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Dr. Gingrich- 3rd period

Chaucerian Tale Paper

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A leader is the person that takes the first step out of the puddle in the path and pulls everyone out with

Prologue

The Staff Sergeant walks into the tan sand colored tent with all of the soldiers in it feeling confused with mixed emotions and sweat constantly dripping from their foreheads marking the lines of sand and dirt on their faces. The short, stubby Sergeant dressed in his camouflage from head to toe tucked in his heavy duty combat boots that take the quad muscles of an ox to run in, walks in in a different manner than his normal emotionless way, a bit more casually. Still, all soldiers immediately stand up straight and stiff as trained and make direct eye contact, in the back of their minds hoping and praying that good news is to come. Instead he just calls the name, Marshall. Chase Marshall takes a step forward and follows the Sergeant out of the tent. The farther they walk, the bigger the pit in his stomach gets. They sit down on an old cracked crate used to hold their imperishable food. The Sergeant starts out by saying, "Chase, I know this isn't easy for you, having a wife and kids back home, but I have faith that you will make it through this."

"That means a lot sir, thank you, but is that what you wanted to tell me?" Chase replies very taken back by the most personal and emotional words he has ever heard out of his Sergeant's mouth. The only words he has heard out of his sergeant's mouth in the past few months were orders. So Chase knows he must be well trained at putting

his emotions aside seeing that he also has a family back home, leaving him speechless when he sees the Sergeant has let his guard down.

“Not completely...As you know, these are not good circumstances we are in and we have some young inexperienced guys in this troop with us. I don't know if you realize it, but they look to you for comfort and answers. I need you to step it up so that you do nothing but secure their trust in you even more. A time will come when I am not here and so you really will carry them on your back.”

“I'm sorry, are you saying that I am not a leader? Or that you want me to be a better one?” Chase confusingly replied, not knowing where this conversation was going.

Sergeant takes his combat hat off and scratches his light brown buzz cut in loss for words then says, “What I am saying is that the more danger we get ourselves into and the worse the situation gets out here, the more they are going to you which means you are going to have to step up and take on the role of that leader. You can either take what I am saying and live it out and make this one of the best experiences of your life or you can second guess me and stay in a constant state of fear,” the Sergeant tries to explain to Marshall.

A tear strolls down Chase's cheek, for the first time since enlisted in the army, Chase lets his fear and worries surface. He looks straight into the sergeant's blue eyes and bushy eyebrows as if looking for answers. Tongue tied for words he says, “I want to make you proud and I want them to look up to me, but I don't know if I can do it,” he says with anxiety in his face.

The sergeant puts his arm around Chase and says, “Chase I believe in you, and trust me I wouldn't put you in this position if you couldn't handle it. I think you can do

great things in your life and I don't want you to let anything stop you. Let me tell you story..."

Sergeant's Tale

There is this girl, Sadie. Sadie is not like any other girl in the whole school. She is the kicker for her high school football team, probably the only person that could manage to achieve this not only athletically, but also personality wise. She's a tough girl that likes to goof around and avoids all that girl drama. Well, with that said, she becomes very close with the football players, none at an intimate level, but more like brothers, especially with the quarterback, Connor. Being on a team together, people are bound to develop a strong relationship, seeing that as a team you go through the some of the most dramatic ups and downs of your life at the time together. So when Sadie quit playing football, Connor, along with the rest of the team, didn't understand why. All they saw was how good she was and how they didn't seem to be the same team without her.

Many of the guys dwelled on this "loss" that the team had, including Connor. He tried to go about his business at practice and games, but someone would always make a remark like "this is hopeless, we are going to lose without Sadie as our kicker" or, "who is going to say the prayer before the game, no one can pray like Sadie". After weeks of these comments, thoughts, and weakening actions, the boys went on the worst losing streak the school had experienced. In the south where they live, football is what some people live for, so losing just wasn't acceptable. It's fair to say that even the town and some of the player's parents were losing hope in the team.

Connor would see Sadie on a regular basis and their friendship didn't change much. The only difference was that football was rarely mentioned, but ever since this losing streak started, Sadie had been reaching out to Connor in a different way. She

had been pushing him to talk about football. Not just the sport or the team, but Connor's role on the team. She made him think about football more than ever and Connor didn't think it was possible to think about football more than he already did, but he was quickly proven wrong.

There was a large break in the football season schedule and the team usually goes on a vacation/tournament during that time to the beach. Considering the circumstances and a couple other contributing reasons, the trip was cancelled. None of the boys knew what to do with themselves and the coach decided maybe a break is due. Sadie had plans otherwise and told Connor they need to talk. They met up at the field to throw a football around; it seemed to be when they both are the most relaxed and comfortable. He had high hopes that maybe she was going to come back and play, but other than that, he had no idea what she could want to discuss in such a private matter. Naturally, the conversation flowed to football and nothing was mentioned about her coming back, but rather the subject of Connor. She kept questioning the team moral and who is stepping up. She asked who is playing good and when his response was a melancholy "nobody", she is concerned. Sadie grasped the football and held it close to her while she walked toward Connor saying, "Ya know I think you need to step up, be the leader, this team obviously needs a leader". Connor was taken back and rebuked, "I am a leader, I am the quarterback". She saw the conversation going nowhere but downhill so she ended it by changing the subject.

Connor kept thinking about their conversation and talked to his parents about it. He told them how she implied that "he is not being the leader of his full potential". Hoping for his parents to side with him and reassure him that he was doing everything

he could, they didn't. Surprisingly to Connor, they said that maybe Sadie was right. Maybe you should be a little more active or lead by better example. The quarterback has big shoes to fill on the field, but there are also roles you could fill that would benefit the team all around. Connor, frustrated with his parents' argument stormed upstairs and avoided the topic the rest of the week. He felt ganged up upon by not only his best friend, but also his parents who seemed to of betrayed him.

The one person Conner thought he could trust at this point was his coach, Coach Bayson. So when Conner got called into his office out of class one day, he thought nothing of it except maybe a new play or to get a t-shirt or something. Once again to his shock, that's not how the meeting went. It was more like an exact repeat of the conversation with the parents: Coach Bayson suggesting Connor maybe get the team together or talk to them, Connor being taken back and shutting down and him leaving. He felt as if all the people he thought he was closest to are blaming those losses on him and that he wasn't doing anything right. Everywhere he was there was either Sadie, his mom, dad, or Coach Bayson.

His friends could tell he was under some distress. So, Patrick, the 3rd string defensive lineman decided to talk to him, having the best interest of the team at heart. He talked to Connor, realizing and understanding how he was feeling. He knew these were the last words that Connor wanted to hear at that moment, but he said "Connor as much as you don't want to hear this, maybe you should put some thought into what they are saying". Normally Connor would be furious at this point, which he was for a second, but it hit him that maybe, just maybe Patrick is right. Not fully submitting to Patrick's suggestion, the conversation ended and Connor had time to think after practice.

The words of Patrick, Coach Bayson, his parents, and Sadie kept replaying in his head, knowing in his heart what that meant. He went home and avoided the subject with his parents. His mind was racing back and forth, whether to be his usual stubborn self and try to prove himself right or to trust the voices that have been persistently trying to tell him something. His first instinct was to feel as though he had done something wrong. He was used to receiving nothing but praise from the ones he trusts. When those aren't the words coming out of their mouths, he didn't know how to take it.

As if he had the devil on one shoulder and the saint on the other he just listened to his mind leaning one way, towards the Saint. But he couldn't just submit to his parents and coach that easily being a teenage boy. He had this overwhelming satisfaction that he was going to step up and be the leader and take this role on 100%, but then it hit him; how was he going to do this? Will his teammates take him seriously? Not long after these fears were brought to his attention, once again with his short attention span of a teenage boy, he figured "whatever it will be okay, if this doesn't work out I can pull a "told ya so" to all those people who pressured him in to this."

Connor decided to organize a team get together at the field, just him and his teammates. There, they talked about how the season had gone, had some laughs, played a pickup game and all the boys were just having a good time. The kind of good time that makes you feel like you can't wait till you are all back together again. Everybody has heard the saying that 'your team is your family because you go through your highest and lowest moments with them'. For the first time Connor understood this. Even though that season may have had a lot of low moments, that's what makes them stronger.

Their big rival game was coming up and Connor had the team all pumped up. The day of the game he talked to every single player individually making sure their head was in the game and they were ready to play leaving everything on the field. Connor, not only because he was stubborn, but because he was a humble person, didn't tell Sadie, Coach Bayson, or his parents what he was doing. Patrick saw what Connor was doing and didn't say anything either; he just took the back seat and smiled, proud of Connor's actions.

The day came and they were all pumped for the game! They were closer as a team than they had ever been before. As they took the field, Connor gathered the team together to say a quick prayer and just let his teammates know that he trusted them and loved them no matter what happens. With that said, they all ran onto the field ready to go. By halftime they were all beat up, exhausted, and losing...bad. They went back in the second half and fought their hearts out. When Connor scored their only touchdown, the team had a celebration like high school football had never seen. The score did not reflect the hard work and passion that went into that game as a team, but everyone there, saw one thing, Connor leading that team to the best victory possible, being a family.

Through this experience Connor gained trust in his loved ones: Sadie, his parents, Coach Bayson, and Patrick. He learned that they have the best intentions for him, but he ultimately was the only one who could take action. By him taking action, his teammates respected him, they built trust and player chemistry. The hardest time to step and be the leader is when you're in a puddle, but it's the time that counts the most.

Epilogue

One year later...As the sergeant steps up to the podium with the spotlight on him, everyone is anxious to hear what he has to say, knowing this is going to be quite an impactful speech. He starts by saying, "I carry great joy in presenting this award and even greater satisfaction in the fact that this soldier was one of my own personal trainees. I am thankful to now call him a friend, but before I tell you who this award goes to, let me tell you a little something about why he is receiving the Medal of Honor tonight. This person grew mentally more than any other soldier I have ever seen out on the battle field. I was lucky enough to sit down and talk to him before I was re-stationed. I told him how much I believed in him and I also told him the only thing I knew for sure: that it was not going to be easy to get everyone out alive. I told him the story of the football player stepping up and being the leader when his team needed him most and when you are the leader that everyone looks to, more good will come than you can ever imagine. For the first time, I saw Chase Marshall get emotional. In that moment, I knew that meant not that he was any less of a man, but that he was the strongest most loyal man there. It meant he carried the weight of the lives of every other soldier in that tent, and that's what makes a great leader. Today, Chase Marshall is the father of three beautiful children and a loyal husband. He receives this recognition for showing his great leadership through risking his life and taking three bullets to the leg for his fellow soldiers. But what makes Chase Marshall different than any other soldier is that even when he was wounded and bleeding out, he would not retrieve to safe grounds until every single person in his tent was safe. In which he did by taking two more bullets to the upper leg. With this, I conclude by saying that a leader is the person that takes the

first step out of the puddle in the path and pulls everyone out with him, that is just what Chase Marshall did.. Congratulations Chase Marshall for receiving the Medal of Honor.” Chase wheels up to the stage with pure joy across his face and his newborn son in his lap in the wheelchair to accept the award.