

George did not have a map of the unknown frontier. But he had something just as powerful: a surveyor's compass. It was a small brass instrument that could reveal direction even in the middle of a thick forest. No matter how confusing the land became, the needle always pointed north.

By the time he was sixteen, George had become a surveyor. He traveled deep into the wilderness, sleeping beneath blankets of stars. He crossed rushing rivers and climbed mountains that had never been named.

The frontier was beautiful, but it was also dangerous. One wrong step could send a man tumbling into a ravine or lost among endless trees.

Out there, among towering oaks and whispering pines, George learned the first rule of leadership: Before you can lead others, you must learn to lead yourself.

One evening deep in the Blue Ridge Mountains, a powerful storm rolled across the wilderness. Wind howled through the trees. Rain turned the narrow trails into slippery rivers of mud. George's team was tired. Hungry. Cold.

And then the whisper came.

You are too young for this.

The woods are too big.

You should go home.

George closed his hand around the brass compass. The metal felt cold against his palm. He did not turn back. Instead, he stood tall, pulled his navy coat tighter against the wind, and searched the sky until he spotted the North Star shining through a break in the clouds.

George chose to stay. George chose to lead.