



Bangle of Peace A Folktale

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Forward By: Njie Martin Vevanje (Academic Scholar)

A tale dedicated to all the victims of the socio-political crisis that started in 2016 in Cameroon, revealing deep truths about man's inhumanity to man and the power of doing good even when a pay is not attached to it. We saw it in the life of Bella who took the bull by the horn to love and care for a widow rejected by her people. Will their love ever last long without the community noticing? Find out from this mind blowing tale written by Cameroons award winning writer and author who took a new dimension revealing the pains many went through during the Anglophone crisis where many were deprived of their homes and became internally displaced persons in a foreign land. Others were beheaded in cold blood, fingers cut off, unexpected disability, innocent children killed and others deprived of school. The crisis left many abled men and women become kid's over-night, begging for food, shelter, and clothing and in search of a job. Belinda's story is just a tale that blends these facts in a land where hatred towards people whose family were victims of such acts of wickedness, regarded as evil people but forgetting to realize that they were just victims of circumstances. Life can be very painful at times but to all those who lost hopes of returning home and those who lost their loved ones, may the good God grant them rest and comfort you at this difficult time.



About the Short Story

Things are difficult nowadays due to the socio-political crisis in the two English speaking regions of Cameroon. I decided to write Bangle of Peace to express the pains I felt when this crisis started. People being killed, others lost their dignity due to the crisis; some became jobless and internally displaced. Most young girls got pregnant and education ended for them. The rate of poverty and starvation increased. Above all, people lost hope but Bangle of Peace has come to tell us that we don't need to be distressed because there is a solution for every problem. Indeed it is very important to show love to others rather than hatred. Being united will make us stronger and let us live together in harmony. Let us stop the killings, we need peace in Cameroon. Bloody incidents happened during this crisis like the Kumba Massacre which took the life of innocent children just because they went to acquire knowledge. Bangle of Peace talks about a widow who was innocent but still yet, was killed and her disappearance left many including Bella who loved her to moan for days. How long will we continue to moan our loved ones as a result of this crisis? Let this story mend the broken heart for I feel the pains others go through especially the internally displaced persons. I pray for Gods divine intervention in my country Cameroon. At the end of the story, there was a solution to the drought. I pray we find a long lasting solution to the Socio-Political crisis. Bella was the chosen one in Besodi and I pray we find the chosen one to restore our country. The ancestors of Belinda were angry with their people over the poor treatment given to their daughter. My prayer is that let the innocent blood of the dead who died as a result of this crisis not speak against my



nation for they were victims of circumstance just as Belinda in my story. I am advocating for peace in my country Cameroon as a Women's Advocate.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this story to Dr. Venantius Kum Ngwoh for his fight for non-violence and to Mrs. Ann Munjong of CRTV-Buea for the promotion of women's rights through her program *Voices of Women* and for her dedication to advocacy for a return to peace in the two English Speaking regions of Cameroon.

APPRECIATION

To God Be the Glory.



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Once upon a time, there lived a happy family called the Madiki's. Mr. Madiki was happily married to Mrs. Gloria Madiki but their marriage was shattered by their daughter's heart of gold. She was called Bella, a sixteen year old girl. Bella was so generous to Belinda the rejected widow. Belinda was rejected by the people of Besodi because all her family members died mysteriously and she was the only one left. The people of Besodi blamed her for the mysterious deaths in her family and rejected her. They made life unbearable for her through the devilish widowhood rites of the people of Besodi which was meant to console the widow rather than inflict pain on her. She was nicknamed "the barrack" and feared by all.

Belinda bemoaned day and night as she remembered her days of sorrow. Little Bella as young as she was with a heart of gold did paid homage to the rejected widow, cleaned her up, clothed her, cooked for her and laid her to sleep on her old bed before rushing back home.

When the people of Besodi heard of the sacrilege committed by Bella, they took the matter to the chief Barton who decreed that anyone who visits, gives the widow food and helps her in any way will be banished from the land. When Bella heard the decree, she cried for days without food nor water as her parents kept on begging her to forget about the widow before it was too late.

One bright morning, some visitors came to share bread with the people of Besodi but to their greatest surprise, stood the rejected widow on the bread line. She looked neat, well dressed and made up but the chief ordered them not to give



her bread for she was cursed with death and anyone who showed pity on her will suffer her curse and will deacease to be part of them.

Mr. Madiki the great hunter advised his daughter with the help of Mrs. Gloria but still yet, Bella gave deaf ears to her parent advice. Her parents failed to understand that the bleeding heart will never be a heart of stone but the heart that bleeds when others suffer. That heart was the heart of Bella.

Even though the people of Besodi rejected Belinda, she knew that her rose Bella won't reject her. Bella took some bread to her and she was so happy and thanked her.

Day after day, night after night, Belinda lived the best of her life, shining like the stars of the night. The people of Besodi were astonished when they heard the widow was living well because they knew she had nothing to survive. What bothered them the most was to know the secret of her good living? When they made their findings, behold, Bella was caught, beaten in the village square and rejected by the villagers. She lamented day and night for days due to the pains she felt. "What is wrong in doing good even when nobody is for you? Life is like the waves of the sea blown by the wind of the desert. I wish I had the power to turn this tide of life that has befallen me. The load so heavy but I shall carry it till I give up my breath" said Bella.

Little Bella intoxicated the minds of her parents and her neighbor's to see the need to care for others despite their predicaments. Just her words did pierce their heart of stone and made it bleed. She visited the rejected widow by night, cleaned her up, gave her food to eat and laid her to sleep on her old bed before disappearing in the dark hoping to see her the next day without knowing that the



chief had dispatched his guards to watch over her. The guards hurriedly ran to inform the chief that very night and he ordered them to behead the old rejected widow by sunset the next day. By night, she heard how the guards discussed on beheading her and throwing her body in the forest of the dreaded spirits. One of the guards walked close to the window of her thatched hut and whispered “The barrack will bleat by sunset”. Belinda shivered on her old bed in fear with no hope for the people of Besodi for she saw in a dream, a plague of famine upon the land caused by the spirits of her ancestors who were filled with grief over the pains of their beloved daughter Belinda. They decided to fight for her and cursed the land with famine.

When it was dawn, Belinda sent for Bella and asked her to sit next to her and with tears dripping like blood, looked in to her eyes and told her the time for the return of the one she loved. Bella became worried and asked her why. “The guards will kill me by sunset and throw my body in the forest of the dreaded spirits” Said Belinda. “Last night I had a dream” Belinda shivered in fear. In that dream, I saw drought consuming the land and making life unbearable for the people of Besodi.

They treated me like a monster, they rejected me and now, they have to suffer the wrath of my ancestors. By Sun set, I shall join them. No wonder a wise man once said “The grave is the silent world for I shall rest my bones in a strange land controlled by dreaded spirits” She added.

Little Bella stood up as if she was in a trance contemplating about the welfare of her people before she was interrupted by Belinda. “Worry not, my daughter. Because of you, I shall forgive the land but the drought must occur for this to be fulfilled and you are the chosen one to save your people. I am doing this



because of your good heart. You stood by me when my world began to crumble, you were beaten all because of me but you didn't reject me. The solution to the drought is my bangle called "The bangle of peace". My late mother warned me never to take it off but remember, I shall give it to you. Follow the warriors closely by sunset and see where I shall finally be laid to rest so that when the drought begins, you shall be chosen to lead the maidens of Besodi and once you cry upon my grave, I shall rise and hand my bangle to you so you can save our people. You shall be the first queen of this land. You shall change their ways and soften their hearts of stone. Be strong my daughter, for the journey won't be an easy one. The gods of our land will bless you with a lovely husband and wonderful children. You will never lack for you are blessed. "I will miss you so much. My parents and neighbors will also miss you. I wish I could follow you to the world of the dead, the silent world but I have to stay back for the prophecy to be fulfilled" Bella lamented.

When it was sunset, Belinda was taken away to the forest of the dreaded spirits by the guards of the chief Barton, beheaded and buried under the watchful eyes of Bella who was hiding in a nearby bush. Bella cried internally seeing the one she loved going to the world beyond.

When the guards had left, she placed two large stones on the grave of Belinda and returned home. When she returned home, she moaned Belinda with all who knew her as a woman with a clean heart.

When it was dawn, the drought began. The chief and the elders of the land were astonished. Hunger and starvation was the order of the day. The drought took away the old and the young in the land of Besodi and there was great need for a



solution as fast as possible. The chief opted to enquire from the eye of the gods to reveal the cause of the calamity. “You are the cause of this calamity your highness. You assigned your guards to kill an innocent widow for no just cause and her ancestors are very angry. Six maidens must embark on a journey of life and death to the forest of the dreaded spirits. The spirits are evil and appear in any direction. The maidens must be well fortified in my shrine for the journey is for the spiritual. They must look for the grave of Belinda and beg for forgiveness. When she feels pity for them, she will arise and give them her bangle of peace which we shall place on the graves of her ancestors and that shall appease them and their spirit of vengeance shall be calm and they shall restore the land. Anyone who returns with the bangle of peace shall be the first queen of Besodi” Said the eye of the gods. The villager’s ululated in contentment.

Behold, the girls were well fortified and their leader was Bella. She led the maidens to the forest of the dreaded spirits but as the journey became tough, most of them were caught by the dreaded spirits, others ate food prepared by the dreaded spirits while some were beaten by poisonous snakes and died. At last, only Bella arrived the grave of a woman whom she loved despite the fact that her own people rejected her, she still had compassion for them. Bella cried out bitterly for mercy as she lay at one end of the grave holding the ground where she knew she was going to return to someday. Behold, Belinda in her grave felt the impulse of her heart beat and the words of her lips and rose up. She then gave the bangle of peace to her.



On her way back home, she saw a dove that danced on one spot for a long time and raised the dust of the earth. She stood and watched keenly to get the intended meaning of the sign but it was above her.

When Bella entered the village, she met her people moaning their late chief Barton who died due to the drought. Little Bella handed the bangle to the eye of the gods and he did all what he had to do with it and the land was restored. Bella became the first queen of Besodi and was happily married to Mr. Divine, son of Bernice the cripple. Bella made her people to understand the need to help others despite their misfortune for as the storms did flow, it must come and go. She made them to see the need to help those who are in need because the reward was bountiful. She was blessed with many children and lived happily ever after.

THE END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Njie Martin Vevanje is an award winning Cameroonian writer, author of *Died Before Her Time* published on Wattpad. Njie is the author of six published poems and three academic articles on dance, underrepresented communities and humanities. He has interest in Film studies, Women and Gender issues, and cultural studies. Njie holds a Bachelor's degree in Performing and Visual Arts from the University of Buea. He is currently an Associate Editor with the International Journal of Indian Languages and Literature (IJILL).