

## The Curse of the Caleuche

How would you feel if you saw a sailing ship that was full of bright lights, music, and laughter? Would you want to join the party? Maybe not, if you lived on the island of Chiloe.

Chiloe is an island located off the coast of Chile. Residents of Chiloe tell tales of a ship called the Caleuche. It appears and disappears at will and is said to be able to sail underneath the water. The Caleuche is also known as the Enchanted Ship, the Ghost Ship, the Warlock's Ship, or the Barcoiche. Each name describes a slightly different version of the legend associated with the vessel.

The Enchanted Ship is thought to be a living being. It is seen on misty nights when the tide is low. Its mission is to lure local sailors and fisherman aboard with its haunting music. These unlucky victims are then enslaved for all eternity.

The legend of the Ghost Ship says that the vessel is crewed by the ghosts of people who have drowned at sea. Water spirits rescue the souls from the waves and deposit them aboard the ship. There they are doomed to sail the ship forever.

Those who call the Caleuche the Warlock Ship believe it is captained by evil wizards. They make magical deals with people from the island, offering

wealth in exchange for dark favors. If an islander gets rich quickly, people might say that they've made a deal with the Caleuche's warlock crew.

Finally, there is the legend of the Barcoiche. The word barcoiche means horse drawn carriage. In this version of the tale, the crew members ride to and from the ship on horses that can gallop over the waves.

Knowing all of these stories, it makes sense that the people of Chiloe would not want to join the party on board the Caleuche. But even spotting the mighty ship can bring a curse. If you simply see or hear the legendary ship, you could be turned into a seal or sea lion. Beware the curse of the Caleuche!



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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What does the word barcoiche mean?
  - a. Sea horse
  - b. Warlock
  - c. Horse drawn carriage
  - d. Water spirit
  
2. What happens if you only see or hear the Caleuche?
  - a. You turn into a seal
  - b. You are doomed to sail the ship forever
  - c. You get wealthy
  - d. You ride to the ship on a sea horse
  
3. If someone says, “you made a deal with the Caleuche,” which name are they most likely to call the ship?
  - a. Barcoiche
  - b. Enchanted Ship
  - c. Warlock Ship
  - d. Ghost Ship
  
4. Which of the following is NOT a reason that you might want to go aboard the Caleuche?
  - a. Because it is full of bright lights, music, and laughter
  - b. Because you want to make a deal to get wealthy
  - c. Because you’ve never heard of the legends
  - d. Because you want to be a sea lion

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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