

## If Someone Must Die, Kill Me

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Excerpted from *They Loved Their Enemies*

The rebels had just arrived in the village of Lazaro in the Congo.

“Someone from this village must die!” shouted the rebel leader.

The people waited silently, so the rebel called forward two strong, young men.

“One of the two of you will die!” he shouted.

“Wait!”

An old grey-haired man stepped forward. “I’ll die,” he said. “They are young, and I am old. I’m a Christian—not afraid to die.”

The rebels loaded the old man into their truck. When they arrived at the rebel camp, the old man saw bodies scattered all over the ground. He saw a row of men and boys lined up to be shot.

“Here, I will die,” he thought.

But before he was shot, the chief called to the firing squad. “This man offered to die. And he is a Christian. He ought to be able to preach. So preach, old man!”

And the old man preached of Jesus.

Several prisoners began to sob and pray. The rebels shot them in the middle of their prayers.

But the old man was not shot.

Each morning, the old man thought, I will be shot today.

But they kept asking him to preach. And prisoners kept coming to Jesus.

And one morning, the rebels disappeared. The government army was coming.

The old man was free. And, back in his village of Lazaro, people listened because he had been willing to die.

But even if the old man had died, he still would have been free.