a given signal, they held their guns, took aim and waited, tense and silent, for another signal. One of the white men raised his arm and a hundred muskets blazed into the night. The dancing people stopped and looked skyward. Then they fell to their knees, bewildered, fearful only of one thing they had offended the Spirit of the Night. The chief slumped forward. All of the muskets but one had been aimed into the treetops.

At-mun rose to his feet and bounded across the clearing to kneel by his father. Then, in the strange and fearful stillness of the jungle night, he knew what had happened. He stood tall and held out his hands to his people, but no smile flashed from his lips.



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