Kapid

English Short Story for Children

Synopsis:

Kapid is a Hiligaynon word for 'twin'. In this tale of siblinghood and family, mystical twins Kapid Katmon and Kapid Kataw brave their differences and prove that the strength of their bond can surpass any challenge thrown at them. Through their ordeal, the face of their world changes and deities come alive to immortalize the true meaning of sisterhood and love in Capiz, the land of folklore and legend.

Kapid

Kapid Kataw and Kapid Katmon are mystical twins. Kapid Kataw was born with the tail of a silvery fish called Bulan-Bulan. She spends most of her time in the sea. Her dark hair shimmers as the stars reflected on a still evening tide. Her voice is calm as the whispers of the waves. Kapid Katmon has smooth skin like well-baked kulon. Her limbs are sturdy and strong and the color of sunbaked uga. The twins loved each other dearly, the way their mother loved them.

Their mother, Indang Langgod, had been barren and grieved sorely when her husband, Idong Alapog, was lost at sea. In her sorrow and loneliness, she prayed to Adlaw, the god of the sun, to bring back her husband. Despite her repeated appeals, Adlaw did not grant her request. Frustrated, she stopped praying for her husband's return and prayed to Adlaw for a child instead. She prayed day and night.

One evening, as she prayed by her window, beneath the full moon that kissed the bamboo panes with its pallid glow, Libulan, the god of the moon and tides heard her. Libulan had become jealous that Indang Langgod only prayed to Adlaw for the return of her husband and for a child. So, Libulan set out to sow confusion.

Indang Langgod soon became pregnant with twins, one, a blessing from Adlaw, and the other from Libulan's jealousy. So it was, that the twins, Kapid Katmon, of Adlaw's grace, and Kapid Kataw, of Libulan's jealousy were born to Indang Langgod. The twins grew in beauty and graciousness. Their mother loved them deeply each day.

As the twins grew, Indang Langgod noticed that one twin was strangely different from the other. Kapid Kataw could not stand the heat of the sun and the dryness of the land. She spent most of her days in the waters of Baybay. Her skin blistered if she spent even just a moment out of water. Kapid Katmon, on the other hand, adored the golden kisses of Adlaw. She would sleep soundly with her face pressed against the warm bosom of the earth, but the salt of the sea irritated her greatly. A drop of seawater caused her to cry out in pain. Often, Indang Langgod would find her twins at the shore of Baybay, one, napping along the farthest lap of the waves, and the other on the other side, where the water could not touch her, but both holding hands in their sleep.

As the twins grew, problems began to arise. For one, they could not be together on celebrations on the days of their birth. Kapid Katmon had a grand birthday celebration when she turned ten. Kapid Kataw merely watched the festivities from afar, in the water. Kapid Kataw also had a celebration for her birthday, but it was with fewer guests and happened a day before or after that of Kapid Katmon's party because they could not be together. The most important people to her, Indang Langgod and her twin, Kapid Katmon, could not be with her. They merely sent her a present afloat on the waves. Kapid Katmon had to spend her celebrations with the sea people and the other creatures of the sea.

Despite all this, Kapid Kataw loved her twin sister and was never jealous. Kapid Katmon, becoming too preoccupied with her life on land, soon began to seek her twin less and less. Over time, Kapid Kataw would wait for her twin at the shores of Baybay.

Kapid Katmon would never come. Indang Langgod came to visit her sea-borne daughter occasionally, but only for very short reunions. One time, Indang Langgod spent some time talking to Kapid Kataw.

"My dear, your twin is always busy at the village. She has found some friends she spends much of her time with. I hope you have found some friends in the sea, too," said Indang Langgod.

Kapid Kataw simply replied with a smile. She knew that she yearned for nobody else but her twin. Then she swam away to the depths of Baybay.

As the sun moved across the sky, far to the north, Kapid Kataw yearned for her twin more and more. Eventually, Kapid Kataw's visits to the shore of Baybay became less and less frequent. They were already separated by their different worlds, and life pulled them even further apart.

One evening, as she slept beneath the waves, Kapid Kataw was awakened by the sound of festive music. She swam to the surface and saw bright lights at the spot where she would go to wait for her twin. She hurriedly swam to the shore hoping that she would find Kapid Katmon. True enough, she was there, but not alone. With her, there were many others, and they were all laughing, drinking, and eating at a banquet. Then, Kapid Kataw remembered that it was their 16th birthday!

She excitedly dove to the depths of Baybay. There, she chose the best, most colorful, and most beautiful shell she could find and swam back to the surface and to the shore. She intended to give this shell to her twin as a birthday present. As soon as she was at the shore, she called out, her voice, rustling as the waves on the sand.

"Kapid Katmon, Kapid Katmon!! Come! Come! I have a present for you!!!"

Upon hearing her sister, Kapid Katmon stood from the banquet table and gazed at the shore. Suddenly, all the music and laughter stopped. All the guests stood and looked out to the shore. There was silence. Kapid Katmon walked slowly to the shore where Kapid Kataw was. Kapid Kataw was smiling and excited. She was flaunting the beautiful shell she had found for her twin. Kapid Katmon was frowning. As soon as she was close enough to her twin, she shouted at her twin.

"I don't want to see you ever again!! Go back to the sea!! I have other friends now!! You embarrass me with your monstrous form!! Go!"

Kapid Kataw was heartbroken by what she heard. She dropped the shell into the water. She felt a wave of strange feelings wash over her. Without thinking, she violently flipped her tail, swam away, and dove as fast as she could. Unknown to her, when she flipped her tail, a wave of salt water splashed over Kapid Katmon who stood at the shore.

The salty water burned her skin like fire, and she screamed in pain.

Indang Langgod had heard her daughter's screams and ran to the shore. She carried her daughter to safety as Kapid Katmon cried and screamed in pain. For days, Indang Langgod nursed her ailing daughter as she became weaker and weaker.

Powdery agay-ay started to fall from Kapid Katmon's limbs. Kapid Katmon was gravely ill. She would die if nothing was done.

Desperate, Indang Langgod fell to her knees and implored the gods for help. Adlaw heard her prayers and sent the bulalakaw to deliver a message to Indang Langgod.

"There is only one way to heal Kapid Katmon,' said the bulalakaw with a voice that crackled like burning bamboo, "You must seek out her twin and ask her to grant Kapid Katmon a kiss. This must be done at udtong-adlaw when Adlaw is at the peak of his power. That is the only way to cure Kapid Katmon of her malady," added the bulalakaw who then flew off in a blazing trail of fire.

Wasting no time, Indang Langgod rushed to the shore that very udtong-adlaw and called out.

"Kapid Kataw! Kapid Kataw! Your sister is dying! She needs your help!"

Kapid Kataw had retreated to the darkest depths of Baybay. She had been sulking for days after hearing her twin disown her. Suddenly, she heard the voice of Indang Langgod call out to her. She was hesitant to swim back, at first, but in her heart, she still had so much love for her twin. She finally gave in and swam to the shore.

"Kapid Kataw, your sister needs you. She will die if you don't come and grant her a kiss!"

"But Nanay, I can't leave the sea! Bring her to the shore, quickly!" replied Kapid Kataw.

"She is too weak to be carried here. She will surely die if we take her here…"

Both desperate, Indang Langgod and Kapid Kataw fell to their knees and sought the intercession of the gods again. They held each other's hands, there at the shore of Baybay and prayed, deeply and intensely for the gods to hear their plea.

Libulan had been watching everything that transpired since the birth of the twins. He was content with the chaos he had sown and sat happily on his shadow throne in the Kingdom of Gab-i. But when he saw how gravely his mischief had hurt the twins and their mother, and how deeply the twins loved each other, he felt an overwhelming sense of remorse and compassion. Immediately, he stood from his throne and rushed to the aid of Indang Langgod and Kapid Kataw.

As both prayed on the shore, the tides rose and Libulan, in his Bulan carriage, rose from the horizon. He spat a maelstrom from his mouth. The whirlpool burrowed inland creating a river straight to the hut where Kapid Katmon lay dying. Now that there was a path for Kapid Kataw to swim to the threshold of the hut, there was another problem.

Kapid Kataw could not stand the immense heat of udtong-adlaw. Libulan raised his arms and suddenly miniature, thin, white moons broke off from his Bulan carriage and formed a ceiling between sky and river. Kapid Kataw now had her chance.

"Quickly!' Libulan screamed, 'these moon fragments are fragile, they will not last long! Quickly now!"

Upon hearing Libulan, Kapid Kataw swam swiftly upstream, following the river to the hut where her twin lay. There she found Kapid Katmon writhing in intense pain.

She approached Kapid Katmon and kissed her on the forehead. An intense, yet comforting white glow filled the room.

When the glow faded, Kapid Katmon was sitting upright on her banig, healed and smiling. There were no words exchanged between the twins, only gazes of love, gratitude, and relief. Kapid Katmon then stood from her banig and moved closer to her twin. She hugged Kapid Kataw tightly and Kapid Kataw hugged back, and in a gentle duet, they both whispered,

"I missed you…"

Indang Langgod saw the magical moments unfolding as she was standing at the bank of the new river when Kapid Kataw healed her twin. Suddenly, small, round, moon-like shells fell from the sky into the sea. Libulan had released his hold of the mystical ceiling, and the fragile moon-like shells fell into the water. In the flurry of a million shells falling from above, Indang Langgod saw a familiar silhouette rising from the alimpulos. It was her husband, Idong Alapog, coming ashore! Indang Langgod was overjoyed.

Libulan smirked as he watched the reunion knowing that he had held Idong Alapog captive for stealing his prized taklobos. The impish god was relieved to see everything turn out well.

From that time on, the twins remained close, their love growing stronger by the day. Kapid Katmon had felt horrible about how she had rejected her twin, so she dedicated more time to making amends. There was now a large river that led from the sea to the hut. Kapid Kataw could now visit her twin anytime. At times, Kapid Kataw

would gather the thin, round, white, moonlike shells from the sea to make jewelry for her sister and chimes for the little hut, and Kapid Katmon would make panes for their windows out of the shells so that her sister could stay longer ashore without too much sunlight coming in.

Those round, little moonlike shells, once called pakinason sang Kapid, in remembrance of the twins, Kapid Kataw and Kapid Katmon, are now known to us as Kapis shells; reminders that the bond of family and love will always prevail.

Sometimes, on a windy day, the whirlpool of Libulan's breath could still be seen at the Banica estuary, where the Panay River meets the Sibuyan Sea.