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Nomad: The Warrior

By Rustam Ibragimbekov

For centuries, the Great Asian region
bordered by Russia and China
has been home to my people,
the Kazakhs -
nomadic tribesmen
roaming from one pasture to another.
Since the time of our legendary
ancestor, Genghis Khan,
hordes of foreign invaders
have tried to conquer this land
and put an end to our
peaceful way of life.
Of all those who threatened
the lives of my people,
none were more
brutal or determined
than the ferocious
Jungar tribesmen from Mongolia.
The Jungars brought war against us,
yet the Kazakh tribal leaders
were still unable to agree
about how to unite the tribes
against a deadly enemy.
Many of my people fled
from the horrors of the war.
This period has become known
as the "Flight With Bloody Feet."
Many more of us remained, hoping
to see the fulfillment of the prophecy
that one day a warrior descendant
of Genghis Khan
will rise up, and unite all the Kazakhs
in a revolt against our enemies.
I, Oraz, have always believed
I would see this come to pass
and I have searched
tirelessly, far and wide
for the promised child.
I 71 0 - Kazakh Tribal Land
Surround him!
Are you Oraz the Wise?
Yes, that is my name.
Galdan, the ruler of all Jungars,
orders that we bring you to him.

You can inform your sovereign
that I am a Kazakh, not a Jungar.
As such, I do not follow his orders.
If you refuse to go willingly,
we'll take you there by force.
Seize him!
Take him alive!
You must understand, Oraz,
if we return without you,
we'll lose our heads.
I should go then.
I don't want your children
to curse my name.
I found him, my sovereign.
So you are Oraz the Wise?
I have heard much about you.
Is it true that you understand
the language of all living creatures?
That talent belongs only to God.
You won't deny, however,
that you understand horses?
Every Kazakh
knows about horses.
Let us see.
Pick the best horse for me.
That chestnut stallion. . .
. . . is the best.
A horse fit for a great warrior,
one who makes the earth tremble.
Do you know, wise man,
what awaits you if you are mistaken?
Hey, Kazakh. . .
you were right.
This is truly a horse
worthy of a great ruler.
You were right, Kazakh!
You were right.
I will give you
your weight in gold
and make you my horse-master.
Freedom is worth
more than gold.
If you refuse my gift,
you may soon lose your good luck.

I do not rely on luck.
My path is clear before me.
You speak with such certainty
of the future.
Tell me what the future holds for me.
You know yourself,
even stars fall from the skies
and new stars are born.
Who is this newborn star?
What is his name?
You and I both will find out
when the time comes.
Whatever perils
awaited me in my path,
I never lost hope.
One day, I asked the Almighty,
"O Creator,
when will you send my people
the fearless warrior
who will unite
all of the Kazakh tribes
and push our foes from our land?"
And at that moment I heard
a child crying.
Suddenly I understood
that the savior of my people
had just been born.
I have seen a terrible prophecy
that brings danger to my master!
My liege.
My master and protector!
You will reign for many years
but a child has been born
to a Kazakh Sultan
who will grow to defeat you
unless you kill him at once!
So Oraz was right.
Sharish, find this Kazakh child
and kill him at once.
Yes, my liege.
God save you, traveler.
And you too.
At last, the child of the prophecy.
Is something the matter?

Jungars are approaching. Quickly,
prepare for their attack.
Stop!
Surround them!
Protect the carriage with your lives!
Quick!
The child!
Leave him!
I will kill him myself.
Where is the child?
There was no child here.
Kazakh city of Turkestan
Sultan Wali's Palace
Greetings, Sultan Wali.
I need to speak with you.
Speak.
There are no outsiders here.
Worthy Sultan,
the Jungars attacked the caravan.
I know.
They spared no one.
Sharish killed my wife and my son.
No, Sultan.
Your son is alive.
How can this be?
My darling, my precious!
How can I repay you?
I do not need anything.
I cannot let you go
without some reward.
You have brought him back
from the dead.
Tell me what you want.
Give me your son.
How can your tongue speak
such words, Oraz?
If Galdan finds out your son is alive
he will not rest until he is dead.
There is no safer place
in the world for him
than with me, in this palace.
There is a traitor close to you.
He told the Jungars about the caravan.
You ask for that which is

most precious to me.
Take him and raise him
to be a good warrior.
I will teach him all I know, Sultan.
Keep your back straight.
Keep your heels down.
- Don't let go of the reins.
- I understand.
Don't be afraid. Go!
Good!
A horse is your wings.
A good horse is
your best friend.
In difficult times
it will help you defeat your enemy.
I gathered them
from all parts of the Kazakh steppe.
I picked only the best,
each from a different tribe.
They all worked hard
to become true Kazakh warriors,
but two boys did everything better
than the others -
Mansur and his best friend Erali.
I was the only one who knew
that one of them was
the son of Sultan Wali.
How many eyes does a nomad have?
Two.
Four.
Two in front,
and two behind.
Tell me your names.
You didn't name your tribe.
Perhaps you don't know it.
I do, but Mansur and I
call ourselves Kazakhs.
These boys are the hope
of our nation.
God protect them.
Let's move on.
It is time for our next lesson.
This tree has been growing
since the time of Genghis Khan.

We have much to learn
from the past of this land.
You are growing older
and older, my friend.
I ask, oh Great One,
in the memory
of our deceased ancestors,
let us remember
that Genghis Khan
forged the unity
of the Kazakh people
but he never forgot
their nomad hearts.
Once long ago,
on the eve of a great battle,
Genghis Khan gathered his men together
to demonstrate the importance of unity.
He told them all,
one tribe was like a single arrow,
easily broken.
But many tribes together
would be strong.
Under this fundamental principle,
he brought justice for all
and proved that the many tribes
could continue to flourish and grow.
I want you to know which people
you belong to
and to swear loyalty to each other.
That is the message we must
learn and carry in our hearts.
Come. . .
Let us swear to one another.
We swear! We swear!
Our colt was born
on the night of the new moon.
It will be a good horse.
What's its name, Gauhar?
Moonchild.
I like your colt.
Why are you looking
at me like that, Mansur?
You are the one who's looking.
I'm not.

Hey, you, stop!
Hey, Kazakh, come out to fight,
you coward!
I'll cut off your head!
I'd like to see you try!
Mansur, don't you recognize us?
Erali, is that you?
You were scared of me!
I'll show you a coward!
No, not like that. . .
Try it like this.
You must protect your wrist.
Straight. . .
Straight. . .
After ten years of relative peace,
the mighty army of the Jungars
invaded our land once again.
Meanwhile,
my boys had grown up.
Honored Oraz, Sultan Wali requests
that you escort him to the camp
of Sultan Abulkhair.
Enough.
You would have won, Mansur.
No, Erali, you were better.
Gather everyone.
O Almighty,
let the people be joyous,
and the land prosperous!
Let the men be powerful,
and the horses strong.
Let my people's spirit rise,
and let our enemies be overcome!
Amen.
Let the game begin!
Mansur!
If we don't come to an agreement,
our homeland will disappear.
That is why I gathered the tribes
here today.
Then what do you suggest we do,
Sultan Abulkhair?
We must find a leader to unite us,
Sultan Barak, and make an alliance.

I would suggest an alliance
with the Russians to the west.

Never!

Sultan Abulkhair,

you do not govern us!

I will not submit to any man,
either Russian Czar or a fellow Kazakh!

We will never surrender our freedom!

No one doubts your bravery,
but we must find some kind of unity,

or the Kazakh people

will cease to exist.

We must never forget
the prophecy of our people.

- I do not believe in fairy tales!

- Neither do we.

No, Sultan Abulkhair is right!

The tribes must come together.

Our only hope is the prophecy.

Gauhar!

Mansur, are you awake?

Yes.

My heart is bursting.

I have not been able to sleep all night!

Something has happened to me,
something I have never felt before.

- What is it?

- I feel dizzy

as if I am high above the ground,
looking down.

I see.

Sounds familiar.

Don't tell me you are in love again.

Is that it?

Yes!

This is the real thing.

I wish you the best of luck this time.

It happened on the swing.

She was next to me.

Her eyes, her hair...

Gauhar is so beautiful!

Why didn't I notice it before?

So you are in love with her, too?

Have you asked for me, Teacher?

I couldn't find Erali.
I only need to speak with you.
We are facing difficult times.
Yet again, our leaders
were unable to reach
an agreement to unite.
They pull in every direction
instead of standing together.
You are not a child anymore.
The time has come
for you to answer the cries
of our people.
You are right, Master.
Oh terrible!
I bring news!
My liege, I have terrible news!
Oh ruler of the steppes,
my master and protector,
your wisdom is boundless,
and your reign will last many years.
But the child from the prophecy
is still alive.
You must kill him!
Otherwise our days will turn
into nights,
your star will be extinguished,
and we will perish in darkness.
What shall we do, my liege?
The Kazakh's prophecy
has been fulfilled.
When will you return, father?
After I conquer Turkestan
and find the child from the prophecy.
Haven't seen Moonchild for a long time.
- He's grown.
- We have all grown up.
Here, this belongs to you.
You dropped it from the swing.
I want you to keep it.
I'm sorry, I can't.
Why?
Because Erali loves you.
I know.
He is like a brother to me.

He is like a brother to me, too.
I don't know what to say.
You don't have to say anything.
Black flag! It's the Jungars!
I have to go.
Protect him, Almighty.
The Jungar army was approaching
Turkestan
laying waste to our land,
killing the men,
enslaving the women.
It would not be long before they
would destroy the walls of Turkestan.
We must not leave Turkestan
to the enemy.
If we survive, we can rebuild the city.
Now we have to think about
saving people's lives.
Your son has become a man.
His time has come.
We need someone to unite
the tribes of our land.
Show him to me.
That day is near.
Be patient.
You will recognize him in battle.
- I will come back.
- No, stay there.
Look after the people.
Goodbye.
- Be safe.
- You, too.
Moonchild, take good care of Gauhar.
- Kasim, look after your sister.
- I will.
Did you tell her?
No, I did not.
And you?
You should have told her.
We are facing a difficult battle.
- We are ready.
- We have gathered a lot of earth oil.
Good.
You should know that there are

hidden tunnels under the city.
Meant for escape?
We have to be prepared for everything.
We will never show our backs
to the enemy.
Do the Jungars know
about the tunnels?
No, but, unfortunately,
they often know more
than we need them to know.
Here, give her to me.
Please keep an eye on her.
Zeinep, Zeinep, I'm going back.
You mustn't!
You can get to safety without me.
You must stay with us.
You're almost there.
The gorge is under that hill.
Gauhar, stop!
Kasim!
Don't let your sister go alone.
Gauhar, Gauhar! Stop!
Stop following me!
Mansur told me to look after you.
Go back.
I will not let you go alone.
Where were you going, my beauty?
I will not tell you!
- Of course you will.
- I would sooner die!
Tighten the rope until it breaks!
Let the boy go!
- Who is he to you?
- My brother.
Then listen to me.
You will become my tenth wife
and bear me a child.
If you harm yourself in any way,
your brother will be tortured to death,
cursing your name.
Take her to our camp.
To be a wife of a great warrior
like Sharish
is an honor very few can boast of.

It's good to cry.
A woman's tears wash away
the sadness.
Hurry up!
She should be ready
the moment my son returns in victory.
We cannot take this city
with swords alone.
We must ask Galdan for cannons.
No.
I will take the city alone.
Let us not spill any more blood.
Tell us your terms.
I propose a fight, one against one.
If we lose... we leave.
If we win...
you will open the gates to us.
It will be a duel between two warriors.
If the Kazakh wins...
they will leave.
If the Jungar wins...
we will surrender without a fight.
I think we should accept.
Did they give the name of their warrior?
Sharish.
Sharish has never lost a fight!
May I speak, Teacher?
You taught us to fight any opponent.
Each of us is ready.
We are ready!
This time, send me.
Give me your blessing.
You are a great warrior, Erali,
but Mansur will fight Sharish.
It was Sharish who killed your mother.
O Almighty,
help him prevail over his enemy!
Let the spirit of his grandfather Ablai
aid him in defending the pride
of our people.
Amen.
Did you pray, Kazakh?
For you are about to die.
Let me see you try.

You could not kill me 20 years ago.
Ablai! Ablai! Ablai!
Victory!
Erali!
Bad news!
The Jungars have captured Gauhar.
We have to get her out.
Don't say anything to Mansur.
Ablai! Ablai! Ablai!
Forgive me for not being able
to call you my son for so long.
I am proud of you.
I did my duty.
I avenged my mother.
Please tell me about her.
Everything...
I will.
I promise you.
Your mother was a noble woman.
Son.
Father.
Messengers were sent
to all Kazakh tribes of the great steppe
to announce that a new leader,
given the name of Ablai,
has risen and brings hope
to all Kazakhs.
The Sultan's son, Ablai,
is sleeping.
Out of the way!
Open the gate.
Wake up.
Get up.
What is it?
I must leave.
Why?
Do you resent me
because I was chosen for the fight?
Did you always know
that you were the Sultan's son?
Of course not.
And it makes no difference to us.
We grew up together as brothers.
Only God can part us.

Even so, you must let me go.
You will understand soon enough.
I didn't tell him anything.
You did the right thing.
The people need a leader.
He mustn't leave Turkestan.
Teacher, I believe Gauhar is alive,
and I will do whatever it takes
to rescue her.
Goodbye.
God be with you, my boy.
Why didn't you stop him, Master?
I cannot change his destiny.
He was born to help you
achieve your mission.
I don't understand.
You have a special mission.
You were chosen by the stars
to unite all Kazakhs.
I shall be leaving you tomorrow.
Why?
There comes a time when a young eagle
must be thrown out of his nest
to see how he flies.
Is there anything else I need to know?
Beware of betrayal.
Oh great leader!
Sharish has been struck down in battle!
We have lost our great defender!
What is it?
Who killed him?
A new Kazakh warrior.
They call him Ablai.
Ablai is Mansur!
The child from the prophecy!
I warned you!
So he does exist.
Silence, you fool!
I will avenge him!
What news do you bring?
Oh hallowed tree of my childhood,
I've come to you for strength.
I pray for wisdom from my ancestors
and I pray for the safety

of my dear friends -
Erali and Gauhar.
Where are they now?
I need their help. . .
And I miss them. . .
Do not kill him!
Galdan wants him alive.
Again!
Sanji,
you have great aim.
Thank you, my liege.
A Kazakh warrior has been captured!
We captured the warrior
who slew Sharish!
Stop the music.
From days of old it has been
the custom of the steppe
to greet the host respectfully.
Is it not so?
When a Kazakh crosses
someone's threshold,
he puts his hand upon his heart.
But how am I to greet you
when my hands are tied
behind my back?
I see that you respect
the customs of the nomads.
But where is it written
that a warrior
can be captured away
from the battlefield?
It was I who captured you!
I will cut your head off,
like you did my brother's.
Your brother was an enemy
of my people.
I killed him in a fair fight.
I respect the laws of the steppe.
I cannot kill
a captured descendant of Genghis Khan.
But I can force you to face our trials.
If you pass, you'll win your freedom.
Otherwise, you will die like a slave
in my captivity.

The choice is yours.
Moonchild!
Where did you get that horse?
My father gave it to me.
It's the horse
of the captive Kazakh girl.
He's a good horse.
His name is Moonchild.
How did that man know my horse?
What man?
The prisoner.
He called my horse Moonchild.
That is not possible.
My horse recognized him, too.
- What else did he say?
- That he's a good horse.
Do you want to prove that to everyone?
- How?
- Tomorrow...
I let myself be captured.
I would rather die
in battle.
O Almighty, help me defend my honor
in the face of the enemy!
Hey, Kazakh, get up!
- Get lost!
- Come out and fight.
Take this.
Don't be a coward, Kazakh,
we put a lot of money on you.
Pay up, come on.
You, too.
You wanted the Kazakh to lose,
and he won!
- Isn't that your horse?
- Yes, that's my horse!
Let everyone see how fast he is!
God help him.
Protect him, Moonchild.
You proved that you are a brave
and skillful warrior.
Before you, no one has ever
survived this test.
I must give you your freedom,

as promised.

No! No!

This villain has to die!

Otherwise the spirit of Sharish
will be displeased.

I respect your age,

but vengeance has blinded you!

If we break our laws,

our ancestors will turn away from us

and the eternal bond between

the living and the dead will be broken.

My liege, I know

what we must do.

- Where is the prisoner?

- Over there.

Where are you going?

Taking some broth to him.

You can't go in there!

You cannot pass!

I have to see him.

Hey, Kazakh, get up!

Your time has come.

Great Galdan has sent for you.

I'm not going anywhere.

Leave me be.

Don't be stubborn.

This is your last fight.

If you win, you are free to go.

Who is it?

I am Hocha, Galdan's daughter.

You were magnificent today.

A true warrior, sent from the Almighty.

I am honored to hear such praise

from one as beautiful as you.

Know this:

they will not let you live,

even if you win the fight.

You could lose your head

for telling me this.

I already lost my head

and I don't know what to do with myself.

All my life I have waited

for a warrior as strong and as brave

as you.
If you marry me, I will save your life.
Thank you, but I cannot accept.
Then you're on your own.
You will have to fight tomorrow.
Your opponent has never known defeat.
You will die from his hand.
O Almighty, protect him!
Damnation!
What was to be, was to be.
Farewell, brother.
Erali, it's you!
Yes.
I knew it was you from the first blow.
Don't show your tears to the enemy!
Let them see
that Kazakh warriors die with honor.
I set out to save Gauhar.
Now it's up to you.
Goodbye, brother.
You are a great warrior.
Forgive me, brother.
Bury him
with the honor he is due.
Let it be so.
I promised you your freedom,
and you shall have it...
tomorrow.
Show him to the tent
for honored guests.
Until tomorrow,
he remains our guest.
O Almighty,
help me.
Drink this, noble guest.
Drink this.
Mansur!
Mansur, don't take it!
Quick, get on!
Get us out, Moonchild!
Hold on!
Did you know that this would happen?
How can it be that birds
from the same flock,

like best friends that grew up
to become brothers,
are forced to kill one another?
Like night and day,
good and evil. . .
are always together.
Someone must give his life
so that another can prevail
in the name of love and justice.
Why are you looking at me like that?
You are the one who's looking.
I am not.
Do you know what I've always
wanted to say?
I wanted to say, I love you.
I've never had the courage. . .
until now.
6 months later
I sent messengers to all Kazakh tribes.
- And where are the troops?
- Maybe they are late.
If Kazakhs don't unite now,
we have no hope for the future.
Be patient, my son.
This battle will decide our fate.
Either we will become a free country,
or lose hope forever.
We must buy some time.
I believe they will come.
Child, you don't belong here.
Leave!
I will not!
Honored Ablai,
we filled the tunnels with earth oil.
What are you doing here?
I want to fight the Jungars.
You're too young.
Go home.
I don't have a home.
The Jungars killed my family.
- What's your name?
- Erali.
Erali,
you will stay with me.

O Almighty, hasten our fellow
tribes to our rescue.
With their help,
we may survive this.
The Kazakhs have sent a messenger.
Tear him to pieces!
Do it!
Unless we unite now,
this will be our fate.
They have until the morning
to surrender.
I am the only one who knows
what awaits the Jungars tomorrow.
However, this battle can only be won
with the help of all the tribes
working together as one.
I pray that they arrive in time.
Sultan Barak is on his way.
He asks that you hold out
for as long as you can.
Get some rest.
How are you?
You didn't sleep?
I still want you to have this.
Keep it with you always.
Take care of yourself.
Raze the city to the ground.
Take no prisoners.
And bring me. . .
Ablai's head.
They will kill us all.
Ablai, we are ready to attack.
They need to get closer.
We have to wait.
If it comes to it, we can escape
using the tunnels.
I gave orders to fill them
- with earth oil.
- What?
Honored Ablai,
Sultan Jomart is on his way.
Thank you, brother. Rest in peace.
Let us begin!
Let us give our lives for our land,

for our loved ones,
so that our children can live free!
Why are you standing around?!
I told you to fight to the death!
Where are you going?!
Stop them!
Traitors!
Reinforcements have arrived!
It is time, brothers!
Time to fulfill our destiny!
Amen.
No retreat! I will have your heads!
Cowards!
Traitors!
Stay and fight!
To the death!
The battle by the walls
of great Turkestan
lasted 100 days and 100 nights.
Blood flowed like rivers
from both sides.
It was during this epic battle
that my people finally
came together as one
like our forefather Genghis Khan
had many years before.
This is how we conquered the Jungars
who had never known defeat.
Let me go! Let me go!
Come here, you little runt!
Ablai, should I cut his throat?
Don't harm that child.
Bring him with us.
My people, we have prevailed!
The enemy is defeated.
Our tribes have all come together.
Let us preserve this mighty unity.
Mansur, your grandfather Ablai
was the defender of the Kazakhs.
I give you his sword.
I will be worthy of my people's trust.
Ablai! Ablai! Ablai!
- Who are you?
- Messengers

with a special delivery.

Grandfather!

Come here, my dear boy.

Take a look, my liege.

- What is this?

- It's a model of the world.

Ulugbek made it.

It's called "a globe."

These are the Tian-Shan Mountains.

Here are the Chinese and the Russians.

And this is...

Kazakhia.

It's very big.

- Who sent this?

- Ablai Khan.

"From this day forth, all Jungars

and enemies of the Kazakhs

must know that

from the Tian-Shan Mountains

to the Aral Sea. . ."

"From this day forth, all Jungars

and enemies of the Kazakhs

must know that

from the Tian-Shan Mountains

to the Aral Sea

lies a land that has been inhabited

by the Kazakhs

since ancient times.

All who dare to encroach upon this land

will be beaten and driven out

as has been done to the Jungars.

We will greet our friends

with open arms,

but we will show no mercy

to our enemies."

- Ablai Khan