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# *Traditions Of Guatemala* 3



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**CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS FOLKLÓRICOS**

**TRADITIONS OF GUATEMALA**

**3**

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### THREE STUDIES ON FOLKLORE

#### ADRIAN RECINOS

The articles reproduced in this section were written by the distinguished Guatemalan historian Adrián Recinos between the years 1916 and 1918 for the *Journal of American Folklore*, the publication of the American Folklore Society and the oldest of its kind in the United States.

The importance of these articles lies in the fact that they demonstrate the early concern in Guatemala for folkloric topics and their analysis. In them, one can perceive that Guatemala was up-to-date with the prevailing theoretical concepts.

These articles are also the first written contributions on Guatemalan literary folklore.

Thus, with these works, Recinos becomes one of the pioneers of folklore research in his country.

A historian and politician, Recinos stood out mainly for his study of the ancient history of Guatemala. His profound historical knowledge is credited with producing the best translations of Guatemala's most important indigenous texts, including the *Popol Vuh* and the *Memorial de Sololá*. He also delved deeply into topics related to the conquest and its protagonists.

The Center for Folklore Studies at the University of San Carlos of Guatemala is launching, with this section, a program aimed at disseminating the earliest written works on Guatemalan folklore, since, due to the way they were originally published, they are almost unknown in our country.

We hope, in this way, to contribute—however modestly—to the study of Guatemalan folklorology.

The articles we are reproducing are the following:

“Algunas observaciones sobre el Folk-Lore de Guatemala” en *Journal of American Folklore*. Vol. 29 (1916), págs. 559-566.

“Cuentos populares de Guatemala” en *Journal of American Folklore*. Vol. 31, N. 122 (1918), págs. 472-487.

“Adivinanzas recogidas en Guatemala” en *Journal of American Folklore*. Vol. 31, N. 122 (1918), págs. 544-549.

## Some Observations on the Folklore of Guatemala

Adrián Recinos

### I. Folk Tales

The imagination of the Guatemalan people is very rich. The books of the indigenous peoples, composed during the time of the Conquest, contain a great number of fables and legends that are purely popular in nature, with heroic and religious origins.

Apart from this, the current indigenous populations, which are still quite numerous, preserve and pass down from parents to children many interesting tales and legends.

However, the most useful material for the study of the country's folklore comes from the tales of the white or mestizo population. There is a great variety of stories intended to entertain children, all based on heroic adventures of princes, the loves of princesses, witches, fantastic animals, and prose fables featuring wild and domestic animals.

## EL CADEJO

*El Cadejo* is a monster that appears at night on roads and in dark streets of towns, frightening travelers, lovers, and night wanderers. It terrifies horses, causing them to throw their riders to the ground, and makes dogs howl.

*El Cadejo* takes the form of a black or white dog, depending on the region, with eyes that burn like embers and long, woolly, tangled hair.

The people sincerely believe in the existence of this fantastic creature, and it is very common to hear the phrase 'Me salió el cadejo' ('El cadejo appeared to me'), which is used to signify bad luck in an endeavor, a thief being caught by the authorities (identified with el cadejo), and similar misfortunes.

Some years ago, there was a bandit known as 'Bambita,' who had committed countless robberies, murders, assaults, and other crimes, yet had managed to evade justice. One night, in the town of Amatlán, attracted by the music and festivities of a celebration, he ventured into a dark neighborhood.

As he turned a corner, he came face-to-face with el cadejo itself, staring at him with its fiery eyes. Seeing the cadejo and trembling from head to toe happened simultaneously, and his terror was so great that he did not think to flee. Right there, he was found and arrested by a police patrol. He was tried and recounted his encounter with the cadejo. Later, he was executed by firing squad.

From the same 'family' as El Cadejo are the *Sombrerón* and the *Headless Mule*, creatures that credulous people believe roam the night, chasing men, foretelling serious misfortunes, and even causing death.

## LA CIGUANABA

Just as *El Cadejo* is the male ghost that frightens passersby who venture into distant neighborhoods of the cities at night, the *Ciguanaba* is the female ghost — a kind of siren of extraordinary beauty and long hair — who is also seen at night near public fountains and rivers. She lures men with her beauty and singing, leading them to perish in ravines and mountains, or drowning them in the waters of the rivers.

La Llorona is a different name for the same ghost. It is the Spanish name for the *Ciguanaba*. *Ciguanaba*, in the indigenous language of Guatemala, means 'Naked Woman.'

She is also called *Ciguamonta* in some regions, a name that is also used for a bird belonging to the cuckoo family.

A popular folk verse explains the reason why the *Ciguamonta* or *Ciguanaba* wanders at night around fountains, always weeping. The verse goes as follows:

*“Lloraba la Ciguamonta  
La muerte de su marido,  
que si no se hubiera muerto, . .  
tal vez estuviera vivo.”<sup>4</sup>*

## LA TATUANA

La Tatuana is a historical woman who actually existed in Guatemala, but she has become one of the ghosts used to scare children into sleeping or staying still. It is said that La Tatuana was a witch who practiced all kinds of sorcery, and for this reason, she was denounced before the Inquisition, which was based in the city of Antigua, the capital of the Colony.

She was taken to prison and locked up with all the security measures deemed necessary to prevent the escape of such a dangerous woman.

However, the tribunal and the jailers did not reckon with the witch's magical power. When she was left alone, she painted a small boat on the wall of her cell with charcoal, and by boarding it, she escaped from prison.

## II. LOS CANTOS DE NOCHE-BUENA

The people of Guatemala celebrate Christmas not only as a family holiday but also as the celebration of the Christ Child.



On Christmas Eve, an altar is set up, the Spanish 'nacimiento' (Nativity scene), with mountains, rivers, lakes, roads, villages, and with men and animals, a miniature imitation of the real world, as it was on the night when Jesus Christ was born. In the center of the 'nacimiento' there is a hut, with Joseph, Mary, and the Baby Jesus, surrounded by a donkey and an ox, according to the biblical tradition.

Around midnight, both young and old gather around the 'nacimiento.' The 'Novena' for the Child is prayed, which consists of prayers addressed to Him, and the children sing carols, popular verses, often incorrect but full of innocence and simplicity. We have collected the following:

Zagales y pastorcitos,  
al Niño vamos a ver,  
con pitillos y tambores  
mostrando nuestro placer.  
(Young shepherds and little boys,  
let's go see the Child,  
with whistles and drums  
showing our joy.)

Los pastorcillos del Valle  
venimos a conocer  
al Mesías que ha nacido  
en el portal de Belén.  
(The little shepherds of the Valley  
have come to see  
the Messiah who was born  
in the manger of Bethlehem)

Pastores, pastores,  
vamos a Belén,  
a ver a María  
y al Niño también.  
(Shepherds, shepherds,  
let's go to Bethlehem,  
to see Mary  
and the Child as well.)

They continue with another part of the prayers, and then, with a different, cheerful, and light tune, playing flutes and little drums from time to time, the boys and girls sing again:

Sandalitas quiere el niño  
para comenzar a andar.  
Háganselas bien hechas,  
no se vaya a tropezar.  
(The child wants little sandals  
to start walking.  
Make them well-made,  
so He doesn't trip.)

Qué bonito el naranjito  
copadito de azahar,  
donde se sienta la Virgen  
con su aguja y su dedal,  
a coserle los pañales  
al niño Baltasar (1)  
(How beautiful the little orange,  
filled with orange blossom,  
where the Virgin sits  
with her needle and thimble,  
to sew the swaddling clothes  
for little Baltasar.)

The people do not worry much about the accuracy of the ideas or the words. In this verse, they even forget the name of the Child and call Him, quite freely, Baltasar, just to make the rhyme, although they confuse Jesus with the king who came from the East to worship Him. On the other hand, that 'little orange filled with orange blossom' is a true poetic subject.

Another type of verses is sung to the Child, just as mothers sing to their own children in order to lull them to sleep. This type includes the following, which can be heard on Christmas Eve directed to the Child Jesus and every day of the year directed to the children, the sons of man:

Señora Santa Ana,  
Señor San Joaquín,

escondan al Niño por el tacuazín.<sup>5</sup>  
 (Lady Saint Anne,  
 Lord Saint Joachim,  
 hide the Child in the *tacuazín*)

— Señora Santa Ana,  
 ¿Por qué llora el Niño?  
 — Por una manzana  
 Que se le ha perdido.  
 (— Lady Saint Anne,  
 why does the Child cry?  
 — For an apple  
 That has been lost.)

— Que no llore, pues  
 yo le daré dos,  
 una para el Niño y otra para vos.  
 (— Don't cry,  
 for I will give you two,  
 one for the Child and one for you.)

La Virgen lavaba,  
 San José tendía, 6  
 y el Niño lloraba  
 del frío que hacía.  
 (The Virgin was washing,  
 Saint Joseph was drying,  
 and the Child cried  
 from the cold that was there.)

This same group includes the following stanzas that are sung to children to help them fall asleep:

Rú rú, niñoito,  
 cabeza de ayote,<sup>7</sup>  
 si no te dormís,  
 te come el coyote,  
 (Rú rú, little child, pumpkin-head,  
 if you don't fall asleep,  
 the coyote will eat you.)

Dormite, niñoito,  
 que viene guá-guá;<sup>8</sup>  
 si no te dormís,  
 él te comerá.  
 (Go to sleep, little child,  
 for the guá-guá is coming;  
 if you don't fall asleep,  
 he will eat you.)

Dormite, niñoito,  
 que tengo qué hacer,  
 lavar tus pañales,  
 sentarme a coser;  
 una camisita  
 que te has de poner, el día<sup>9</sup> tu santo  
 al amanecer.  
 (Go to sleep, little child,  
 for I have things to do:  
 wash your diapers,  
 sit down to sew;  
 a little shirt  
 that you must wear  
 on the day of your saint  
 at dawn.)

### III. COPLAS POPULARES

The creativity of the people is mainly expressed in their love songs and verses, either sung individually or combined into ballads with several stanzas. The general rule is that each stanza is independent, so that each one can be sung separately.

All the verses included below are sung accompanied by a guitar, and often with no accompaniment other than the voices of the singer's work companions or friends.

Generally, at popular festivals, each attendee sings a verse, creating a competition where wit is lavishly displayed, with both men and women participating. Liquor is usually abundant at these gatherings. One of the best-known Guatemalan verses is the following:

Ayer pasé por tu casa

y me tiraste un limón;  
 el limón cayó en el suelo  
 y el zumo en mi corazón.  
 (Yesterday I passed by your house  
 and you threw a lemon at me;  
 the lemon fell to the ground  
 and its juice into my heart.)

Another one goes:

Con el bordón del amor  
 voy cayendo y levantando  
 y como el bordón conoce (el camino)  
 solito él me va llevando.  
 (With the staff of love  
 I go falling and rising,  
 and since the staff knows the way,  
 it carries me along by itself.)

Sometimes the entire gathering joins in, forming a chorus with a stanza known to everyone, which is usually sung at the beginning and more commonly at the end. The main singer is almost always a young man addressing his sweetheart, who is present at the gathering, or a scorned lover seeking to fulfill the principle of punishing disdain with disdain.

Standing at the center of the gathering, the singer raises his voice and begins by saying the words '¡Bomba, bomba!' followed by some mischievous thought. For example:

¡Bomba, Bomba  
 Cachinflín y cuete! 10  
 Que para quererte a vos  
 No es menester alcahuete.  
 (Bomba, Bomba,  
 Firecracker and rocket!  
 To love you,  
 there's no need for a go-between.)

The following is a *Bomba*, popular in the region of Verapaz:

Soy nacido entre las flores

y criado en el cardo-santo,  
 y son tales las mujeres  
 que echan de cabeza a un santo.  
 (I was born among the flowers  
 and raised in the holy thistle,  
 and such are women  
 that they can make a saint fall headfirst.)

¿para qué son tantos brincos  
 estando el suelo parejo?  
 Con esta mi modo y seacall  
 antes que me dejen, dejo....  
 (What are all these jumps for  
 when the ground is level?  
 With this, my way, and I'll be quiet,  
 before they leave me, I leave...)

Ya las muchachas bonitas  
 Ya no quieren dar un beso;  
 y las que son feototas  
 hasta alargan el pescuezo.  
 (The pretty girls  
 no longer want to give a kiss;  
 and the ones who are quite ugly  
 even stretch their necks.)

Y así me voy despidiendo  
 de la arena los terrones;  
 que no hay como l'aguardiente  
 para ablandar corazones.  
 (And so I bid farewell  
 to the dirt and the clods;  
 for there's nothing like aguardiente  
 to soften hearts.)

### CHORUS

¡A mí no me quema el sol!  
 ¡A mí no me quema el gas!  
 ¡A mí no me quema el fuego,  
 ni el aguardiente, ni el aguarrás!

(The sun doesn't burn me!  
 The gas doesn't burn me!  
 The fire doesn't burn me,  
 nor the aguardiente, nor the turpentine!)

Other verses begin with the same line, or end with the same words in the form of a chorus. Judge by the effect of the following, which the people sing in various regions of the country:

Las muchachas de este tiempo  
 son como las guayabitas,  
 que apenas les dicen — mi alma,  
 van cayendo maduritas.  
 (The girls of this time  
 are like the guayabitas,  
 for as soon as they're told — my soul,  
 they start falling, ripe.)

Las viejitas de este tiempo  
 ya no se ponen listones,  
 porque tienen las trencitas  
 como colas de ratones.  
 (The old women of this time  
 no longer wear ribbons,  
 for their little braids  
 are like mouse tails.)

Las viejitas de este tiempo  
 ya no se ponen aritos,  
 porque tienen las orejas  
 que parecen huacalitos.  
 (The old women of this time  
 no longer wear earrings,  
 because their ears  
 look like little buckets.)

Más arriba venden quesos,  
 más abajo chicharrones,  
 en la cabez'é las viejas<sup>12</sup>  
 hacen nido los ratones.  
 (Up above they sell cheese,  
 down below they sell pork rinds,

and on the old women's heads  
the mice build their nests.)

-----

Dicen que ya no me quieres  
porque te he dado mal pago;  
volveme a querer de nuevo,  
que un clavo saca otro clavo.  
(They say you don't love me anymore  
because I repaid you poorly;  
love me again,  
for one nail drives out another.)

Dicen que ya no me quieres  
porque no te he dado nada:  
Acordáte de los palos  
de la semana pasada.  
(They say you don't love me anymore  
because I haven't given you anything:  
Remember the beatings  
from last week.)

I can still add other loose verses, or combinations of two or more, with the same or different meter, since when it comes to poetic liberties, the people use them all. See the following:

Todos dicen que soy feo  
que tengo cara de coche;<sup>13</sup>  
sólo mi negrita dice  
que soy su huele-de-noche.<sup>14</sup>  
(Everyone says I'm ugly,  
that I have the face of a pig;  
only my little dark-skinned girl says  
that I'm her night-blooming jasmine.)

-----

¡Dicen que borracho vengo!  
¡Por Dios que no tengo nada!  
Y si borracho viniera,  
a nadie le pido nada.



(They say I'm coming drunk!  
 By God, I've had nothing!  
 And if I were drunk,  
 I wouldn't ask anything from anyone.)

-----

Quisiera ser guacamaya, 15  
 pero de las más azules,  
 para pasarme contigo  
 sábado, domingo y lunes.  
 (I wish I were a macaw,  
 but one of the bluest ones,  
 so I could spend with you  
 Saturday, Sunday, and Monday.)

-----

Ni mi madre, ni mi padre,  
 ni San Antonio bendito,  
 no me han podido evitar  
 que yo chupe mi traguito.  
 (Neither my mother, nor my father,  
 nor blessed Saint Anthony,  
 have been able to stop me  
 from sipping my little drink.)

-----

Mi mujer y mi caballo  
 se me murieron a un tiempo.  
 ¡Qué mujer ni qué demonio!  
 mi caballo es el que siento.  
 (My wife and my horse  
 died at the same time.  
 To hell with the wife!  
 It's my horse I truly mourn.)

-----

Mi caballo era tan gordo  
 que parecía una bola,

con una matadurita  
 desde la cruz a la cola.  
 (My horse was so fat  
 it looked like a ball,  
 with a little saddle  
 from the withers to the tail.)

-----

La que se casa con calvo  
 tiene su pasión entera:  
 de día, cruz y calvario,  
 y de noche, calavera.  
 (The one who marries a bald man  
 has her full passion:  
 by day, a cross and a calvary,  
 and by night, a skull.)

-----

Dicen que no nos queremos  
 porque no nos ven hablar;  
 a tu corazón y al mío  
 se lo pueden preguntar.  
 (They say that we don't love each other  
 because they don't see us talking;  
 they can ask your heart and mine.)

-----

Cuando te quise  
 fué por el pelo.  
 Ora pelona,  
 ¿pa qué te quiero?  
 (When I loved you,  
 it was for your hair.  
 Now you're bald,  
 what do I want you for?)

-----

Me quisiste, yo te quise

me adoraste, te adoré  
 me quemaste la canilla  
 yo también te la quemé.  
 (You loved me, I loved you,  
 you adored me, I adored you,  
 you burned my shin,  
 I also burned yours.)

-----

Me quemaste la canilla  
 como quien no dice nada  
 pa que la gente me diga:  
 ¡Adiós, canilla-quemada!  
 (You burned my shin  
 as if it were nothing,  
 so people would say to me:  
 'Goodbye, burnt-shin!)

## NOTES

1. Compárese la malora de Nuevo Méjico, esta revista, vol. xxiii, p. 8. — A.M.E.
2. Mexicano moderno, ciuanauac, "concupina".
3. Ciuamontli, "nuera".
4. "Compárense la llorona de Nuevo Méjico y la calchona de Chile, esta revista, op. cit., p. 9. — AME.
5. Didelphis virginiana, Kerr, mexicano tlacuatzin.
6. Tendía (la ropa lavada). (the washed clothes)
7. Calabaza. (Pumpkin)
8. El perro. (The dog)
9. El día de. (The day of.)
10. Cachinflín y cuete. Cuete es vulgar de cohete; cachinflin, la parte del cohete que lleva la pólvora.
11. Seaca, contracción de se acabó.
12. »Cabez'é contracción de cabeza de.
13. Cochino, cerdo.
14. Huele-de-noche, planta que florece de noche y emite una fragancia deliciosa.
15. Macaw.

## POPULAR TALES OF GUATEMALA

Adrián Recinos

## 1. TIO COYOTE Y TIO CONEJO

(First Version.)

There was a lady who had a watermelon patch. Every night Uncle Rabbit would come and eat the watermelons. One night he came, ate one, made a mess inside it, dirtied it all up, and then covered it; it was the ripest one there was. The next day was the Father's (Priest's) saint's day, and the lady went to give him the watermelon as a gift. The gentlemen were already eating when the Father said to the servant: "If you can guess what we forgot?" "What?" asked the servant. "The watermelon!" said the Father. So he went to get it. The Father was about to cut it open when he saw a little ball jump out, and then more little balls kept jumping out. So he ordered the lady to be brought in, and they punished her.

So the lady put a wax doll in the watermelon patch, and the next night Uncle Rabbit came and said: "What are you doing here? If you don't move, I'll slap you." And since the doll didn't answer, he slapped it. "Let go of my hand!" he said, and he slapped it with the other hand. "Let go of both my hands!" he said, and he kicked it. "Let go of both my hands and my foot," he said, "or else I'll hit you with the other one." "Let go of all four legs, or else I'll hit you with a belly slam." "Let me go," he said, "or else I'll headbutt you."

The next day the lady came and took him down from the watermelon patch and locked him up, while she went to heat up the branding iron. Then Uncle Coyote came by. "Uncle Coyote," said Rabbit, "come enjoy the banquet they're going to give me," and he left Coyote in his place. Soon the lady returned and said: "When I left, you were smaller, and now that I'm back, you look bigger!" Then she burned Coyote's rear with the branding iron and let him go. Meanwhile, Uncle Rabbit ran ahead and climbed into a grafted tree.

And Uncle Coyote passed by and Rabbit said to him: "Uncle Coyote, Burnt Butt!" "Now I'm going to eat you," said Uncle Coyote. "No, Uncle Coyote," answered Uncle Rabbit, "I'll knock down a grafted fruit for you," and he dropped a ripe one for him. "Throw me another one," said Coyote, and Rabbit threw him a green one and broke his teeth, then ran away. Further along, Rabbit climbed into a palm tree and said: "Uncle Coyote, Burnt Butt!"

"Now I'm really going to eat you, Uncle Rabbit!" "No, Uncle Coyote, I'll drop you a palm fruit," Rabbit said. "Throw me a ripe one," said Coyote, and Rabbit threw him one. "Throw me another," said Coyote, and this time Rabbit threw him a green one and broke his head, then ran away again. Then Rabbit went to stand under a rock, pretending to lift it, and along came Uncle Coyote and said:

"Now I'm going to eat you, Uncle Rabbit!" said Uncle Coyote. "Come help me, Uncle Coyote," said Rabbit, and Uncle Coyote started to help lift the rock. But the rock began to fall. "Come help me, Uncle Rabbit!" cried Coyote — and the rock fell on him and smashed her eggs. Uncle Rabbit ran away.

Later, Rabbit was by a river when Uncle Coyote passed by, and Rabbit said: "Uncle Coyote — burnt butt, broken teeth, cracked head, smashed eggs!" "Now I'm really going to eat you, Uncle Rabbit!" shouted Coyote. "No, Uncle Coyote, come help me fish out this cheese that's in the river," Rabbit said. But it was only the reflection of the moon. Uncle Coyote started drinking water to lower the level, and he drank so much that the water began leaking out of his rear. "Plug me up, Uncle Rabbit!" he yelled. Rabbit plugged him with a corncob. "Put another one, Uncle Rabbit!" Coyote begged. So Uncle Rabbit went to get some stinging nettles and stuffed them into Coyote's rear — then ran away.

### (Second Version)

In a certain orchard, there was a beautiful pumpkin patch where Uncle Rabbit would go every night to eat the pumpkins. The owner, an old woman, set a trap and the rabbit got caught. After a little while, an old coyote passed by and asked: — "What are you doing there, young man?" — "Oh, Uncle Coyote, my dear!" replied the rabbit, "They have me locked up because they want to marry me off to a rich girl, but I don't want to." — "You fool!" said Uncle Coyote, "Why don't you want that? Why are you turning down such a catch?" — "Because I want to be free! Uncle, if you wanted to take advantage of this opportunity, you'd have someone to take care of you in your old age." — "Well, man," said Uncle Coyote, "it's settled then," and just like that, he got into the trap.

The next day, the old woman arrived with a hot branding iron and said: — "Here you are, you big scoundrel, we'll see if you still feel like eating pumpkins after this!" And just like that, she stuck the branding iron into his backside. Poor Uncle Coyote rolled around in pain. The

rabbit was hiding and, seeing the result, said: — "Goodbye, Uncle Coyote, burnt bottom!" ... and ran off.

## 2. JUAN MUDO Y JUAN VIVO

Juan Vivo, whose mother was gravely ill and near death, had to leave the house. Before he left, he instructed Juan Mudo to stay behind and take care of his mother. "Stay here and look after my mom," Juan Vivo said. "Okay," replied Juan Mudo, and he placed her behind a door. He then put a bone in her mouth, believing that she wasn't truly dead, and he thought that would be enough for her to "eat." When Juan Vivo returned, he asked if Juan Mudo had fed his mother. "Yes, I gave her food," Juan Mudo replied. "Let's go check," said Juan Vivo, and the two of them went to see.

When they entered, the old woman had a "ron-ron" in her mouth. "So she's even snoring," said Juan Mudo. It was the "ron-ron" that was flying around in her mouth. But Juan Vivo saw that his nana was already dead and said to Juan Mudo: "Fool! What have you done with my nana?" "Well, let's do this," said Juan Mudo to Juan Vivo. "What?" replied Juan Vivo. "Let's go with the priest to bring the sacrament, and we'll put a false door so that when the priest pushes it, it falls on my nana." "Alright," said Juan Vivo, and the priest arrived. The door fell on the old woman. "He's killed her, Father!" they both said. "Don't say anything, my children," the priest said, "I'll give you money to bury her." "Alright!" they said, and they accepted the money.

Once, Juan Mudo went to the church and climbed up to the bell tower. The priest said to him: "Oh, you're putting eyes!" So Juan Mudo went to the slaughterhouse with a bucket and gathered all the eyes of the oxen, then went back to the bell tower. From up there, when people passed by, he dropped the bucket of eyes and shouted, "What are you doing, animal?" "I'm putting eyes!" answered Juan Mudo.

Now go and plant the cornfield," said Juan Vivo. "Alright," replied Juan Mudo. He went to all the trash heaps, gathered all the old shoes, and went to the cornfield. He took his machete, cut down all the plants, and began putting shoes on each one. Afterward, he returned to his brother and said: "It's all shoed up." "Let's see," said Juan Vivo. When he saw it, he said: "Animal! That's not how you shoe it.

## 3. PEDRO ORDIMALES

(First Version)

Pedro Ordinales was herding some horses that belonged to his employer. Near the house, there was a swamp. Some travelers who passed by shouted: "Are you selling the horses, Pedro?" And Pedro answered: "Yes, but without tails." The travelers, after checking the horses, wanted to buy the tails. Pedro received the money, and they left.

After the travelers left, Pedro Ordinales stayed with the tails and buried them in the swamp, leaving part of them above the ground. Without drawing attention to it, he went to his boss and said: "Sir, sir, the horses have gone into the swamp!" The boss was shocked and ran to check. When he saw that all the tails were above the ground, he immediately sent for a rope and his wife. She gave him the rope, and he headed toward the swamp. It didn't take long to get there, and when they were together, they tied one of the tails, and Pedro and the boss pulled hard. But Pedro already knew what would happen and made sure not to pull too hard. The boss fell upside down, suffered the blow, and didn't want to continue. Pedro is still probably enjoying the money.

(Second Version)

### Pedro Urdimales y su hijo Juan Panela

Pedro Urdimales, having the misfortune of losing his mother, sought a place for himself at a ranch called "Las Vacas." Since this ranch had a large number of cows, his boss would wake him up very early to feed the cows and send him to cut grass with a well-sharpened machete. "Oh, cut off their heads!" yelled the boss when Pedro was already far away. Believing that the boss meant for him to cut off the cows' heads, Pedro did so. Upon seeing this, the boss kicked him off the ranch.

Juan Panela was the son of an old woman who, having panela (sugarcane candy) for her coffee, noticed that her son would steal the panela every day very early while his mother was still asleep. He would take the panela to school, which earned him the nickname "Juan Panela." One day, the old woman left the panela with her son to guard it, and noticing that there were many flies in the panela, he began to swat them. While killing them, he told his mother that he could kill seven with one blow. However, he didn't say what he was killing. Since he told everyone this, the king of a nearby province heard about it and called for him, saying that if he could kill all the thieves in the world, he would marry his daughter.

Juan said that he was ready and went to his mother, telling her, "Mother, I'm going to kill all the thieves in the world!" His mother gave him some tortillas and a bit of dough with poison. However, there was no grass for his horse, so Juan gave the dough to the horse, and it died. The vultures came and ate the horse, and over two hundred vultures died as well. Juan then took them to the place where the thieves lived, and seeing that they had a large pot, he used the vultures to prepare everything. When the thieves arrived and saw Juan, they said, "Kill the one who is in our house!" He replied, "Don't kill me, I'm guarding your food. I have many chickens here." The thieves didn't kill him but instead ate the vultures, and they all died because the vultures were pecking at their bellies.

So Juan Panela went to the King and said, "Your Majesty, I have killed every thief I found in the world; now you don't have to worry, your daughters won't be stolen." The King, seeing this, asked him how he had killed them, and Juan replied, "Well, I killed seven with a single punch until I finished them all, and only one was left. That one was tough to kill, and look how wounded I am because he had great strength. The King then said, "Now you will marry my daughter, and I will build you a palace in one night so that you can live with my daughter and improve the life of Pedro Urdimales, who was living in misery.

And to make this story more beautiful, I'm going to hide in a little hole.

(Third Version)

### Historia de Pedro Ordimales (The Story of Pedro Ordimales)

When Pedro was wandering in the world, the people were very simple, and Pedro was the clever one, the astute one. At that time, Pedro had a guava tree, and between the flowers, he placed small amounts of silver coins, reales, pesetas, quarters, and pesos. When someone passed by, he would call them and say: 'Buy this tree from me.' He would ask for thousands for it. The buyer, seeing that a lot of money fell to the ground when the tree was shaken, would fall in love with the little tree and say:

—Day by day shaking it, what a fortune will accumulate! The buyer decided on five thousand pesos and bought it. He spent the whole days shaking the tree, but nothing fell, and he was left wondering what secret he could use to make his little tree bear fruit.



Pedro had a horse, and it was his habit to collect the horse's droppings of coins. Whenever someone visited him and found him cleaning the stable, they would ask where he got the money. He would reply that his horse pooped out silver and that he wouldn't sell it for any amount of money. However, the greedy people made a deal with him and bought the horse for a good price. The buyer took the horse and spread a blanket beneath it so the money wouldn't be lost when it fell to the ground. He did manage to collect a few coins, but no more, and spent every day desperately digging through the stable, but he never found another coin.

Pedro immediately went on his way to find another scheme. He soon came across a dead horse and noticed that there were a lot of vultures inside it. An idea struck him—he decided to block the horse's tail, and with the help of the vultures inside, the horse stood up. Pedro, using his cleverness, made it walk. A man passed by and said, "Sell me that dead one of yours." Pedro replied, "You won't get what I want for it; this is a flying horse. Look!" Pedro got on the horse, which was walking smoothly. The buyer mounted it too, but he wasn't satisfied and said he wanted it to fly. Pedro asked him to wait a moment and said he would prepare lunch for the horse. While the buyer waited, Pedro stuffed more vultures inside and, having added another dozen, he carried the horse to the buyer. He took another vulture, folded it in half, and used it as a plug. When the buyer arrived, Pedro said, "Is it ready?" "Yes, it's very ready," replied Pedro, "with the food I gave it, it can even fly. Mount it." The buyer climbed on, and with Pedro's cleverness, the horse began to soar. It gained a great height, but then the vulture plug came loose, and all the others flew out. The horse started spinning with the rider and came crashing down. The buyer, the horse, and everything else came to an end there.

And the vulture that Pedro had used as a plug, became so stunned from the fall that, after regaining consciousness, it swore: "I swear and vow that the next time I eat a horse, I will start with the eyes and then the rear end!"

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Pedro went off to find work with some pig herders. Soon he was hired by one to take care of the pigs, and he took them to bathe in a muddy pond. A livestock dealer came by and bought all the pigs from Pedro, but Pedro sold them without their tails. When the owner returned, he asked where the pigs were. "They're bathing in the lagoon," Pedro answered, "they've sunk so deep that only their tails are

visible. Go fetch one, they're already sold," the owner ordered. Pedro went, but soon came back saying he couldn't get them out—the pigs were so deep that their tails would tear off. The owner went to see for himself. Pedro went back into the mud, and as he stuck his hands in, he said, "Yes, it's tearing, it's tearing, little boss... it tore!" Then the owner waded in to see for himself, and sure enough, when they all tried pulling the pigs out, they only managed to pull out their tails. The owner was left thinking that maybe Pedro had tricked him with a fake sale.

At night, the muleteer thought of throwing Pedro into the river, since he realized the crooked sale Pedro had pulled on him. But Pedro, suspecting his intentions, made a plan—he disguised himself and pretended to fall asleep on some sacks. Around midnight, he slipped away, gathered all the owner's ropes into a sack, dressed in another worker's clothes, and lay down somewhere else. When the muleteer woke up, he said to Pedro, "Come, let's go throw Pedro into the river for what he did to me." "Alright," said Pedro. They grabbed the sack full of ropes, and just as they were about to toss it into the river, the muleteer said, "Goodbye, Pedro Ordinales!" Then Pedro, in a different voice, replied, "Goodbye, ropes and lassos! At that point, Pedro took off to another place. When morning came, the muleteer went to saddle his animals but couldn't find any ropes or sacks. He asked where they were, and finding nothing, immediately suspected that clever Pedro had been the one behind it, especially after remembering the voice that answered as they threw the sack. He went to wake up the other worker, and they both went to check the river. After walking a short distance, they found the sack tightly tied. They opened it and found all the ropes, lassos, and sacks inside—and were then fully convinced that Pedro had indeed tricked them with the sale of the pigs.

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One day, while Pedro was relieving himself in the middle of the street, a priest passed by and asked what he was doing, to which Pedro replied that he was guarding his dove that laid silver and gold eggs. The priest asked to buy it, and Pedro said he would only trade it for the priest's cloak and cap. The priest agreed, gave him his clothes, and stayed behind watching over the "dove" while Pedro, now dressed as a priest, went off to nearby towns preaching and collecting money, shouting "Mass, sermon, procession—and pull!" to draw attention. Before leaving, Pedro had warned the priest not to touch the dove too soon, but after a while, the priest got impatient, lifted the hat, and reached under it, only to crush something warm and foul in his hand.

Realizing he had been tricked and humiliated, the priest tried to find Pedro, but he was long gone.

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It so happened that Pedro died a natural death, and when he arrived before our Lord, he was not forgiven and was sent to Hell to serve the Jews. He offered to serve them food, but melted lead and tin onto their chairs, and when they sat, they jumped up with the hot metal stuck to their behinds and chased Pedro, later telling the Lord they didn't want him there because he didn't know how to serve. The Lord called Pedro back and told him he couldn't enter Heaven because of his misbehavior in life. "Oh Lord, grant me just one favor," Pedro replied, "let me at least look at Heaven." God agreed, and as Pedro stood at the gate pretending to drop his hat, he kicked it in and snuck in after it. When the Lord saw he had already entered, there was nothing else to do, so He said, "Then you shall turn into stone!" "Oh, but with eyes!" Pedro replied.

And that's how Pedro Ordinales entered Heaven; he doesn't speak, he's a stone—but he sees...

#### 4. LOS CUENTOS DE TATA PINQUIN (The Tales of Tata Pínquín)

Tata Pínquín lived on Hospital Street. One time, he went to spend a few days in El Tuerto, and while he was there, he remembered it was the Day of Guadalupe and the feast in his neighborhood. Since he had the habit of inviting his friends over to watch the procession from his house—where he would serve them buñuelos, bananas, and a smoothie—he found a rope, made a loop with it, and lassoed his friends, a woman who made buñuelos, a woman who made smoothies, and even a man along with his whole food stall. He took them all and spent a very joyful day.

When night fell, Tata Pínquín, already drunk, pulled out his stick and charged at all the guests. At the sound of the commotion, the police arrived and chased him from *El Tuerto* almost all the way to his house. Tata Pínquín ran until he reached a drainpipe with a strong stream of water and climbed up the stream onto the roof. Just as he finished climbing, the police showed up and began to climb the water stream too. But just as they were about to catch him, Tata Pínquín wrapped the stream around his hands and, with a tug, snapped it—leaving more than fifty police officers dead from the fall.

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Tata Pínquín was on his way home one day when he came across a rabid dog that lunged at him. Just as it was about to bite him, Tata Pínquín shoved his hand into the dog's mouth all the way to its tail, and with a yank, turned it inside out.

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Another time, Tata Pínquín left six hens and two cats locked in his house and went off to Escuintla for a season. A few days later, he returned and went to check the hens' nests, where he found some big black eggs. He waited until the hens were broody and set them to hatch the eggs. Then he went back to Escuintla to close a deal, and after a little while he returned to find the chicks already grown: they had a rooster's face, four legs like cats, and a big bristly tail, and at five in the morning they all crowed: "Cock-a-doodle... meow!...

(Another Version)

(a)

One winter afternoon, Tata Pínquín left Guatemala and took the road to Amatitlán. He hadn't traveled far when a heavy storm started, and as he passed through the plains of Castañás, a lightning bolt struck him, splitting his horse in half. But since he needed to arrive quickly, he continued his journey on the other half of the horse, riding down to the Amatitlán lagoon. Instead of turning around, he went straight ahead and crossed the lagoon on his half-horse. But as his legs hung down, when he emerged from the lagoon, he noticed that a number of fish had gotten caught on the spikes of his spurs, which he sold very well at the Amatitlán market.

(b)

On another occasion, Tata Pínquín went to Antigua on a winter day, and along the way, a downpour caught up with him from behind. He spurred his horse so that the rain wouldn't catch him. As he passed the Villalobos River, which was very swollen, he brushed against a beam that served as a bridge for pedestrians, but he kept running without the rain ever catching up to him. By the time he arrived in Antigua, the downpour had given up chasing him. He dismounted from

his horse in the streets of Antigua and noticed that only one drop of water had fallen on the horse's tail. While adjusting the saddle, a furious dog jumped at him with the intention of biting him, but he rolled up his shirt sleeves, stuck his hand in the dog's mouth all the way to its tail, and with a strong yank, completely flipped the dog over.

The owner of the animal found it disoriented and called a patrol that chased Tata Pínquín under a heavy downpour. As the patrol was catching up to him, Tata Pínquín tossed the horse to one side and climbed up the eaves of a house, running along the rooftop before descending into a courtyard. He hid himself inside a tecomate (a type of gourd) he found in the yard, and despite the patrol searching everywhere, they couldn't find him, not even in the last corner.

(c)

And since he was always pursued by fate, on another occasion, he was traveling to Jalpatagua. As he passed through the plains of Arrazola, a bull charged at him. When Tata Pínquín saw it, he ran, and the bull chased him until he came across a gun that some hunter had left behind. Tata Pínquín quickly hid inside the barrel of the gun, and the bull followed him in. However, Tata Pínquín managed to escape through the little hole at the top of the barrel, leaving the bull stuck inside.

## 5. EL QUE NO TE CONOZCA QUE TE COMPRE (Whoever doesn't know you, let them buy you.)

Don Jesús Nuezmoscada, a simple and devout man of good faith, went to the Chiantla fair to buy a male (macho). But since he was carrying a bag full of money over his shoulder, two thieves who are always present at fairs noticed him and began following him. After walking around for a while, Don Chus found a male he liked. After pointing out many defects and the seller highlighting many qualities, they closed the deal, and Don Chus took his purchase to his inn, tied it to a post, and gave it plenty of hay.

Nuezmoscada decided not to sleep that night and kept going out to check on his animal. Meanwhile, the thieves were watching him. As soon as he let his guard down, they untied the male, put another rope around its neck, and one of them started crawling on all fours. A few moments later, Don Chus came out of the room with his torch made of pinewood, and he fell backward in shock when he saw that instead of his male animal, there was a man tied by the neck, struggling to eat the

grass. Little by little, Don Chus gathered his courage, and finally, without getting too close, he made the sign of the cross and said: "In the name of Almighty God, what are you doing there, you? Oh, my Lord! My benefactor," replied the thief. "I am a man who was very disobedient to my parents, so a witch cursed me, turned me into a male animal, and told me: 'Wander the world as punishment for your wrongdoings, and you will return to your true form when a man of good faith buys you. Since then, I have gone through many hardships. I was at the post, and they auctioned me off, but Ño Pascasio Taltusa bought me. However, since he is a heretic, I couldn't return to my original state until my good luck led me to you, who are a saint. About half an hour ago, I regained my true form. Now all that's left is for you to untie me, because I still feel my hands like hooves," said the man. "Well!" said Don Jesús, "And if I untie you, who's going to pay me back the money I gave for you? Do you have anything to pay me?" "Where do you want me to go get it from? Let me go, give me your blessing, and give me five pesos. God will repay you because when have you ever seen God leave a debt unpaid?" In the end, moved by compassion, Don Chus untied him.

The next day, Nuezmoscada went to the fair to replace the lost donkey, very satisfied with his good deed, when he found an animal very similar to the one he had lost. As he was inspecting it, he noticed the size, color, and the marks, pulled out the sales contract, and compared all the details. It turned out to be the same donkey he had bought the day before. "Ah, rascal!" Don Jesús said, "You won't fool me twice! He who doesn't know you, let him buy you!"

## 6. ESPERAR QUE EL HIGO CAIGA EN LA BOCA (Wait for the fig to fall into the mouth.)

Don Gumersindo Pososeco had a son who was already quite grown, and he seriously decided to have him learn a trade. One day he called him and said, "Look, son, you're already grown and you don't know how to do anything. I've decided to have you learn a trade—tell me which one you like." The boy replied, "I don't know the names of the trades, Dad. Tell them to me one by one until I hear the one I like best." "Alright, let's see... do you like carpentry?" "No, I might cut myself." "Blacksmithing?" "No, I might get burned!" "Bricklaying?" "Not that either, the lime might get in my eyes!" "Tailor?" "No, I'll prick myself with the needle!" "Cobbler?" "No, my knees will hurt from hammering!" "Potter?" "I don't like the mud!"

Don Gumersindo tried every trade, but the boy found fault with all of them. Desperate, the old man said, "Then the trade that would suit you is being a loafer." "If you say so," said the boy, "I'll give that one a try." The next day, the boy was handed over to Ño Juan Jaragán, a man with no known trade who lived off schemes and handouts.

On the first day of training, Ño Juan said, "Let's go, son, to the street and see what we can catch." They walked around a lot, begging here and seeing what they could snatch there, but nothing came of it. Hungry, they went to a place with a fig tree. "Well," said Ño Juan, "this is something to kill the hunger. You stay down here and I'll climb up to knock down some figs. Once you've eaten enough, gather the rest for me." Ño Juan climbed up and dropped a bunch of figs, but when he came down, he found his apprentice lying on the ground with his mouth open. "So?" he asked, "Have you eaten enough?" "No, sir," replied the boy, "none of them fell into my mouth!" "Ah... you really are something," said Ño Juan. "I don't know why your dad sent you to me. I should be the one apprenticing at your house, because you've left me behind, brother!"

## 7. EL MOSQUITO (The Mosquitoe)

This was a mosquito who wanted to see the world, so he went traveling, and the first night was very cold. He covered himself with his little jacket, but one tiny foot was left uncovered, and the ice burned it.

So the mosquito went to the ice and said: "Ice, are you so brave that you burned my little foot?" — "Yes," said the ice, "but the sun is even braver because it melts me.

So he went to the sun and said: "Sun, are you so brave that you melt the ice—the ice that burned my little foot?" — "Yes," said the sun, "but the cloud is even braver because it covers me.

Then he went to the cloud and said: "Cloud, are you so brave that you cover the sun—the sun that melts the ice, the ice that burned my little foot?" — "Yes," said the cloud, "but the wind is braver because it blows me away.

Then he went to the wind and said: "Wind, are you so brave that you blow away the clouds—the clouds that cover the sun, the sun that melts the ice, the ice that burned my little foot?" — "Yes," said the wind, "but the wall is braver because it stops me.

Then he went to the wall and said: "Wall, are you so brave that you stop the wind—the wind that blows away the clouds, the clouds that cover the sun, the sun that melts the ice, the ice that burned my little

foot?" — "Yes," said the wall, "but the mouse is braver because it makes holes in me.

Then he went to the mouse and said: "Mouse, are you so brave that you make holes in the wall—the wall that stops the wind, the wind that blows away the clouds, the clouds that cover the sun, the sun that melts the ice, the ice that burned my little foot?" — "Yes," said the mouse, "but the cat is braver because it eats me.

Then he went to the dog and said: "Dog, are you so brave that you kill the cat—the cat that eats the mouse, the mouse that makes holes in the wall, the wall that stops the wind, the wind that blows away the clouds, the clouds that cover the sun, the sun that melts the ice, the ice that burned my little foot?" — "Yes," said the dog, "but the man is braver because he kills me.

Then he went to the dog and said, "Dog, are you so brave that you kill the cat, the cat that eats the rat, the rat that digs through the wall, the wall that stops the wind, the wind that blows away the clouds, the clouds that hide the sun, the sun that melts the ice, the ice that burned my little foot?" The dog replied, "Yes, but the man who kills me is even braver.

Then he went to the man and said, "Man, are you so brave that you kill the dog, the dog that kills the cat, the cat that eats the rat, the rat that digs through the wall, the wall that stops the wind, the wind that blows away the clouds, the clouds that hide the sun, the sun that melts the ice, the ice that burned my little foot?

Yes, but even braver is death that kills me.

Then he went to Death: 'Death, are you so brave that you kill man, man who kills dog, dog who kills cat, cat who eats rat, rat who drills wall, wall that stops wind, wind that throws clouds, clouds that block the sun, sun that melts ice, ice that burned my little foot? Then, Death, placing a hand on him, said: 'Enough,' and killed him.

## 8. JUAN MARIA Y JUANA MARIA (JUAN MARIA AND JUANA MARIA)

There were two friends who lived together and loved each other very much. And the two friends each had a child: one had Juana María and the other had Juan María. The two children grew up together, loving each other like siblings, but when they reached a certain age, they wanted to get married, and both mothers opposed it.

Then the children ran away from home and wrote a letter in blood from their own veins, swearing that they would never marry



anyone else. They arrived in a city and were arrested for being strangers, then placed in separate jail cells with no communication—she with her jailer, and he with his. Each day, they were taken out to sunbathe in the street; on one of these outings, the Governor's daughter passed by on her way to mass, saw Juan María, and fell in love with him. The girl asked her father to release him because she was in love and wanted to marry him. Her father agreed and had Juan María taken to a hotel so he could "reform."

Juana María found out and prepared herself; she had a white shroud made, along with a dagger, a long heavy chain, and a lantern. The night of Juan María's wedding to the Governor's daughter arrived; there was a great celebration, and Juana María, wearing the shroud, the chain, the dagger at her waist, and the lantern in hand, escaped from her prison to fulfill her oath. As she walked through the streets on the way to the Palace, she cried out with a heart-wrenching scream that made people flee: "Oh! This is the street of my passions. If I found some scoundrel and he had two thousand lives, two thousand lives I would take!" And the chain clanged.

She kept crying out like that until she reached the door of the Palace, where the wedding celebration was at its peak. Juan María came out to open the door for her, and he brought her inside to where the wedding bed was. She told him she had come to fulfill her oath; he lay down on the bed, stretched out, and she pulled out the dagger and drove it into his chest. Then she left, walking back through the streets, crying out: "Oh! This is the street of my passions. If I found some scoundrel and he had two thousand lives, two thousand lives I would take!"—until she reached her prison, where she locked herself in very calmly.

At the palace, there was great commotion when they found the young groom turned into a corpse, with no one knowing how it had happened. The wedding celebration turned into a wake. The next day, they placed Juan María in a coffin and took him to the church so the body could rest there until the burial the following day. That night, Juana María once again set out—dressed in her burial shroud, carrying the chain, the lantern, and shouting the same haunting words. The city was in uproar, full of rumors and fear. She reached the church, opened the doors, entered, lifted the lid of the coffin, and drove the dagger into Juan María's corpse once again. As she was leaving, the devils seized her, and she passed by the prison, where her jailer Catalina was waiting for her at the door. "Goodbye, Catalina! Take care of yourself, and thank you for your care!" said Juana María. And the jailer replied, "Goodbye, girl! You're leaving me behind!" Then Juana María

answered, "My chain is long and reaches everyone!" And wrapping Catalina in the chain, she took her along.

## 9. EL PALACIO ENCANTADO (THE ENCHANTED PALACE)

In a great city, a millionaire man wrote this sign on the door of his house: "He who has money can do and achieve everything." The King heard of this bold claim and summoned him. "Sir," he said, "on what grounds do you post such an extraordinary sign on your house?" — "Your Royal Highness," he replied, "because I can benefit half of humanity." — "In what way?" — "Well, as I consider myself the only humanitarian and kind-hearted man in the city, I can give away whatever I feel like, buy up land, win over the most beautiful women; in short, Your Royal Highness, I have seen it all, and I am at your service. I am Gípiles Rosatales.

Then you bear the burden," said the King, "that since you are rich and claim to do everything, I want you to prepare yourself—because on the road to the edge of the city, there is a very large tunnel that no one has ever been able to reach the end of. And since you are rich and can do anything, get ready to enter it." — "Sir," replied the rich man, "I have no objection, as long as you grant me five years' time, the finest and choicest meats and preserves, and good machinery, because I may have to conduct these experiments with great care and preparation." — "Everything will be granted," said the King, "as long as you give me a clear account of what you see in that solitude.

Gípiles Rosatales set off, and it was agreed with the executioners that they would release more cable as needed, and that he would signal them with a bell once he reached solid ground. The executioners kept working, feeding the endless rope, while he continuously changed its number. After a month of walking day and night, he finally reached solid ground, but everything was in total darkness. He used his machinery to determine the path, felt hungry, lit his lantern, drank some coffee, and continued. After eight days walking through that darkness, he noticed a faint light filtering through a crack. His joy was immense upon realizing daylight still existed, and that the landscapes were vast, with huge birds unlike any he had seen in his city. He observed everything closely and took notes to report back to the King. He kept going, encountering mighty rivers and mountains, but he wasn't troubled—he was prepared for anything. Courage kept him going, but he never found a single soul to talk to or ask what existed in that desolate land. In despair, he fell asleep, and in his dream, a bird

appeared and told him: "Do not lose heart in your courage, for you are close to reaching the enchanted palace." He immediately resumed his journey following the dream's guidance, and before long, he spotted the enchanted palace about a league away.

Shortly after, he arrived at the palace's main gate and saw the immense riches at the entrance. He looked at and touched everything, but didn't see a single person to ask about what existed there. Then he saw some hands passing behind a crystal wall from within the palace, and suddenly a table appeared, covered with exquisite dishes and the finest liquors. The table then vanished, and the astonished young man went into another room, where he heard a voice say: "Who has entered here? I am," he answered, "my courage compels me, and I have come to discover what lies here. I've been walking for two years and haven't seen a single person to ask why this palace exists or who owns it." — "Since you have some courage," the voice replied, "if you wish to meet me, press that button on the door and you will enter." He pressed the button and saw an angel surrounded by clouds. "What are you doing here, my angel—are you a divinity of heaven or earth?" — "Don't be surprised," she answered, "I am a deity of the earth." — "And why are you here?" — "Let me tell you," she replied, "I am under the control of a cursed beast who has kept me imprisoned here for forty years, and I beg you, out of kindness, to leave and avoid being found by the beast." — "Do not worry, my angel," said the brave young man, "even if I had two lives, I would lose them both to make you mine. With this blade, I will defeat that beast. Suddenly, the lion roared in desperation, and the man prepared for the attack, hiding behind a door. Just then, the beast arrived and said, "Ilifa, lifa, it reeks of human flesh!" — "No one has come here," the maiden replied. — "My sense of smell does not lie," said the beast, and it found the man, shouting, "You miserable wretch, how did you get in here, where only the maiden and I should be?" — "Well, cursed beast, by the strength of my immense courage, you useless monster, with this blade I will split your skull and take possession of the palace. Prepare yourself, for we shall fight. The maiden begged them not to fight, to leave the insults for another day; but both the man and the beast came to blows, and the man struck the lion with such a powerful stab that it fell dead beside the maiden's altar. The maiden let out a cry of joy upon seeing the lion dead and thanked the noble man, saying, "I am yours until death, for you have freed me from the claws of this cursed beast who repaid my service so cruelly." — "Patience," said the young man, "I still have two floors left to explore, so wait for me; I will return for you."

The brave young man continued to the next floor via a huge spiral staircase. Upon arriving, he heard a voice say, "Who has entered here?" —"I am the man who has defeated beasts," he replied. —"If you wish to meet me, touch that button over there." He touched it, and another door opened, revealing another woman, even more beautiful than the first. —"If the first was good," he said, "this one beats her hands down. Miss, by God! What are you doing on this magnificent altar? You draw my attention because you are as beautiful as the flowers in a garden." —"Oh, man! You have much courage, and I beg you, please, to go back the way you came because I am controlled and dominated by a cursed beast." —"What kind of beast is that?" —"The serpent with a hundred heads, and you would do well to turn back and avoid seeing it." —"My dear," said the young man, "I am enchanted by you, and today I must prove to this useless beast that I intend to make you mine. Suddenly, the beast entered, saying: "Miserable man, what are you doing here? How did you manage to get in?" —"Through being a true man, and prepare yourself to fight, for I will show you with my steel that I am better than you." The beast leaped onto him, biting several parts of his body; but the man struck a powerful stab at the center of its many heads, and the feared beast fell dead. The maiden let out a joyful scream, saying: "Ah, my dear man! You have such courage and skill, and because of that, you have killed this creature! I am yours." —"My dear," said Gípires, "I consider myself happy for having claimed this enchanting angel as mine; but I still have one more floor to explore, and on my way back, I will come for you.

He began to climb the final floor and heard a sharp voice saying: "Who are you, and why have you come so suddenly?" —"I am the man who has defeated the beasts that have kept these seductress angels captive, and I have come to save you." —"Well, if you wish to meet me, touch the button on your right." He touched it, and a huge door opened, revealing another angel even more beautiful than the first two. —Miss, —said the young man, —by luck, I want you to tell me how you ended up here and if you are a deity of heaven or of the earth. —From the earth, —she answered, —and don't be surprised that a beast controls me. Since you are a very kind gentleman, I beg you to avoid letting this beast find you here. —And what beast is it? —It's the devil! —I won't leave without fighting him, —said the young man, —and when he felt it, he realized the devil was speaking with him. —Prepare for us to fight, —the young man said, and he struck the devil with a large machete, cutting off one of his ears. And when he saw the ear fall, he picked it up and kept throwing it. —Ah, ungrateful one! —the devil said. —You have taken my ear. —Now leave me alone with the maiden, or else I'll kill

you, —he replied. The devil ran away, shouting. Give me my little ear!" —"Damn devil," —he replied, —"go to hell." Shortly after, news arrived in the city that the young man was returning, bringing with him the three enchanted princesses. When the King saw them, he wanted to marry all three, but they refused, telling him it was impossible to marry him, as the young man present was the savior of their lives and the husband of all three. The King became angry and said: 'Let my armies come upon this man.' —'Pagan King,' said the young man, 'do not be inconsistent and designate the battlefield for combat.' The young man took the devil's ear and gave it a strong bite. The devil appeared and said: 'I am at your service!' and gave him a great army, flying horses, brave riders, and spears. With them, the young man won the battle, took the King off the throne, and kept the crown and his three women.

#### NOTES:

1. Chichicaste, ortiga que secreta un líquido cáustico. (Chichicaste, a nettle that secretes a caustic liquid.)
2. Ron-ron, escarabajo. (Ron-ron, beetle.)
3. Monós, por vamonós. (Let's go)
4. Coches, cerdos. (Pigs)
5. Juelgo, la respiración. (Breathing)
6. Batido, bebida popular. (Shake)
7. Fonda, cantina de ínfimo orden. (Fonda, a low-class tavern)
8. Bolo, borracho. (Drunk)
9. Pato, puñal, (Knife)
10. Polis, policías. (Police)
11. Somatén, golpe fuerte. (A strong hit)
12. Chucho, perro. (Dog)
13. Culecas, cluecas.
14. Echar las gallinas sobre los huevos. (To set the hens on the eggs)
15. Mojaras, peces. (Fishes)
16. Tecomate, calabaza. (Pumpkin)
17. Pisto, dinero. (Money)
18. Petardos, estafas. (Frauds)
19. Alzos, hurtos. (Lifts, thefts)

- 20. Mi hijo. (My son)
- 21. Bartolina, prisión estrecha. (Bartolina, narrow prison cell.)
- 22. Se reformara, se vistiera de nuevo, se transformara (Would reform, would dress again, would transform.)
- 23. Sacra-Real. El título de los Reyes de España era: Sacra, Real Majestad. (Sacred-Royal. The title of the Kings of Spain was: Sacred, Royal Majesty.)
- 24. Experiencias. (Experiences)

## RIDDLES COLLECTED IN GUATEMALA

1.

Caballito de banda a banda  
que ni come, ni bebe, ni anda.  
(Little horse from side to side  
that neither eats, drinks, nor  
rides.)

Acera Sol.

2.

Agua pasa por mi casa,  
cate de mi corazón.  
(Water passes by my house,  
blow of my heart.)

Aguacate.  
(Avocado)

3.

En un monte campechano  
está un padre franciscano;  
tiene dientes y no come,  
tiene barbas y no es hombre.  
(On a gentle countryside hill,  
lives a Franciscan priest so still;  
he has teeth but doesn't eat,  
he has a beard, no man to  
meet.)

Ajo.  
(Garlic)

4.

Verde como el zacate,  
negra como el carbón,

blanca como la leche.  
(Green like the grass,  
black like coal,  
white like milk.)

Anona.

5.

Un árbol con doce ramas,  
cada rama con su nido,  
cada nido con sus pájaros,  
cada pájaro con su nombre.  
(A tree with twelve branches,  
each branch with its nest,  
each nest with its birds,  
each bird with its name.)

Año. (Year)

6.

Chiquito como un gallo  
aguanta más que un caballo.  
(Small like a rooster,  
yet it jumps higher than a  
horse.)

Bacinica  
(chamber pot)

7.

Largo y peludo,  
sabroso para tu culo.  
(Long and hairy,  
delicious for your bottom.)

Caballo  
(Horse)

8.

Regálame un poco  
de verde verdino  
para este pobre  
que llevo entre las canillas.  
(Give me a little  
of greenish green  
for this poor one  
that I carry between my legs.)

Id.

9.

De una peña soy nacida,  
y es tan contraria mi suerte,  
que el fuego me da la vida  
y el agua me da la muerte.  
(I was born from a rock,  
and my luck is so contrary,  
that fire gives me life  
and water gives me death.)

Cal.

10.

Verde en el monte,  
negro en la plaza,  
colorado en la casa.  
(Green in the mountain,  
black in the square,  
red in the house.)

Carbón.  
(Coal)

11.

Carreta será tu abuela.  
(A cart will be your  
grandmother.)

Carretela

12.

Blanca como la leche,  
negra como la hez,  
habla y no tiene boca,  
anda y no tiene pies.  
(White as milk,  
black as the dregs,  
speaks and has no mouth,  
walks and has no feet.)

Carta.  
(Letter.)

13.

Cebo en una olla.  
(Fat in a pot.)



Cebolla  
(Onion)

17.

14.

Choco, pero no del ojo,  
late, pero no muerde.  
(I bump, but not with the eye, I  
beat, but I don't bite.)

Chocolate

Tibí, tibirí,  
Tibí, tibirá,  
Sábana pintada,  
¿Qué será?  
(Tibí, tibirí,  
Tibí, tibirá,  
Painted sheet,  
What will it be?)

15.

Cielo  
(Sky)

Colorado está colgado,  
Bisbiringo lo está viendo,  
si Colorado se cayera,  
Bisbiringo se lo comiera.  
(Red is hanging,  
Bisbiringo is watching it,  
if Red were to fall,  
Bisbiringo would eat it.)

Chorizo y el gato  
(Chorizo and the  
cat)

18.

Cielo arriba,  
cielo abajo,  
y el mar en medio.  
(Sky above,  
sky below,  
and the sea in between.)

Coco.  
(Coconut)

16.

Tiruliro está colgado,  
Pititillo está sentado,  
Si Tiruliro se cayera,  
Pititillo lo cogiera.  
(Tiruliro is hanging,  
Pititillo is sitting,  
If Tiruliro falls,  
Pititillo will catch him.)

19.

Un negrito subió al cielo,  
pegó un grito y bajó al suelo.  
(A little black boy climbed to the  
sky, shouted a cry, and fell to  
the ground.)

Cohete.  
(Firework)

Id.

20.

Un viejito sube al cielo,  
pega un grito y baja al suelo.  
(An old man climbs to the sky,  
shouts a cry, and falls to the  
ground.)

Id.

21.

Anima del pelo liso,  
retrato del monumento,  
¿por qué le sacas la lengua  
al divino Sacramento?  
(Spirit of smooth hair,  
portrait of the monument,  
why do you stick out your  
tongue  
at the divine Sacrament?)

La comunión  
(The communion.)

22.

Vámonos pronto a la cama,  
a hacer lo que hacemos  
siempre, a juntar pelo con pelo,  
dejando lo vivo adentro.  
(Let's go to bed early,  
and do what we always do,  
and join hair to hair,  
leaving the living inside.)

A dormir.  
(To sleep.)

23.

En un callejón oscuro

meten y sacan a don Juan  
desnudo.

(In a dark alley, they put in and  
take out Don Juan naked.)

Espada.  
(Sword.)

24.

Una señora muy aseñorada,  
llena de remiendos y sin una  
puntada.  
(A very distinguished lady, full of  
patches and without a stitch.)

Gallina.  
(Hen)

25.

Una señora muy aseñorada,  
con muchos remiendos  
y ninguna puntada.  
(A very dignified lady,  
with many patches  
and no stitches.)

Id.

26.

Se sentó peludo sobre rapado  
juró peludo no levantarse,  
hasta que rapado estuviera  
peludo.  
Gallina sobre los huevos.  
(He sat with hair on baldness  
and swore with hair not to rise,

until baldness was hairy.  
Hen on the eggs.)

27.

Una vieja tonta y loca  
con las tripas en la boca  
(An old foolish and crazy  
woman  
with her guts in her mouth.)

Guitarra.  
(Guitar.)

28.

Cajita de pon-pon,  
que no tiene tapa ni tapón.  
(Little pom-pom box,  
that has neither lid nor stopper.)

Huevo.  
(Egg)

29.

Mis padres fueron cantores, mis  
hermanos no lo son; traigo la  
capilla blanca y amarillo el  
corazón.  
(My parents were singers,  
my siblings are not;  
I wear a white chapel  
and have a yellow heart.)

Id.

30.

Cajuelita de pon.pon,  
que no tiene tapa ni tapón.  
(Little box of pon-pon,  
that has neither lid nor stopper.)

Id.

31.

Van cien damas  
en un camino,  
que no levantan polvo,  
ni remolino.  
(A hundred ladies go  
along a road,  
but they raise no dust  
nor whirlwind.)

Hormigas.  
(Ants.)

32.

Un negrito camandulero,  
capita de hueso  
y sombrero de cuero.  
(A little black friar,  
a cloak made of bone,  
and a leather hat.)

Jute.1

33.

En la punta de aquel cerro,  
está una vaca barrosa,  
no hay vaquero que la corra,  
ni lacero que la alcance.

(On the tip of that hill,  
there stands a muddy cow;  
no cowboy can chase it,  
no lasso can reach it.)

Luna.  
(Moon)

34.

Entré a un templo sagrado  
y vide el mundo al revés:  
el penitente en la silla  
y el confesor en los pies.  
(I entered a sacred temple  
and saw the world upside down:  
the penitent on the chair  
and the confessor at the feet.)

El lavatorio, ceremonia  
religiosa.  
(The washing, a religious  
ceremony.)

35.

Entré a un tribunal y vi  
las cosas todas al revés:  
el penitente en la silla  
y el confesor a los pies.  
(I entered a court and saw  
everything in reverse: the  
penitent in the chair and the  
confessor at his feet.)

Id.

36.

Ya vas, ya regresas,  
y nunca te quitas.  
(You go, you return, and you  
never take it off.)

Llave. (Key)

37.

Sobre el mar hay un queso,  
sobre el queso una t.  
Adivínelo usted.  
(On the sea there is a cheese,  
on the cheese a T. Guess it.)

Marquesote  
(sponge-like sweet  
bread)

38.

Pino, lino, flores,  
y alrededor amores.  
(Pine, linen, flowers, and around  
it loves.)

Mesa de  
comedor.  
(Dining  
table.)

39.

Adivina, adivinico,  
cuántos pelos tiene un mico.  
(Guess, guess, how many hairs  
does a monkey have?)

Mil y pico  
(A thousand and  
some)

40.

¿cuál cosa será, señores,  
que tupe el entendimiento,  
que la carne está por fuera  
y el pellejo está por dentro?  
(What's the thing, gentlemen,  
that confuses the  
understanding,  
that the flesh is on the outside  
and the skin is on the inside?)

Molleja  
(Gizzard)

41.

Verde mi nacimiento,  
colorado mi vivir,  
negro me amortajaron  
antes que fuera a morir.  
(Green is my birth,  
red is my life,  
black they shrouded me  
before I went to die.)

Mora

42.

Cartas van,  
cartas vienen,  
en el aire  
detienen.  
(Letters go,  
letters come,  
in the air  
they stop.)

Nubes.  
(Clouds)

43.

Tinto y lulo,  
con siete pelitos en el culo.  
(Black and sweet,  
with seven little hairs on its  
seat.)

Nance

44.

Soy la redondez del mundo,  
sin mí no puede haber Dios,  
Papas y Cardenales sí,  
pero Pontífices nó.  
(I am the roundness of the  
world,  
without me there can be no  
God,  
Popes and Cardinals, yes,  
but Pontiffs — not.)

La letra O  
(The letter O)

45.

Cajita de china-china,  
que se abre, se cierra  
y no rechina.  
(Little box of china-china,  
that opens, closes,  
and doesn't creak.)

Ojo. (Eye)

46.

Cajuelita de china  
que se cierra y no rechina.  
(Little china box  
that closes and doesn't creak.)

Id.

47.

¿Quiénes fueron los que  
primero vieron el mar?  
(Who were the first ones to see  
the sea?)

Los ojos.  
(The eyes)

48.

Te trinco en el suelo y sin  
ninguna duda, te meto una  
cuarta de carne cruda.  
(I pin you to the ground  
and without any doubt,  
I put in a span of raw meat.)

Pantuflo o  
zapato  
(Slipper or  
shoe.)

49.

Pan para blanca,

semilla negra,  
cinco toritos  
y una ternera.  
(White bread for Blanca,  
black seed inside,  
five little bulls  
and one young cow.)

Papel, tinta,  
dedos y  
pluma.  
(Paper, ink,  
fingers, and  
pen.)

50.

El que lo tiene lo carga  
y el que no, carga un petate.  
(He who has it, carries it; and he  
who doesn't, carries a bundle.)

Paraguas.  
(Umbrella)

51.

Una viejita muy arrugadita  
y en el culo una tranquita.  
(A very wrinkled old lady  
and a quiet one on her ass.)

Pasa.  
(Raisin)

52.

Escopeta que no mata perdiz,  
que apunta en el suelo  
y va a dar en la nariz.

(A shotgun that doesn't kill a  
partridge,  
that points to the ground  
and ends up hitting the nose.)

53.

Pedo  
(Fart)

Entre dos piedras feroces  
Sale un negrito dando voces.  
(Between two fierce stones,  
a little black one comes out  
shouting.)

Id.

54.

Un señor subió a un cerro  
y bajó con ganado.  
(A man climbed a hill and came  
down with cattle.)

Peine con  
piojos.  
(Comb with  
lice.)

55.

Adivina, adivinante,  
qué trae el ave por delante.  
(Riddle me this,  
what does the bird carry in  
front?)

Pico.  
(Beak.)

56.

La nana tendida,  
el tata paseando,  
los hijos bailando.  
(The mother lying down,  
the father walking around,  
the children dancing.)

La piedra de moler  
y el maiz.  
(The grinding  
stone and the  
corn.)

57.

Le quitan, le quitan,  
entre más le quitan, más hay.  
(They take away and take away,  
the more they take away, the  
more there is.)

Pila  
(Stack)

58.

Árbol que me das sombra,  
a Dios le sirves de alfombra<sup>3</sup>  
y de luz al miserable.  
(Tree that gives me shade,  
you serve as a carpet for God  
and as light for the poor.)

Pino.  
(Pine)

59.

Botón sobre botón,  
botón de filigrana,  
que no lo adivinaréis  
ni hoy ni mañana.  
(Button over button,  
a filigree button,  
you won't guess it  
today or tomorrow.)

Piña  
(Pineapple)

60.

Oro no es,  
plata no es,  
levanta la cortina  
y lo verés.  
(It's not gold,  
it's not silver,  
lift the curtain  
and you'll see it.)

Plátano  
(Banana)

61.

¿cuál es un San Antoñito  
que ni come ni bebe  
y siempre está gordito?  
(What is a little Saint Anthony  
who neither eats nor drinks,  
yet is always chubby?)

Id.

62.

Capa sobre capa,  
a que no me lo adivinas  
ni de aquí de Totonicapa.  
(Layer upon layer,  
bet you can't guess what I am  
even from here in Totonicapa.)

Repollo.  
(Cabage)

63.

Negra es ella al parecer,  
cuerpo tiene, carne no,  
porque la carne soy yo  
de quien ella se mantiene.  
(Black she seems to be,  
has a body, yet no flesh,  
for I am the flesh  
on which she feeds.)

Sombra.  
(Shadow)

64.

Cien monjitas en un convento  
que todas se orinan a un  
tiempo.  
(A hundred little nuns in a  
convent  
all pee at the same time.)

Tejas.  
(Roof tiles)

65.



Hay cien niñas  
 en un convento,  
 todas se orinan  
 al mismo tiempo.  
 (There are a hundred girls  
 in a convent,  
 all pee  
 at the same time.)

Id.

66.

Cuarenta caballos en un corral,  
 todos juntos chorrean por igual.  
 (Forty horses in a corral,  
 all together they drip equally.)

Id.

67.

Tercio, pero no de leña,  
 pelo, pero no de gato.  
 (Tercio, but not of firewood,  
 hair, but not of a cat.)

Terciopelo  
 (Velvet)

68.

Una señora muy aseñorada,  
 con el pico por delante  
 y los ojos por detrás.  
 (A very aged lady,  
 with the beak in front  
 and the eyes behind.)

Tijeras  
 (Scissors)

69.

Dos pajaritos que caminan en  
 compás  
 con el pico por delante,  
 y los ojos por detrás.  
 (Two little birds walking in  
 rhythm,  
 with their beaks in front,  
 and their eyes behind.)

Id.

70.

¿cuál es la cosa que, cortándole  
 los extremos se vuelve más  
 larga?  
 (What's the thing that, when its  
 ends are cut off, becomes  
 longer?)

Zanja  
 Ditch

Special riddles.

71.

Tres cazadores cazando  
 y tres palomas volando,  
 cada cual cogió la suya  
 y dos se fueron volando.

(Three hunters hunting  
and three doves flying,  
each one caught its own  
and two flew away.)

(Vivas was the  
name of his  
servant.)

Cadacual era el  
nombre de uno de  
los cazadores.  
(Cadacual was the  
name of one of the  
hunters.)

74.

Doroteo se fué al campo  
y cazó un su animalito  
y comió carne nacida y sin  
nacer.  
(Doroteo went to the field and  
hunted a little animal and ate  
meat both born and unborn.)

72.

Doce peras en un plato,  
doce frailes a cogerlas,  
Cada cual cogió lá suya  
y quedaron once peras.  
(Twelve pears on a plate,  
twelve friars to pick them,  
Each one picked his own  
and eleven pears remained.)

Mató una  
venada  
preñada de  
un  
venadito.  
(He killed a  
pregnant  
doe with a  
fawn  
inside.)

Id.

73.

Un cazador fué al campo,  
siete palomas mató,  
muertas las llevó a su casa  
y vivas se las comió.  
(A hunter went to the field,  
killed seven doves,  
carried the dead ones home,  
and ate them alive.)

75.

Todos hacemos nuestra familia  
por el lugar correspondiente  
que Dios ha dado; pero hay uno  
que la hace con la pata.  
(We all make our family in the  
appropriate place that God has  
given; but there is one who  
makes it with its paw.)

Vivas se llamaba  
su criado.

El pato.  
(The Duck)

76.

De Antaño soy hija,  
De Antaño son madre,  
Crié hijo ajeno,  
marido de mi madre.  
(I am the daughter of the past,  
Of the past is my mother,  
I raised another's son,  
The husband of my mother.)

Había  
amamantado a su  
padre en la  
prisión.  
(She had  
breastfed her  
father in prison.)

77.

Coman pan y beban vino  
del bautizo de este niño;  
es mi hijo, es mi nieto  
y hijo de mi marido.  
(Eat bread and drink wine  
from this child's baptism;  
he is my son, my grandson,  
and my husband's son.)

Se había  
casado con  
su hijo.  
(She had  
married her  
son.)

78.

me estoy, pensando.  
de pensar me vuelvo loca,  
con la suegra de la mujer de mi  
hermano  
¿Qué parentesco me toca?  
(I am thinking.  
From thinking I go crazy,  
with the mother-in-law of my  
brother's wife,  
what relationship do I have?)

Era su  
madre.  
(It was her  
mother.)

79.

¿Qué es lo primero que hace el  
buey al salir el sol?  
(What is the first thing the ox  
does when the sun rises?)

Sombra.  
(Shadow)

80.

¿por qué el buey busca la  
sombra?  
Porque la sombra no busca al  
(Why does the ox seek the  
shade?  
Because the shade doesn't  
seek the)

Buey.  
(Ox)

81.

¿En qué se parece el cielo a un huevo?

(In what way is the sky similar to an egg?)

En que se  
estrella.  
(In what it  
crashes.)

82.

¿En qué se parece un elefante a una hormiga?

(In what does an elephant resemble an ant?)

En nada.  
(In nothing.)

83.

El carpintero y su hermano,  
el herrero y su mujer  
se comieron nueve huevos  
y les tocaron a tres.

(The carpenter and his brother,  
the blacksmith and his wife,  
ate nine eggs,  
and three were left for them.)

El herrero era el  
hermano del  
carpintero.  
(The blacksmith  
was the brother of  
the carpenter.)

84.

Estaba un pato,  
sobre su cola un gato,  
se zambulló el pato  
y no se mojó el gato.  
(There was a duck,  
on its tail a cat,  
the duck dove in,  
and the cat didn't get wet.)

El gato estaba  
sobre su propia  
cola.  
(The cat was on its  
own tail.)

**Adrián Recinos.**

**NOTES:**

1. Jute, crustáceo. (crustacean.)
2. Nance, pequeña fruta tropical. (Nance, small tropical fruit.)
3. En las fiestas religiosas y profanas es costumbre regar hojas de pino sobre el suelo. (In religious and secular celebrations, it is customary to sprinkle pine leaves on the ground.)