

# On the Island of Binga Bonga



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The War That Never Was

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## THE WAR THAT NEVER WAS

On the island of Binga Bonga no one fought and there were no wars.

When someone started to get angry or cry, a friend came by, rubbed them nose-to-nose, gave them a big belly-to-belly hug and held them close until they were better. Then they would go out and swim or play.

They lived in little houses made of wood and straw, but often, at night, people slept outside. Families would climb into their great big hammocks, which were tied to the trees, and snuggled together to sleep safe and warm. Crickets and frogs sang a song, “Good night. Good night. Boys and girls sleep well.” But one day long ago, the large Chunga Choo Army appeared on the top of the mountain leading to Binga Bonga. Their leader, General George, was tiny and troll-like with a terrible frown on his face and looked as if he had eaten a lemon. Behind him were hundreds of boys and girls with swords, shields, arrows, and one little drummer boy.

The general said, “We will take your land and you will work for us! We’re the biggest and meanest army around.”

His army gave a huge shout, “Hubba Hubba Hubba Hoo! We’re gonna’ take you over!” General began to dance and sing, “Chinga chonga choom! Choom! Choom! Chinga chonga choom, we’re gonna’ whoop on you. You have until sunrise to surrender or die.”

The people of Binga had never known anyone to be so angry and mean.

“Do you think he has fleas?” one boy asked.

“Or maybe worms? People do get angry when they have worms.”

“But what are we going to do?” asked t

Chief Bi Bop-a-Lou brought together her group of wise elders and talked late into the evening near her hammock.

“Should we go to war? Should we leave?” asked one.

“But there is no other place to go!” said another.

A little girl by the name of Jasmine said, “We’re the people of Binga Bonga and we don’t know anything about war. Why don’t we try to be nice to them?”

“Nice to them?” One of the elders spoke up. “They came over here and wanted to start a war” Jasmine said, “Isn’t that what we do? When someone is sad or angry, don’t we give him or her a hug? If someone is unhappy, don’t we give them the Binga Bonga belly hug?”

The Chief said, “Jasmine is right. We will get whipped since we don’t know a single thing about fighting. As to leaving, we’ve never been anywhere else, so where would we go? Let’s be nice to them and see what happens!”

The Chunga Choo Army was on the hillside. They had long spears, short spears, swords, and wooden shields, but scariest of all was little General George who grumbled and growled so it echoed down the hill... He began his war dance song, "Chinga chonga chinga chonga choom! Choom! Choom! Chinga chonga choom, we're gonna' whoop on you."

The village elders lead by Bi-Bop-a-Lou said, "Hold just a minute! Before you take us over, let's have something to eat."

Bi Bop-A-Lou rubbed her nice round belly and did the great belly drumming of the Binga Bonga tribe on her tummy as she gave the welcome call, "Ruba dub. Rubba dub. Rubba dub. Rubba Dub Moo. Rubba Dub Mooooah!" The general told his men to put their weapons down and have some fun before they took over Bing Bonga. The eating and dancing went on into the night. They ate tomatoes as big as basketballs, carrots as long as arms, delicious fruit, and drank dreamy time tea. The musicians played drums, fifes, and flutes. When they woke up in the morning, the Chungas found another feast waiting. The general shouted, "No! Up! Up! It's on to war. We have to go to war!"

The young drummer boy, Chichi, said, "Excuse me, General George. These people have been so kind. Last night they fed us like kings and danced with us. This morning they fed us delicious fruits and massaged our feet. How can we make war and do bad things to these people?"

There was a silence so deep they could hear a worm cough. No soldier had every questioned the great general, let alone a lowly drummer boy.

A loud belch erupted from the general's tummy before words tumbled out his mouth, "Drummer boy is right."

The army murmured, "Wow."

The general shouted, "On to the next village! These people have been kind, but we're an army! An army only knows how to do one thing, make war!"

Jasmine said, "I'll take you to the next village, that way you'll be safe."

The Chunga Choo Grand Army was led by Jasmine, who played a flute and Chichi, who happily pounded on his drum. They marched at the head of the parade, two steps behind the general. But nothing could shake the drowsiness from the army. They looked like all the sleepy children around the world waiting for an early morning bus.

Word spread to the second village and they were ready! In Binga Bonga if one village has a party, then the second one has to have an even bigger party. When the villagers heard about this army from Chunga they worked to make sure it would be the best party of all.

The General began his war song, "Chinga chonga chinga chonga choom! Choom! Choom! Chinga chonga choom, we're gonna' whoop on you."

Jasmine said, "Excuse me General, before the war begins I'd like you to meet my family and friends." She introduced him to babies, moms, and dads, and all her cousins. "The general and his army have come to take over the village and make all of you prisoners."

"Prisoners? What is a prisoner?" one girl asked.

"It is when they tie you up and you have to do what they say."

"Yes, that's right!" said the little general. "We're the biggest army the world has ever known. Aren't you scared of us?" His eyes grew so wide as if they would pop out of his head.

Oh, no!" said the villagers. "He seems scary and a little crazy too!"

The leader of the village said, "Before you take us over and do bad things we have to have a party."

"A party? No, not another party! The last village was too nice to us. If this keeps up, none of my soldiers will want to go to war!" General George shouted so angrily and loudly even the scarecrows flew away.

Jasmine said, "Please General, your army looks so tired and needs to eat."

He scrunched up his face in a frown, "Hmmm, you're right. A party first and then we go to war!"

The party began before sunset and lasted into the next morning. There were even more dancers, music, food and dreamy time tea than the first village. The next day the general awoke at noon. His army was scattered, sleeping in the fields, nestled in each other's arms; many were sleeping with teddy bears.

The general shouted, "Up soldiers! Up soldiers! We're an army. We're the mightiest army that anyone in these mountains has ever seen!"

Try as he could, all the army did was roll over and fall back asleep. He yelled at his troops to get up and do something, but the only sound he could hear was peaceful snoring.

The general stomped and stormed, but his army wouldn't hurt the villagers. Chichi said, "These people were even nicer than the first village. They fed us well, taught us how to play new games, massaged our toes, and read us bedtime stories. General, you never read us bedtime stories like they did."

The general was so mad he was almost crying, "I read you stories of great heroes, wars, and fighting! I am a good general to you."

"Yes," said the little drummer boy. "But you didn't read us nice stories where there was no fighting or war."

Now the general was really mad and the army got scared, but they didn't take over that village. General George said, "Okay, maybe not this village, but the next one we're going to take over. No more Mr. Nice Guy!"

By the evening he had pushed his army on to the next village. To their surprise, an even bigger party was waiting for them! There were drummers, saxophone players, jugglers, and a circus with elephants. The tables were loaded high with oranges, cherries, berries, and fruits of all kinds and even yummy pies.

How could one fight a war or be angry when one felt this good? And so the party continued in each village of the land. By the time the Grand Chunga Army reached the capital of Binga Bonga every soldier had gained at least fifty pounds! They said, "Please, no more food. No more parties. Please, stop being so kind and generous!"

They had become so round their pants kept falling to the ground. It's hard to march to war when your pants keep falling down.

Chief Bi Bop-a-Lou said to Jasmine, "We'll give these boys and girls one last party they won't forget. After all, they did come all this way."

Jasmine smiled, "I'm beginning to like them. At first they seemed scary and now even the general doesn't look so mean." She looked at General George who sat under a tree eating a big custard pie. For four days the party continued, the Chunga Army got rounder and plumper, and more peaceful with every cup of dreamy time tea. The villagers massaged their toes and sang them songs. The soldiers left all their weapons on the ground, as they happily ate lots of juicy vegetables and the yummiest pies one could want. But what would they do with all those silly spears?

One little girl had an idea, "Let's use them to fly!"

Soon the boys and girls of Chunga Choo and Binga Bonga made the spears into pole vaults so they could sail high into the sky. Up! Up they flew! The boys and girls were flying and soaring! The tin helmets filled with dirt made perfect flowerpots. Their wooden swords made very nice firewood. The best fun of all was when they used the shields to slide down the wet side of the grassy mountain. Down they flew, one, two and three. "Ooooooh, Ooooooh!"

The general stood on the hilltop alone watching his army playing in the fields, dancing with the other children, and being like all the other children in the world. Jasmine and Chichi came by and said, "General won't you please join us? We can have so much fun."

He stood up to his full height of three feet and said, "When I was a child the only thing I knew how to do was to play war games!" He said this with a chop, chop and a swing of his sword.

"Please, George take my hand," Jasmine said quietly. "Let's take a ride down the hill." They jumped into the General's big shield. General George, Jasmine, and Chichi went sliding and swaying down the hill. The faster they went, the higher they flew. The army heard a surprising shout "Yippee! This is more fun than war! This is more fun than any war!"

The General took off his helmet, threw away his sword, and spent the day sliding down the hill. That night he slept well in the land of dreams where every warrior's sword becomes a silver fairy wand and each wave of a wand makes a rainbow across the sky.

On the next day it was time for the Grand Army of Chunga to leave. The soldiers were round and happy. Jasmine walked hand-in-hand with the boys and girls of Chunga Choo to the top of the mountain with Chichi at the head of the parade playing his drums. The happiest person of all was General George who had decided he wanted to be called Georgie.

On the top of the highest mountain Georgie waved to the people of Binga Bonga. “Goodbye! Goodbye! You’ve been the best of friends. Thank you!”

Soon the legend spread all over the globe about the peaceful land.

This is the story of the Great War that never happened, a war where not a single arrow flew and everyone went home well and happy.

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