

The Bad Girl

Don Bosco

Radio Drama

2018

Fact: Much of Solomon Islands is covered by tropical rainforest. Excessive logging has disrupted the environment, caused erosion, damaged water resources and disruption of the reefs. Damage has been done to Marovo Lagoon, Isabel and other islands. The Solomons has 173 bird species.

Actors

The Village Chief

Mother of Veronica

Mr. Kim – a Tree Logging Manager

Peter - son of the Chief

Voice 1

Voice 2

Veronica

Grandfather

Sound effects person

NARRATOR: (CHIEF) My name is Chief Ramo. I live on the small island of Noventsa in the Pacific near Solomon Islands. One morning I called at the house of Mrs. Galan.

SFX: KNOCKING ON DOOR

MOTHER: Good morning. Come in sir. I am honoured to receive the village chief into my house. Please sit here. This is my best chair. I will get you a drink.

CHIEF: Thank you, Mrs Galan. Your house is always tidy. If your husband was still alive he would be proud of you. He was a good man. It was a sad time for our village to lose both your sons and your husband by drowning when they went fishing.

MOTHER: Yes. I do not like living alone. All I have left now is my daughter. But she is left home too. She will be twenty-three years old now. I remember when she upset you eight years ago. She upset all the old people of the village then she went to live on another island a long way from here.

CHIEF: Yes. She was a bad girl. When I think about what she did I am shocked. She was rude to all the village elders, and so rude to me too. Veronica was not even a woman. She was just an unmarried girl of sixteen. She said western education was more important than Solomon customs.

MOTHER: My husband and I always tried to bring Veronica up like a good Christian.

CHIEF: Yes, I know. It was not your fault Mrs. Galan. She was just a bad girl. When I tried to speak to her, she shouted at me and walked out of the meeting. I have not seen her since. She put shame on us all.

MOTHER: I am sorry. Veronica always said what she thought. She is clever. Her brain is good.

CHIEF: I am here because I have heard she is coming back to our island today.

MOTHER: I have heard nothing.

CHIEF: This is an important day. I am bringing a special man to our village for a meeting. He is from Malaysia. His name is Mr. Kim, a Logging Manager. He will make this village rich. I met him last week in Honiara at his hotel. He's a nice man. He paid for my lunch, gave me a gift and talked with me for a long time.

KIM: Chief Ramo. I am so honoured to meet you. Please accept this special gold watch as a gift.

CHIEF: Thank you, Mr. Kim.

KIM: I enjoyed sharing a meal with you. This hotel is the most expensive and best in all Solomon Islands. Now, we must talk business. Your island has many tall trees. My company would like to buy them. We will pay you. Your village will become rich.

CHIEF: I will need to talk to the village elders first, Mr. Kim. But, I am sure they would be pleased. There are six elders from six villages.

KIM: Yes, I know. I have a gift for all of them. Here is money and a watch for each of them.

CHIEF: You are a kind man.

KIM: I will meet the villager elders, so we can sign a contract for the tree cutting. As soon as it is signed I have a special gift for you, Chief Ramo. I have twenty thousand Solomon Islands dollars for you alone.

CHIEF: I will arrange a meeting with all the village leaders and people.

KIM: I would like the meeting to be tomorrow, so we can sign the contract.

CHIEF: That is not much time, but I will do my best to get a meeting ready

KIM: Very good. I will be at your village meeting tomorrow with a contract and I will tell all the people how much money you will get for each tree. You will all be happy.

CHIEF: So, Mrs Galan. That is what Mr Kim told me when we met at the hotel. It would be good to have more money in our village. We are poor. When he comes here we must respect him.

SFX: CELL PHONE RINGS

Hello. Oh, yes. Sister Rachel. Are you at the convent? No. You are calling from the wharf. What's that? The ship has just arrived. Yes. Yes. I am listening. Oh...what did you say? A woman is with you. Veronica. And there is a man with her and a baby. Okay, sister. I will see you later. Goodbye

Mrs Galan. Veronica is back with a baby and a man. He must be her husband. But, he is old. Sister Rachel has taken them all to the convent. She never sees girls as bad. She says there are only girls who need help. I do not agree with her. There are good and bad girls. Veronica is bad.

MOTHER: I don't know what to do. This is a surprise.

SFX: KNOCK ON DOOR

Come in. Welcome Peter.

PETER: Father. It is terrible. That bad girl has come back, and she has her husband with her. He is old and thin. Huh. She cannot even find a young husband, because she is so bad. She has a baby with her too. It looks sick. We must not allow Veronica to stay here. She will make trouble again. Tell her to leave the island. You are the chief.

CHIEF: (Narrator) I did not want Veronica to come back on our island, but what could I do. She was born here. This is her island. Now she has come with a husband and a baby too. And I am arranging a big village meeting for Mr. Kim, the Manager of the timber logging company. He will make our village rich. That night, all the village met in the church hall. We welcomed Mr Kim. He told us how everyone would get money. Other people would do all the work. Every time a tree was cut down, the village would get more money. People were happy and clapped hands. He wanted us to sign the contract. Then Veronica came into the hall with Sister Rachel from the convent. She was with her husband, the old man and her baby. They all came to the front of the hall and sat down. Mr. Kim stopped talking. He had the contract ready. Then Veronica stood up. I was shocked. I thought... this bad girl has come to make trouble again.

VERONICA: Chief Ramo, I would like to speak.

CHIEF: You may speak, Veronica.

VERONICA: I would like this man from another island to speak too.

CHIEF: Yes, your husband may speak.

VERONICA: He is not my husband.

CHIEF: What do you want to say, Veronica?

VERONICA: When I left this island, I went to live on the island of Noventsä. It has been making much money from logging.

VOICE 1: Then why is the baby looking sick. It does not have enough good food.

VOICE 2: The baby looks starved.

VERONICA: Chief. I would like the Grandfather from Noventsas to speak.

CHIEF: Welcome. You may speak, Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER: My home is on Noventsas Island. We used to have many trees and plants and we had fish in the sea on the reef and we drank fresh water from the river. When I was a boy I used to hear birds singing. We were happy. Now – all is quiet? In the morning when I wake up I hear nothing. Nothing.

VOICE 1: Grandfather. What are you saying? Why is everything quiet?

VOICE 2: How did it happen?

GRANDFATHER: Our village changed when the tree logging company came. They cut down our trees and gave us money. But when the trees were gone the plants would not grow. We had no more fruit and no vegetables. Our river became red from the rubbish from the trees. We could not drink the water. When we did we became sick. Our reef became dirty from the waste from the trees. Our beautiful coloured reef fish died. We then used all our money buying rice and tinned fish to eat. Some people became sick. We were unhappy. Children became sick. When all our trees were gone we had no more money.

VOICE 1: Grandfather. Your little baby looks sick

VOICE 2: Where is the baby's mother?

GRANDFATHER: My granddaughter was the mother. But she died giving birth.

VOICE 2: And where is the father?

GRANDFATHER: He was from the logging company. When my granddaughter became pregnant I spoke to him. He laughed and said he was not the father. But my granddaughter said he was. I believed her.

CHIEF: Did you go to see the Manager of the Logging Company.

GRANDFATHER: I did. He said the girl was responsible. The Logging company said it was not to blame. I was hurt and ashamed. So, now I looked after my granddaughter. There is no one else. My wife is dead, now my granddaughter is dead, and my other children are all working overseas.

MOTHER: How did you meet Veronica?

GRANDFATHER: She came to the island and helped our people. She told me this island was going to sell its trees. I wanted to come here to talk with you to tell you what will happen when all your trees are cut.

PETER: My name is Peter – I am the son of the chief. Have your trees started to grow again, grandfather?

GRANDFATHER: No. We have hardly any trees now. Many of our young men have left the island to work in other places. So, we only have old people and young children now. My island of Noventsia is dying.

PETER: I thought the money from the trees would make people rich forever.

KIM: It does. You will have money for every tree we cut.

PETER: Mr. Kim, do you put the waste rubbish from the trees into our river and our reef?

KIM: Of course not. But some rubbish may flow by accident into the reef and the river. But you will have enough money to buy rice, chicken, tinned fish and biscuits

MOTHER: Mr. Kim. How will we get fresh fruit and vegetables for our children if we cannot grow it on the island?

KIM: You will have enough money to buy it and fly it in aeroplanes from Honiara. We will pay you every week. That is why you must sign the contract now? I have it here.

PETER: I have a wife and new baby. My baby gets strong eating fish from our reef and eating vegetables from my garden.

KIM: You will have money to buy good vegetables and plenty of beer too.

PETER: That is not what I want.

CHIEF: Mr. Kim. I would like all our elders and the people of the village to have more time to think about cutting down our trees. We cannot sign the contract today.

KIM: My company cannot wait. I have the contract right here, and the money. You promised to sign it.

CHIEF: No Mr. Kim. I did not. I said we would have a village meeting and talk about the logging. My people are now worried about the pollution with the river and the reef and losing their fruit trees.

KIM: You are listening to the words of a stupid old man. He is crazy.

CHIEF: The elders of my village want to talk more about this, Mr. Kim. Afterwards we will talk with you.

PETER: And the young people of this village want to talk about whether we should cut down all our trees,

MOTHER: I am a mother. All the mothers of this village want to talk about whether we should cut down our trees.

KIM: My company cannot wait. If you want our money you must sign the contract today.

CHIEF: I will not sign for the elders.

PETER: I am the next Chief. I will not sign for the young people.

MOTHER: The mothers of our village want to talk with their husbands before our trees are cut down.

KIM: Then. There will be no contract then. You village people are wasting my time. Look. I tear it up now. Look. Look.

SFX: TEARING PAPER

And I will not stay here wasting anymore time in this village. You have listened to the words of a stupid old man and the words of his foolish granddaughter. You have all lost a lot of money. I am going now. I will not come back to this island. You have made a foolish decision. Goodbye.

SFX: DOOR SLAMS

CHIEF: I am sad that Mr. Kim is angry. But our village is important. Our people are important. Thank you, Grandfather, for coming here. You have helped us a lot. Where will you go now?

GRANDFATHER: I have nowhere to go. I have no home.

MOTHER: Chief Ramo. May I speak?

CHIEF: You may Mrs. Galan.

MOTHER: Only one person lives in my house. Many years ago, my husband and sons drowned at sea and Veronica left home. Grandfather, I would like you to live in my house with your granddaughter's baby. You may stay as long as you like.

CHIEF: That is kind of you, Mrs Galan.

MOTHER: And I have one more offer. Veronica. My daughter. Would you like to come home too?

VERONICA: (*long pause*) Yes, mother. I would like to come home.

MOTHER: In the morning we will go into our garden to get some fresh fruit and some fresh vegetables for the baby.

VERONICA: And I will catch a fish.

GRANDFATHER: And I will sit down in your garden and listen to the birds singing.

END OF PLAY

You have been listening to 'The Bad Girl' a Don Bosco Radio Production. The actors were: