

Legends and Ghosts of Taboga Island and Morro Island

The Howling Dog of Morro

The townspeople say that long ago on Morro Island was a lovely small house at the base of the hill next to the sea, with a balcony placed so the owner could sit and hear the waves lapping against the rocks. One night, the owner and his son were asleep in their beds when an enormous rock rolled down from the hilltop and landed on the home, instantly killing both the owner and his son. By a miracle, their dog escaped and began to howl. In the morning it was heard by the neighbors who came running to see the unfortunate fate that had befallen the sleeping family. The townspeople say the dog still can be heard at night, and when you approach Morro Island, it can be seen for a flash, only to disappear under the trees.



The Ancient Shark of Taboga

Long, long ago, when there was so many fish in the sea one only had to use his hands to catch his supper, there lived a shark beside Morro Island. He lived for many years feasting on as much fish as his stomach could hold. He had seen many battles, and was encrusted in barnacles like an old ship covered with scrapes, evidence of spears which had glanced off his armor. All Tabogans knew where he lived and respected his home. They never disturbed him.

One day a stranger came to the island, and not knowing the tale of the shark, went swimming into his protected area. The shark was angry and at once the stranger disappeared from the surface of the sea with only one drop of blood left floating on the current. Townspeople had been nearby and seen the fate of the stranger. Soon after, out of mounting fear that the shark was becoming more dangerous, a priest was paid to sing chants to the shark which brought him to the surface. The priest then sprinkled him with holy water. Afterwards all fear disappeared, and so possibly did the shark..

A research expedition to Taboga in the 1920's did indeed record several large specimens: 1 Hammerhead Shark, 1350 lbs., 17 ft. long; 1 Tiger Shark, 1760 lbs., 20 ft. long; 1 Sawfish, 4500 lbs. 29 ft. long. Due to over-fishing, sharks are now rarely spotted on Taboga.

A Robbery Gone Wrong

In 1855, 3 people were hanged for the stabbing murder of an American and his wife, the Tracys. The couple owned a small repair shop on Taboga and were heard screaming late at night. Neighbors ran to help but were too late. The Tracys were found dead from stab wounds. The assailants had come into their home to rob them but when they resisted, the assailants brutally killed both townspeople. The killers were caught immediately and put into a makeshift cell at the Pacific Steamship Company. Later that night, enraged townspeople took justice into their own hands. They dragged the men out of their hold, and promptly hung all three without a trial. When police arrived to investigate, no one knew anything. After 3 days of investigation and questioning, police left without learning more and never found the bodies. They are still said to wander the island late at night.

The Ghost of the Virgin del Carmen

Barely past midnight, on a brilliant moonlit night, Taboga Bay lay still and sparkling with reflections of the southern stars, only a few candle-lights remained flickering in the village. Just offshore pirate rogues laid secretly in wait, still filthy and stinking from their voyage. Then black clouds came looming over to cover the town in darkness. They had hidden for hours on the deck of their sailing ship just for this moment. Taboga Island lay helpless and ready for raiding. Full of anticipation and tension for what was about to ensue, they silently climbed into their dinghies intending to come ashore a wreak havoc on the unsuspecting. Just as they were about to reach the shore the pirate crew spied a mist coming towards them from the beach, out of the fog a magnificent woman appeared, so breathtaking she could not be from this world. She marched along Playa Honda straight for the tiny pirate boats, flanked by her fierce army with swords in hand ready for battle. Shaking in their boots and afraid for their very lives, the pirates hastily retreated for their ship and set sail into the Bay of Panama, never to return, the spirit army following closely at their tail.

The Headless Rider

Take a stroll on dark nights past the Hotel Chu towards the historic graveyard of Taboga Island where graves from as early as the 1700's hold the remains of Spaniards and French, and townspeople of the island. On your way, keep a careful watch for an old man sadly riding along on his mule with his head in his hands. People say he is the ghost of an old Catholic bishop who was decapitated by pirates during one of their many raids on Taboga.

The Full Moon Choir

Exploring the town of Taboga on a full moon night, you will see that the townspeople come alive in the cool evenings on Taboga Island. Don't forget to walk by the church of San Pedro on the Plaza. Perhaps you will hear a choir? The elders of the island say that at midnight when the moon is full, Spanish nuns can be heard singing Christian hymns, their charming voices floating through the windows of this famous church which has been located on the plaza since the 1500's.

San Pedro still Watching over Taboga

In 1847 there was a huge fire in San Pedro town that threatened to destroy the Church of San Pedro. Some people attempted to rescue the statue of San Pedro but could not as it was badly worm-eaten. By what islanders believe was a miracle, the church did not burn. When the statue was examined it was found to be in good condition without worm damage. The same statue is still standing above the alter in the church in miraculously good condition.

Fairies Pool and Mermaids Garden

Somewhere, at the base of Mt. Sinai where the Spanish Cross is located there is said to be a magical pool. This pool is believed to have special healing powers. Fringed by green moss and lined with mother of pearl, many were said to have travelled to be healed by the magical waters of the Fairy Pool.

Not far from the pool, in front of the Mt. Sinai cove there is said to be a coral garden where mermaids once played. Legend says that the coral was magical and decorated by the mermaids in many shades of blues, pinks, lilacs and greens. The Mermaid Garden was said to be the birthplace and home of many colorful tropical fish. Due to the ravages of time, the mermaids have left and what exists today are a few beds of coral still home to colorful fish.

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