

# TRAUCO

Trauco is an 80-centimetre tall creature, similar to a gnome, that lives in the woods near the Chilote people. It looks like a strong short man. He carries a stone axe in his right hand, which he replaces with a staff when he is faced with a girl. He wears a hat made of dried grass and a poncho. He  
5 doesn't have feet, only stumps. People say he is the living representation of fecund love – the creator of new life. Some women think that he is a horrible little monster that scares everyone. These ladies think they have to keep away from him. Other women think he is attractive even though he is ugly.

10 Not only the girls worry about him, but also mothers, who know the consequences of his mischievous behaviour. They avoid sending their grown girls into the forest in search of firewood or in search of grass for the sheep because he can catch them on their way or give a blow to them with his wooden staff called “pahueldún”. These attacks do not happen if they are  
15 accompanied by their youngest siblings. He prefers to act when he sees girls alone in the forest.

Trauco is always on the alert, hanging from a tree and lurking in the forest for his victims – attractive, single girls.

As soon as it gets dark, he returns home to be with his bad-  
20 tempered and feared wife – Fiura. When he wants to know details of his future victim, he disguises himself as a bunch of quilineja<sup>1</sup> and sneaks into the kitchen, where all the family get together in the evenings. If someone tries to catch him, he disappears in the shadows.

Trauco is very interested in single women, especially if they are  
25 attractive. He will never be interested in a married woman. Whenever he

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<sup>1</sup> Dried sticks used to make brooms.

sees a girl in the woods, he climbs down from his tree and he hits the trunk with his axe three times. The echo sounds as if he were chopping all the trees. As a result of this, the girl gets so confused and scared that she does not realise when Trauco is next to her. Then he hits the girl with his staff of wood and she stares at him and, within seconds, she falls into a deep sleep. After some minutes, or perhaps hours (she does not know), she wakes up angry and crying, she stands up, arranges her torn clothes and hair, and cleans the leaves off her back. Then she runs home through the fields. As time goes by, the girl's body (possessed by Trauco) starts to change. The girls never hide these changes since they feel they are the victims of a supernatural being, against whom no single woman is protected enough.

After nine months, another Trauco's son is born. However, this does not socially affect the mother or the child because they feel linked to the magic of an unworldly<sup>2</sup> being.

People conjure a charm on him to keep him away or to escape from the effects of his presence. However, he is so powerful that nothing or nobody can stop him.

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<sup>2</sup> Having qualities that do not seem to belong to this world