

# VALLEY WITCH



An old legend about a scary road in a scary valley. Make-believe— or true?

**There's a place** in Southern California called Proctor Valley.

Many years ago, Proctor Valley was well-known, what with rumors and secrets swirling and surrounding the place. In the valley, you'll find Proctor Valley Road—a rutted, winding dirt road that curves down and through the valley. It was rumored that people sometimes went crazy just driving along it.

One kid had heard from his cousin's best friend's sister's uncle that the police found a very strange sight once: two people hanging in the breeze from one of the enormous trees that bordered the road.

Folks whispered that maybe it had to do with the Proctor Valley Witch.

Everyone knew she wasn't a real witch, just some loony old lady who had lost a couple of her sons and went a little crazy in the process. The Witch, as she was known, was purported to sabotage travelers' cars, because she didn't like them coming around. Supposedly, she had a third son. He was massive in size, as strong as three men, and couldn't speak. He was rumored to wander the valley at all hours.

One Saturday night, a carload of teenagers out for some excitement decided to drive Proctor Valley Road. Two of the girls didn't want to go. They begged the boys not to do it, but the boys laughed them off and turned down the dirt road anyway.

Bouncing and jostling along the pits and bumps, the girls began giggling. How silly was it after all? How silly was it to be afraid of something called The Proctor Valley Witch? Or her equally silly son? The Proctor Valley Witch! What nonsense!

Slam! The girl's laughter died instantly as the car spun sideways and came to a rest alongside some trees.

The girls thought the boys had done something on purpose to scare them. But it turned out to be no joke, as the car had hit something and broken its axle. It was odd, though. There was nothing in the roadway that could have caused such damage. The girls began to cry, as the moon began to rise high above the ominous trees.

The moon cast such a bright light that it should have been a relief, but instead, the moonlight exaggerated the shadows that flickered here and there from the tree branches.

The boys flipped a coin.

One boy readied himself to walk back to the main road and try to hitchhike to a pay phone to call his father for help.



# VALLEY WITCH (CONTINUED)

The other boy stayed with the girls. As the first boy hurried back down the road, disappearing behind a curve, the second boy and the girls got back into the car and locked the doors.

It was quiet. So quiet, that when the noise first surfaced it was almost inaudible. A light "screeeeeeeeeeeeee," was faintly rising outside the back window.

The girls began to cry again. The boy told them to shush, that he would go back there and look. The girls begged him to stay in the car. He didn't listen. He got out of the car, went around to the back--- and gasped so loudly it made the girls jump.

He got back into the car, breathing heavily. One girl screamed. The other girl asked what he'd seen. She begged him, but he refused to answer. The girls huddled together as the noise got slightly louder and heavier. It continued on throughout the next couple of hours, on and off, here and there—"screeeeeeeeeeeee"—as the moonlight darted back and forth over the windshield.

The girls thought they wouldn't make it. The boy still refused to say what he had seen behind the car. The girls made mental notes of all the things they would do differently if they lived. They would do their chores. They would be kinder to their parents. They would never, ever come to Proctor Valley Road again. They thought this as they heard rustling in the brush only a few yards from the car, a rustling that sounded very big. The girls covered their ears and huddled together and cried.

A couple of hours later, they heard a different noise. A car? Yes! A car! It was the first boy being driven back by his father! The girls had never been so happy in their whole lives. As they piled into their rescuer's vehicle, one of the girls took a quick look at the back window of the broken-down car and gasped.

She saw what had made the noise: tree branches.

Then she saw what had made the loud rustling in the brush next to the car: cows in a field.

She then saw the strange smile on the face of the boy who had stayed behind with them—the boy who refused to say what he had seen.

It was later revealed that what he saw was above the car, hanging in the branches.

This is a true story. I know. I was one of those girls.

