

Axe Slingers By AC Zito

It was late. But the village was still up. It was the tribal ceremony that was still going on and, from dusk till dawn, so it will continue. Montehew looked down at the newly fresh tattoo stamped across his chest. It took up the entire area of his front torso. And was caked with the blood of the fallen soldiers from their last battle.

“Montehew, oh Montehew; why are you still awake?”

“Go back to sleep, woman.” The village woman laid her head back down onto her pillow. Montehew arose from his deep slumber. It had to already be half-way through the night. The drums were still being clobbered to death. The wind was still swirling heavily throughout the hills that the tiny village was nestled in between, and, through and through, it was peaceful. Montehew felt at tranquility with his new brotherhood. They were a tight group and every single one of them had the Axe Slinger’s emblem on their chest. Just like how he had one now. And just joining the brotherhood had its benefits. And those benefits included the two women that slept on either side of him.

As he stepped out into the brisk night air, he picked up his axe and the thin, long brown rope that was tied to its end and wrapped it around his waist. He then slid the blade of the axe into the grooves of the slip strapped to his back. He went only half-way into the deep, dark parts of the jungle to do his dirty work when, suddenly, half-way through relieving himself, he heard the screams of one of the village women. The sounds of fighting and death wrung out from the quiet stillness of the air. Bloodshed brought by his fellow brothers’ axes, and the strangling brought by the slings, went out into the forefronts of the night. Montehew crept around the edges of the jungle of where he could get a better view of who landed on their sandy shores. It was quite a while until he could get a better eye. But then he noticed the rough sea and the glint the stars and the moonlight made from shining off of it. Out on the clear waters were gigantic ships and little boats lining up all along the edge of the waters.

“Pirates,” Montehew breathed out with surety. And the killings were of an ambush attack! There, along the cliff’s edges were great, noble men bringing wrath and anger upon the pirates. It was his own brotherhood: the brotherhood of the Axe Slingers. Fire crept up along the embankments of the shores as hut after hut was set on fire. Montehew spit on the ground as he saw the disgrace to his homelands burning up in a heap of hot mess. And that’s when he knew: he had work to be done.

Crawling out of his hiding, he crept up onto the scene of the chaos. It was every man for himself. He loosened the rope that was tied around his waist. Then, twirling it up and around his head, like it had wings of its own, it flew out of his grasp and the hoop tied to the end caught hold over and around one of the pirate’s necks. And like how his own brotherhood taught him, he pulled the rope towards him bringing the pirate down onto his back and then released the axe. It sliced through the air and down into his chest.

“Just like butter,” Montehew whispered through the gap in his two front teeth. It went on like so throughout the night as he ran from one side to the other. From the Big Hill on the Eastern side of the mountain all the way over to the Western side where the Little Hill sat.

And then that’s when he ran up on it. It was his brothers; they were all kneeling down in a circle, their heads slumped over.

“Get up!” He screamed at them. He looked over to see all of their weapons thrown into a pile against the side of one of the huts. Montehew looked down at his own axe and the thin lasso rope tied to the end of it. He threw it into the pile with the rest of the weapons that were once his brothers’. And then Montehew did what the rest were prepared to do: he died. He died an Axe Slinger.