

In k'áabae' María Uicab
[My name is María
Uicab]

By Christi Uicab

SCENE 1: traveler

My name is Christi Uicab and I came to Felipe Carrillo Puerto because I was told that a woman named María Uicab lived here.

-Is she my relative?

-I don't know.

-Do I know the meaning of her last name?

-Yes. Honeybee, I think.

-Am I fond of my last name?

-Yes, but I haven't always been.

Especially during ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

-Last one to get there is a rotten egg!

-UICAB MARTÍN CHRISTI VERÓNICA

-Here!

Or in **MIDDLE SCHOOL**:

. ¡UICAB MARTÍN CHRISTI VERÓNICA, stop gossiping!

- What's the matter?!

Or, when older, at a BAR's entrance.

-ID, please.

(Pause)

-You can't get in. Next!

That's how I found out that I didn't like my last name. It sounded different and even more so when I looked at my skin, my cheekbones, my aquiline profile, and my slanted eyes. I didn't like the name Uicab. I always wondered why I wasn't born a Chapur, Mediz, Bolio, or Cervantes!

This story, however, is both about her and about me: about how María Uicab taught me to embrace the history of my name.

SCENE 2: The origin and the three resistances

Let us go to the origin – of the origin and of the anti-origin:

*From the kingdom of
Córdoba*

*We shall sail to the New
World*

Indians, gold and land

*We shall sail to the New
World*

In the Name of God!

Land ahoy!

After Francisco Hernández de Córdoba conquered the land of Yucatán, in **1546** the iron men commanded by Montejo “El mozo” subdued the brown-backed Mayan people.

We locate the second resistance, also called the “Canek Rebellion,” in **1761**, which was a consequence of the encomienda system and original haciendas. Those brown-backed men now had the furrows of the worked soil imprinted in their bodies with blood.

The third resistance broke out in 1841 when the Maya people, tired of the abuses against their skin, rose against the *dzules* or white people. In Mérida, men questioned the unfair taxation for working their own land. Women grew tired of the labor and sexual abuse they suffered as servants in the whites’ mansions.

DZUL: *Droit du seigneur*. That’s what we call it when an Indian woman, before marrying and sleeping with an Indian man, has the obligation to sleep with me first, because everything belongs to me. Hurry up, Sac Nicté! Bring me the newspaper because I want to find out about this Caste War that your relatives, the barbarians or *cruzo ’ob*, are provoking.

That is what they called this third resistance: Caste War. Because the *dzules*, who had been nursed by the brown milk from the Maya women, diminished the conflict as a melanin fight: the Divine Cast, those white sons who had been nursed by the brown milk versus the

barbarians, the brown-backed who had been nursed by the injustices since they were “discovered” by Cortés, tied up by the “Córdoba” and “conquered” by the annihilator of the forest, the Montejo-dón.

María Uicab’s story is set in this third resistance.

To say three is to say peninsula.

To say peninsula is to say Campeche, Yucatán and Quintana Roo.

To say three is to name sides.

To name sides is to say whites, the *cruzo’ob* and the *mestizos*

Three great resistances in the history of the peninsula
Three sectors hierarchized by the whites who were nurtured with brown milk
Three names to identify and hierarchize the population of the peninsula.

SCENE 3: UICAB OR THE BIRTH

María Uicab was born in Muyil. She had her ceremonial center in Tulum. She was a military leader in Noh Kaj Chan Santa Cruz Xbalam Nah, now Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Quintana Roo.

It all began with Doña Petrona, a 60-year-old woman who, together with her husband, the *jalach mukul* of Muyil, don Pedro Uicab, had no children. One day, doña Petrona went to her *meliponario*.

DOÑA PETRONA: *¿Bix a wanile’ex, chan xunáan kabe’ex?* Let’s see their work. *Ko’onex wilik, Ko’ox wilik... beora tech, beora letie’jobona’*. Well, *ninias*, I’ll come back to see you later.

Suddenly, she saw a *xux* growing from the ceiba tree that glittered like gold. She moved closer, pulled it down and felt a strong urge to place the honeycomb on her belly. The honeycomb attached itself to her uterus and Petrona felt intense contractions. Suddenly, a baby girl was born. The honey that covered her little body turned into placenta remnants, the buzzing turned into crying, and the honeycomb became her first diaper.

PETRONA: María will be your name. Child of the sea because I like the turquoise water of our coasts. *Yuum bo’otik óolal le sibalilá*. ¡Pedro! ¡Pedro! ¡Pedro, *ilej le ba’axtu sijiten le k’áaxo’!* Her name will be María Petrona Uicab but not because of you, Pedro, but because the bees made a gift of her to me. Isn’t that right, *nené?*

Petrona and Pedro raised the girl as their daughter.

When she was six months old, María Uicab started crawling. She soon discovered she could climb trees, and the six-month-old baby became a two-year-old toddler. When she learned to listen to the animals, she grew from 2 to 4 years old. At 4 years old she lifted a large stone slab and discovered a body of water, and she grew to 8 years old. The 8-year-old dipped into the water, and from the water emerged a 14-year-old teenager. Each milestone made her older.

One night, she felt called by the light of the full moon. María felt attracted to the round, white and bright celestial body that was coming towards her. Similarly to her mother, she took it and felt a strong urge of placing it over her belly. This time, however, no baby was born. María had her first menstruation.

MARÍA: *Na'tsil, tin u'uyaj máama luunaj*, she told me that her voice will sound from a cross. The blood emanating today is the blood of light and peace, but she is telling me that the blood of the sons of the cross will be dark and warlike. *¿Ba'ax u k'at u ya'aten, in na'tsil?*

Her mother, upon hearing María's words, knew two things: that she had the gift of understanding the talking cross, and that she was ready to be the heir of her father's chiefdom, the *jalach mukul* from Muyil. So María gathered her things and left for Tulum to train as a priestess. At the same time, she became the chief of Muyil.

PETRONA: But, daughter, before you go, I've prepared a gift for the occasion.
(*Hands it over*).

The 14-year-old girl, upon arriving in Tulum, became an 18-year-old woman.

MARÍA: *In k'aabe'* María Uicab, *teen u nojoch jala'achil Muyil yéetel taalen Tulum tu meen a'ala'ten yaan in kanik in wu'ujej ba'ax ku ya'alik le kruus parlanteo'*.

From that moment, María expanded her domain from Muyil to Tulum, and from these shores her men sailed to present-day Belize to trade honey and dyewood.

In Belize, an English colony, María Uicab was named queen, a category that did not exist among the Maya hierarchies. However, for the people in Belize, María Uicab of Tulum had the same power and respect as the Queen Victoria in England.