

THEME 2:



From the Weeping Woman to the Naked Gringo, a guide to Costa Rica's spookiest folklore

By Alejandro Zúñiga (The Tico Times) October 28, 2013

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Creepy tales are all a part of folklore.

Halloween is not considered a traditional holiday in Costa Rica, but the lore here is rich in scary stories. Although few people truly believe in haunts these days, it never hurts to pay attention. It has been said that these tales are based on incidents that took place in the colonial era, and they are repeated as warnings to follow the straight and narrow. Or else...

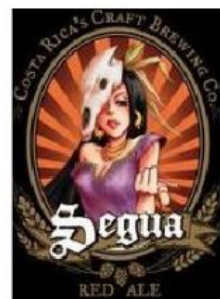
La Segua

Central America's own version of the Sirens. Young men (and perhaps some older ones too) would be riding home on their trusty steed after a late night at the canteen or roadhouse. But then, there along the roadside he comes upon a damsel in distress. And she's quite fetching. Being a chivalrous fellow, the man helps her climb on the back of the horse and they start off.

Along the way he becomes aware of foul odors and hefty snorting from his passenger. He turns around, and sees that the femme fatal has turned into La Segua, a monster with the head of a putrefied horse.

If he doesn't succumb to a heart attack, he vows to change his flirtatious ways, settle down and marry the plain but respectable girl next door. He also vows to never help a stranger in need again. It's a somewhat dubious lesson. Although, to be fair, The Tico Times does not condone picking up hitchhikers.

Today, La Segua has been demystified and gussied up a bit as the mascot of a Costa Rica's famous craft beer. Not so scary now.



El Cadejo

Another tale from the colonial era, this story is of a defiant young man whose father decides to teach him a lesson. If the young man continued in his life of sin, the father – who was also a wizard, apparently – promised to turn his son into a dog. And not just any canine but a big, black, hairy dog with red eyes and goat feet. So, a goat-dog, basically. Which is much worse than a regular dog. The creature also is condemned to dragging a chain behind him (did you know leash laws actually started in the colonial period?). The son ignored his pop's advice and soon he turned into the devil dog, Cadejo.



Many souls swear to have heard Cadejo rattle his chain and growl as they made their way home on rural roads in the dead of night.

El Puente de Piedra

In Grecia, there is a bridge called Puente de Piedra. Satan constructed this bridge at the behest of a wily Costa Rican who needed to cross the river. The Costa Rican, with no faith in MOPT to get the job done, chose instead to barter his soul if Beezlebub would build a bridge of stone. But the devil had to finish it before the cock crowed at dawn.

The devil got busy hauling stones from the river and stacking them to form the bridge, and when he had only one more space to fill, the Tico grabbed a rooster that wandered nearby and squeezed it, making it crow. Thus, he cancelled the contract, and outwitted the Dark Lord Satan himself. By looking up at the bridge from down below you can see the space where the last stone should have gone.





Exercise 6: Choose the correct word or phrase to complete the sentences.

1. The woman who appeared to men at night was described as a _____ one.
a) witchy b) mischievous c) good looking
2. Once on the horse, the woman started producing _____ that called the attention of men.
a) sniffs and smells b) sounds and talks c) smells and movements
3. Due to the shock derived from the scene, men promised to change their _____ lifestyle.
a) hardworking b) frivolous c) demystified
4. The story of El Cadejo is about a _____ man who was chastised by his father.
a) rebellious b) religious c) flirtatious
5. As the story states, El Cadejo was heard in _____ areas of the country.
a) urban b) road c) country
6. In the legend of Puente de Piedra, the author mixes _____ details.
a) mythical and real b) fabled and fictional c) unreal and inaccurate
7. Puente de Piedra story describes the requests of a _____ Costa Rican man.
a) trustworthy b) oblivious c) cunning



Exercise 7: Complete the following sentences with words or phrases from the reading.

spooky / steed / chivalrous / damsel / barter / outwit

1. Courage is the quality that attracted the beautiful _____ to him.
2. John was neither a great soldier nor a statesman, but he was a _____ knight and loyal to what he believed were the interests of his family.
3. See Scooby and Shaggy through five huge episodes filled with monsters and _____ ghosts.
4. The explorers used blankets and other supplies for _____ to get food from the native people.
5. The fox managed to _____ the hunter by hiding in a tree.
6. Trot beside breaking waves on your criollo _____ at Playa Negra, one of Costa Rica's best surf breaks, and stay in beachfront bungalows.

THEME 3:



Writing Task

Read the information that explains the reasons for calling Escazú the city of witches.

Why Is Escazú the City of Witches? To read the text
click here:



Exercise 8: Write a summary of the story. Fill up the outline that follows.

Why Is Escazú the City of Witches?

By Alejandro Zúñiga October 26, 2007

<https://ticotimes.net/2007/10/26/why-is-escazu-the-city-of-witches>



• Introduction –

Escazú's emblem:

• Discovery of Escazú:

-year:

-discoverer:

• The name Escazú

comes from:

Meaning:

• The area was known

for its witches.

Who were they?

• Escazú became noted

for its cures because

• Curanderos could also

• In 1821, the local

government:

• Around 1900,

an old man called:

recommended:

• Ña Matea, whose

potions:

was known for:

• Church of Strong Prayer

to the Holy Spirit offers:

