



A Piece of Culture

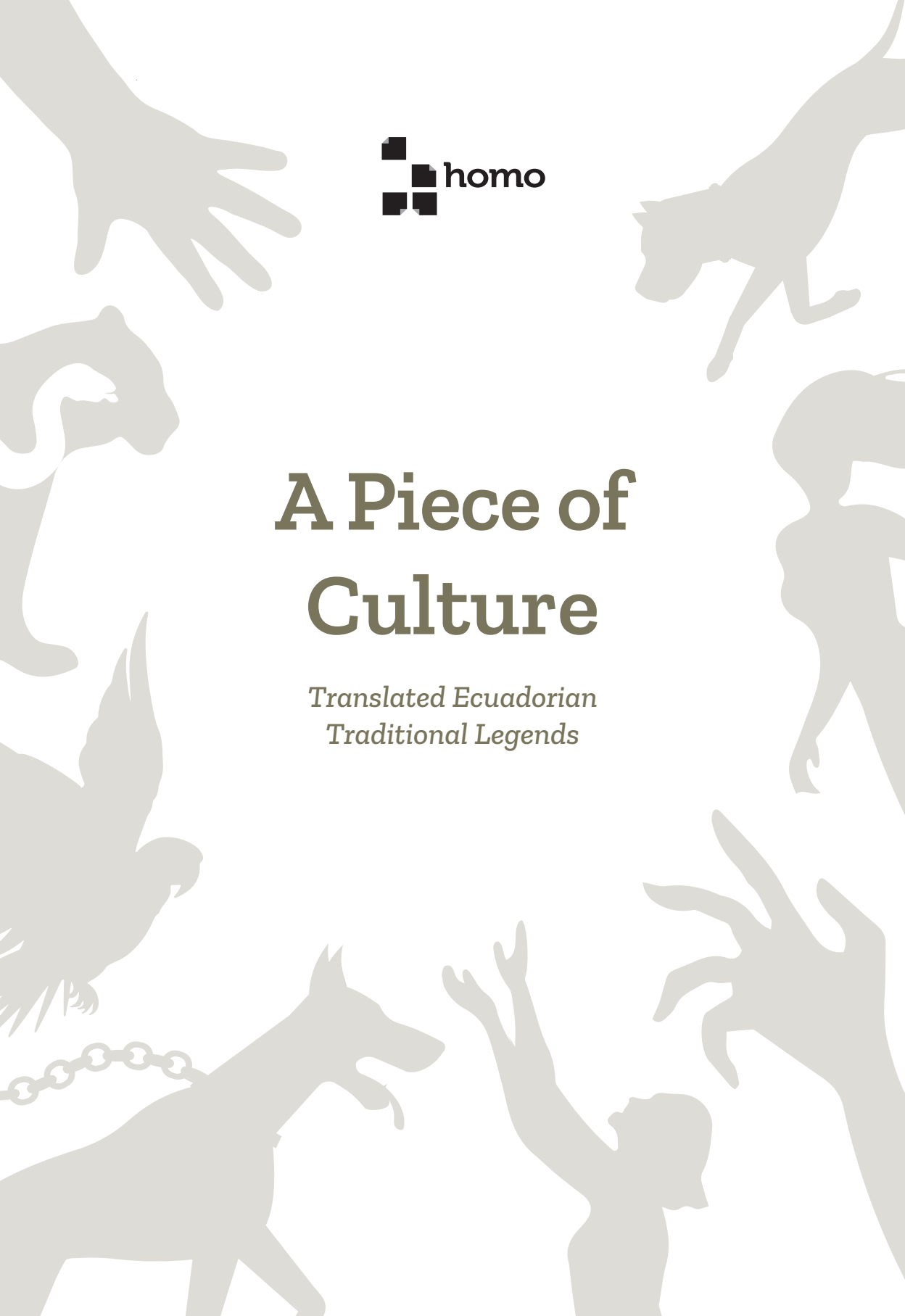
*Translated Ecuadorian
Traditional Legends*





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Traditional Legends*





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Co-translated and edited by: María de Lourdes Moscoso

Dedication

A tribute to our ancestors, to our culture.

This book is inspired by the beautiful traditions of our Ecuador. Culture gives us the most interesting and fascinating stories, which are full of mystery and romance. Yet, translating them was no easy feat. The job was not easy, but for all of us, these legends represent who we are as Ecuadorians, and as International Relations students who represent our country. We want to thank our ancestors for creating, sharing and spreading their passion.

Allow this book to help your imagination wander and remember what it feels like to be an Ecuadorian! Enjoy!

- This book is dedicated to our professor María de Lourdes Moscoso for making this project possible, for creating it, helping it become a reality, and for her work every day making our career a success.

Legends

The Howl of the Chained Dog



At night, the strong wind that moved the leaves of the trees could be heard, and after the squawking of an owl, you could hear the loud howls of a dog. According to the citizens of Cuenca, those who saw the animal would die shortly after the encounter.

The monster's favorite victims were married men who took advantage of the night to find some romance outside their homes.

It was well known that those who had an affair first would hear a warning howl, and then they would hear chains. But the most important thing was that the farther away the chains were heard, the closer the demonized dog was.

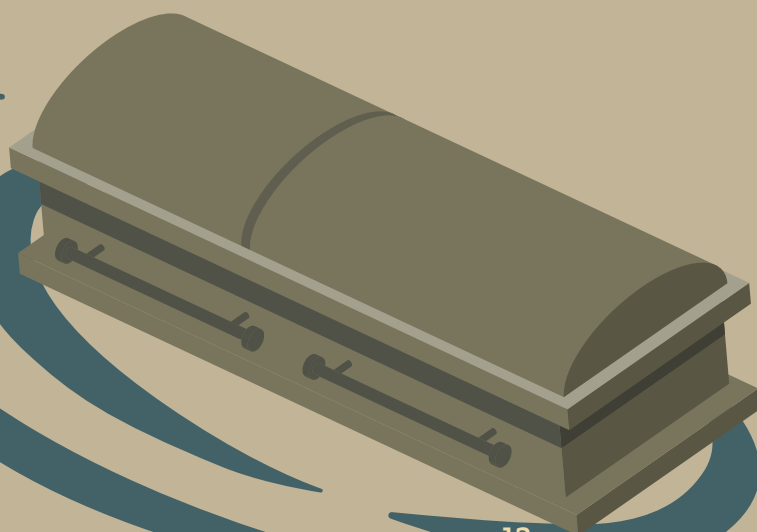
This legend is still in the minds of the citizens, who retain these words in memory of the chained dog:

The owl squawks, the dog howls, the Indian dies; seems
like a joke but it happens.

Translated by Sebastián Bermeo.

Digiofi (2021). *Leyendas de Cuenca – Ecuador: El Perro encadenado*. <https://leyendasdeecuador.club/el-perro-encadenado/>

The Traveling Coffin



During the night, in the rivers that come together to form the great Guayas, a coffin can sometimes be seen with its opened lid floating in the dark waters. The coffin is illuminated by a big candle that allows us to see the princess's and her son's bodies that lie inside.

Mina was the daughter of Chauma¹ who was the last chief of Daulis². She fell in love with a Spaniard. But her father was angry since the Spaniards killed his ancestors and stripped his people of their lands. Because of that she got married in secret and against her father's wishes.

Mina's father was furious, so he cursed his daughter for marrying the enemy and becoming a Christian. His curse condemned Mina's soul never to have rest after she died.

After some days, Mina was very sad since she ran away from her home and found out that her father died when he was going to assault Guayaquil³. So, she died giving birth to her first son who was born already dead. However, her husband carried out the princess's last wish, which was not to bury her and instead, place her inside a coffin and leave her in the river with the lid of the coffin opened.

Translated by Sofia Cárdenas.

Carrillo, Y. (2017). *Leyendas del Ecuador. El ataúd ambulante*. <https://es.slideshare.net/YohelCarrillo/leyendas-del-ecuador-72484649>

¹Chauma is a common native name in that period.

²Daulis is a native tribe in the town of Daule-Guayaquil.

³Guayaquil is the second biggest city in Ecuador.

The Chuzalongo



The Chuzalongo⁴ legend, from the city of Cuenca, tells us a tragic story of two young ladies who were victims of evil despite being innocent.

Chuzalongo is a character that lives in the mountains. There, he leaves his small footprints and despite the fact that many have tried to find him, he has never been captured.

He shows up as a small kid, about six years old; but later he's transformed into a horrible monster that acts with pure evil and can even kill just with his gaze.

When was the Chuzalongo seen?

The first time that the Chuzalongo legend was heard of was when a farmer who owned lands on a hill sent his two daughters to take care of the cattle. In the beginning, the man saw his daughters on top of the mountain, but in the afternoon a heavy storm began.

Under their father's instructions, the young women secured the cows from the storm and stayed in the cabin close to the cattle to wait until the rain stopped.

After a while, they decided to make dinner and since the storm didn't end, they started to eat. At that moment, someone knocked on the door, and when they opened it, they saw a little kid who was cold and wet. They let him in and fed him.

When the storm ended and after many hours, the girls' father went to look for them in the mountains. He knocked on the door, but they didn't open it. After a few minutes, he was so scared because they didn't answer, so he decided to kick down the door.

The Chuzalongo left a terrifying scene!

What he found inside the cabin was painfully terrifying! There was blood all over the room! On the floor there were small bloody footprints. His daughters were shattered and laying in a corner, and in the other corner of the room there was a monstrous character. He had a white face, thick purple lips and large ears that ere disproportionate to his small body.

⁴Chuzalongo: Quechua word. In Spanish it means "seductive and evil child".

What was most shocking were his little green eyes with a red fiery dot.

The man, full of fury, took his machete⁵ and faced the Chuzalongo, but he escaped to the mountain.

The afflicted father didn't stop and followed him with a strong desire to kill him. But the farmer never came back home and nothing was heard of him.

The villagers say that the Chuzalongo does exist and to get rid of him, the victim must take off his coat or any garment and throw it away. The chuzalongo will pick it up and that will be the moment to escape from his claws.

Translated by Andrés Aguirre.

(s.a). (2018) *Leyendas del Ecuador. Leyenda del Chuzalongo*. <http://tradicional-leyendas-de-ecuador.blogspot.com/2018/06/leyenda-del-chuzalongo.html>

⁵Machete: a large knife with a wide blade, used for cutting trees and plants or used as a weapon.

The Rooster of the Cathedral



Once upon a time, there was a rich man that lived like a king. In the morning he had breakfast. Later, he took a nap. Then, he had lunch and, in the afternoon, wearing a lot of perfume, he went out to the street. One day, he went to the Big Square. He stopped in front of the rooster of the Cathedral and making fun of it, he said, ["What a rooster! What a nonsense rooster!"]

Then, Mr. Ramón walked by Santa Catalina street. He entered Ms. Mariana's store to drink mistelas (beer).

He stayed there until night. When he returned home, Ms. Ramón was already coloradito

(drunk). So, in front of the Cathedral, he shouted,

"There is no good rooster. Not even the one from the Cathedral."

Mr. Ramón believed that he was the best rooster in the world! Once again, he challenged the rooster, "What a stupid rooster! I don't even mind the rooster of the Cathedral!"

At that moment, Mr. Ramón felt a spur dig into his legs. He felt a lot of pain.

The rooster subdued him so that he couldn't move.

Then, a voice told him, "Promise me that you will never drink mistelas again."

"I won't even drink water," said Mr. Ramón.

"Promise me that you will never make fun of me again."

"I won't even mention your name," said Mr. Ramón.

"Stand up, man! You'd better keep your word."

"Thank you for your forgiveness little rooster," said Mr. Ramón.

Then, the little rooster went back to its place. Mr. Ramón, the aristocrat, changed his life. He became respectful and stopped drinking mistelas.

Translated by Fergie Tinoco and Natalia Kuzminski.



Manuelita's Last Dream

Mrs. Laura Pérez de Oleas tells the story of how Manuelita⁶ Sáenz died. With a high fever, her big black eyes saw a wandering bright star. The sick woman imagined that it was Bolívar's soul telling her:

- "Manuelita, take this crown of roses. The same that you threw at me from a balcony the morning of my triumphant entrance to Quito. Remember?"

- "Bolívar!... Bolívar!" - cried out the dying Manuelita, as she extended her arms. - "Are you saying that I am beautiful in this white dress with the colors of Freedom?"

- "Yes, Liberator," answered Bolívar's soul. "You were the owner of my life. You saved me from death that September night. Hold my hand and let's go together to the summit of immortality."

Then, Manuelita tried to get up, but she could not do anything else but shout anxiously, "Bolívar do not leave! Do not leave me!"

- "My dear love," answered Bolívar's distant echo, "Close your eyes and follow me, you and I, crowned with roses and thorns and with laurels and thistles."

Manuelita tried to run to the shadow of her beloved. Nevertheless, it was all in vain because she was paralytic and agonizing. In the middle of her bitter crying, she heard the phrase again:

"My Manuelita... in life we were tied together by love; in death we will be joined by glory."

"Do not leave! Do not leave, for God's sake! Come back to my arms, my love!" claimed Manuelita.

Such a prayer was heard by the mulatto maid, who supposing that she was being called, went immediately.

"I was not calling you Imaya. I was calling Bolívar... Didn't you see him leaving?" answered Manuelita, very angry.

"No, miss. I have not seen the military master leave. The fever is making you hallucinate."

This is how, at the time of her death, the Liberator of the Liberator had next to her the spirit of the one that expressed, "I have plowed in the sea and reaped in the wind. This is also how a great woman is behind an illustrious man."

When the bells in the neighboring chapel marked six in the afternoon, Manuelita died in Paita in 1856.

Translated by María Gracia Cobo.

Digiofi (2021). *Leyendas de Ecuador: El último ensueño de Manuelita*. <https://leyendasdeecuador.club/el-ultimo-ensueno-de-manuelita-saenz/>

⁶Manuelita: nickname given to Manuela Sáenz after saving Simón Bolívar's life.



The Water Mother

A long time ago in the colonial era, a young woman from Spain arrived in America with her jealous father. She could hardly get out of her house, only with her maid and under the condition that she should not get close to men.

In spite of these conditions, she fell in love with an indigenous boy whom she saw one day while she walked to church with her maid. He was tall with brown skin. All these characteristics caught her attention, but the most striking was his dark and sincere eyes. They started their romance, which for some reason escaped her father's suspicions.

However, the situation turned out badly because she was pregnant. She loved her baby and also wanted to have their child, but she knew that her father would not accept a mestizo child. She hid her pregnancy with wide dresses and with the hope to escape with her love.

She had a beautiful brown skinned baby. But her father heard the baby crying and went to her room looking for him. He was furious and hateful. He took the child and he drowned him in the lake.

The father also drowned the indigenous boy in the same place. Desperate, the young woman jumped in the lake to save her family, but also drowned. From this day on, the people in the town started to see a beautiful woman with blue eyes get out of the lake in a halo of light. This beautiful woman is a vindictive soul who wants revenge for her family.

The objective of the woman is to attract the kids with her beautiful voice and sweet appearance, take them to the lake and drown them. From this moment on, all the mothers in town take extra care of their children.

Translated by Paúl Moscoso.

Orozco, A. L. (2008). *Mitos y Leyendas de Colombia* (3.a ed., Vol. 3). KingKolor. <https://www.culturarecreacionydeporte.gov.co/es/bogotanitos/cuenta-la-leyenda/la-madre-de-agua#:~:text=Cuenta%20la%20leyenda%20que%20en,figura%20de%20una%20hermosa%20doncella.&text=Dicen%20que%20en%20el%20d%C3%ADa,transmite%20poder%20%20gloria%20y%20espiritualidad>.



The Maiden of Pumapungo

Pumapungo, located in Cuenca, was the favorite destination for the Inca emperors. It was impressively decorated and today it is possible to visit the ruins. This place had a holy fountain that was used exclusively by the emperor.

Some maidens, known as the Sun Virgins, took care of it. These women were raised with different types of art and skills to entertain the emperors.

Nina was one of the Sun Virgins who lived in Pumapungo. Although it was forbidden, she fell in love with one of the priests of the temple. They used to meet in the gardens when there was a full moon.

When the Emperor found out, he ordered the priest to be killed, but prohibited anyone from informing Nina about it. When the maiden noticed that her lover didn't go to their meetings, she died because of her moral pain. It is said that today on the same full moon nights, you can hear her moan between the ruins.

Translated by Doménica Delgado.

The Macaws



In ancient times, the lands of what now is province of Azuay and Cañar were populated. The elderly say that there was a tremendous flood on earth and that there were only two survivors left: two brothers who managed to climb to the top of a mountain and take refuge in a cave that was at the top. Day and night the rain continued, but it did not reach the top, because the mountains rose above the water level. The stars twinkled in the dark and the enormous mountains seemed to travel in the vastness of the night. In their cabin, Ataotupagui and Cusicayo, two young and strong brothers finally rested by the fire that appeared to be a little point in the universe from afar. The first drops fell at dawn. It was cold and the sky was covered with cotton and dark clouds. They all wanted to be there, right there, crowning the mountains, to the point that they seemed to collapse on Earth. And it rained endlessly.

Finally, after many days, it stopped raining and a beautiful rainbow appeared in the sky. The two brothers found themselves alone in a totally depopulated and silent world. They were very hungry, but there was nothing to eat. After walking a lot, they returned to the cave. Upon entering, their eyes were dazzled to find delicious delicacies served on a stone. For several days the same thing happened and the brothers were curious to know who brought them such delicious foods. One day they decided to hide and wait to see who their kind benefactor was. Amazed, they discovered that two beautiful macaws, colorful birds with a woman's face, brought food on their wings and prepared the table.

The brothers caught the macaws, which became two beautiful women who agreed to marry them. These two surviving couples of the flood repopulated the land of the Cañaris. Since then, the macaws are considered sacred birds by the natives.

Translated by Camila Ríos.

The Auca Baby



In the Psiquer's hamlet lived a family with a drunk for a father. Every day he would go to the Bar in Mira and come back very late at night, completely drunk. Then he would mistreat his wife and little sons.

One of many nights, while on his way back to his house, he found a lump wrapped in diapers in the Honda River. It was a beautiful baby that was crying unconsolably. So, he took the baby in his arms and put the baby boy on the horse to take him to his house. At that moment, the baby stopped crying.

After going a long way, the baby became a horrible creature with red crystal eyes and massive yellow fangs. This creature took the drunk from his lapel and said, "look, I have big teeth, look, I have a long tail." In that exact moment, a rooster sang and it ended. After that, the supernatural creature said, "Thank the damn rooster that he sang, otherwise I would have taken you with me to hell." The man was very scared! He threw the lump through the air and when it fell, it exploded.

Immediately the man smelled sulfur.

The abuser was not drunk anymore and promised himself that he would stop drinking and treat his family better.

The Auca baby was an unbaptized boy who could not be buried in a cemetery. Therefore, he was buried in some bushes and thrown into a ditch by his bad parents. Since then, he appears in the middle of the night and his curse finishes at 3 AM when a rooster sings. He does this because his soul cannot rest in peace. Keep calm because he only scares drunk people who mistreat their own sons and wives.

Translated by David Añasco.

Ramírez, C. (2019). *El Guagua Auca*. (2019). <http://www.elmundodelareflexion.com/index.php/leyendas-casos-y-mitos-del-ecuador/sierra/carchi/448-el-guagua-auca> 1#:~:text=El%20guagua%20auca%2C%20es%20un,una%20acequia%20sus%20padres%20desnaturalizados.&text=Pero%20tranquilo%2C%20solo%20espanta%20a,maltratan%20a%20sus%20propios%20ni%C3%BIos.



The Gagones

The legend takes place in the forest near the city of Loja. In this place, there were constantly illicit sexual relations, especially between family members, such as godfathers or sisters-in-law, without getting married. Spirits would come out to manifest themselves while people were sleeping. These prowled creatures had similar traits to those of dogs and cats, and were helpless during the day. As soon as the sun went down, the forest shuddered with their presence and they were transformed into devilish beasts with fierce eyes, who groaned as a newborn child.

In popular culture these creatures are known as gagones that manifest themselves at dusk close to people who live in sin such as couples in free union. They look like dogs or cats who wander as two per species, one male and one female, through the shadows of wooded areas.

These creatures have a light fur when the person is living in sin and still has a chance to be saved; but when their fur becomes dark, it means that they do not have salvation and are doomed to hell.

It is said that when pure souls find a gagon, they must tie a string to their body or paint their face with coal to know the next day who the gagon was and to receive advice for salvation.

The existence of these creatures is a product of a people's sinful behavior, which serve to torment them until they assume their mistakes and go on their way.

Translated by Guadalupe Collaguazo.



The Mystery of the Inlet of Misahuallí River

In the beginning of eastern Ecuador's colonization, upstream the inlet of Misahuallí River in a crisp opening in the jungle, a man of white skin, who was engaged in the exploitation of the rubber tree in the Aguarico river basin, settled down with his camp.

The months passed by and a new settler arrived to this place accompanied by his beautiful daughter, who unsettled the heart of the rubber tapper.

Because they lived in the middle of the jungle and without an authority that could legalize the couple's relationship, they tied their bodies and their destinies under the shade of the lush guaba tree. But since no one can only survive by love, the rubber tapper had to travel to Aguarico to collect the balata (fruit from the rubber plant), which was gathered by its workers, and take it to the Iquitos markets.

The beautiful girl wandered and retained the memory of her beloved, through the long lonely beach. But time mercilessly passed and at the end, the rubber tapper never returned.

The beautiful woman, prey of an indescribable grief, disappeared as if the earth had swallowed her.

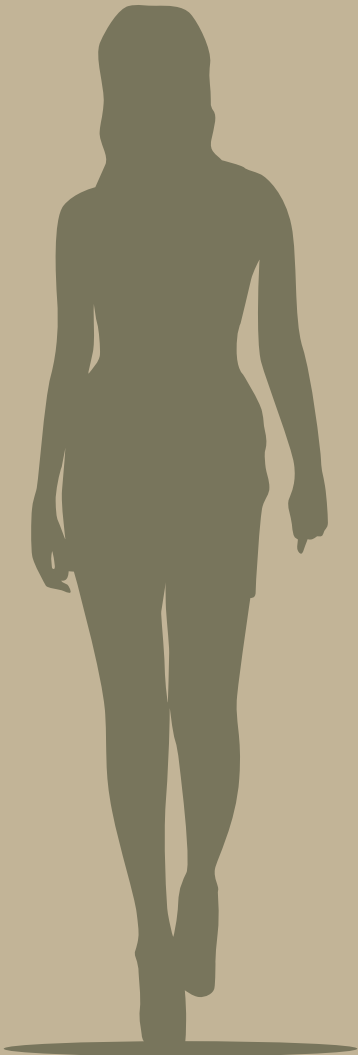
The years passed, giving space to history. One day, a foggy and cold morning, some natives were fishing in the area and they saw a beautiful woman standing on a large stone on the left bank of the river. They approached her and when they asked her where she lived. She pointed to the water, throwing herself into the torrent, where she submerged without splashing a single drop.

After hearing what happened, the elders were assured that the lady was the spirit of that beautiful woman who disappeared, leaving no trace.

From that huge reddish volcanic stone laying near the Misahuallí river; a sweet woman's voice, singing to her lost love, is often heard in the morning. Sometimes she appears to those who fish in the river; but those who go to the place with the explicit intention of meeting her never achieve their goal.

Translated by Camilo Carrasco.

El Universo (2017). Intercultural: *La misteriosa mujer de la bocana del río Misahuallí*. <https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/2017/04/09/nota/6128866/misteriosa-mujer-bocana-rio-misahualli/#:~:text=En%20los%20albores%20de%20la,explotaci%C3%B3n%20del%20%C3%A1rbol%20de%20caucho.>



La Tacona

This legend tells us that in Esmeraldas, there was a young woman with blonde hair who was walking down the street on a moonless night. When she was passing through a narrow street, a man who came across her path took her by force to a corner and abused her.

One hour after the incident, the woman arrived at her home with her stained dress and tears all over her face. She decided to take a shower and put makeup on. While she was putting on some makeup, she looked at herself in the mirror and she swore to herself that no one was going to hurt her again.

The young woman put on a red dress, high heels and beautiful makeup. Later she went out to a bar for a drink to forget all of her sorrows and what had happened just a few hours before.

When she entered the bar, every man stared at her and admired her beauty. They also wanted to dance with her. The boys from the bar gave the woman the nickname of "La Tacona."

After that, a good-looking man asked her to dance and then to go to the beach so they could have some time by themselves. The woman, very determined, accepted.

Once there the man tried to abuse her and at that very moment when he saw the woman's face he realized she had turned into a corpse. Immediately frightened, he released her and ran without any direction. Once he was tired, he realized that he had reached a cemetery. He decided to sit on a grave. Then he read the name on the tombstone and remembered the name of the woman he tried to harm.

It was hers, and surprisingly, she was dead.

Many years later, when the man was already old, he went to visit the tomb of that same girl. He kneeled down on the grave and he thanked her for everything. From that day on he no longer had any bad intentions with other women. Now he was a completely different person. At that very moment the man felt a pat on the back and heard a whisper that said to him, "that's what I wanted to hear." He turned around and there was the back of a blonde woman, in a small red dress, running away.

Translated by Agustín Malo.



Until When, Father Almeida?

The San Diego convent was the home of a young priest who had been admitted to the monastery when he was only seventeen years old. Being that young, he liked alcohol and parties. One night, he and his friends decided to go out without permission. They climbed the walls to enjoy the "quiteña" night. Father Almeida was the most enthusiastic and handsome. He played the guitar and had a great voice.

These nights continued for a long time.

However, one day their superiors realized what had been happening. Because of this situation they decided to increase the height of the wall to prevent the priests from partying. The priests realized their mistakes and decided to amend their ways, but Father Almeida did not think the same way.

When he wanted to hang out that night, he looked for a way to escape from the convent. He saw a window that led him to the street. However, to escape he needed to climb through the window and a statue of a crucified Jesus. He didn't care. Therefore, he continued slipping away every night.

One night, as Father Almeida climbed the statue to go to his parties, the statue of Christ, tired of the priest's wanderings, asked, "Until when, Father Almeida?" And the Father, with audacity, answered, "Until my return, sir."

This event did not prevent the priest from leaving his addictions behind. One night, he came back to the convent quite drunk. He stumbled upon something dark which he thought to be a bull. When he got up from the floor, he saw that he fell into a funeral procession. Some men were carrying a coffin, and all that was heard were footsteps. When Father Almeida saw who the dead person was, he became extremely frightened. The body inside the coffin was him.

The priest ran desperately to the convent, from which he never left again. He turned into one of the most outstanding priests of the church; he was obedient, accomplished, and performed his tasks with great devotion. The tough lesson received made Father Almeida change his life forever.

Translated by Paula del Río.

Juan de Tarfe



On my way I had passed El Salado, where Elia Liut had landed. After crossing the "arch of the aqueduct" that crosses the Municipal Electric Company, located next to the Yanuncay River, I continued my way to the center of the city passing by the bar named Pitimuchas⁸. I was dying to tell many stories, but when I got ready to write, I thought I saw the shadow of a cape. I soon turned my gaze towards the river and I swore that I saw a somewhat blurred figure of a woman with her back to me, naked, looking towards the river. I rubbed my eyes to verify that it was not a game of shadows between the trees, and suddenly, a name in my mind resonated: Juan de Tarfe, the young Emmanuel Honorato Vázquez.

According to ancient storytelling, this young man disturbed the city, and we could write an entire book about the adventures that he and his friends lived in the years of the centenary of the Independence of Cuenca. Wrapped in their black layers they used to travel around the city that they were determined to change in order to take it out of its rustic past and project it to the intrepid modernity. That's why our Juan helped with his knowledge of mechanics, designed facades for houses, introduced photography and illustrated great magazines. He was also a poet and liked to write verses in "puchus,"⁹ the passionate leftovers, "Let's be, let's live, let's feel!

Although it remains later, like rag, like squeezed fruit, like puchi¹⁰ life."

He was determined to change the old way of thinking of a city that was sleeping on its laurels while having a splendid future ahead of it. And to wake it up, he decided to do a provocative act.

It was the day of a mass held in the church of All Saints, the first to be built here, which is even older than the very foundation of the city. It was overcrowded. In a moment of prayer, when the pious eyes were closed, and the heads were bowed, Juan de Tarfe took advantage of the occasion to sneak out to be among the people and hide inside a confessional until the service ended. People waited in line to confess their sins. He spent several minutes of anguish hoping that they would not discover him while he listened to the confessed sins and repeated penances.

⁸Quichua expression for small kiss.

⁹Something small.

¹⁰Derivate of puchus.

When everyone went to the confessional booth, he breathed a sigh of relief. Later, he went out and the darkness surrounded him. He looked for a door that would lead him to the towers of the church, with silent and sustained steps. He thought he found it and stealthily opened it. But he was met with a drowned scream with a skull hanging between the ancient tombstones, surrounded by cobwebs which fell before his eyes. He quickly left this place and restarted his search on the other side. There he finally found the stairs that would take him to the top of the tower from which one could see the beautiful city that joined our rivers and the vestiges of the neighborhood. Pumapungo and the central square with the old cathedral and the new one, were still under construction. After contemplating his beautiful surroundings, he began to work out the plan he came to execute.

He chose the oldest bell and skillfully unleashed it.

We have been told by the same little devils that failed to help Cantuña to work the atrium of San Francisco, in Quito, were experts in chapels. Fortunately, they came to the aid of the young morlaco and held the bell so that it did not crash when losing the support of the ropes. Then they delicately lowered it and placed it on a carriage pulled by black horses that rode on the cobblestones of Cuenca, raising sparks with their hoofs.

What happened next is odd to tell. The whole city was submerged in sadness. The change that Juan de Tarfe wanted to bring resulted in superstition. Enormous lines of mourners were formed who did not want to hear any explanations, but only kept crying and praying.

Juan de Tarfe could not resist this strange scene and with the same kindness he returned the bell while the city gave thanks to God. But in his mind, he was already planning how to steal the lion that crowned the "Picota of El Vecino" (a pikestaff displaying the heads of criminals in the town). But that is another story that I will tell someday.

Translated by Jeanpierre Encarnación.



The Headless Priest

The legend tells that many years ago, in fact, more than a century ago, there was a priest who liked to date several women after concluding his religious mass.

Obviously, this type of behavior was not approved by the citizens of Cuenca. Unfortunately, no one could do anything to prevent it because the priest was a friend of the ecclesiastical authorities, who did nothing to remove him.

The priest continued to date several single girls until the day of his death. It is said that no one attended his funeral except the gravedigger.

When the gravedigger began to throw dust on the coffin, the lid opened, allowing him to see that the body had no head.

The man finished doing his job and went to a canteen, where he told the people what had happened.

Immediately, there were those who affirmed,

“Surely, it was the devil who took his head to hell.”

From that moment on, the priest’s body wanders at night in hopes of recovering his head.

Translated by Tamara Medina.

Etsa and Iwia Shuar Legend



Iwia¹¹ was a terrible demon who used to catch Shuar people, put them in his huge shigra and eat them. Once, he caught and ate Etsa`s parents. He took the powerful child to be near him for a long time. He made him believe that he was his father.

When Etsa¹² grew up, he hunted for the insatiable Iwia every day, who always asked for birds for dessert. The boy returned with a gigantic shigra¹³ full of all different types of birds' species. One morning, when he began his hunt, he discovered that the jungle was silent. There were no colorful birds anywhere. It was only the Yápankam¹⁴ dove that perched on the branches of Malitagua¹⁵.

When Etsa and the dove met in the midst of the jungle, they looked deeply at each other.

"Are you going to kill me too?" asked Yápankam.

"No," Etsa said. "I seem to have left all the jungle without birds."

Feeling guilty, Etsa felt weak and fell on the mattress of sheets on the floor. Then, Yápankam flew to where Etsa was and they became friends.

Yápankam took the opportunity to tell the child how Iwia had killed his true parents. Nothing and nobody could console Etsa. He cried, feeling angry and sad.

When Yápankam realized that Etsa was calm, he said,

"You can't do anything to bring your parents back to life, but you can still give life back to the birds."

"How?" said Etsa. The dove explained, "Introduce the feathers of the birds you killed into the blowgun, and blow." The child did it and immediately thousands of birds of all colors began to come out, which took flight and with their joy they populated the jungle again. Etsa no longer returned to Iwia.

Translated by Michelle Calle and Anais Minango.

Florentino, S. (2021). *El pequeño Etsa. Leyendas de Ecuador*. <https://www.encuentos.com/leyendas/pequeno-etsa-leyendas-de-ecuador/>.

¹¹Demon or Evil for Shuar people.

¹²Name of the sun for Shuar people.

¹³Bag made of straw.

¹⁴Dove for Shuar people.

¹⁵Tree.

The Headless Man of Riobamba



Tne Sunday morning in the city of Riobamba, the people woke up, alarmed by the news that during the previous night a mysterious man without a head had gone horseback riding through the streets of the city.

The midnight ride of the headless man did not surprise the people since it was independence time and night messengers gathered in the city.

A large amount of the population decided to spy through the window to see the horseman. They were terrified and surprised when they discovered that the subject was headless! His clothes, horse, and boots were black as night and provoked even more fear in those who saw him.

In the morning and in the following days, the stories about the headless horseman increased drastically. The victims of the terrifying vision were the night owls that could not resist to go home earlier. Also, the travelers that used to arrive at night in the city would tell the story. And even the workers who had long working days and were forced to return at night had seen the headless horseman.

Every Saturday you could see the headless horseman. The people, full of terror, preferred to hide in their houses and close their wooden gates.

Many settlers started to imagine the story behind the headless horseman. Some of them thought that he was the soul of a soldier in pain. Others believed that he was someone looking for revenge. And others, more lucid, thought that it had to do with priests because they were the only beneficiaries, since a lot of people gathered to pray for the soul of the headless.

The headless horseman passed by Saint Rose neighborhood, where two neighbors decided to discover who this mysterious character was. One of the men devised a plan to unveil the impostor but he failed to convince the other neighbor who was more prudent.

That night, the headless horseman of Riobamba would reveal his secret.

"It is a good plan, neighbor," said the friend wisely. "But tell me something, what will we do if he really is a soul in sorrow? In that moment, the devil will take us."

The cunning neighbor managed to convince his friend and, to scare away the fear, he offered him a big drink.

When both neighbors had drunk enough, they thought the task they were about to undertake would not be so difficult. Furthermore, while laughing, they thought that at least they would not feel pain when the headless horseman took them with him.

Under these circumstances, they went to buy a thick long rope and smuggled liquor and tobacco to take with them. When the night came, they felt they were the bravest men in the world and talked about what could happen to them. Around twelve o'clock at night, they went to the corner where the rider passed by, calculated the height of his chest and tightened the rope.

"Ready," said the cunning man, happy with his drunk friend. "He won't pass through here, and if he does I swear I will never go out on Saturday again."

At midnight, they heard a horse, the rope had achieved its goal and brought down the rider. The neighbors left their hiding place and caught the so-called headless horseman.

When they discovered the rider, they saw that he was the Saint Louis parish priest who justified himself by saying that he was cold and, because of that, he was covering his head.

Before taking him to the authorities, the friends took the priest to the canteen. There, the parish priest confessed that he had fallen in love with a young woman from Saint Rose. In his desperation to see her, he thought that for the people from Riobamba, the idea of a headless horseman would be better than that of a priest in love.

Translated by Alexandra Mendoza.

Huiña Huili From Bolivar



José was a tahúr, an expert card player who also loved to cheat his opponents. One night he left the canteen with his pockets full of coins. The locals, fed up with Jose's tricks, handed him a glass container full of fireflies so everyone could see when he was approaching the town and hide in their homes so as not to run into him.

While walking near the Las Lajas River, he clearly heard the cries of a newborn. Jose cared little for the suffering of others. Despite this, the baby's crying was so strong that he decided to follow the sound to help.

As he went down the hill, he dropped the container of fireflies and was left in complete darkness. Then he found the little boy, covered him with his cloak and at that moment he stopped crying.

Already back, Jose realized that the part of his body where the child was leaning, began to heat up excessively. Immediately, he tried to drop the child on the floor, but at that moment he felt a sharp claw stuck in his abdomen.

Later he heard a deep voice that said,

"I got you, now you are mine and I will eat you." To which Jose, stuttering, replied,

"Why? I have not done anything to you. I just saved your life."

"You are a very selfish person and people like you deserve death," the horrifying creature replied.

The man again begged for his life until he fainted from the enormous dread he felt. The next day, he was awakened by the rays of the morning sun. As soon as he got up from the ground, he heard the crying of the child again.

Jose knew that it had not been a dream or hallucinations caused by alcohol. He promised not to drink again and behave well for the rest of his days.

Translated by David Reyes and María Paz Ortega.

The Chair in the Cemetery



At Riobamba cemetery, there is a chair that tells a story that just some people know. This is a story of love that time and death couldn't erase.

A couple of years ago a foreign couple arrived in the city of Riobamba. They were spouses accomplishing a social helping mission. They both shared their love and dedication for noble causes. They were young, happy and loved each other deeply. Everything seemed perfect in their lives.

Nevertheless, this happiness did not last long. Elizabeth started to feel tired and with time she got worse. Her life was consumed rapidly in front of her husband Jozef's desperation. He did everything that was possible to keep her alive, but to no avail.

Jozef felt a huge desperation and his sadness was so deep that for many days he remained holding the bars that adorned Elizabeth's grave. He couldn't understand how he was supposed to live without his loved one. A few months passed and Jozef remained disconsolate and the time came to go back to his country. He didn't have the courage to abandon the last dwelling of his beloved wife.

For this reason, he decided to stay in Riobamba. He went to the cemetery every day and took a chair with him. He sat in front of the grave for hours to talk with his wife and sometimes he read something to her.

Finally, time was a good friend and death came to

Jozef. After a long time, he could finally be next to Elizabeth on the other side.

Guardians in the cemetery and daily visitors witnessed "an in love" Jozef, who had decided to put a chair in front of Elizabeth's grave as a tribute and recognition of his love and strength.

Since then, the chair continues to tell this beautiful and sad story of love.

Translated by Sofia Peralta.

The Child with the Black Hand



The legend of the child with the Black Hand took place in the ancient city of Guayaquil during colonial times. In those days, the Guayaquileños (people that live in Guayaquil), seemed affected by the presence of pirates that came to plunder the nascent city.

A child named Toribio de Castro Grijuela was born in the gulf of Guayaquil on Puná Island. His parents were devotees and prayed for the child to be born healthy. However, the child was born without his right hand. Although his parents were wealthy, there weren't any medical techniques or scientific advances that could cure his condition.

Over time, the boy grew with the loving care of his parents, who never lost faith and taught Toribio to be a good person. Because of this reason,

Toribio was known as a generous young man who, with support of his good economic position, helped people who needed it the most.

The Castro Grijuela family felt a great devotion for the Virgin of Soto. Every day they would pray for a miracle for young Toribio. Thanks to their unwavering faith, the prodigy happened. The legend says that a senior citizen, a woman, approached the young man and asked for something to eat. Toribio approached the woman happily, despite the fact that the woman was wearing shabby clothes and her face reflected sadness and neglect. After feeding herself, the lady told the child that she would also give him a gift. And she left, without saying anything else. Because of his kindness, Toribio received a miracle the next morning. To everyone's surprise, Toribio received the right hand that he didn't have when he was born, but with the particularity that the hand was all black. As time went by, it's been told that the child with the Black Hand continued to be kind and brave. He also defended his city from the British pirates whom, under service to the British crown, isolated the colonies and attacked the Spanish ships to steal their riches. But the bravery of the Guayaquileños prevented the infamous Cavendish pirates from assaulting the city in 1587.

The miracle was known among all the inhabitants and became more popular over the years. After Toribio's death, his body was exhumed and it was discovered that the Black Hand had no signs of decomposition.

Translated by Alina Guzmán.

The Boa and the Tiger



By the path that leads to Misahualli¹⁶ (a small town in the Ecuadorian amazon), about three miles from the Napo port in the community of Latas¹⁷, lived an indigenous family. They used to work washing gold on the banks of the Napo River. One day, the mother was washing the family's clothes while the youngest daughter was playing peacefully on the river banks. The mother was so concentrated on her hard work that she did not notice that the girl was getting dangerously close to the water, right where the river was deeper. A sudden hunch forced her to raise her head, but it was too late. The girl was dragged by the strong river flow and only her little head appeared for moments in the ridges of the choppy waters.

The woman, distressed from pain and despair, fell to her knees in the sand and begged loudly, "Yaya Dios!¹⁸ (Great God) ... Yaya Dios! I beg you, save my guagua¹⁹ (baby)." And oh, surprise, the young girl returned in the mouth of an immense boa of almost 14 meters long, which put her safe and sound on the very beach. The woman, hugging the girl, cried and smiled gratefully. Since that day the huge boa became one more member of the family, to the point that when the couple went to work, the gigantic reptile took care of the children.

But one stormy day, when the parents went to the jungle in search of guatusas²⁰ (an animal) for dinner, the boa did not arrive to watch the children as it used to do every day. This absence was due to an immense and hungry tiger, who was present with evil intentions.

The desperate children shouted loudly, "¡Yacuman amarul!" (water snake) The giant reptile, hearing the voices of the children, came out of the river and slid quickly into the house. It stood by the door to receive the tiger who was trying to sneak into the home of his friends. The battle that broke out was to death; the boa got wrapped in the body of the feline, despite the sharp teeth of the bloody animal, and the constricting rings of the reptile closed tightly while the tiger bit her right on the head. In the end, a crack of broken bones was heard and both animals were left dead at the entrance of their home.

¹⁶It is a rural parish belonging to the canton Tena and the province of Napo in the Republic of Ecuador.

¹⁷A small community belonging to the Amazon region in Ecuador.

¹⁸Blit is a quechua word (the native language of the Incas), which means the Great Spirit, that of the beginning, the giver of life, the origin of all creation.

¹⁹A child or baby.

²⁰It is a diurnal and terrestrial mammal most commonly found in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

When the children's parents returned, they painfully collected the remains of their boa friend. They ceremoniously watched over it for two days and then buried her with all the honors and rites that they used for their loved ones.

Translated by Paula Carmona.

Tello, M. (2019). *Leyenda kichwa: La boa y el tigre – elMisahualli*. <https://elmisahualli.com/leyenda-kichwa-la-boa-y-el-tigre>

The Legend of "Campanahuayco"

At the end of the 80's, there was a "negrito" (black man) who had a bell in his hand and travelled with a little donkey loaded with silver along a narrow path. When he passed by a big rock, a great lagoon swallowed him, before it dried up. The face of the man was placed within a curious entry. There was a bell hanging in the center, which rang at noon and midnight, and thus it became a dangerous place.

It was said to be haunted so no one dared to go there.

There were beautiful pastures around this mysterious place. By the middle of the previous century there were two brave men, Victor Villacís and his friend Simon Sanchez. They fed their flock near the bell and never saw anything strange until the day Simon decided to go look for Victor, who went missing. When he arrived at the area that was full of greenery, he saw, far ahead, a lovely woman with a lovely face and blonde hair covering her naked body. He came close to see who she was. For a moment he thought he needed to protect her in such a dreaded place, but he walked away in the direction of the bell.

When he was close to the entrance, she disappeared.

Simon was puzzled by the situation. He was still trying to explain to himself what he saw, and it seemed to be a dream. When it was close to noon, the bells rang and the charm emerged. He felt attracted to the entrance. He entered the cave and found aromatic flowers in thousands of resplendent colors covered completely by a bright light. He breathed fresh air. There was peace and quiet. It was true paradise! He also felt a gentle breeze and a slight drizzle of small animals twinkling. It was the most beautiful scene his eyes had ever witnessed.

He was on a narrow, heavenly and diabolical path. He wanted to pluck one of the delicate flowers, but when he touched it, it vanished between his rough hands. Step-by-step the happy man went on his way, impressed, without blinking, not wanting to miss even a second to contemplate the incomparable beauty.

Beyond that path he found a real city with large buildings and ancient palaces. Everybody did something, everyone was occupied with their work and they wore curious dresses. The men wore charming black suits covered with long coats of dark velvet; the women wore large dresses decorated with lights. Perfumed flowers were balanced in a large hat on their heads. Later, he found large orchards of corn and he saw "season of fruits, flowers and abundant vegetables." As he continued on his way, he found roses of every color that were alternating with illusions and carnations. Then, there were very tasty fruit trees. At the same time, he

saw lettuce, beets, carrots, cabbages, cauliflowers, everything that the land of San Joaquin could produce. He was amazed when he realized that there were ploughed by bulls, as was the norm, but they used tractors. Then, someone tapped him on the shoulder. He immediately turned around, scared! He found that it was a nice gentleman who was very tall with blond curly hair, green eyes, white teeth, a neatly ironed black suit, and a beautiful tie with yellow butterflies and black dots; only his shoes were ridiculous as they stood out to a pointy toe.

"Do you want to get out of here?" said the gentleman.

"Yes," answered Simon fearfully!

"I know the exit, but you have to do what I say, okay?"

"I will, Sir."

"Good! When you leave here, do not tell anyone anything of what you have seen or heard. You're the only human who has seen my secret. Since I like you, I am letting you out. Others who came centuries ago did not escape. As a sign of friendship, I give you this corn; do not eat it or sow it, and it will give abundant fruits and richness. You will receive a hard punishment for your people if you say anything. No one will live on corn as they do now. Thou shalt sow flowers that will not sell; thou shall sow vegetables that will be eaten by pests. As for you, there will be a special punishment!" said the man while leading him to the exit.

After he left, Simon was going to thank the Lord, but he realized that he was on a mountain that he did not know. He tried to find the way to his house. He found a sweet little old lady who was combing her white hair and told him that he was in Surocucho. At that precise moment he recalled that Victor pastored there on Sundays.

Meanwhile, people from San Joaquin made assumptions about where Simon was:

"The devil took him," someone said.

"Maybe he was swallowed by the mountain," others said.

Everyone prayed the rosary and gave alms to the poor to ask for the return of Simon. His family was looking for him. No one dared to cross the entrance of the bell until they almost confirmed his death and began to forget about it.

One morning, he was seen by many people, who soon became frightened. They screamed, "It's a ghost, noooooooooooooo, the devil took his body and now he is coming to get us. Oh my God help us!". After some time, they saw that he hadn't done anything to anyone, and soon began to

ask where he was. As soon as Simon arrived home, he bathed and ate as if he had never eaten before. His mother, father and neighbors asked him where he spent four months and he did not answer. He sowed what he brought, and dried his face when he finished sewing.

For several days he kept the secret, but so much insistence tormented him, so he revealed it with minimal detail. His younger sister told their friends, their relatives, and then the whole community knew about the dark event. Immediately Simon felt something strange in his leg: he was almost unable to walk. He went to the corn yard but the corn became yellow butterflies with black spots, so similar to the tie of the man from the cave.

That same evening, he went to the cave to ask for forgiveness and to heal his leg. "Ding... dong..., ding...", the bells rang, because it was midnight. He backed off. It seemed like an earthquake inside the rock. You could hear howls of lamentation. A giant came out of the cave. He was more than 50 meters tall, with a layer of black velvet, fangs that protruded more than a meter, eyes that shone like fire and hairy hands. He grabbed the bell while flying in the direction of Surocucho. He rang the bell and became invisible. It was as if the hood would fly alone in the middle of the sky.

The bell was gone and the charm disappeared while poor Simon was dying with a rare disease.

Where the plains were, there is now a dangerous forest. From time to time, the huaca (wife of the devil) appears, combing her hair with a golden comb and looking at her own face in the waters of the Yanuncay River, which was once a lagoon.

Translated by Jennifer Carolina Vasquez.

Goat Leg



It is said that there is a very attractive young woman who likes to have fun with men. People said that she was condemned after a demonic pact that forced her to become a witch and changed her human legs for goat's legs. Because of this pact she obtained the grace of a very attractive woman to men. In very warm seasons, people tell several stories in nearby places that she was seen performing the same operation (flirting with men) night after night and place after place.

The latest story was one of a young man from the area who, after drinking a beer, was encouraged by a strange woman. She was calling his attention with her mysterious and physical attractiveness, heading towards the center of the dance floor, where she began to dance, seducing the audience.

The young libidinous man approached the woman and whispered in her ear. He invited her to dance with him while she seemed to be seduced by the young man. After a while, the young man could see the legs of the woman who accompanied him and just remembered those legs as the last image of that night in the bowling place.

The young man was surprised to find the limbs of an animal instead of the two lower limbs of the woman. The young man's friends said that they saw the man pass out and the woman run to the exit, never to be seen again in the village. This legend occurred from locality to locality until one day it disappeared.

Translated by Gabriela Palacios.

The Dead-Dragger



Coming back from downtown, my walk takes me to the front of the road that leads me to a place called "The hill of the Black Vultures," where, since immemorial times, corpses have been left. In the same place, the city Cemetery was built at the end of the twentieth century. Since that time, a hunchbacked and thoughtful gravedigger was chosen to look after the place. Everybody called him the Dead-dragger.

He was a small man who always dressed with rigorous mourning. A huge suit and a tiny cap made his appearance worse. He wore a red silky handkerchief, with a black rose painted on the back. To make matters worse, he had a haggard face with deep dark circles under his eyes and pale lips.

When the inhabitants of the neighborhood saw him approach, they immediately began to gossip, "here comes the Dead-dragger, hurry up neighbors, he is coming, hurry up." No one wanted to have him close because it was said that he was the messenger of death, and in each neighborhood that he visited someone died. That's the reason why they searched desperately for jugs and buckets with water to throw on the unfortunate man, scaring him away from the neighborhood.

His story has always been sad. Years ago, he lost his wife and daughter due to typhoid fever that suddenly struck the city. The disease was very long and he did not have a single penny saved to bury them with dignity.

According to popular legend, he made a pact with the angel of death. If the angel gave his wife and daughter a good burial, he would search the streets of the city for new dead to carry and take to the cemetery.

People said that it was usual to see him sitting at the corner of the old heritage Cemetery, in front of the fence opposite the bar whose sign read, "Here you are better than in front." From there, drunk people said that he looked immutable, quiet, looking at his handkerchief, which was the only remaining piece of his beloved.

For hours nothing disturbed them until the 'Dead-dragger' got up, and firmly moved away from the cemetery. A short time later, those same drunkards said that a bell had been rung, thus inviting the people to pray for the soul of another Christian who had died. Then the Dead-dragger returned. He was always the first to help carry the box of the deceased, even before the mourners who accompanied him. Then, at the funeral, only he would stay.

One night, when the last drunk left the bar, they saw the Dead-dragger dancing in the middle of the tombs. A white silhouette accompanied him and together, they slipped among the marble and the leaf litter that covered the cemetery floor. They saw him get lost among the trees of the place never to appear again.

Translated by Madeleine Martin Aguirre.

Beautiful Aurora



This is one of the most famous legends in the city of Quito²¹. According to the story, everything began in the Independence Square²², which at that time didn't hold any monuments.

Beautiful Aurora, who was a beautiful young woman, lived in this place. She had gone with her parents to a bullfight. According to people who attended that bullfight, nobody knew where the black bull came from to approach her in a strange way. He stared at her until she fainted out of fear. Her desperate parents left the place immediately, took her home and asked a doctor for help. However, he did not have an explanation as to why beautiful Aurora did not recover from the shock.

The bull, not seeing the girl in the square, jumped the wall and went to the 1028 house, where beautiful Aurora lived. The furious animal came into her house and broke down the door of her room. The young woman, who was still nervous, just screamed while he attacked her and ended her life. Until now, nobody knows where that strange bull came from and why he attacked the girl. Apparently, this could be a myth that we will never resolve.

Translated by Fernanda Rodríguez.

Hasta la Vuelta Señor Fonda Quiteña. (2017). *La leyenda de la bella Aurora*. <https://hastalavuelta.com/la-leyenda-de-la-bella-aurora/>

²¹Quito is the capital of Ecuador.

²²Independence Square (Plaza de la Independencia, also known as Plaza Grande) is the civic heart of historic Quito. The square began as a meeting place and water source for the fledgling town.

The Black (Hairy) Hand



San Francisco Church is a monumental Catholic building located in the middle of the historic center of Quito. The beautiful building is the largest architectural complex within the historic centers of the Americas and is, therefore, known as "El Escorial del Nuevo Mundo." San Francisco is also a true gem of continental architecture because of its amalgam of different styles, well combined throughout its more than 150 years of construction.

The Quito legends are born from the imagination and daily experiences of the characters who lived in the churches. Here I present one of the most curious and fun legends. It is an invitation to visit this Church in Quito, Ecuador, and let your imagination play in this place; you may discover a secret door or a black hand.

"ANYONE THERE?"

The voice sounded throughout the church. No one answered while an ugly and strange noise came from the benches on the left side near the confessional. "What is that shadow that moves quickly over there?" The young priest trembled and walked to the other side of the church.

"Is anyone there?" he asked again. Something sounded like fingers tapping on wood. He was sure it was a mouse or a rat.

The young priest approached the image of Christ who seemed to look at the young priest with sweetness. Then the young man saw something under a bench that looked like a spider, but very big one! The young priest, with goosebumps on his arms, looked nervously to the other side of the church.

"Help" shouted the young priest. "Maybe I can save my life," he thought. He wanted to run, but he was so terrified his legs froze like two stones.

There was no doubt that horrible thing was the famous Black Hand! Now, trembling with fear, the priest watched as the hand slowly moved towards him. When closer, he saw that the hand was not only black, it was hairy, too. The man shouted, "Black hand, jump back!!" as his heart beat very fast and his body froze with fear.

So many months of sweeping only the floor of the church of San Francisco; so many nights of sleeping like a baby on the benches in the middle of those cold and silent shadows, and now there was is, in the middle of the night, terrifying! The hand was dancing in front of him

and calling the young priest. He wanted to run but slipped and fell. The hand walked towards the priest and called him again. The young priest followed the hand, but it ran quickly and disappeared behind the confessional.

The next night, he met the black hand again but the attitude of the young priest was more relaxed and confident. The same event happened the next night and the one after that. It was a mysterious encounter in the silence of the night that nobody wanted to believe. All his priest friends believed that the friar Diostedé was crazy.

One night, when he was asleep on one of the benches, a voice inside his head called him. He opened his eyes and saw the black hand right in front of him. The hand was calling him.... he felt it was not time. He did not want to walk but was a sleepwalker so he followed the black hand. Where did the hand want to take friar Diostedé?

The hairy hand ran quickly through the silent shadows on the old wooden floor. A heavy stone door was opened; it was quite rare because the priest had never seen that secret door near the tombs of priests before. The black hand jumped into the dark room, with the young priest in pursuit. He couldn't see anything, but remained calm. He was not afraid; he had confidence in the black hand. Suddenly, a huge void opened under his feet and the young priest, Friar Diostedé, disappeared shouting many words. No one understood the words that that young man said. His priestly friends ran to see Diostedé, but the young man was gone. The young man and the Black Hand disappeared forever.

Translated by Milena Orellana.

The Sad Princess of Saint Anne



In the city currently known as Guayaquil , there was a king who was very wealthy. One day his daughter got sick and no one could find the cure for her illness.

After that, a wizard appeared in front of the king and offered to cure the princess in return for all his fortune. Due to the king's refusal, a spell fell over his lands and people, condemning them to disappear.

Centuries later, when one of the Spanish expeditionaries was climbing one of the hills, he came across a beautiful princess. She gave him two options, a beautiful city full of gold or a devoted and faithful wife.

The Spaniard choose the first option and as a consequence the princess cursed him. He then began to pray to the virgin of Saint Anne to save him and it worked. That's why this hill, where the city of Guayaquil was founded, was baptized with the name of Saint Anne.

Translated by Joaquina Jara.

Condor leyendas (2019). *La princesa triste de Santa Ana*. <https://condorleyendas1996.wixsite.com/misitio/post/la-princesa-triste-de-santa-ana>

²³Second biggest city in Ecuador.

The Lion, the Cow, the Goat and the Sheep



A lion, a cow, a goat and a sheep agreed to hunt in the mountains. They decided to share any prey that they caught in equal parts. A sweet deer was the first prey they caught. The lion, after dividing it into four equal pieces, said,

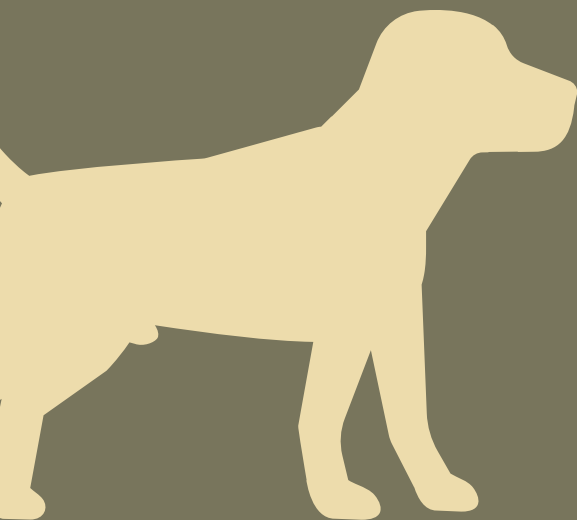
"The first part is for me, because my name is lion. I will also eat the second part because I'm the strongest, and the third one too." With menacing eyes, he concluded,

"The one that touches the fourth part, start writing your last will and testament. I will eat you!"

When you are honest like the cow, innocent like the goat and gentle like the sheep, you should not hang around with lions.

Translated by María Eugenia Solís.

The Curious Little Dog



Once upon a time, there was a curious little dog that was interested in everything his owner liked. One day, the little dog heard some weird noises that drew his attention. In a sneaky way, the dog came upon the place where he suspected the noises were coming from and found a lot of mice having a big banquet.

"They do not come to me with craftiness," he thought. The curious dog jumped and stumbled upon a mouse trap that trapped one of his paws, making him howl with pain.

"Look at the hunter!" screamed the parakeet.

"Please, help me out of this problem," begged the dog, "you can trust me!"

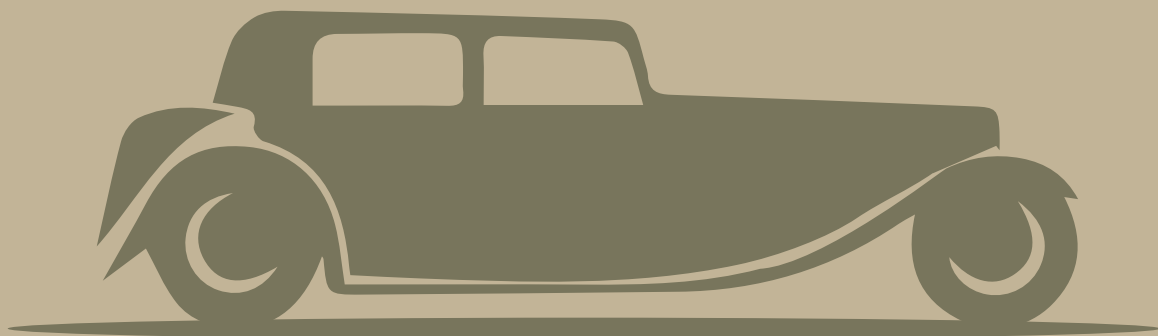
The mice, who were nice, set their persecutor free, telling him,

"This happened to you for doing what a cat would do."

Do not try to accomplish things that are not meant for you.

Translated by María Eugenia Solís.

The Devil's Car



In Loja, a group of gentlemen were drinking in a bar at night. The bar was located on Bolivar Street, near San Sebastian Independence Place. They heard a car coming through very fast and it seemed it had wooden wheels.

When the all-nighter gentlemen heard the big noise, they left their bottles and glasses to see what had happened. They were surprised to see a black car, very similar to a hearse, which was surrounded with colorful candles. Also, there was a coffin that illuminated the driver, who was dressed in black and was likely to throw fire from his face.

The drunk clients from the bar became sober when they saw the big show. One of them fainted and foamed from the mouth. The next day, what had happened spread all over town.

Nobody doubted that it was the devil coming to Loja to carry off the people that had died in mortal sin.

After that, the tradition of hanging around the deceased for 24 hours until the burial day started. People had to pray to scare away Satan in order to avoid him from coming in his car to carry off the dead before they received a Christian burial.

Some people did not believe in ghosts, much less in the devil. This group of people were called Liberals. They challenged the belief about the Devil's Car, and met to drink in the same corner bar to face that supernatural being.

At 7 p.m., they were drinking alcohol while pasillos²⁴ were playing. The silence was evident when 12 chimes came from the tower of the San Sebastian Church. Suddenly, the rampage of the car made a big sound with the wooden wheels over Bolivar Street. As the seconds passed by, it got closer.

Suddenly, the "devil's car" stopped in front of the bar. A gust of wind came through, opened the doors, and turned off the candles that illuminated the place. The candles were changed with the ones inside the float and threw a resplendent light of many colors. The disbelief and braveness of the young liberals vanished suddenly. They and the owners of the bar got out of that place very fast. They were really scared, so they looked for a shelter.

It was curious that the next day the community went to the bar to check the quality of the candles left there the night before, but at that time there were no candles. Instead, there were big bones that belonged to a dead person.

After throwing holy water over the place, the church authorities took the human remains. Then, they buried them in the cemetery in a procession with the people in the town. Since that day, that horse was not seen or heard of again.

Translated by José Jachero.

Mi Cariamanga (2021). *Mitos y Leyendas*. <https://micariamanga.com/la-ciudad/mitos-leyendas>

²⁴Ecuadorian music with lyrics about love and sadness.

The Legend of Kuartam the Frog



Once upon a time, deep in the jungle of Ecuador, there was a frog who was different from the rest because it had a peculiarity: if somebody made fun of it, the frog became a tiger and attacked without mercy.

Only some old people said that they had seen it when they were children, so for most of the indigenous people from the tribes close to the Amazonas, the strange animal was like a legend that hid in the jungle. But they knew about its existence because in the middle of the night, it sang from its hiding place:

"¡Kuartam – Tan! ¡Kuartam – Tan! ¡Kuartam – Tan!"

Because it used to repeat 'Kuartam – Tan' constantly, the frog received the name Kuartam.

According to some stories, one night, a shuar²⁵, a young man whose name was Nantu, wanted to go hunting. Before he left his house, his wife warned him:

"Be careful outside, and please, if you see Kuartam the frog, don't bother it. You know the reputation it has here!"

"Oh, crap! I am sure that the story of it becoming a tiger is absolutely false, but don't you worry. If I see it, I will not bother it and I will go on my way, I swear!"

"Nantu, I warn you. Do not be irresponsible!"

The man winked his eye and kissed her cheek.

"Trust me! And now, I should go. I am getting late... I will be at home before midnight!"

Under the moonlight, the man walked around the jungle setting aside the plants with a sharp bowie knife and on alert in case there was any prey.

Unfortunately, he just saw a snake and two or three mice running.

"There is nothing here to eat... What a waste of time!"

Later, he arrived at a gap and he rested on the ground. His muscles hurt, but especially he was bored of walking without finding any results.

"If I arrive home without anything, the menu for tomorrow will be fruits for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I will end up hating coconuts and bananas!"

Suddenly, he stopped complaining because he had an idea.

"What would happen if I bothered the frog a little?... I will see what happens!"

²⁵The Shuars are indigenous people from Ecuador and Peru.

Without any modesty, he started to call Kuartam. He was convinced that, although it used to sing in a very strange way, the frog did not have any kind of powers so he was not scared.

"Kuartam! ... Kuartam!" he yelled.

There was only the sound of the flutter of a family of birds, so he continued screaming.

"Kuartam! ... Kuartam!"

Because there was nothing like a frog there, Nuntu became braver and his voice sounded more like a joker:

"Yoo-hoo! ... Kuartam, are you there? ... Is it true that you are a magic frog? ... If I do not see you, I will not believe you! ... Do not be a coward and show me your face!"

He did not receive an answer, but Kuartam was there, hiding at the top of a tree. Of course, Kuartam listened to everything, and there came a moment when he became very angry. He was not patient anymore, and what had to happen, happened: his little body, like an orange, began to grow incredibly and he became a tiger.

Nantu, without any idea of what was happening, continued calling the frog and making fun of it.

"Kuartam, stupid frog... You are a chicken! COCKA-DOODLE-DOO! Little chicken, come to me!

COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO!"

Kuartam, that is now a huge feline, could not stand it anymore and he emitted a roar that made the clouds shiver. After that, he jumped from the top, opened his mouth as much as he could, and he ate the senseless hunter in one bite.

While all of this was happening, Nantu's wife was waiting at home, feeling that the night was going too slowly. She was waiting for her husband next to the door for many hours. Seeing that he did not arrive, she became very nervous.

"It is very strange that Nantu has not arrived home yet," she said. "He knows the jungle like the back of his hand and he is the most agile man in the tribe... There is only one possible answer to this... He found Kuartam the frog!"

Without any doubt, she left her house very quickly. Fortunately, it did not rain, so she could follow the trace of Nantu's footprints.

Everything was fine until she arrived at a gap in the jungle. In that place, for some reason, Nantu's footprints faded away as if he had been swallowed by the earth.

The woman was very sad and she started to scream:

"Where are you, my love, where are you?... Should I go to the north or to the south? ... I do not know where I can find you!"

At that moment, she listened to a kind of breath coming from the heights. She looked up, and on a thick branch, she saw a giant frog sleeping, face up. It was so puffy that it looked like it was going to explode.

"That freak of nature must be Kuartam. I bet it ate my husband and that is why it is so fat!"

Indeed, it was Kuartam, who, after eating Nantu, became a frog again, but kept colossal dimensions.

The woman, bravely, took the ax that she carried on her waist and started to chop down the tree. The frog did not notice her presence and it continued sleeping. "You do not have a way out! ... I will kill you!" she screamed.

After a strong effort, the tree fell down and so did Kuartam. The fall was so incredible that it opened its mouth instinctively and Nantu, the hunter, came out shot like a bullet out of his mouth.

But that was not all! When the frog's stomach was empty, it started to deflate, and it recovered its little body very quickly. Due to the conversion, it felt sore. It began to recuperate its strength and jumped until it disappeared in the green foliage.

Fortunately, Nantu was still alive. His wife had saved him in time, so he could not stop hugging her.

"If I am still here, it is thanks to you, and your courage. I am very ashamed of my behavior because I failed to keep my promise. I beg you to forgive me!"

The woman realized that Nantu was very honest and very regretful. Nevertheless, she lifted her index finger and she told him very seriously:

"Respect for others, no matter if they are people or animals, is above every single thing. I hope you have learned your lesson and never make fun of anyone!", she said.

"I swear, darling, I swear," he replied.

It is fair to say that Nantu kept his word, and he was kind with everyone for the rest of his life. But he had to carry his sorrow with him because he could not apologize to the frog for being so disrespectful to him. Their paths never crossed again.

Translated by Jazmín Merino.

The Smith Family



The Smith family, a couple that arrived in Cuenca, Ecuador, had heard a lot about landscapes and culture. They were newlyweds and wanted to travel. One of their destinations was Ecuador.

Benjamin Smith was a businessman and adventurer. He brought sophisticated equipment, many cameras and even a diving suit with him. They wanted to do what they had never done before. Benjamin was a skinny and blond gentleman; his eyes were blue and he was very tall. Because of this, people from Cuenca looked at him as if he were a giant. Bella Smith was a normal woman. She was a Spanish teacher in the United States. She was not as tall as her husband, and her eyes were the color of the tocte (like a nut). They arrived in San Joaquin, where, based on what they had been told, there were beautiful landscapes and fresh vegetables.

They talked to the residents in San Joaquin. They asked them everything about their orchards. They continued talking and ended up learning different and fantastic stories. The Smith family were fascinated by the idea of being able to check if all of those incredible stories were true. One of the residents of San Joaquin, who came to talk to these foreigners, was Don Jose. In a funny way he tried to speak English and only caused laughter from his neighbors. After joking, he became more serious.

"Look *gringuitos* (nickname used in Ecuador to refer to Americans), I'm going to tell you the story of the treasure of El Cajas (National Park close to San Joaquin)," he said, sitting on an old bench.

He began to explain to them about an old cargo of gold that was intentionally lost in one of the lakes. He said that the owners of the booty left it because it was damned. Whenever they left it somewhere, the booty returned intact and by itself. Scared, the owners decided to put the gold in a chest and leave it in one of the lakes, thus getting rid of that heavy curse.

The Smith family listened carefully, Bella a little more than Benjamin because she could understand almost everything. The only thing she failed to listen to was when Don Jose said that the treasure was now the lake because only the lake was worthy of so much richness and not the craziness of power as man.

Bella told the story to Benjamin. He got excited and tried to convince his wife that they had to look for the chest. After pleading a lot, they returned to the hotel to pick up the diving suit. Bella could not

believe what Benjamin was about to do, but she kept encouraging him. They knew it was crazy, but they were determined to do it.

They arrived in El Cajas with all their equipment, set up their camping tent, inflated a boat and then went for a reconnaissance tour of the place. The air was thick because it was very pure. Benjamin liked the place, and Bella felt an unexplainable peace. However, this quiet moment was short; Benjamin was so enthusiastic so he quickly put on his diving suit while Bella took off her shoes with the intention of putting her feet in the lake. The water was so cold and as soon as they touched it, her feet became transparent. She took them out immediately and went to look for her husband. He was already in his diving suit.

Then they got into the boat and moved further into the lake until Benjamin could submerge a camera and take pictures underwater. They continued for an hour until they reached the center of that huge lagoon. There the wind began to blow and took them from one side to the other. Soon the sky cleared and a ray of sunshine appeared in the middle of that lake. Between the waters there was a flash. Benjamin immediately put on his oxygen tank and submerged. Bella, in her language, shouted at him to be very careful.

Five minutes passed and Benjamin came out with a mirror in his hands; the flash was only the reflection of the sun. After getting in the boat and feeling defeated, Bella told him not to worry, that it was only a legend. Benjamin did not accept this and continued sailing. At one point the current was divided and the boat pushed against a rock. It was not very big, but the boat could not move; something was pulling him from below.

Benjamin dived in and saw that the seaweed had entangled part of the boat. He picked up a knife and dove to the bottom. Bella did not think it was going to take so long, but the minutes passed and Benjamin did not come up. Suddenly the boat started to move. Bella was worried. About 10 meters from the boat she could see a hand coming out of the water holding a small chest. Benjamin drove the boat to the bank of the lake, took off the tanks, opened the chest and found the gold coins.

Benjamin's eyes opened like those of madman! He told Bella that she should pick up everything and that they were going to the hotel at that very moment. She did not believe what was happening and began

to feel nervous. She told her husband that it was best to leave the chest in the lake, but he ignored her. She put their belongings in the car she had rented and they immediately began their descent to the city.

Benjamin drove very fast, but he did not realize the lake was following them. All the water from El Cajas began to flow through the Tomebamba River. Likewise, it began to rain and this helped the floods. There was so much water that flowed down from the river that the bridges fell, one by one.

The Smith family reached the Vado Bridge (a bridge located in downtown Cuenca). They could see a giant wave coming from above! They were so scared that they got out of their car and started to run. They saw how the water took that bridge, the car and the treasure.

The *gringuitos* were very surprised to see how the river calmed down and changed direction. Now, the water returned the treasure where it belonged.

Translated by Andrés Quiroz.

The White Witches



Three sisters, who were witches, lived in the north of the country. They were different from horrible witches who dressed in black. They wore white gowns and were very nice. Everyone in the town accepted them without being afraid of them. They were not surprised to see them fly through the skies. They would float in the air with their arms wide open, without using any broom or cane.

However, young locals did not stop bothering them. They discovered some secrets and certain tricks to make them upset. For example, they would lay on the fields in a cross-shaped form so that witches would suddenly fall to the ground. This was fun for the kids, but it put the witches in a very bad mood, who would immediately turn them into roosters, donkeys or pigs.

Of course, the spell lasted just a couple of days.

The witches got tired of being made fun of and disappeared. Although rumor had it that from time to time, on a full moon night, they can be seen in the mountains. Beware of making fun of them or interrupting their meetings without being invited. You could end up being turned into an animal!

Translated by Fernando Delgado.



Tamarind's Widow

There is a lonely tree at the center of a traditional belief in Posorja, Guayas. It is the tamarind tree, which, according to the grandparents in the area, was the meeting point of a beautiful woman who used her charm only to later show her true form: a skull wrapped in female clothes.

Residents or people who come to visit remember this oral tradition as real. Many taxi drivers in the area say they have witnessed this fact. Generally, the victims of the widow of the tamarind were drunk people who frequented the canteens in the area or men who went alone to their homes.

Translated by Paula Sarmiento and Romulo Albarracín Zamora.

Huayco's Witches



In a house located on the main street of the city, there was a single woman who, like the rest of the women with the same job, spent her afternoons dozing behind the counter of her store. The easiness that she enjoyed and the sedentary life she lived had made her a voluminous woman and the fat of her body erased her regular and beautiful features.

One day, her huge wealth was reduced to antique furniture and a store that was becoming empty. Her only friend was Mrs. Sabina who, since her parents' death, became the only person to take care of the lady.

One day, Sabina convinced her to take a trip to Zamora Huayco²⁶ to share a spell with the famous witches who lived there and, with that, end her misfortune.

After the trip, a terrible shiver shook the lady's body and she felt the impulse to run away, but Mrs. Sabina did not let her go. The witches stood up from their seats, to kneel down at the feet of a goat with a demon's head. After they kissed its legs, they picked up a leather bag with gold coins.

Finishing the ritual, the witches sang a song from which they became bats, turkeys or other birds. Once they returned to their homes, they went back to their original shape.

With the money that she brought from the meeting, friends, family and even admirers of Mrs. Filomena returned to her side. One night, two guards saw some strange animals leaving Mrs. Filomena's house towards Zamora Huayco. Moments before, the bells of midnight had rung in Saint Sebastian's Church and the guards were scared and curious and aimed their guns at the creatures.

Their mistake was just shooting the bigger one which fell down abruptly over the yard of the headquarters, while the other creatures continued their path. When the guards saw the animal fall down, they ran to see what it was. Their surprise had no boundaries when they saw the bleeding body of Mrs. Filomena.

²⁶It is a neighborhood located at the south east of Loja city. Years ago, it was very far from the center of the city, so it was rare for people to go there.

One of the shots perforated her head, and the other one, her heart.

During Mrs. Filomena's agony, she asked the guards to carry her home and let her die there without telling anyone.

The guards accepted her request. After leaving the dying lady in her house with her maid, they returned to the headquarters and sacrificed a little dog to justify the noise of the shots and the blood in the yard.

Translated by Marco Bravo.



The Church Robbery

The provisional church of the Clarisas nuns was robbed while the tabernacle and the sacred hosts were removed.

On Wednesday, January 20, 1649, all the citizens of Quito were called to the Cathedral. The bishop informed them that thieves had committed this unforgivable sacrilege. Everyone went to Santa Clara to learn more about what had happened and to find the thieves.

In Quito, everyone was afraid of the divine punishment that the people could receive in the face of this sin. To prevent the terrible plague from falling on Quito, Spaniards and Indians carried out processions and prayers on the streets. The people of Quito carried images of saints and walked chained; some flogged themselves and carried a cross.

At that time, it was mandatory to attend church daily at 6 p.m. The bishop ordered everyone to wear black clothes. In the city no one talked anymore. Everyone carried out their labors in silence and in black clothing. There was general panic, for they were sure that a rain of fire would destroy the city.

A second procession was organized in hopes of finding the thieves, but they could not locate them. Finally, an indigenous woman discovered the tabernacle and the host. The criminals had stolen the box of the Blessed Sacrament, thinking it was silver and full of jewels and coins. When they did not find the desired treasure, they threw everything into the ravine and fled to Conocoto, another city.

When they found the thieves, the authorities ordered the most severe punishment: they would be hanged, dragged and quartered.

So that these events would remain in the memory of the people of Quito, a church was built in the place where they found the sacred objects. It is known as and named the Church of Thievery.

Translated by Christopher Maldonado.



The Demon of the Stream

It is said that there is a demon that lives in the streams near the river. He is always looking for houses built on the edges to pull them into the river. One night, the demon, disguised as a handsome and charming man, in his attempts to destroy the house with its inhabitants inside, bewitched a family to go to sleep.

One of the children managed to hide under a chair and fled in search of a priest. He, with his prayers, managed to save the house and the entire family

Translated by Cristina Vázquez.



The Student's Cloack

Being a student from the old city in Ecuador, Quito (the capital), was not only about getting good grades, but also about being respectful, good Christian child with an impeccable appearance. According to Quiteñas legend, the student's cloak was a characteristic that could not be missed.

Neighbors in Quito were happy and they felt that the authorities had to judge the students. The teachers were the ones who demanded this almost perfect style of a student's life the most.

When the end of the year approached, all of the students were nervous thinking about their final exams. But Juan was not only worried about his grades, but also about the bad condition of his boots and the lack of resources to replace them. He knew that he could not present himself under those conditions to the final exams. He imagined the criticism of his neighbors and the severe scolding he would receive from his teachers.

Many friends advised him to sell the cloak, but it was not an option; the cloak was the student's symbol. Meanwhile, the protagonist of this legend was sad and thoughtful. He was the perfect victim for a group of classmates who, as a joke, presented him with a sinister challenge that would end in the least expected way. They approached the worried student and offered to give him some coins to solve his problem. In exchange, he would have to demonstrate his bravery by going to the "El Tejar" cemetery at midnight. He would have to approach the grave of a woman who killed herself and then put a nail in her stone. Juan, without giving it much thought, accepted the challenge so he could finally buy the boots that he needed so much.

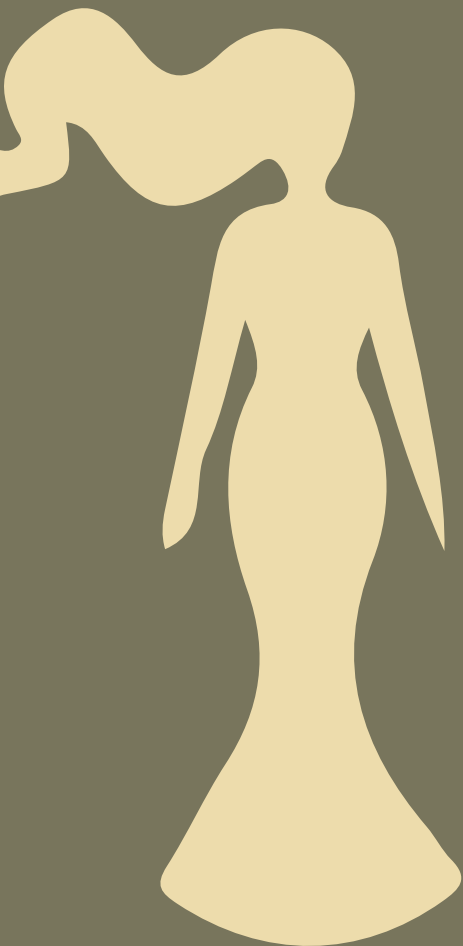
The name of the young suicidal girl was not unknown. Juan and that girl had had a romance, but it was not important for him, while for the girl it was a sweet dream of love cruelly broken by treason. The pain of this event led her to kill herself.

At night, all of them gathered outside the cemetery. Juan easily climbed the wall and went to the indicated place. On his way, he thought of the terrible punishment that all these souls who committed the mortal sin of killing themselves faced.

He found the grave and started hammering the nail and at the same time he was apologizing for the pain that he had caused. Immediately, after finishing his mission, he intended to escape, but he could not move since he felt trapped and his efforts to escape were useless.

The sun was already rising, but Juan did not come out. His classmates, who were waiting outside the cemetery, decided to look for him. When they arrived, they found Juan immobile next to the grave, his face showing fear and desperation. Juan was dead. At the beginning, they thought that the soul of the girl took revenge for Juan's actions. But one of his mates saw that the cloak was nailed over the stone.

Translated by Rennia Muñoz.



The Legend of Posorja

Although Posorja means “sea foam,” for native people, the name of this place is in honor of a mystic princess who arrived from the sea. Everything began with a pre-Colombian legend that talks about a small white girl with blond hair who arrived in a light raft to the Puna Island located on the coast of Ecuador. She was covered by thin blankets with strange hieroglyphs that were not understandable for the Huancavilcas — a tribe from that place. This girl dazzled the people of the tribe and they decided to adopt her.

That beautiful princess was named Posorja and she was treated like a goddess because of her Greek physiognomy. When she grew up, she became a wonderful person who predicted tragic events, including the end of the Inca Empire’s reign. Her predictions were so exact that even Huayna Capac, an Inca emperor, went to see her to find out about his future.

Unfortunately, before the eyes of the princess, he would have a tragic end which later came true. Then, Atahualpa, who was the last Inca emperor, went to see her, too. She told him that white men would arrive to destroy life in Ecuador, which also became true. After that, the princess announced that it was her last presage and that she would return to the sea. She approached the ocean wearing her snail necklace and disappeared with the waves in front of the tribe.

Translated by María José Calderón.



The Gift of Fire

In the Amazon region, a group of Shuars²⁷ had yet to know what fire was; therefore, they could not cook their food. They used to eat raw pumpkin, cassava, birds and fish. They were also not able to light up their homes on dark nights.

Near the community, a man named Taquea lived with his wife. They were the only ones who owned fire but were too stingy to share it. The couple did not allow anyone to come up to their home and, even worse, to the fire that remained lit all day and night. Furthermore, in order to watch the fire, they took turns to work in the chacra²⁸ (field).

One day, Taquea's wife was working in the chacra, when she found a quinde²⁹ (hummingbird) among the plants. The bird had its wings soaked and it could not fly. After a moment, with a very weak voice, it spoke to the woman:

"Please help me. I'm wet and I'm cold." The woman was touched, and she held it in her hands. She took it to her home and put it by the fire, so that it could dry.

The quinde had witnessed the greed of this couple. Then, when it was completely dry, and while the woman was distracted talking with her husband about how she had found the little bird, the hummingbird took the opportunity to go to the fire, light its tail and fly away through the window.

The spouses could not stop the bird, so they stayed at the door blaming each other. Taquea was furious.

The quinde went from house to house distributing the fire among the other inhabitants of the area. From then on, everyone cooked their food, and at night, they lit fires to sit around and talk.

Translated by Salomé Garzón.

Ecuador del Sur (2015). *El regalo del fuego. Mitos y leyendas Shuar*. <https://ecuadordelsur.blogspot.com/2015/07/el-regalo-del-fuego-mitos-y-leyendas.html>

²⁷The Shuars are a native population living in the western part of the Amazon rainforest of Ecuador.

²⁸Chacra: This term used in South America, comes from the Quechua language, and it means field crop.

²⁹Quinde: This term is used only in Ecuador and Peru to refer to a hummingbird.



San Gerardo's Goblin

In the San Gerardo town, very close to Riobamba, a boy named Juan worked in a place away from the forest, far from the town's village.

In fact, to get to his job, Juan had to cross a dense forest. Therefore, every day he left his home before the clock hit 8:00 in the morning. After a couple of hours of walking, he arrived at his destination and began to work until 8:00 p.m. After that, he returned home.

One of those days when Juan was returning home, he had the feeling that someone was following him. At first, he decided to ignore it because he thought it was the wind that was moving the leaves of the trees. After a while he heard a loud voice said,

"Don't you look back! All I want is for you to give me the cigar in your hand."

It is unknown why Juan listened to the mysterious voice and did what that voice wanted. The important thing is that the next day, to avoid running out of cigarettes to smoke, the man took a full pack with him.

Once again heading home, the voice asked Juan to give him a cigarette. Juan was clueless, but he managed to see out of the corner of his eye that the one who asked for the cigarettes was a very short man. This little man had a whip in his left hand, and a very big hat in his right hand.

When Juan arrived home, he told the whole story to his mother. She advised him that the next time he went to work, he shouldn't leave his house without carrying a cross with him, because this cross would protect him.

The next day, Juan took a pack of cigarettes and a crucifix with him and he placed these objects in his pockets. But this time was different. When the goblin arrived, he did not ask for cigarettes, but simply began to whip Juan in the back.

The pain that Juan felt as a result of the lashes on his back was almost intolerable. Juan, full of courage, took the cross out of his pants and showed it to the goblin.

At that moment, the creature disappeared in the darkness of the forest and was not seen again in a long time. There are other stories that describe the meetings of the Riobamba residents with the San Gerardo goblin.

The villagers claim that he is still in the San Gerardo forest and will be there to scare those who go out at night.

This legend reflects people's religious spirit in that time. The church used these kinds of stories to keep control and order in the young society, and to guarantee the devotion of the town.

Translated by Andrés Esteban Herrera.



María, La Guagua³⁰

María, the Baby

Maria was a defenseless peasant who went to the city looking for a job. She used to frequent the steps of the Tomebamba River³¹ and the Vecino neighborhood³². She knocked on every door until she got a job.

One day, Maria went to the market as required by her boss. On that day she was abused and mistreated by drunks and hampons³³. Later on, she was fired. At that time her boss noticed Maria's pregnancy. Unfortunately, she gave birth to a son who died immediately due to her condition of poverty and loneliness.

It took weeks for the neighborhood to take the rotten and smelly baby from her arms. Of course, it happened against the will of the native woman. Consequently, this event drove her to madness. Since then, Maria kept looking until she found her baby; in reality it was not a baby, it was a rag doll.

However, the youth of the town began to mock the peasant. They took her guagua (rag doll) away and played with it by throwing it to one another while they shouted, "*María...la guagua!*" The frightened peasant chased them until they decided to return her baby. Even though the baby was not her true baby, she would always love and protect him.

She used to walk around the city and return to the same place. She liked to wear a lot of make-up and She sought the attention of men like lawyers, doctors and judges to claim the paternity of her child. But, they ran away.

Maria la Guagua was a woman from the street, and as time went by her situation worsened. Regrettably, one night she went to sleep and never woke up.

Translated by Mardou Calderón.

Luis Roberto Bravo (2019). *Cuenca's legends: María, la guagua*. <http://lrbtic.blogspot.com>

³⁰Guagua: is a word commonly used by native and it belongs to the Quechua language. It means baby.

³¹Tomebamba River: runs along the city of Cuenca and this river is the most important of the four rivers that cross it.

³²Vecino's neighbourhood: it is an area located in the city of Cuenca.

³³Hampons: is a word that expresses a criminal.

Mariangula's Grim Idea



This story is about a 14-year-old girl whose mom used to sell Tripa Mishqui (traditional dish that consists of the intestines of the cow fried on a brazier with hot coal for its slow process of cooking). It is common to sell this dish on the corners in the city of Quito-Ecuador.

On one of those days the mother of Mariangula sent her to buy some of these intestines, but Mariangula was so restless that she went to play with her friends and disobeyed the orders of her mom and, making matters worse, she spent her mom's money.

The girl, worried about what would happen, was already imagining how her mom was going to punish her.

While Mariangula was walking down the streets, she passed through the cemetery and thought about the grimmest idea of drawing out the intestine of one of the dead bodies who were recently buried. She took out the entrails and took them to her mom to sell them. She Actually achieved her goal to avoid her possible punishment. The intestines were sold and everybody was pleased with the tripa mishqui. Some clients even bought the dish twice.

Then during the night, at Mariangulas family house, which was located on the colonial side of Quito and had a traditional two-floor architecture, Mariangula thought of what she had done.

Suddenly, she heard how the door opened strongly, and surprisingly she was the only who could hear the sounds of some mysterious beings; the rest of her family slept as if nothing was happening.

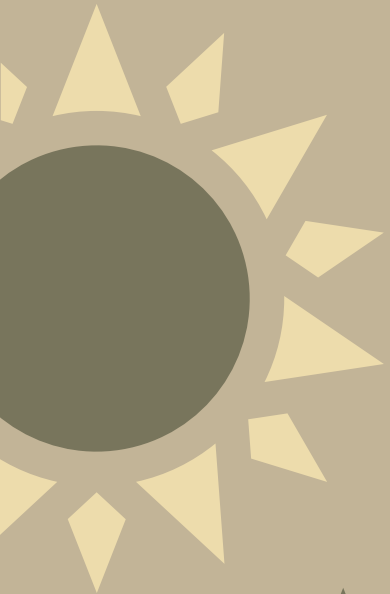
When the noise was too loud, she could clearly hear a voice saying "Marianguuuuula, bring the intestines that you stole from my holy grave."

This voice got closer to her room and Mariangula was more and more scared, because she could hear some steps coming up the stairs and this voice was getting louder. "Marianguuuuula, give me back my intestines!"

She thought about what she had done and what she could do to save her life at that moment. Suddenly, she found a knife in her room and she cut her stomach with it. When the dark beings entered the room, Mariangula had all her intestines on the bed. She was about to die and the beings just disappeared.

People say that Mariangula's mother now sells cooked meat on a stick instead of tripa mishqui. The meat on a stick now works for Mariangula to protect herself from the spirits.

Translated by Nicolás Espinoza.



The Tsachila that Became the Sun



The elders in Tsachila (a community in Santo Domingo), tell a story that many, many years ago, the grandparents of the grandparents could talk with the birds. It is said that in the sky where they lived, an enormous tiger, with a huge snout, eyes like lightning, powerful claws, and a very shiny coat, lived in the darkness. One day, the Tiger of Darkness was furious and hungry, and in one bite he ate the Sun so darkness fell on the Earth. The Tsáchilas lived in darkness all through that long night. They stumbled upon each other and spent their days all beaten up and sore, so they decided to lock themselves in their homes.

They could not do anything. Even their food was running out. More than once, desperate screams were heard from those attacked by the wild beasts of the jungle. The moon was confused because of the disappearance of the sun; it did not rise. That was even more serious because they could no longer fall in love with that night light.

The birds died and the rivers began to dry up because the rain, confused without the guidance of celestial star, did not fall. Distressed, the Tsáchilas decided to make their own light and tried to make bonfires with branches and light with their fire. But it was useless. The weakest died fast. Meanwhile, the Tiger of Darkness, with his open jaws, approached the frightened Tsáchilas to devour them one by one. His steps were heard very close to their homes. Seeing the imminent disaster, the wise elders created their own sun. The Shaman gathered and thought of turning a young Tsáchila into the powerful star. Three sad and gloomy days passed. On the fourth day their surprise was total and they could barely keep their eyes opened. An incandescent light burned them and it was almost impossible to resist seeing it. There was the sun again, reigning at the top, reaching all the Tsáchilas with its rays. With all its splendor, there it was again, but they could not stand it.

The elders remembered that the young Tsáchila had two eyes and that he probably was lighting up with both. So, it would be necessary to light up with only one. So, after throwing a great stone towards the sky they achieved their goal. They could finally enjoy the benefits of the king sun, now with just one eye.

Translated by Quirina Aguirre.

Tutor, M. (2013). *Leyendas de Ecuador: El tsáchila que se convirtió en sol*. <http://leyendasdeecuador.blogspot.com/2013/08/el-tsachila-que-se-convirtio-en-sol.html>



The Covered Lady

The covered lady looks very elegant and slender. She carries an umbrella.

Villagers say that when she is close to a man, her spirit begins to emanate a very pleasant fragrance, so that the victim is captivated with her aroma and follows her wherever she goes.

The person, seduced by the perfume, follows her without knowing where she is going. This way, the covered lady takes him away to a lonely area where the individual cannot ask for help.

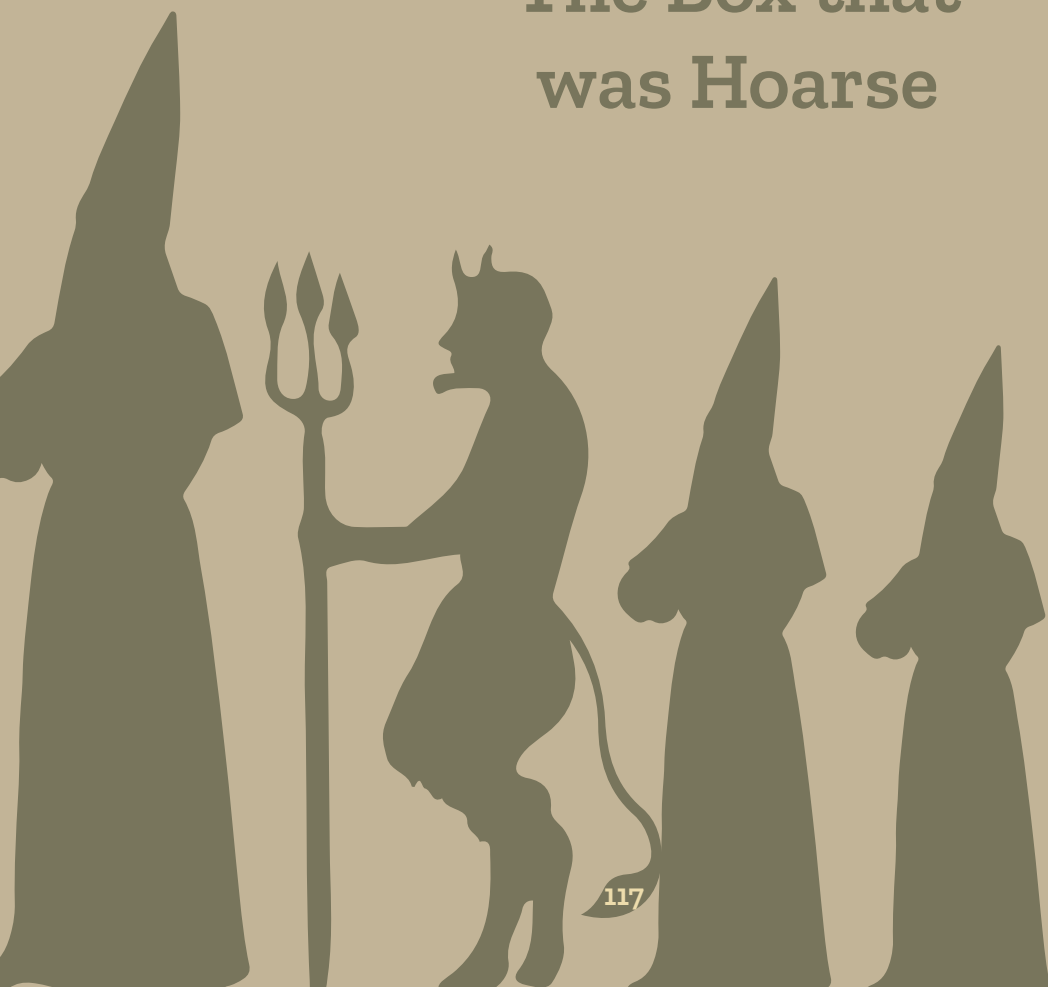
Suddenly, the woman stops in the middle of the road, stands in front of him and upon discovering her face, the man is terrified by her looks, by the appearance of her terrifying corpse face.

Immediately, the pleasant perfume becomes a totally unpleasant and nauseating smell of rotten meat, so quickly the victim is affected by all these horrors that do not allow him to move and they die from this impression.

Few who had managed to survive, continue their lives in a normal way, overcoming the encounter with this macabre being, who remained in their memory in order to preserve their story. But others who fled, did not have the same fate. Their mental health was affected. They had to live with the trauma that this encounter, with the spectrum, had on them.

Translated by Miriam Maldonado.

The Box that was Hoarse



Long time ago, in the city of San Miguel de Ibarra, there lived two great friends: Carlos and Manuel. One morning, Carlos's father asked them that before they go to play, they water the plants in the garden since it hadn't rained for quite a while.

They agreed, but at the end, they forgot.

The night fell, and that's when Carlos remembered what his father had asked of him.

"It is very dark and I'm scared. Would you join me in watering the plants?" said Carlos.

"Sure, let's get it done," answered Manuel.

Before they approached the back of the house, where the flowerpots to be watered were, they began to hear several voices speaking in another language, the same way it happens when people go out in a procession.

They hid behind a tree and saw that they were not human beings, but creatures able to float through the air. None of them showed their faces, since they had them covered with a hood.

After the hooded men passed, a chariot appeared, guided by a horrifying entity that had a pair of sharp horns on its head and teeth equal to those of a wolf. It was at that very moment that Carlos recalled an Ecuadorian legend told by his grandfather about a box that was hoarse. The older man's description of the beings guarding this mythical object was precisely like the creatures he had just seen.

The terror they felt immediately caused them to lose consciousness. Later, when they woke up, they realized that they were now also carrying a long white candle. Only it wasn't wax but a bone.

They were released immediately, and each went home. From that moment on, they never tried to go out again at night, much less to doubt the stories and myths told in the regions close to the capital of Ecuador.

Translated by Kelly Fernandez.



The "Panecillo" Pot

El Panecillo is a hill in the southern area of Quito-Ecuador, where, in ancient times, the Indians used to worship the sun. The time when the inhabitants of Quito had large farms and the city still maintained beautiful green spaces, many poor people went out with their animals to find a green place for them to graze. One of those people was a woman, who had a cow. Every day, she climbed to the top of the Panecillo to feed her animal. While the cow was eating, the lady took advantage of the time to collect firewood to take home and be able to cook and keep her family warm.

One of those days, the woman went, as usual, to the Panecillo. But after collecting firewood, when she went back to get her cow, she did not find it. With great concern, she set out to look for the animal, but she couldn't find it anywhere. The hours passed, but she couldn't find the cow, so she decided to go down to the Panecillo pot. Although she was so afraid, she needed to find the cow because it was her family's support.

When she was in the center of the pot, she was totally impressed seeing that it was the entrance to a wonderful castle, which was luxuriously decorated. A beautiful indigenous princess was sitting on a beautiful throne. When the princess saw the humble woman, she asked, "what has brought you to my place?"

"I can't find my cow! If I lose it, me and my family will be in the greatest poverty,"— the lady replied very sadly.

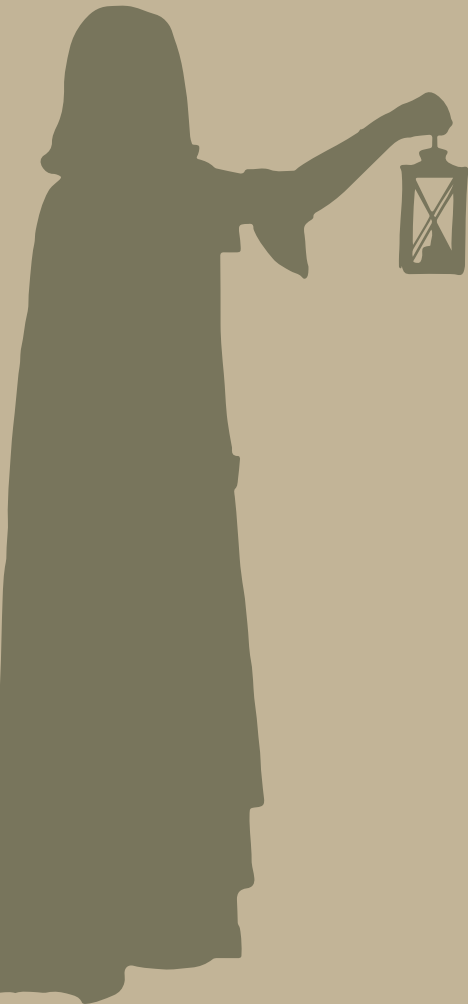
The beautiful princess saw that the woman was sincere and to calm her suffering, the princess gave her a splendid gift. She handed her a cob of corn and a brick of gold, and explained to her that she shouldn't worry because her cow was safe.

The lady was very grateful and left the palace very happy. When she left the pot, she found her little cow. "My cow, it's here!" she exclaimed with happiness.

The woman returned home with her cow and the princess's gifts which allowed her and her family to live happily.

Translated by José Vintimilla.

Go Raymi (2021). *La olla del Panecillo*. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.goraymi.com/es-ec/pichincha/quito/leyendas-cuentos/olla-panecillo-a4d3lvug1%3famp>



The Widow's Lantern

Close to the Tomebamba River, a married woman used to go out for a walk every night to meet a man who was not her husband. To cover her infidelity, she told her husband that she went for a walk with her little son, so the baby could sleep easily.

Thus, every night she walked along the banks of the river with her lover and her son. The lady was deeply in love with this man. There were times that she lost all notion of time and it seemed like they were the only two people in the world.

On one of those nights when she was with that man, due to the feelings that seized her, she lost her sanity and without realizing it, her little baby fell into the river.

After a few minutes, she returned to her senses and desperately looked for her son. She went home to look for an oil lantern to make her task easier. Although she spent all night on the shore, she could not find her son.

When her husband found out everything that had happened, the bitterness and despair consumed him and he killed himself.

As a result of the tragedies that had been triggered by the woman's romantic adventure, she went totally mad. She spent all her time by the riverbank looking for her son and crying in despair, which caused great fear to all who passed close to her.

Finally, the pain won the battle and she committed suicide.

Many people in Cuenca claim that the tormented soul of that woman is still looking for the baby because the light of the lantern on the banks of the river can be seen. Others say that the spirit of the Widow's Lantern only scares the unfaithful men and women who take advantage of the night to cheat on their partners.

Translated by Ma. Dolores Vázquez.



The Legend of Cantuña

The Franciscan priests³⁴ had entrusted an Indigenous man called Cantuña with the construction of the San Francisco Church in the city of Quito. He accepted and said that he would finish it in six months; in exchange, he would receive a large amount of money.

Although it seemed impossible to finish it in six months, Cantuña put forth his best effort and determination to finish it. He put together a team of indigenous people and his goal was to finish the church. However, the building did not advance as he expected. In those moments of anguish, Lucifer appeared and said, "Cantuña! I am here to help you. I know your anguish. I will help you build the incomplete atrium before the new day appears. In return, you will pay me with your soul."

Cantuña accepted the deal and only requested one condition: to finish the construction of the church as quickly as possible and to absolutely have all the stones placed.

However, Cantuña felt desperate because the little devils were doing things very fast, just as Lucifer had offered. The work was completed before midnight. It was then the right time to charge the high price for the construction of the church: Cantuñas' soul.

The devil was approaching Cantuña to take his soul when suddenly he stopped him with a timid voice. "Just a moment!" Cantuña said. "The deal is incomplete! You offered to place all the stones of the construction in their place and they were not. A stone is missing!" The indigenous man had removed a rock from the building and hid it quietly before the demons began their work.

Lucifer, astonished, saw how a simple mortal had fooled him. That is how Cantuña saved his soul and the devil, feeling mocked, went to find refuge in hell without taking his pay.

Translated by Estefanía Saldaña.

Roldán, A., (2007). *Quito Traditions: Legend of Cantuña*. Editions Abya-Yala.

³⁴Franciscan priests: members of the Order of Friars Minor founded by St. Francis of Assisi in 1209 and dedicated specially to preaching, missions, and charity.

The Encalada Brothers



In Machala and Puerto Bolívar there is a large abandoned building in front of the city square. This legend is about a man, who, in times past, around the 30s and 40s, had a good economic position. He gave the Encalada brothers a job in his farm. They seemed to be very poor when they were just teenagers, in Buenavista, El Oro. They worked with chocolate and its entire process. One of the brothers, Manuel Encalada, was always smarter. He learned very quickly everything related to chocolate and also learned from other farms, and from other people. He and his brother toured around the city getting to know the social life in the town, the peasants and their farms. At that time people who had a lot of money did not keep it in the bank; instead, they put all their money in boxes, along with gold, jewelry etc. And they buried them underground in places that only the owners knew.

With the invasion of Peru, as a result of the secular territorial dispute and lack of recognized and accepted borders between Ecuador and Peru, everyone hid in the mountains, leaving everything behind (houses, cattle, money, gold and jewels). The majority went into the mountains and the few who remained, including the Encalada brothers, were under the orders of the Peruvian military. Manuel Encalada and his brother had privileges with the Peruvians since they were in charge of telling the Peruvians where the heads of cattle were, not only from the people of Buenavista, but also Pasaje. They could walk quietly through the streets at night, while other people were kept in complete confinement in their homes.

Obviously, they didn't do it well. Their intention was to look for something better: the piles of money, gold nuggets and jewels that were hidden underground. Once they found them, the two brothers began to take out all those boxes of money and keep it for themselves. At the end, when it was time to distribute the money, it is presumed that Manuel lied to his brother that they had been robbed and kept the part that belonged to his brother (who died in extreme poverty). Then he began to buy farms at a very deplorable price, because, due to the conflict with Peru, people wanted to sell their farms, houses and lands at the lowest possible bargained price. Everyone was expected to flee from there. Taking advantage of that moment, he acquired a great fortune. It is said that, at first glance, he was a person who had no money and wore dirty rags; he always dragged a sachet full of money. From this, a popular story emerges: when he went to buy car, he was ignored for his looks and kicked out. Then he went to the store in front of the first one, to buy the car, took out the money and bought five cars. He also built a big house where he lived with his children.

Translated by Josué Maldonado.

Tradición oral



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**"Translation is not a matter of words only: it is a matter
of making intelligible a whole culture."**

Anthony Burgess



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