



Itagué Dosape, Ayoré

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On one of her long walks, Itagué Dosape came across a large *garabatá*¹ plant. Whenever she went into the wild, she was accompanied by several animals and walked under the rainbow. She started digging up the plant to take it back to her community. Sad-eyed armadillos and hungry anteaters helped her dig the earth around the *dajudie*² plant. Meanwhile, the plant was getting bigger and bigger and its roots deeper and deeper. She asked herself, scratching her head, when was the last time she harvested such a large shrub. Its leaves could make several bags. She would dye the fiber with paquíó or with ajunao peel and yellow root. She already knew how to spin and twist the fiber, and now she was learning how to weave the bags. She was a big girl now.

When she grew up, she would no longer be a “barbarian”, as the white children call her when they see her at the door of the church selling her necklaces. She would have a house in the town, eat a lot and have plenty of fruit on her land for her animals.

¹Typical plant from the South American Chaco region used by the Ayoreo communities to make handicrafts.

²Alternative name for the *garabatá* plant.

Once, a man had yelled “marginal” at her when he almost ran her over with his motorcycle. She felt that was an ugly word, although she didn’t quite know what it meant. That day she got so angry that she ended up breaking a small pumpkin she was decorating. The word “marginal” kept ringing in her head. He had said it with such anger that surely it was an insult, like when she would tell off her dog and it would hide and put its paw over its nose. But she wasn’t going to duck or hide. Just that every time she remembered that man, she felt like slapping him with a branch.

It was already late afternoon when she finished digging up the root. She hung the plant on her backpack to take it home. The armadillos marched happily beside her, together with the anteaters who had filled their bellies with abundant food. They also carried what they had collected that day: colorful feathers, roots and seeds that were falling out of the bag, with the hope to grow into big trees.

On the way back to the village, she saw the other children fishing in the river, further beyond the women weaving the symbols of their culture on the *utebetai* and *peyé*³, while the happy and smiling men prepared for the hunt, carving their arrows. She was not “marginal”, whatever that meant. They were all people, they were Ayoreo.

³Traditional handmade bags for men (*utebetai*) and for women (*peyé*).

