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War Witch

By Kim Nguyen

WARwITCH

You will come out
of my belly one day,
I know you will,
So I have to tell you
how I became a soldier
with the rebels,
Listen good when I talk to you
because it's very important
that you know what I did
before you come out of my belly,
Because when you come out,
I don't know if God will give me
the strength to love you,
I started to make war
when Great Tiger's rebels
kidnapped me from my village,
Kill them.
If you don't kill them,
I will...
with a machete.
They will suffer a lot.
Komona, do as he says.
You are now a rebel
of Great Tiger.
we have 1 0 kids.
Twenty AK-47s.
Hurry.
Sit down.
Take it. This is your mother.
This is your father.
Don't hold the gun
like that.
You have to hold it like this.
Understood?
Don't ever lose it,
ever, ever.
we are rebels.
Respect your guns.
They're your new mother and father.
Look at me. why are you
looking at the ground?
When I started to make war
with the rebels,

I had to work very hard
and I had to fight against
the soldiers from the government,
because if I didn't,
they would hit me with a stick,
And I had to learn to make
the tears go inside my eyes
so they didn't see I was crying,
When my tears wanted to go outside,
I had to go in the forest
so no one would see me,
Give me the cookies!. Give!.
I have not eaten in two days!.
No one must know I gave you these.
I will tell you a story...
that tells how hard
a soldier's life is.
Look. My scar.
Look here.
It's a bullet wound.
we were told not to smoke at night,
but I smoked and I was shot.
Lift the gun. Come on, shoot.
Run!
When we take the magic milk
from the tree, we can see things,
We see ghosts all over,
When I see the ghosts,
it helps me do the job,
because when I see the ghosts,
I don't see the red meat
leaking red on the ground,
All I see are the ghosts
that walk in the forest,
There are many, many ghosts here,
You wouldn't believe,
Too many ghosts,
Even when I sleep,
I see ghosts inside my head,
I don't know if you'll believe me,
but I'm the only one from my village
who survived the bullets
of the government,
That's how they decided

that I was a witch
and that I could tell where
the demons from the government
were hiding in the forest,
we have a witch!
who will help us win
against the government!
My generals liked the things
I could see in the forest so much
that they gave me a big reward,
They sent me to see Great Tiger
so I could meet him
and become his war witch,
They say that you can see
the government soldiers
hidden in the forest.
I have a gift for you.
My wizard gave it magic powers.
When I was at
Great Tiger's camp,
I had to tell the things
I saw in my head
and I had to carry a black rock
that they called "Coltan, "
I don't know what Great Tiger
does with the Coltan,
but I think it is
very important to make war,
I saw a rebel who stole
the Coltan from Great Tiger,
and to punish him,
they dug a hole in the ground
and they put the rebel in the hole
except for his head,
I saw him each day for three days
with just his head
out of the ground,
and he died just like that,
with his mouth open
and the flies that would come
in and out of his mouth,
Don't hit
Great Tiger's witch!
Since I became

Great Tiger's witch,
the ones who tried to hurt me
would risk getting killed,
because Great Tiger
said that, with me,
he would win all the battles
and that I was sacred,
It's time to celebrate!
Ask me better than this!
Tell us!
It's a book about Great Tiger.
when he was saying his prayers
at noon, in the sun,
he came onto 30 elephants.
But because of his magic,
he was able to fight the elephants.
You know why
he's called Great Tiger?
Because his magic is so strong
that he can even eat men.
what are you doing?
Sit down.
what is it?
It's the eye of the night.
He sees everything
that happens in the night.
And that?
Protection by the ancestors.
And the wings?
It's the bird of the night.
He takes the eye to the sky.
I have something
that you will always
have to keep on you.
Give me your hand.
Put it in your pocket.
- what are you doing?
- I'm drinking magic milk.
The chief's son
wanted to get married,
so he invited girls.
They put their makeup on
with lipstick...
You are pretty, mademoiselle.

One day, many government soldiers
came to the mine
because they wanted to steal
the Coltan from Great Tiger,
So I took my AK-47
and we won the battle,
even if there were more soldiers
in front of us
than I have hairs on my head,
we're not going back to Great Tiger!
- I am not leaving!
- You're coming with us!
I'm dreaming.
See this grigri?
You're the one who's going to die
if you shoot, not me.
After everything I have
done for you!
I protected you in the camp,
in the river...
- we're going back to Great Tiger.
- No!
You've lost your mind.
They've made you crazy.
Go on, leave.
Come on. Let's go.
- Leave me!
- Come on, I said!
Now listen to me.
The magician spoke to me
for a very long time,
He told me that, one day
or another, I would die,
that the government soldiers
would kill me
or that Great Tiger would make
holes in me with his AK-47,
on the day I would not do
the job well,
He told me that Great Tiger
had already killed
three witches before me,
So I decided to listen
to Magician and leave with him,

Are we moving forward or backward?
Even a pig
rows better than you!
You don't know what you're saying!
we would have tipped the boat
if it wasn't for me!
After we ran away from Great Tiger,
Magician told me he loved me
and he asked me to marry him,
I told him what
my father told me
to answer to the boys
who asked to marry me,
I told him you can't marry me
just like that
and that, if he wanted to marry me,
he had to find me a white rooster,
My father always told me
that the hardest thing
to fiind in my country
is a white rooster,
Give me a white rooster!
Give me a white rooster!
You're making fun of me?
You're in love?
You wanna get married?
Mama Angele!
what's so funny, Papa?
He's looking for a white rooster
to get married.
You are completely crazy!
Magician searched for a
white rooster for a very long time,
- where can I find a white rooster?
- well, it doesn't exist.
Of course it exists.
I'm looking for one.
My father wanted to marry
the prettiest girl in town.
They asked for a white rooster,
but he never found one.
So he married my mother
for 10 cows!
OK, OK, OK. where are

the chickens around here?
There's a henhouse further that way,
but there are no white roosters.
Drop it.
Bastards!
You will get your throat slit
just like chickens!
I don't want to.
we need a white rooster
to be together.
white roosters don't exist.
Your daddy lied to you.
They don't exist.
Everyone I ask
tells me they don't exist.
white roosters only exist
in your village.
And you refuse me for
a white rooster that doesn't exist.
I don't have one for you,
so I'm leaving.
My leg!
Stop your nonsense.
- I need money for the hospital!
- Liar! He threw himself on the car!
You hit my brother!
Pay him!
Help!
Tell me.
Know where I can find
a white rooster?
It's very difficult to find.
I know they are
difficult to find!
Give me a grigri
to protect me from war.
- That's all you want?
- Yes.
- Is Maestro here?
- Yes.
A white rooster is very expensive.
It's rare.
It will cost you a lot.
They tell me you are a magician.

I have three wives.
I see one on Monday,
one on Tuesday
and the other on Wednesday,
not easy to do.
So you give me a little money
and I also need something
for strength.
No problem,
I have something for you.
with that,
I can have fifteen wives?
You will be in control
of the situation.
Here's the white rooster.
If it's to get married,
then show your courage.
Come.
Uncle!
Are you finished with the war?
My wife, Komona.
You don't need this anymore.
Everybody called
Magician's uncle "The Butcher"
He would always keep
an empty bucket next to him
when he cut the meat,
because every time he would
cut the meat with his machete,
it would remind him
of what happened to his family
and he wanted to throw up,
I will not tell you
what happened to his family,
Because, if I do,
you won't listen anymore,
You will do like
you don't have holes in your ears,
we press and extract the oil.
we've come for Great Tiger's witch.
She's not his witch.
She's my wife.
She's not going anywhere.
- we are leaving with the witch!

- She's not leaving.
Hold him!
Leave him!
Kill him.
You are my wife.
Be happy.
Take her!
It has been two years
since my commander stole me
from my village to make war,
It is him
who put you inside my belly,
I wonder if I throw up like this
because you're filled with poison,
My commander decided
to marry me
because the girl
that slept with him before me
was killed in the war
with an AK-47
so he needed a new girl
to sleep with him,
Since my husband the magician
was killed,
my father and my mother's ghosts
came back to give me nightmares,
Each day, they tell me I have to go
back to my village to bury them,
They tell me that if I don't bury
them, they will stay in my head,
They will never ever leave,
Before I go back to my village,
I have to become a poisoned rose
so I can kill my commander,
Because I don't want
the crazy things in his head
to go into your head,
To become a poisoned rose,
you have to have a thorn,
like a rose,
why are you looking at me?
I'm not looking at you.
You're looking at me.
You were waiting for me?

You want to make love?
You're all alike.
Each day, I pray God to give me
the strength to love you,
even if you look like
your father
who forced me to sleep with him,
even when I cried,
Help!
Guns are not allowed here.
Give me your gun.
No. I'm keeping it.
Are you OK, little girl?
Help us, Komona.
why aren't you helping us?
Come.
Drive us.
It's a hearse.
I'm waiting for a body.
You can get the body later.
Go!
You can go to the cemetery later.
- Faster!
- You can't do that.
where do you want to go?
You'll go back to prison
if we take you to a hospital.
To my uncle's, The Butcher.
- You know where it is?
- Yes.
where does The Butcher live?
Take a right at the end.
Push.
why did you do this?
You could have suffocated
the baby, you know?
The baby is OK.
Stay.
You are like my daughter.
I will teach you how
to take care of the goats.
My gun!
Give me my gun
or else I'll kill you.

My gun is my child.
It's my father.
It's my mother.
I will kill you.
Give me my gun.
You're having a nightmare.
I don't know how long
I stayed at The Butcher's,
It feels like time stopped,
Every night,
my nightmares tell me
to go back and bury my parents,
but you force me to stay here
at The Butcher's,
even if I have to bury my parents
before you come out of my belly,
or else the evil spirits
will punish you
for all the bad things
that I have done,
just like they punished
my husband the magician
because I married him before
I buried my father and my mother,
You want to make me
admit things.
You are a witch.
You eat people at night.
I eat no one!
You eat people at night!
How did the witchcraft
get into your body?
It's not in my body!
what do you want?
I have witchcraft in my body.
How did it get in?
Through Great Tiger's gun.
what?
Through Great Tiger's gun.
what do you want?
I want you to rid me
of the witchcraft.
I need a token to pray.
You must pray a lot

and ask God for forgiveness
so that Komona's spirit
returns to your body.
I will kill you!
You killed my family,
my husband!
Give me my gun!
what's gotten into you?
wait!
Each day, I pray to God
to help me so I don't hate you,
so I don't throw you in the river
when you come out of my belly,
In my head, there are things
that even the magic milk
can't erase,
Go, go, Father
Go, go, Mother
I decided to call you Magician,
Like my husband who died,
because I hope that,
one day,
you will become strong
and courageous just like him,
where are you heading?
- To my uncle's, The Butcher.
- Get in!
I don't have any money.
No one has money.
It's OK.
I'll take care of him.