



The legend of la Garsa

Once upon a time, in the deep, mysterious forests of the Pyrenees, a cottage stood hidden among ancient trees. A woman known as la Garsa lived there. In the nearby village people called her a witch because of her unusual ways and her knowledge of herbs and spells. In truth, she was a wise woman who loved nature and understood the forest's secrets better than anyone.

The nearby village, Els Avets, was a peaceful place. Its people worked the land and respected their traditions. Yet fear of the unknown and old superstitions made many of them afraid of la Garsa. They whispered that she could summon storms with a murmur and speak to woodland animals.

One day a group of young villagers, led by the boldest of them, Lluís, decided to investigate the mysteries of her cottage.

"We must find out whether she really is a witch or simply an old woman who lives alone," Lluís said.

On a night of full moon they took their torches and set off into the woods. As they walked, every sound seemed louder: owls calling, wind in the leaves and their own footsteps crunching on the ground.



Although they tried to look brave, they were all a little frightened.

When they arrived, the door was partly open. Lluís went in first and the others followed. Herbs hung from the ceiling, old books lined the shelves and unfamiliar tools stood around the room. But la Garsa was nowhere to be seen.

Suddenly a deep voice spoke behind them.

“What are you doing here, curious young people?”

They turned with a start. La Garsa stood in the doorway, wearing a dark robe that almost blended into the night. Her bright eyes watched them carefully. The visitors stood still, unsure what to say.

“We... we wanted to know whether you really are a witch,” Lluís finally replied, trying to hide his fear.

La Garsa smiled a little.

“And what do you think now?” she asked gently, as though setting them a challenge.

The friends looked at one another. At last Lluís answered:

“I think we should not trust appearances alone. Perhaps you are different from what people say.”

She nodded.

“Well said, Lluís. Appearances can be misleading. Come, I will show you something.”

The cottage's secrets



La Garsa led them through her home, showing them the books, herbs and objects that had puzzled them. She explained that she studied plants and preserved old knowledge about nature and the universe. In this storybook world, neighbours also came to her seeking traditional remedies.

The young people, who had arrived full of prejudice, now listened with fascination. They realised that her knowledge could be a treasure for their community rather than something to fear.

But the night held another surprise.

“Now that you have seen part of my life, I will show you something more,” she said.

With a movement of her hand she called to the creatures of the forest. Birds, deer, foxes and even bears appeared, approaching the cottage without fear.

The visitors stared in amazement. Nature seemed to answer la Garsa, and the animals recognised her as a friend.

“The forest and I belong to the same world,” she explained. “I have learnt to respect it and listen to it, and its creatures trust me. That does not make me an evil witch. It makes me someone trying to live in harmony with her surroundings.”

That night they learnt an important lesson: you cannot know someone only by their appearance or by the stories other people tell. The truth often lies beyond a first impression.

A change in Els Avets



The young villagers returned home with a different outlook. They told their families and neighbours what they had seen. La Garsa was a wise woman and a friend to nature, not the frightening figure many had imagined.

At first people listened doubtfully. Little by little, however, their opinions changed. Some began visiting the cottage to ask about their gardens and learn more about plants.

La Garsa welcomed everyone kindly. She shared what she knew and explained how to use the forest's resources without using them up. In the story, her care and traditional remedies helped many neighbours too, and they learnt to appreciate her.

In time she stopped being someone to fear and became part of everyday life in Els Avets. Children came to hear her stories about animals and trees. She taught them to care for their surroundings and respect all living things.

Lluís and his friends had opened a door to change. Curiosity had taken them to the cottage; listening carefully had helped them leave their prejudices behind and share a different truth.

La Garsa's story became a village legend: a tale about looking beyond appearances and seeking answers beyond rumours.

The years that followed were peaceful. The woman and her neighbours shared knowledge and treated one another with respect. Nature flourished around the village and, in that world of legend, the woodland animals became friends and protectors of its people.

The tale passed from one generation to the next, reminding everyone of understanding, respect and an open mind. Even today, when



imagining those Pyrenean forests, it seems possible to hear the echo of the wise woman who taught a village to look differently.

Wisdom that keeps growing

Time passed, and la Garsa continued to live in her cottage, surrounded by the nature she loved. The children who had learnt from her grew up and passed those lessons on to their own families.

One day Lluís, now an adult and the father of two children, came to visit. He brought a basket of fruit and vegetables from his garden as a thank-you. She welcomed him with a smile.

“Because of you, we have learnt to live more closely together and to care for nature,” he said. “The village owes you a great deal.”

La Garsa looked at him warmly.

“You owe me nothing. I have only shared what I know. True wisdom begins with listening to and respecting what surrounds us, both people and the natural world.”

Lluís kept those words in his heart. He promised to keep learning and pass that respect on to the generations who came after him.

Meanwhile, the village’s young people explored the woods with a new curiosity. They learnt to recognise plants, observe animals and understand nature’s cycles. La Garsa guided them like a patient teacher, helping them discover the forest’s secrets.

The relationship between the village and its surroundings grew stronger. Els Avets became an example of living alongside nature. People from neighbouring villages grew interested and came to learn



what was happening there.

Its reputation travelled even further. Visitors from distant places came to the cottage, hoping to understand how the villagers had found such balance. La Garsa welcomed them all with the same respect and patience, always willing to share.

And so her legend spread beyond the Pyrenees, becoming a symbol of wisdom, respect and harmony. It inspired many people to think about how they lived and how they might take better care of their home.

Even today, if you visit Els Avets within this story, you can hear her wisdom in leaves stirred by the wind, in streams singing among the stones and in the kindness of the villagers. The legend of la Garsa lives on, reminding us that appearances can mislead and that learning to listen brings us closer together.