



On a little island in the Caribbean called the Isle of Spice, there lived an old lady way up in the mountains. Petite Mama was tiny, but she worked hard and was very strong. She owned lots of land where she grew bananas, soursops, oranges, star-apples, mangoes, and every other tropical fruit you could think of. When they were ripe, she would go down the mountain to sell her fruits in the town. No one would come up the mountain to buy from Petite Mama because people were afraid of her. They thought she was some kind of witch.





Petite Mama had many fruit trees, but her choicest crop came from the nutmeg.

Just beyond her nutmeg trees was a bottomless lake in the middle of a volcano. Now, on this lake, Petite Mama said, lived a beautiful young woman. Petite Mama called her the Nutmeg Princess because she would only appear when the nutmeg was ready for picking.

Dressed in a pale blue gown, with dew drops in her hair that looked like diamonds, she would sit on a bamboo raft in the middle of the lake humming a song, sometimes sad, sometimes happy, and in the blink of an eye, she would disappear.

Petite Mama was the only one who had ever seen her.





In the town lived a boy named Aglo and his best friend, a girl named Petal. Aglo and Petal loved to spend time with each other. Sometimes they would splash in the ocean. Other times they played hide-and-seek among the colorful trees and bushes. But what they loved most was reading together.

Whenever they saw Petite Mama selling her fruits, they would call out, “Do you want any help today, Petite Mama?” And she would shout back, “No thanks, children, not today.”

Some days Petite Mama would surprise them and throw them a couple of mangoes or plums. They would bite into the fruit and laugh as the sweet juices trickled down their chins.

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