“Charlie for the last time, you cannot come hunting with us, you would end up killing someone.” The chief says. Charlie has never actually been allowed to go hunting with the other men, he always had to stay back at the settlement with the women because ‘he couldn’t hurt anyone there’.

“I know, but I just feel like-“

“Charlie, remember when we found you, we made and agreement, you had to stay and help the women in exchange for food and shelter.”

“I know, but-“

“Charlie, enough.” He turns around and walks away with his head hanging in sorrow.

No one around there trusts him, he’s just not as smart as the other men. Even the twelve year olds get to go hunting, and they are much younger than him. The one elder how doesn’t treat him like a small child always tells Charlie to be thankful, and that if it weren’t for the chief’s kindness he wouldn’t be alive. So he always try to remember that, but sometimes he still want more.

When the tribe found him, Charlie was digging around in the swamp looking for some form of food to eat. Someone approached him, thinking they were going to hurt him, Charlie quivered away in fear, but when the tall man held out his strong hand and Charlie place his frail one in his, he became part of the tribe. While walking back to the temporary settlement the chief explained the deal. “Charlie, I will allow you to stay with us, if you do not harm anyone. You must stay with the woman, elders, and children. All in exchange for food, shelter, and protection.” Charlie readily agreed, he had been dropped off somewhere by his previous tribe, left to die. They said he was a waste of food and they shouldn’t have to put up with him because he does nothing for them. He started to believe it when he could never find food for himself, he was slowly starving himself, but then they found him and saved him.

Walking over to where his favorite elder is, he realizes that he is not special he is just stupid, like his old tribe said. He sits down beside her ready to scream at her for lying to him, telling him he’s special. But nothing comes out, nothing except the hot tear running down his face. The old woman looks at Charlie with softening eyes.

“Charlie what’s wrong?”

“I’m not special, I’m not useful. You have been lying to me all this time!” he accuses with tears flowing out of his eyes.

“Oh Charlie, of course you are-“

He cuts her off by saying “I’m just going to make some pottery”

He goes and sits by the women making pottery while thinking ‘Not even my friends like me. This tribe shouldn’t have chosen me’. Coiling the clay one around the other until he makes a pot shape. Then taking the drawing stick I start to make a messy drawing of men hunting, and then one lone man making a pot. Though the drawing resembles one of a child’s the pottery itself was not bad. The rest of the tribe could use it when they collected water, or berries. That made Charlie feel very good, he felt useful for a second.

“Everyone, it has come to the time where we need to move, the shortage of meat is coming and we need to follow the animals. Children and Charlie will go gather some berries and water for the trip. Women will preserve the meat for the trip and men will pack and carry.”

‘Of course I get put with the children, I’m over twice there age, but get treated the same if not as if I’m younger.’ Charlie thinks

“Okay Charlie and children, you are now going to find the berries and water. You each must return with at least one pot. Six water and six berry pots at least. Mike you will carry the bow just in case.” The chief went on.

Mike goes towards his father to get the bow and arrows.

‘Maybe I can get him to let me touch them or even shoot one’ Charlie thinks. But then he sees the Chief pull mike so that he speaks directly into his ear so that no one else can hear. Even though he couldn’t hear what was said by the looks on their faces he knew he wouldn’t have the chance.

When all the children started to head out he followed them. He takes a very large pot so that he could look capable and unchildish. He also decided that he was going to pick the best berries the land could offer.

‘I will make all these people respect me and treat me right’ Charlie thought with a smile on his face.

“Charlie keep up!” Mike yells over his shoulder.

He really is trying. He’s carrying a pot almost twice as big as theirs and he tells himself that he can do it. He sees the first bush of berries and immediately runs to it tripping a little in the process. When he reaches the bush he sees his favorite, blueberries. He inspects each berry before putting it in the pot. Making sure every blueberry is perfect and will please the elders.

Once he has gone through all the blueberries he decides to go look for more berries to bring back for the elders. Finding a raspberry bush Charlie started doing the same thing he did with the blueberries. He did this to about every other bush that he collects the berries from.

When he gets back to the camp he sets down the pot with a proud smile on his face. Not only did he pick the best berries, but also the most, he also carried it the entire way from where they were searching to the settlement. He saw the looks on the tribe members’ faces and knew he did well.

The chief asked to speak with him privately and when they were alone he said to Charlie “When we go hunting for the last time tomorrow, I want you to accompany us.”

Charlie was so happy to hear that. For the second time that day tears came to his eyes. This was all he ever wanted, to help hunt the food that feeds the tribe. Feel like a real man, not some stupid man who does women’s work.

“Thank you so much sir.” Charlie responds to the chief, through the tears. “This means so much to me.”

“I know Charlie. Just don’t mess it up.”

The next morning Charlie wakes up knowing that this is the most important day of his life, and that if he messed it up, his life would be over, at least mentally. Walking outside of his small house, he sees the chief and runs over to him.

“Thank you so much. It really means a lot to me.” Charlie says to him.

“I know Charlie, but some of the other men don’t think it’s a good idea, so you need to prove to them that they are wrong and despite your differences you can still do things.”

He nods in understanding, he is really stupid, but he will prove them otherwise. He knows he will.

Seeing all the other men come out of their huts he notices they all have a weapon, but he does not. He looks at the chief for support. The chief reaches behind him and pulls out a sheath of arrows and a bow, then hands them to Charlie. Charlie looks at the weapons he was just given in awe. No one had ever let him in the same hut with a weapon, but he had one of his very own now. And that made him very happy.

“Alright men, let’s set out. We are all sticking together today. If we don’t get much game, then it’s alright because Charlie got us lots of berries that would be able to hold us over.”

They set off into the forest. Each man on the lookout for something to kill. Each man wanting to be the one to bring home the next meal. Charlie included, but he also has to prove that he is capable making the desire to kill the animal stronger for him.

Charlie sees a shadow, he raises his bow and shoots. Just seconds later he feels a sharp pain in his foot.

“Charlie!” someone yells out but he is already passed out. The men all help carry him back to camp.

When Charlie wakes up he is in his house. The chief and some men are watching him. After a few moments of silence the chief finally speaks up “Charlie, you are never going hunting again.”