

LA LLORONA

"The Wailing Woman" has been reported on the Colorado River in Austin, on Buffalo Bayou in Houston, along the Guadalupe, the Nueces, the Rio Grande...possibly on every river in Texas. It is said that she was betrayed by a husband who left her for another woman, and, in madness or revenge, she drowned their children. Since it happened—and exactly what happened may change—"La Llorona," the wailing woman, grieves and searches for her children along all the rivers in Mexico and the Southwest.

Some trace "La llorona" to the native mistress of a selfish Spanish don. When he left her to marry a woman of his rank, she drowned their children to prevent him from taking them. In some areas, the story is set in the more recent past, when a hard-working wife was rejected by her husband for a frivolous woman. Sometimes she goes insane; sometimes she thinks her children would be better off in God's hands. She pushes them off a cliff into the river. Sometimes she follows them, and it is her ghost who roams the river calling for them.

That wailing sound along the river near you? It may be "La Llorona," grieving her crime, searching, crying out for her lost children.

Sauvageau, Juan. Stories that Must Not Die, vol. I. Kingsville: Juan Sauvageau, 1975, pp. 15-19.
Oral folk tradition.

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