

# The Legend of Maria Makiling

Once upon a time, a diwata lived in a mountain of Laguna. She was called Maria Makiling. She has light olive skin, long shining black hair and twinkling eyes. She was breathtakingly beautiful. Maria was always about helping other people. One time, the children of a farmer got sick. When he went to Maria to seek help, he was given a bilao full of ginger. The farmer sadly went home carrying the bilao of ginger. When he reached his hut, he was greatly surprised: the ginger had turned to gold! Because of Maria's kindness, the townsfolk had grown to love her.

Maria was a great beauty. She was sought for and wooed by many suitors. Three of them were very much determined to have her. One is Captain Lara, a Spanish soldier who always brought her gifts from Europe. The other is Joselito, a Spanish mestizo who was studying in Manila. Every time Joselito visits Maria, he had many stories to tell her about foreign countries and the things that he had read in books. He dreamed of going to Spain. He didn't like to live in the Philippines. Of the three, it was Juan who is the most industrious. He is a common farmer. But he is so hard working, and his fruits and vegetable grew fat and juicy. He also had many pet animals and birds. But if truth be told, it was Juan who Maria secretly admired. As time passed, her suitors became more and more impatient and demanded that Maria tell them who she loves. So the diwata was forced to promise: "By the night of the full moon, I will tell you my answer."

When the night of the full moon arrived, all of her suitors climbed up the mountain to know her decision. All was startled when Maria told them that it was Juan whom she loved. The suitors went away feeling dejected. On the other hand, Joselito and Captain Lara were very much angry with Juan. They thought of a plan against him.

One day, all was surprised when a huge fire devoured the cuartel of the Spanish. Because of the fire, Captain Lara ordered many Filipinos to be captured. Secretly, Joselito helped him. Juan was among those who they imprisoned and tortured.

Many prisoners did not last long from the tortures the Spanish had inflicted upon them. One night, Captain Lara and Joselito secretly spoke with the prisoners. The next day, Juan was blamed for the burning of the Spanish cuartel. "I did not do it!" cried Juan. But the prisoners pointed at him because Captain Lara and Joselito frightened them.

The soldiers brought Juan to the plaza. In front of hundreds of people, Juan was shot as the enemy of the Spaniards. He was killed even though he didn't commit any wrongdoing. But before he died, he managed to shout out loud Maria's name. It was heard by the diwata so she quickly went down her mountain.

But Juan was already dead when Maria arrived. Tears falling down her face, she embraced tightly his lifeless body. Afterwards, she faced the crowd. "Why did you not take care of

him?" she shouted. Meanwhile, Captain Lara and Joselito fled to Manila because they were afraid of Maria. When she learned of this, she cursed the two. She also cursed those men who cannot accept failure in love. Soon, the curse took effect. Joselito suddenly became ill. There was no cure for his illness.

Captain Lara, on the other hand, was called back to Laguna when the Filipinos revolted against the abuse that the Spaniards had inflicted upon them. The revolution quickly spread to many parts of the Philippines. The revolutionary Filipinos killed Captain Lara.

From then on, Maria never let herself be seen by the people. Every time somebody got lost on the mountain, they remember the curse of the diwata. They remember the great love of Maria Makiling.