

## Model Narrative: “Peuchen”

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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*El árbol* (“the tree”) *El que a buen árbol se arrima, buena sombra le cobija.*

By now, we were nearing the house of Abuelita Remedios. My four younger sisters, Juanita, Delia, Velia, and Pita, were all exhausted. We were also rapidly losing daylight. “Keep your eyes open for somewhere to take shelter for the night,” I barked at everyone. Teresita’s warning about the threat of the Peuchen was still ringing in my ears, so I wanted to get us off this path before dark.

I took the lead off the path, towards what looked like two caves. The first cave seemed too exposed, but the other cave had a tiny entrance. Inside, it opened into a large room with a dry, sandy floor. “Let’s stay in here,” Delia decided.

No one mentioned the Peuchen as we were settling down. Feeling protected, everyone else dropped off to sleep quickly. The claws of sleep tore at my eyelids, trying to drag them down over my eyes, but I had to stay awake. I had to protect my sisters from whatever might be coming for us tonight.

Suddenly, I heard a whistle in the darkness. I could barely trace the shape of someone standing in the entrance. It was a woman about my height wearing a shabby tunic dress; she was breathing heavily, the air whistling. She beckoned to me as she left the cave. I was gripped with fear, but I knew I had to draw whoever it was away from my sleeping sisters.

Facing away from me in the moonlight, the woman began to speak softly in the familiar voice of La Llorona, but in a sort of hiss. “Odilia, you and your sisters are in grave danger. I already fed tonight on the blood of a ssssssheep just over the hill, so you are not at risssssk from me. I will guide you to ssssssafety.”

Overwhelmed with relief, I began to walk towards her, but something stopped me. It sounded like La Llorona, but why the hissing sound? “La Llorona, is that you?” I whispered. I walked closer to her, mentally pleading for her to really be who she seemed. She turned to face me, and as she did, I heard Juanita scream, “Don’t look into her eyes Odilia, she isn’t who you think. It’s the Peuchen!”

The creature’s feet began to move towards me, wiggling, no, slithering like a snake. I started to run, when suddenly a new whistling scream high in the air bounced off the cliffs. The snake feet were upon me, “Odilia, he’ssssss here. Run back to the cave as fasssst as you can,” the Peuchen’s voice anxiously insisted.

I tripped and fell over rocks, and when I turned back the figure was gone. In her place was a gigantic snake with huge, dragon-like wings. She gave a whistling scream as she rose into the air. Then, to my horror, she was answered by a louder scream and into view flew another, even larger snake. “Stay away from my prize, Sister. I haven’t fed on human blood for weeks and I won’t let you stand in my way,” he said.

We watched as the two Peuchens launched at one another and became a mass of wriggling, writhing bodies and beating wings. Whistling screams created a cacophony that echoed in the cave.

I knew we had to escape. We crept out, into the mouth of the other cave. As we turned a corner, I felt a cool breeze on my sweat drenched face and realized that this must lead to an exit. We could still hear the screams of the Peuchens, but they were fading away. The further we got away from them, the more confident I felt.

Finally, we came to another cave in the back of the cliff. We could see that it connected to a series of caves, which were likely to hold a way out. I led our little troop to a dark corner and whispered, “Let’s take turns getting some rest.”

As I sat there watching my sisters sleep, I wondered about the fate of the Peuchen who had tried to save us. Why had she come? Why had she saved us? Why did the Peuchen and her brother have such different ideas about right and wrong?

Written by EL Education for instructional purposes.