



THE ENCHANTED BAKYA

by:

SHAREE DILAO JASMIN

DWIGHT GNARL ANDAYA REVILLA

Once upon a time, nestled in a quaint and picturesque village, surrounded by majestic mountains and lush forests, lived a young lad named Sipat. He was known throughout the village for his quick wit and mischievous nature.

From a young age, Sipat's cleverness shone brightly. He would often entertain his friends and neighbors with his witty remarks and cunning tricks. One night, just as the church bells rang ten, signaling curfew for minors, he devised a scheme to sneak past the village guard. With a grin and a twinkle in his eye, Sipat spun a tale so wildly amusing that the guard burst into laughter, forgetting all about his post. In the confusion, Sipat slipped past unnoticed, leaving only echoes of laughter in his wake.

Sipat's mischievous nature flourished with each passing day, and his penchant for playful antics became the stuff of legend in the old-fashioned village. One memorable occasion occurred during the lively barangay fiesta, where Sipat invented a scheme so audacious that it would be talked about for years to come.

As the fiesta reached its peak—karaoke blaring from a nearby sari-sari store, children chasing each other with colorful balloons, and the scent of *lechon* wafting through the air—Sipat seized the opportunity to weave his magic. With a mischievous gleam in his eye and a smirk playing at the corners of his lips, he approached the villagers gathered near the barangay hall. From the road, jeepneys and tricycles loaded with visitors rumbled by, some

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honking their horns cheerfully, others waving excitedly from crowded backseats. A few passengers clung to the roofs, laughing and pointing at the festive buntings overhead, while a man shouted, "Ang saya dito sa inyo, Kap! Fiesta na fiesta!"

Seizing the moment, Sipat leaned in and whispered to a group of curious children, "Did you hear? Kapitan Ramon was blessed by a wandering *diwata*! He can talk to animals now!"

"Talaga?!" gasped one girl, her eyes round as lanzones.

"Promise!" Sipat grinned. "I even saw him bowing to a carabao kanina!"

"Talaga?!" gasped one girl, her eyes wide.

"Promise!" Sipat said, holding up three fingers. "I even saw him nodding at a goat kanina!"

The rumor spread faster than *halo-halo* melts under the noonday sun.

Soon, the barangay captain himself, Kap Ramon, gruff and always proper in his faded *barong*, was surrounded by a growing crowd. Someone shouted, "Kap! Kaibigan mo na raw ang mga hayop!"

Caught off guard, Kap Ramon laughed nervously. "Ha? Sino'ng nagsabi niyan?"

"Si Sipat po!" a child pointed. "Sabi niya naiintindihan niyo raw ang mga manok!"

Not wanting to spoil the fun, the captain scratched his head and turned toward the animals.

He knelt beside a chicken. "Ah, Manang Inang... kamusta ang itlog mo ngayon?" he said, trying to sound wise. The crowd erupted in laughter.

Next, he faced a goat and said solemnly, "Kambing, payag ka bang dagdagan natin ang budget para sa damo?" The goat bleated.

"He said yes, Kap!" someone shouted.

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Even the sheep, chewing lazily under a tree, seemed to respond when Kap Ramon asked, "At ikaw, Tupa, gusto mo bang sumama sa barangay tanod?"

As if on cue, the sheep gave a long, dramatic baa.

The crowd howled. Laughter rippled through the plaza like waves in the rice paddies. Some clapped, others wiped tears from their eyes.

Even Kap Ramon couldn't help but chuckle. "Ay naku, Sipat," he muttered under his breath, shaking his head. "Balang araw, magiging mayor ka Talaga o komedyante."

The scene was nothing short of extraordinary, with the normally stoic barangay captain transformed into the village's very own Dr. Dolittle, much to the delight of the onlookers. For days afterward, the village buzzed with excitement, and the memory of that fateful festival lingered in the hearts and minds of all who bore witness to Sipat's masterful prank.

Despite his mischievous tendencies, Sipat had a heart of gold and was beloved by all who knew him. He would often use his wit to help those in need, whether outsmarting bullies or finding creative solutions to village problems.

However, Sipat's greatest fascination lay in the tales that swirled around the village about a mysterious witch named Aling Sayong, rumored to dwell deep within the forested peaks. Legends spoke of her possession of a remarkable pair of bakya, said to be imbued with the power of invisibility. So deep was Sipat's curiosity that one night, he even dreamed of discovering the fabled bakya, hidden beneath a forgotten cupboard within the mystical confines of Aling Sayong's enchanted abode.

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The mere thought of such enchanted footwear sparked a fire in Sipat's imagination, and he dreamed of the daring adventures he could embark on if only he could acquire those magical bakya.

Many nights, he would lie beneath the stars and whisper to himself,

"If I could disappear, maybe I could go where truth hides, where grown-ups forget to look... and maybe even find the things people stop believing in."

Then, one radiant morning, as the sun cast its golden rays over the village, Sipat felt a stirring within him—a yearning for adventure that ignited his soul. With a spark of excitement in his eyes, he realized that today was the day—the day he would embark on a daring quest to uncover the mysteries surrounding Aling Sayong, the elusive witch of the forest.

Summoning every ounce of courage, Sipat set forth on his journey, his heart pounding with anticipation. With each step, he felt the weight of uncertainty lift from his shoulders, replaced by a sense of exhilaration that propelled him forward. As he ascended the rugged slopes of the mountain, the dense foliage whispered secrets of ages past, urging him ever onward. Navigating through the labyrinth of twisted branches and tangled undergrowth, Sipat pressed on, his determination unwavering. With each passing moment, the air grew thick with anticipation, and his senses tingled with the promise of discovery.

At last, after what felt like an eternity of treacherous ascent, Sipat emerged into a clearing bathed in sunlight, the canopy of trees parting to reveal a sight that took his breath away. There, nestled amidst the verdant embrace of the forest, stood Aling Sayong's humble abode – a quaint cottage, weathered by time yet pulsating with an aura of mystique.

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With bated breath, Sipat approached the rustic dwelling, his eyes alight with curiosity. The cottage seemed to hum with otherworldly energy, its walls adorned with symbols of arcane wisdom that spoke of ancient secrets long forgotten.

As he drew closer, Sipat whispered under his breath,

"Maybe the bravest journeys aren't the loudest ones... maybe they're the ones we take with no one watching."

His heart quickened. This was it—the moment he had been waiting for, the culmination of his quest for knowledge and adventure.

With a steady hand and a resolute spirit, Sipat crossed the threshold into Aling Sayong's domain, his pulse racing with the promise of untold wonders waiting to be revealed. And as he stepped into the heart of the witch's sanctuary, he knew that his life would never be the same again.

Undeterred by fear, Sipat pressed forward, his curiosity driving him deeper into the heart of Aling Sayong's mysterious abode. With each step, he felt a surge of excitement coursing through his veins, propelling him onward in his quest for discovery. As he ventured further into the dimly lit interior of the cottage, Sipat's keen eyes scanned every corner, every shadow, searching for any sign of the elusive boots rumored to possess magical powers beyond imagination. And then, as if guided by fate itself, a scene once painted in the palette of Sipat's dreams unfolded before his waking eyes, his gaze fell upon a concealed alcove tucked away beneath an ancient cupboard, its contents shrouded in secrecy. With trembling hands, he reached out and carefully withdrew the dusty old box hidden within, his heart

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pounding with anticipation. With bated breath, Sipat lifted the lid, his eyes widening in astonishment as he beheld the treasure hidden within – the special pair of bakya, shimmering with an ethereal glow that illuminated the darkness of the room.

A rush of euphoria swept over Sipat as he realized that his wildest dreams had finally come true. At that moment, time seemed to stand still as he marveled at the beauty and power of the magical pair, their presence filling him with a sense of wonder and awe.

With a triumphant smile, Sipat knew that his journey was far from over. Armed with the newfound power of the enchanted bakya, he was ready to embark on a grand adventure unlike any other, where the realms of possibility knew no bounds and the promise of untold wonders awaited him at every turn.

As Sipat admired his wonderful find, he suddenly heard a noise outside the cottage. His heart raced with fear at the thought of Aling Sayong returning. But then, a smile crept onto his face. With the magical bakya in his possession, he could disappear whenever he wanted. Oh, the exciting adventures he could have now!

He looked down at the glowing wooden slippers in his hands and whispered, "So this is what it feels like... to hold the impossible."

Then, after a pause, his smile faltered just slightly.

"But what if the things we take without asking take something from us, too?"

For a fleeting moment, the room seemed to hold its breath. But the thrill of invisibility quickly surged within him again, and with a gleam in his eyes, Sipat slid the bakya onto his feet, his fears drowned out by the echo of possibilities.

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Meanwhile, Aling Sayong hurried back to her cottage, feeling an unease she couldn't explain. The door, which she had locked tightly, now stood ajar. Panic gripped her as she realized someone had broken in. She rushed through the rooms, her sharp eyes scanning every corner, and her fears were soon confirmed—a thief had gone through her things.

But it was when she reached the hidden place where she kept the magical bakya that she truly felt the depth of the intrusion. The box lay open. The bakya were gone, leaving behind only an empty shell—a silent witness to betrayal.

Aling Sayong fell to her knees, her voice cracking as she let out a cry that echoed through the silent forest.

"I guarded them not because they were powerful," she whispered into the stillness, "but because not all who seek power are ready for the silence it leaves behind."

She bowed her head and pressed her palm to the ground.

"Forest, hear me... Let justice find the feet that wear what was never theirs."

As Sipat reveled in the thrill of his newfound invisibility, he dashed down the mountainside with a spring in his step and a mischievous twinkle in his eye. The rush of excitement surged through him as he effortlessly evaded detection, his form blending seamlessly with the shadows cast by the towering trees. With each bound, Sipat felt the exhilaration of freedom coursing through his veins, the wind whipping through his hair as he frolicked with the abandon of a child. No obstacle could hinder him now, no obstacle except perhaps his insatiable appetite for mischief. With a grin that stretched from ear to ear, Sipat

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relished the prospect of the surprises he had in store, the anticipation of the laughter and astonishment that awaited him fueling his every step.

As he raced through the untamed wilderness, the world around him transformed into a playground of endless possibilities, each moment brimming with the promise of joy and adventure. And with a heart full of glee and a spirit unbound, Sipat charged forward into the unknown, ready to embrace whatever wonders awaited him on his journey of invisibility and merriment.

As the sun set and darkness blanketed the nearby town, pandemonium broke loose. Confused villagers found themselves in the middle of all sorts of strange pranks. Startled gasps filled the air as a bicycle inexplicably rolled down the street, its owner nowhere in sight.

"Hoy! Akin 'yan! Teka!"

Meanwhile, a weary street vendor shrieked as her banana cues rearranged themselves into a smiley face.

"Ay sus! Kahit sa prutas ba, ginugulo ako?! Diyos ko, pahinga naman!"

In a cozy little eatery, chaos erupted. Utensils clashed mid-air in a wild fencing match, forks poking at nothing, while pitchers tipped and poured juice onto empty chairs.

"Ay, ayoko na!" a man yelled, diving under the table.

"Teh, ba't yung baso ko tumatawa?"

"Baka gutom lang 'yan!" shouted someone from behind the counter.

Plates flew through the air like frisbees. One poor soul screamed as he ran from a pair of scissors flapping through the air behind him.

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“Huwag mo’kong habulin! Hindi ako papel!”

But the mischief didn’t stop there. In the town square, statues suddenly came to life, doing the cha-cha with stiff stone limbs.

“Lolo Ambo! Yung monumento ng bayani, sumasayaw!”

Meanwhile, the town fountain erupted like a geyser, soaking anyone who passed.

“Ay! Parang shower sa bukid, pero wala sa plano!”

Through it all, Sipat watched from the shadows, barely able to contain his laughter. Each new prank brought a fresh wave of amusement.

“Walang hiya, sino man ‘tong kaluluwang ito—ang kulit!”

As confusion grew, so did the tension. The villagers began snapping at each other:

“E ikaw, siniko mo ‘ko kanina sa kanto!”

“Edi, wow! ”

In the rising madness, nobody knew the truth: that right in their midst, invisible and giggling, Sipat danced with glee—master of the invisible mischief, king of controlled chaos.

As time went on, things got even more chaotic. It felt like the whole town was in a big mess, with everyone blaming each other. And in the middle of it all, there was Sipat, still causing trouble without anyone knowing it was him. Little did he know that his fun was about to take a wild turn.

The next day, as the bustling market hummed with activity, a commotion erupted when a group of chickens, mysteriously dressed in tiny costumes, began parading around like

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miniature soldiers. Their unexpected march caused a stir among the crowd, with some laughing and others scrambling to avoid the tiny, determined poultry.

Amidst the chaos, Sipat couldn't resist the urge to join in the spectacle. He grabbed a toy trumpet from a nearby stall and marched alongside the chickens, blowing the horn with delight and adding to the madness. Undeterred, Sipat spotted a barrel of slippery fish that had somehow been overturned, sending fish flopping and sliding across the cobblestones. With a mischievous grin, he couldn't resist the opportunity for more chaos. He scooped up a handful of fish and began tossing them into the air, causing shrieks of surprise and laughter from the onlookers.

However, chaos started to erupt as a pig's head inexplicably took flight, sending terrified customers fleeing in all directions. Sipat, the architect of this pandemonium, gleefully chased after the airborne swine, oblivious to the danger lurking nearby.

Unbeknownst to him, his tricks had attracted the attention of the dogs' population, who, drawn by the tantalizing scent of the pig's head, joined in the pursuit. As Sipat frantically dodged and weaved through the chaotic scene, his attention consumed by the pursuing dogs, he failed to notice the treacherous mud beneath his feet. With a sudden stumble, he found himself sprawling face-first into the mud, his grip on the pig's head lost in the tumult. Struggling to his feet, Sipat realized too late that one of the magical bakya had become ensnared in the thick mud, leaving him half-exposed and vulnerable. As he tugged and pulled, panic began to rise within him, his heart pounding with each futile attempt. Seeing him that

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way, the crowd erupted into hysteria, convinced they had stumbled upon a monstrous apparition. Among the chaos, a voice cried out, "Monster!".

Driven by primal terror, the villagers scattered in all directions, their panicked footsteps echoing off the cobblestones like the beat of a drum heralding chaos. Windows rattled, shutters slammed shut, and mothers instinctively pulled their children close, seeking refuge from the perceived threat.

Seizing the opportunity born of their fear, Sipat sprang into action, his determination lending speed to his stride as he pursued the fleeing villagers. With each step, his form flickered in and out of sight, a ghostly apparition haunting the periphery of their vision. Shadows danced around him, and whispers of dread followed in his wake, amplifying the terror that gripped the hearts of those who dared to glance back.

Utilizing his half-invisibility to its full advantage, Sipat became a specter of fear, his presence elusive yet unmistakable. He darted through the alleys and streets, a phantom figure blending seamlessly into the night, leaving only a trail of dread in his wake.

Yet, amidst the fleeing crowd, one figure remained steadfast, undeterred by Sipat's spectral antics. It was Aling Sayong, the village's most feared witch, her expression twisted into a mask of anger and determination.

With a heavy heart sinking in his chest, Sipat realized the direness of his situation. His feet pounded against the cobblestones as he fled down the crowded street, his breath coming in panicked gasps. Glancing over his shoulder, his heart dropped to see Aling Sayong, a dark and foreboding figure, looming at the end of his path like an ominous shadow. Trapped in the

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ominous presence of the vengeful witch, Sipat knew that escape was futile. With a resigned acceptance of his fate, he pressed forward, his steps faltering as he approached Aling Sayong with a mixture of fear and defiance.

Bracing himself for her inevitable wrath, Sipat stood before the witch, his heart pounding in his chest. But what came next chilled him to the bone.

"You insolent rascal!" Aling Sayong's voice pierced the air like a dagger, her eyes blazing with fury. "You dare to seek invisibility? Then so be it! From this moment forth, everything shall be invisible to you!"

As her words sank in, Sipat felt a cold shiver run down his spine. He had thought he was clever, but now he realized the true cost of his mischief. With a sinking feeling of dread, he understood that he would forever wander in a world of invisible wonders, forever isolated from the sights and sounds of the world he once knew.

With a simple gesture, Aling Sayong cast a spell that plunged Sipat into darkness, surrounding him with an emptiness that seemed to swallow him whole. In this void, Sipat's pleas for help faded into nothingness, bouncing off unseen walls without finding any answer. It was a stark reminder of what happens when someone plays with things they shouldn't, a lesson learned too late in the silence of the dark.

When Sipat opened his eyes, he was lying under the balete tree, the rustle of leaves above, the scent of rice cakes in the air.

"Was it... a dream?"

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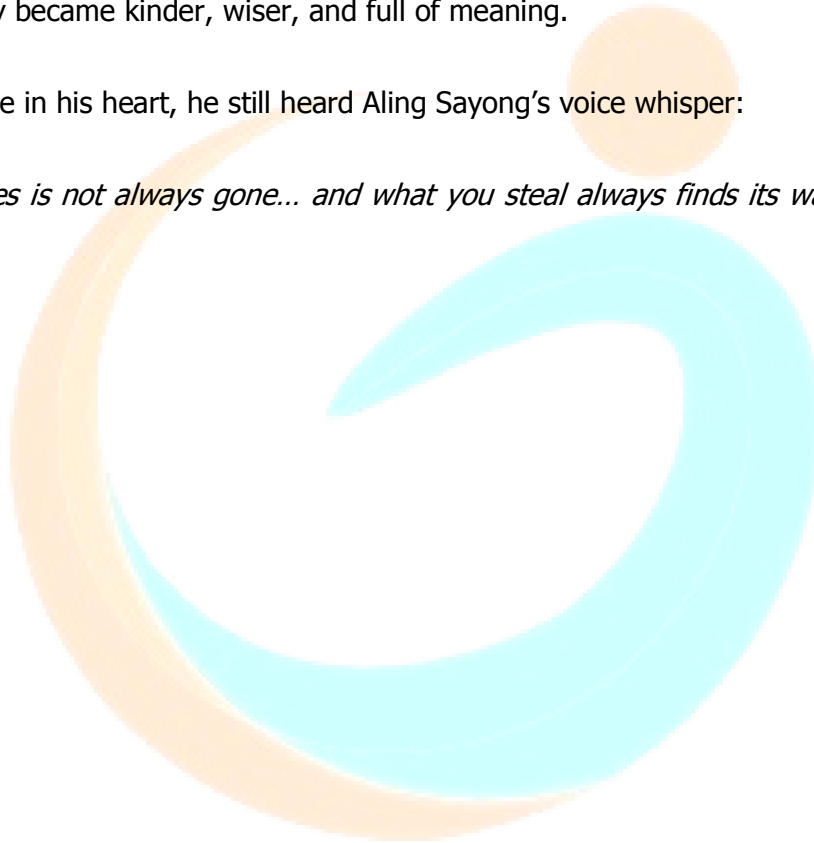
He touched his feet. They were bare. No bakya. But beside him, a carved wooden slipper—tiny, too small for wear—rested on the grass.

"Sipat! Come home! The kakanin is getting cold!"

He ran back laughing, never speaking of what he saw. But from that day on, his tricks changed. They became kinder, wiser, and full of meaning.

For somewhere in his heart, he still heard Aling Sayong's voice whisper:

"What vanishes is not always gone... and what you steal always finds its way back—with a price."



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