

# La Llorona

*Mexico and South America*

**O**NCE UPON A TIME, there was a beautiful young widow named Maria who lived in a small village. She was the loveliest woman in town, full of joy and passion.

Then, things changed. As she got older, the others in the village began to gossip about her. "She is not as beautiful as she once was," they would whisper as she passed by. "It is not right for her to be raising those children all alone. With the way her looks are, she might never be able to find a stepfather for them."

One day, a handsome stranger arrived in town. That day at the market, the stranger walked straight up to Maria as she shopped. "Hello, my dear," he said, taking her hand. "Pardon me, but I couldn't help noticing you. You are so beautiful, and it would be my honor to make you my bride."

Maria couldn't believe it. "Oh, I am so happy to have a family once again!"

"...What?" he asked. He seemed surprised.

"A family. I have two beautiful children, and I can't wait for you to meet them."

The man looked away. "I'm not so sure about that," he said quietly. "You are beautiful Maria, but I cannot marry a woman who has children that are not my own."

Before she could ask why, the stranger turned away and headed home.

Maria was heartbroken. She had hoped this man would bring the same happiness to her life that her first husband had. That night, she took her children to a river far away from town and left them there.

The next day, she went to the man's home to tell him what she had done, hoping he would now agree to marry her. He was horrified, and told her never to contact him again.

Devastated with guilt, she went back to the river the next night. She called out her children's names into the woods. Try as she might, she could not find them. Every night for the rest of her life, she went to the woods to search for her children.

Even today, if you go to a lake or river late at night, you may come across a dark figure, dressed all in black, crying for her lost children.

# The Black Lady of Bradley Woods

*Lincolnshire, England*

**A**LONG TIME AGO, deep in the forest, a young woman lived with her husband and small child in a cozy cottage. Her husband was a soldier, and they had a very happy life together.

One day, the husband was called to war. Though she was sad to see him go, she knew it was what he had to do. A week later, the three of them walked to the little road at the edge of the woods; the only road for miles. He kissed his wife and baby goodbye, and headed off.

Days, weeks, months went by, and there was no news of her husband. Every day, she would take her baby to the edge of the woods and look down the road, hoping to see her beloved husband returning home. Day after day she stood in the same spot, peering down the road as far as she could see, but she never saw him – in fact, she never saw anyone.

One day, she went to the edge of the woods with her baby, as she had been doing for years now. She waited and waited, and suddenly she saw two soldiers coming up the road. She couldn't believe her eyes – could it be her husband, coming home after so long?

As the two men got closer, she saw that neither of them was her husband. She feared that they were bringing bad news.

As it turns out, the soldiers were on their way to attack a neighboring town. As they rode by, one of them grabbed her baby right out of her arms. She screamed and pleaded with them to give it back, but they rode away laughing. She was heartbroken. Every day for the rest of her life, she went to the edge of the woods to wait for her husband and her child to be returned to her.

It is said that if you visit the woods late at night, you will see a figure dressed all in black wandering the woods, searching for the family that was taken from her.



# Compare *La Llorona* with *The Black Lady of Bradley Woods*

*The stories different?*

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*How are...*

*The characters similar?*

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*The endings similar?*

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*The characters different?*

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*The endings different?*

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*The stories similar?*

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