

Local Mayan legend:

Mayan princess Ixmucane received a special gift from the sun god that allowed her to solve any problem a human could worry about. Once the worry was shared with the doll she could take the worry out of our work and into hers. It is said the worry doll represents the princess and her wisdom.



Guatemalan legend:

Once upon a time in the hills of Guatemala there lived an old man; his daughter, Flora; and Flora's two children, Maria and Diego. Their home was a small hut made of mud and wood. The grandfather was a farmer, as many of his father's ancestors were and as he taught his own family to be. One year there was a terrible drought. Without enough rain, the crops dwindled, and they had very little food.

The whole family would wake up with the sun and tend to the fields in the hope that the rain would come. Then Maria and Diego would go to school for the day. At night, Flora would make tortillas for dinner with what corn they had and then weave colorful cloth to sell at the market. The grandfather would tell the children stories before tucking them into their hammocks at bedtime. One of the children's favorite tales was about a magical doll that could grant wishes.

One night a burglar snuck in and stole all of Flora's cloth — everything she had worked so hard to make over many months. She cried that she had nothing to sell at the market and didn't know how the family would get the money they needed.

The next day Flora came down with a fever, and Maria knew she had to do something to help. Then, she had an idea. She went through her mother's weaving basket and found scraps of fabric in odd colors and shapes. She brought the basket outside and told her brother to collect small twigs for her. With the scraps of cloth and the twigs, Diego and Maria went to work. They worked late into the night and kept their project a secret. When they ran out of cloth, they saw they had made dozens of tiny dolls in tiny clothes. Maria hoped these dolls would be magical, like the one in her grandfather's story.

That night, Maria lined up a few of the dolls and spoke to them of her worries: "My little friends, we need your help. My family is in trouble. The fields are dry, my mother is sick, and we have no food or money. Please help us. Good night." She placed the dolls lovingly under her pillow and lay down to sleep. Maria slept well that night, confident that the dolls would somehow help her.

In the morning, Maria and Diego packed up the dolls and walked a long way to the market. The family was so poor the children didn't even have sandals; they had to walk barefoot. When they finally got to the market, they found that it was crowded with people. They had never sold at the market before, and

Maria had never seen anyone else sell tiny dolls there, but she was determined that her plan would work. The two finally found a good spot near a shoe seller.

Maria and Diego laid the dolls on the sidewalk. The shoe seller saw them and wondered why anyone would want such tiny dolls. Marie explained there was magic in the dolls. The shoe seller laughed and said the magic in his shoes didn't help them to sell. Marie was firm and said: "We shall see."

The day wore on, but no one bought any of the dolls. The children were becoming sad and worried. As Maria was packing up the dolls to go home, a man in fine clothes and a large hat came by and asked what they were selling. Diego piped up: "These little dolls."

"Magic dolls!" Maria corrected her brother.

The man looked impressed. "Well, I could use a little magic. I'll take all of them!" he said.

Maria and Diego excitedly wrapped up the dolls for the man, who then handed them a stack of money, without asking the price. Maria thanked him, and the man was gone before Maria could say anything more. She counted the money and found there was enough for the family to live on for a year.

The two bought some food at the market and then excitedly headed for home to tell their mother and grandfather the news.

"We sold the dolls we made!" Diego exclaimed.



"Magic dolls!" Maria emphasized, and she told them the whole story.

"This doesn't sound like any magic," Flora said to her children, "It sounds like you worked hard, and it paid off."

"Ah," the grandfather chimed in, "but you are feeling much better, Flora. How do you explain that?"

"And look! It's raining!" Diego jumped up and pointed to the fields. Sure enough, it was raining and the fields were getting the water they needed. The drought was over.

That night as Maria got ready for bed, she noticed something in her pocket. She reached in to find a pouch that contained the same dolls she had slept with under her pillow the night before. She was surprised because she was sure she sold all of the dolls to the man. Inside the pouch was a little note that read: "Tell these dolls your secret wishes. Tell them your problems. Tell them your dreams. And when you awake, you may find the magic within you to make your dreams come true."

Coffey, Lisa. "The Legend of the Worry Dolls." *Sleep Savvy*, 24 January 2019, <https://sleepsavvymagazine.com/what-is-a-worry-doll/>

How to:

Make Your Own Worry Dolls

by Larissa

What you will need:

Chenille pipe cleaners

Embroidery floss and/or yarn (multi-color)

Fabric scraps (multi- color and/or prints)

Glue

Fabric markers or sharpies

Scissors

Wooden craft clothing pins



1. Pipe cleaner cut in half for arms



2. Secure arms by twisting pipe cleaners



3. Wrap floss/yarn around torso



4. wrap floss/yarn around each peg to make pants or around both for a skirt or dress



5. Draw a face with markers



6. Scrap fabric for a hat



Now you have your very own worry doll to tell all your worries to.