

ON TRUE WAR STORIES

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AN ILLUSTRATED ADAPTATION

I HEARD A DIFFERENT KIND OF WAR STORY AS I GREW UP AMONG VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. THERE WAS THE ONE ABOUT A MAN WHO HELD UP A MOM AND POP SHOP IN A SMALL VIETNAMESE TOWN WITH A HAND GRENADE.

OR THE ONE ABOUT A MOTHER WHO FLED THAT SMALL TOWN WHEN THE COMMUNISTS ARRIVED,



TAKING HER SONS BUT LEAVING BEHIND HER ADOPTED TEENAGE DAUGHTER TO TAKE CARE OF THE SHOP, BELIEVING SHE WOULD SOON RETURN.



MOTHER AND DAUGHTER WOULD NOT SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN FOR TWENTY YEARS.

OR WHAT ABOUT THE TIME THAT MOTHER AND HER HUSBAND OPENED ANOTHER SHOP IN SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, AND WERE SHOT ON CHRISTMAS EVE IN AN ARMED ROBBERY?



BUT WHAT IF WE UNDERSTOOD IMMIGRANT STORIES TO BE WAR STORIES?

OR HOW THEY CRIED WHEN THEY RECEIVED LETTERS ANNOUNCING THE DEATHS OF THEIR PARENTS IN THEIR LOST HOMELAND?



OR HOW THEY WORKED TWELVE HOUR DAYS EVERY DAY EXCEPT FOR CHRISTMAS, EASTER AND TET?

AND WHAT IF WE UNDERSTOOD THAT WAR STORIES DISTURB EVEN MORE WHEN THEY ARE NOT ABOUT SOLDIERS, WHEN THEY SHOW US HOW NORMAL WAR IS, HOW WAR TOUCHES AND TRANSFORMS EVERYTHING AND EVERYBODY, INCLUDING, MOST OF ALL, CIVILIANS?



WAR IS HELL...

A WAR BROUGHT ME FROM OVER THERE TO OVER HERE

PEOPLE LIKE ME, THE VIETNAMESE WHO FLED TO THE UNITED STATES AFTER THE WAR'S END,



WERE LIVING PROOF OF THE SUCCESS OF ONE OF AMERICA'S GREATEST DESIRES,



TO WIN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF OTHERS.