



# *The First Potato Bake*

Leann Mathis

Action/adventure, Historical, Supernatural

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High in the Incan village of Pisac, there lived a little girl named Yutu. She often picked wild herbs while the rest of her family weeded the community terraces.

As the farmers sang, their voices merged together to form a beautiful song. Her steps soon matched the rhythmic call of the music. A corn cob blossom twirled in a white skirt as it joined her.

“Do you like to dance, too?”

Its top bowed in the breeze as she caressed its delicate petals.

“Then you should come home with me!”

Yutu replanted it by the kitchen window where she could visit it every day. When the flowers no longer bloomed, the leaves swayed in their place. Fall eventually came, and she lost her dancing companion to the curled yellow blankets of hibernation.

“I hope you come back in the spring,” she whispered as she trimmed its dead leaves.

After it was taken care of, she turned her focus to helping her brother prepare oca for winter storage. She had just transferred a fresh batch of prepared oca to the drying blanket when she heard a loud noise from the front of the house.

“Sinchi, are you okay?” she called to her brother.

“Of course I am,” he said, coming out the back. “I was just getting another blanket.”

“I thought I heard a crash,” Yutu said. She looked at the house, puzzled.

Sinchi prepared to laugh at his sister when he heard a noise, too: a soft scrap, tapping noise. Yutu hid behind her brother.

“W-what is it?” she asked.

“I don’t know, but I am going to find out. Sinchi picked up a stick and moved slowly inside the house to the

kitchen, his sister following from a safe distance behind.

The pot that held Yutu's dancer had cracked open on the floor. The plant was gone, and long, thin brown marks lead away from the center of the dirt. Sinchi followed the tracks behind a bag of dried peppers. Multiple eyes stared back.

Sinchi stumbled back, and a single, brown creature jumped after him. Eyes covered its entire torso and white, hairless limbs sprang out randomly from its body. The arms whipped back and forth as it raced towards them. Sinchi threw his stick at the monster and pierced it, but the monster pulled it out using one of his many hands. Once free, the monster resumed its attack and soon it and Sinchi were wrestling on the floor. Sinchi ripped off its arms, but that didn't stop the creature.

Yutu looked around for something to help her brother and saw her father's cloak. She threw it over the creature — blinding it. It thumped against the side of the fabric as it struggled to free itself.

While the beast pounded, Sinchi wrapped ropes around it until it stilled. He dragged it toward the fire, and with one great heave, the cloak joined the flames.

"Sinchi, you were so brave," Yutu said. "I don't know what I would have done without you!"

Sinchi placed his arm around his sister as she started to cry. "It's okay, little bird. You're safe now."

When the creature's bones softened into mush, Sinchi pulled it back out of the fire. Sinchi cut the creature up and handed her a piece. "Here," he said. "This is the only way to make sure it can never come back again."

Yutu and her brother ate the creature in silence — each wondering how many of those creatures were still out there, but vowing to stop them before they overran the village.

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