



Itsaso's Dream

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Kids, Magic

In the large village of Anali, one hot August night, four different babies were born. Two of them would grow up to be fishermen, the third a seamstress. These aforementioned babies are of no importance to the story, so let us move on to the fourth baby; a girl, who her mother, Wisteria, named Itsaso.

Itsaso, at first, was an ordinary child in every way. She started crawling about the house around eight months, she took her first steps at ten months. She was running around the house and laughing and talking when she was about two. Her family enjoyed Itsaso at this age primarily; she was over the fussy- baby age, and not quite in her 'terrible twos' year; just a sweet little toddler who made funny speeches.

One morning, for example, during the morning meal, Itsaso announced, "I had dream."

"Oh, did you?" cooed Brin, a big sister. "What was it about?"

"Stream," answered little Itsaso. "Stream got big and went everywhere."

No one thought anything of this speech, they all just gave a little laugh over it, and went on with their meal. It was soon forgotten. No one who had been at the breakfast thought of it again, not even when a nearby large stream flooded the next week and ruined a field of corn.

But soon Itsaso grew older, and told more of her dreams. When she was about five years old, her family realized that she was... odd. But what could they do about it? Wisteria felt it best she should talk to her little daughter to be sure that she didn't run around the village, telling everyone of her dreams that would soon come

true. "Her dreams are just coincidences," Wisteria told herself firmly. "And nothing more. But the villagers might not agree..."

Itsaso was staring expectantly at a round, carefully crafted nest, waiting for the four eggs inside of it to hatch. She had dreamed of it just the night before, and so of course it would happen. Maybe not today or tomorrow, but soon. No- it was happening now! The first egg began to shake and wobble, and the five year old girl noticed several cracks running down the sides of the brown egg. Oh! A little yellow beak just poked through the shell of the egg! Itsaso squealed with excitement. The large mother bird hovering over her unborn babies chirped expectantly.

Itsaso was so absorbed in watching the precious eggs she did not notice her mother's approach until the latter spoke:

"Itsaso, get off the dirt. You'll muddy your dress."

The little girl obediently stood and said innocently, "yes, Mama? Do you need something?"

"Yes," Wisteria said. "I have come to ask something of you." She paused for affect before continuing. "Did you- Did you have any dreams recently?"

"I did!" said Itsaso, beaming. "I dreamt about baby birds coming. And look!" she pointed.

"Very nice," the girl's mother said. "Now, do you have dreams a lot?" she asked, even though she very well knew the answer.

"Oh, yes," answered Itsaso, her eyes wandering back to the bird nest. " Almost every night."

"Itsaso, do you know why your dreams always come true?"

The little girl paused, and thought about the question. "Noooo," she finally said. " I don't."

"Dreams can be... good or bad," said Wisteria slowly. "Itsaso- ITSASO! Look at me, please! Did you hear what I just said?"

“Look at me,” repeated the girl seriously.

“No, I said-” Wisteria sighed, exasperated. “I SAID that dreams can be good or bad. And that frightens people. So I am asking you to stop telling your dreams to people. Do you understand?”

Itsaso frowned. “But-” she began.

“-No buts,” argued her mother. “Now, promise me you won’t tell your dreams anymore?”

The little girl reluctantly promised, and kept her promise, but she still had her dreams, and they continued to come true. One night, a little over a year later, she had a dream. It went like this:

Two boys were in the forest, camping. They had a tent pitched under a tree. It was morning, and therefore not very warm, so the two boys who emerged from the aforesaid tent were not warm at all.

“Let’s start a fire,” suggested the first boy. They did this, and it burned steadily all morning. Later that day, they went bathing in a stream, as it had grown so hot outside, and the fire was still roaring. They came back nearly two hours later, and their whole camp was ablaze in flames. And it was heading towards the village.

Itsaso woke up from this terrifying dream, her heart beating quickly. She had to do something! She tried to tell her family of the dream the next morning, but her mother stopped her and hissed into her ear, “remember what you promised me!”

So, not knowing what else to do, Itsaso took herself to the heart of the village. Here resided old Darya, a dream-interpreter and fortune-teller.

Itsaso told her dream, completely forgetting the promise Wisteria had forced her to make, to Darya, who rubbed her hands together and said, “hmmm, it appears that this dream is trying to tell you something!”

“Yes,” answered Itsaso. “I know! And we must warn everyone! They may not listen to ME, but the others will listen to you! You must tell everyone and warn them! No, we should stop those two boys from leaving the fire!”

“You don’t actually believe the fire will happen, do you?” cackled Darya. “No, no, the dream was reviving your deep fear of fire within you! That is all! Don’t play with fire tools and you’ll be fine! Now, go. I have other

customers to attend to.”

Itsaso felt her fear and anger rise within her. If Darya wouldn't believe her, then who would? The fire could be coming today! She had to stop those boys before it was too late! So Itsaso took off to the woods.

It was worse than she had thought. The fire was already burning, and the two boys from her dream were not anywhere to be seen. There was a basin of water, half filled, which Itsaso attempted to pick up and throw over the blazing curls of flames, but it was too heavy. She managed to tip it over, but it trickled in the wrong direction! Itsaso's vision was clouding over from the smoke. She felt as though it was filling her head, too. She could hardly think straight. Without really knowing what she was doing, she stumbled off to the river, where the boys were still peacefully enjoying the summer day.

“Fire,” she wheezed. “Have to stop it, before...” she paused to take a breath. “Before it reaches... Anali.”

The boys looked at each other, then at the smoke rising into the sky in the distance.

Back in Anali, a woman stood at the far end of the village, drawing a bucket- full of the water from a well. She stood for a moment, admiring the summer sky... was that smoke? It was. The woman filled with dread. It was fire season, so why was she so surprised? She should have been more prepared! She hurried into the village to warn everyone, but it seemed that everyone had already flown into panic. This was because Itsaso had ran back to Anali the moment the two boys had been warned to stop the fire.

“Look!” yelled a man named Ackley. “The fire has stopped!”

Everyone looked, and, sure enough, the smoke had stopped rising from the not-so-distant treetops. “Thank goodness,” said Wisteria to herself. “Now where has Itsaso gone?”

Itsaso was found looking anxiously out of her window at the forest. Where were the boys? Did her warning somehow affect them from escaping the fire? She desperately clung to the hope that they had somehow made it out.

“Itsaso.” Wisteria's voice was quiet and lethal, full of poison and anger. “You broke your promise. Now the whole village knows. And they are not happy. They are scared.”

“But...” Itsaso said, confused. “The fire is gone. Why are they scared?”

“Not of the fire, anymore,” said Wisteria impatiently. “Of YOU.”

“Of... me?”

“Yes, you. Who did you tell your dream to?”

“D-Dayra,” stammered the girl.

“Darya!” exclaimed Itsaso’s mother, more to herself than her daughter. “That woman may be wise in some ways, but she couldn’t tell you what your strange dreams were about if her life depended on it! ... And, even worse, she can’t keep a secret. Of course, after the dream came true, she told everyone... now they think Itsaso is some kind of witch.”

Itsaso’s voice quivered. “A... A witch?”

“Yes,” Wisteria sighed. “I don’t know how on earth they can be dissuaded from this foolish belief. You’d better pray to your lucky stars, Itsaso, that this whole matter is resolved.”

Itsaso prayed with all of her might, that the boys were saved. “Let them be saved, let them be saved, please, please, please...”

That night, she slipped outside into the hot, sticky August night. She had to see if the two boys were alive. They had not yet been recovered, though there had been search parties out all day. The members of this aforementioned search party would have still been out searching, but they had nothing to light their way unless they held torches- But after the day’s events, no one dared to. So it was left to Itsaso.

She first went to the burnt- out campsite, and looked around. The grass was black and withered, and the camp equipment ruined. No lifeless bodies. Itsaso took this as a positive sign. She then slipped down the trail that led to the river. She found an almost empty water-skin bottle that someone of the search party must have dropped, a burnt, almost entirely disintegrated leaf or two, and a boot almost entirely hidden by the mostly destroyed underbrush that surrounded the footpath she walked on. Itsaso wondered how someone had left their BOOT behind. Someone in Anali was missing it right now. She decided to bring it back with her, and

stooped to pick it up.

She nearly screamed when she saw that it was attached to... a leg... which was attached to... a body. It was, undoubtedly, one of the two boys that had been camping. Itsaso managed to gulp down her scream, but a little whimper still escaped. Was he even alive? Just then, the boy groaned. Itsaso gasped with relief.

“Speak to me,” she demanded.

“Can’t move,” he grumbled. “Broken leg.”

“Why didn’t you say something when the men came looking for you?” scolded Itsaso.

“Voice... too quiet,” croaked the boy. “They... couldn’t hear. All talking... Where’s Halcyon?”

“Halcyon? Oh, the other boy? I... I don’t know.” Itsaso gulped. “Can you sit up?”

With some struggle, the boy sat up, groaning horribly. “Have to find... Halcyon,” he insisted, in between wheezes.

“Where did you see him last?” asked Itsaso urgently.

“... At the river,” answered the boy. “He... stayed behind... to bring more water... to put out the fire... I took a water skin bottle... I don’t know where it is...”

“Here it is,” Itsaso said, holding up the bottle she had earlier retrieved. “It may have some water in it still. Drink.”

The boy drank gratefully, and when it was gone, his voice was clearer. “Is the fire gone?”

“Yes,” Itsaso assured him. “It died out, somehow. We have to find Halcyon now. Can you stand?” This, however, proved to be beyond the boy’s power. “Can’t,” he gasped. “Hurts too much.”

Itsaso groaned. “Okay... I’ll go look around some more. By myself. You’ll stay here.” Although she very little wanted to wander around in the dark by herself, she had no other ideas.

Hours later, Itsaso had searched every trail within three miles, and walked up and down the river, on both

sides, and found no one... unless a startled river rat or two counts. Itsaso also heard some strange rusting noises somewhere in the darkest part of the forest, but dared not investigate. She eventually realized that the best thing she could do was get the boy she HAD found back into the village. But he still could not stand. "Go to Anali..." he managed to say. "Tell them... you found... Pembroke."

"Who? Oh, you. Okay, I will." So Itsaso hurried back to the village.

"I FOUND PEMBROKE!!!" She screamed, banging on every door she saw. "I FOUND PEMBROKE, IN THE FOREST! HE CAN'T WALK! COME HELP, COME HELP!"

The villagers eyed the little witch- girl skeptically. Dare they go see if Pembroke was actually there? What if this monster child was only trying to lure them into the woods to eat them, one by one?

All at once, a man and a woman broke the crowd, shouting. "Our son? You found our son? Where is he, oh where?" A boy with a badly burned face ran with them, yelling, "Pembroke?"

"Follow me," said Itsaso.

She knew that the man and the woman had to be Pembroke's father and mother, but who was this boy? Pembroke's brother, perhaps? Yes, that must be so.

Before long, they reached the boy who lay half asleep in the dead grass. He had eyes only for his brother.

"Halcyon," he gasped.

"Oh!" said Itsaso. "YOU are Halcyon? I- I thought you were lost! I've been searching all night!"

"Have you?" asked Halcyon, surprised. "I was lost for the longest time, after I put out the fire with a barrier, but then I stumbled across the campsite, and found my way back from there, long after dark But never mind that. Is Pembroke alright?"

"Don't speak like I'm not here," said Pembroke testily. "I am just exhausted, and I have what must surely be a broken leg. I cannot walk."

"You will be okay," promised the boy's mother. And he was, after he was carried safely home. Halcyon and Pembroke, as well as their parents, made sure that little Itsaso's name was cleared, and, she received the title

'Teller of the Future'. Everyone consulted her from then on before doing things. For example:

"Should I plant my garden this week, or will the river flood? Should I wait till next week?"

"I want to go on a trip this week, but is that predicted rockslide going to occur just as I am passing Sterling Mountain?"

"Will River say yes if I propose to her?"

Itsaso found that it was good to be appreciated for her talent, and was happy from then on. And yes, she DID live 'happily ever after.'

THE END.

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