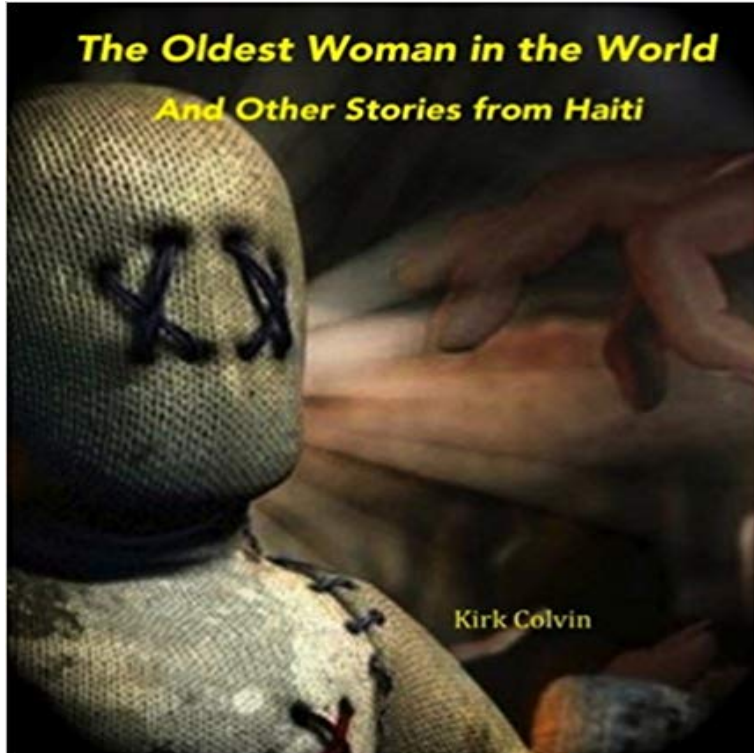


The Oldest Woman in the World and Other Stories from Haiti



I spent two years (1984-86) as the Coast Guard Attache to the U. S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Looking back all these years later, I realize that those two years were the the most intense, most moving, most heart-wrenching years of my life. I was your typical middle-class white American when I arrived in Haiti--Id grown up in the comfortable suburbs of the San Francisco Peninsula. Id attended private schools, universities, and become a Coast Guard aviator. It was an easy, privileged life. Then I arrived in Haiti. Poverty and despair were everywhere. Garbage littered the streets; sewage ran in the gutters; naked children stood along the roads, their bloated bellies and reddish hair announcing their malnourishment; the corrupt government, led by Baby Doc Duvalier, stole money from the peasants, siphoned U. S. aid money into Swiss accounts, and lived a life of decadence made all the more obscene by its blatant disregard for the plight of the people who made it possible. The country was a living nightmare ... only 600 miles from our shore, near enough to tempt thousands of desperate boat people to risk their lives trying to reach there. Thousands died in the attempt. Haiti was (and still is) a horror story. Now, nearly thirty years later, Haiti is in even worse shape, and Im still unable to fully explain how deeply my short stay there affected me. These few stories are my attempt to give you some idea of what it was like to live in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Somewhere deep inside, a part of me is Haitian. Perhaps after reading these stories, youll have a sense of what that means. PS: If you liked these stories, you might like my novel Bloodless Coup, also available as a Kindle Book.

Kirk Colvin (Author of The Oldest Woman in the World and Other The Oldest Woman in the World and Other

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