

Scene- Night time with a full moon. Blanca, a middle-aged woman, with long gray hair wearing a long dingy white dress is standing near the sycamore tree.

Blanca

Come closer, come closer everyone, my name is Blanca de Luna which means white moon or full moon if you like. I heard what that young girl said about me!! (*pointing towards station 4*) No respect, she has no respect for elders. And YES, I was here first!! Before that sassy teenager Penny and even before Harry Potter!! I am a *curandera* -a healer, wise woman and star gazer. I am sought after by the community from Santa Buenaventura to San Gabriel to pray over the crops and groves, deliver babies and tend the sick and (*whispers*) an occasional, *mas o menos*, (more or less) love charm for the unwanted to give them confidence. Yes, Yes, (*looks down at her dress*) my dress was once white but now after 176 years out in the rain, sun and wind, it is what I like to call Dove Gray not Dingy. Teenagers!! That Penny will be the second death of me -there are days I regret stepping into the middle of the road in front of her. (*Looks down at her dress again*) I think some of these stains must be from my tears which is why some call me La Llorona, the crying woman. But I want to make it clear I am not the original La Llorona, that inconsolable woman who cries by the riverbed. My tears are shed for the injustice of being accused as a Witch, a *Bruja* who deals in curses and has a loveless heart. My work as a healer has its root in love -my prayers and skills work to ease suffering and bring life to our fields with a bountiful harvest. I started my training as a healer as a young girl of 9 when I lived with my family on a farm in what today is called Fillmore. Although Fillmore did not legally become established until 1887, there were many of us already living here for generations working the land and raising our families near the river -the Rio de Santa Clara. The beauty and generosity of the spirit of the Santa Clara Valley had been a blessing to the residents who made it their home. I was one of 6 girls and worked in the fields with my sisters -drifting away at times to sit by the river, pick flowers and enjoy the sound of the wind through the cottonwood trees. I was a day dreamer and earned the name of star gazer as I would sit outside at night looking at the stars. I was teased for my funny ways until one day Sanapia, a Chumash medicine woman from the Sespe tribe came to work her healing touch on my father's painful *empacho*, (*whispers*) constipation. Sanapia noticed how silent and attentive I was to her every

word- noticed that within the scrawny little girl beat the heart of a healer. As payment she asked my parents, making sure my mother was in on the discussion, if I could become her assistant -learning the ways of a wise woman. To my excitement and a little fear, my parents agreed and Sanapia return the following new moon to set on my new path. I worked hard, learning the ways of nature -memorizing plants and roots and when best to pick them. Learning the ways of the human heart and body –how best to choose the right mixture for a tea, powder or salve. There was another *curadera* in the Valley, Senora Ortiz, who could have taught me, yet my destiny was with Sanapia. Later I found out Senora Ortiz was resentful of my training with Sanapia and as the grudge grew in her heart her healing touch began to fade. Senora Ortiz secretly turned her attention to the practice of witchcraft and became a Bruja.