

My Wedding Rings

Written by Laura Cuizara

Wedding rings are, for me, the most important objects I brought from Bolivia. Something curious is that our original rings are not the ones we wear every day, but rather replicas I bought shortly after we got married. Our real wedding rings rarely leave the house. We keep them safe and only use them for special occasions, like family events or weddings.

Sometimes people ask me: Why use copies rather than the originals?

The first reason is quite simple: I am a distracted person. I lose things easily. Since I was a child, I have lost rings, bracelets, cell phones, and notebooks. That is why I got used to carrying backpacks or large pockets, to always have a place to keep what I have with me. Even now, living in Canada, I have already lost four hats and two gloves. I would've lost more items if kind people hadn't found them and returned them to me.

The second reason for leaving the original rings at home has to do with family tradition. In my house, my parents' wedding rings were always kept in a special place, along with my mom's most valuable objects. I almost never saw their rings on their wedding fingers. They only appeared at important moments, like celebrations or family events. The rings were treated like small treasures.

But, beyond the material value, it is mostly because of a general belief that losing one's wedding ring is a bad omen. My mom said it was bad luck if one of the spouses ever lost their ring because it was likely to bring forth a tragedy, like death or separation. She would tell stories about her family to support that belief. But there is one that I experienced myself...

When I was five years old, something happened that deeply marked our family. My mom's brother died in an accident at his house. I remember the pain that filled the house and how my mom cried disconsolately for the loss of her favourite brother. At that age, I didn't fully understand death, but I nevertheless felt everyone else's sadness.

During the wake and the funeral, I heard many conversations between the adults. One of the stories that affected me the most was that my aunt - my uncle's wife - had lost her wedding ring a few months earlier. It might have been a coincidence but, for a five-year-old girl, that story affected me very deeply at the time, and stayed with me.

I also remember a time when my parents' rings were lost by mistake after a trip. They had accidentally been thrown in the trash. In my head, a thousand possible tragedies appeared. I felt a huge fear... until I finally managed to find them. I felt a wave of relief when I found them and knew they were back where they belonged—with my parents.

Nowadays, I wouldn't consider myself a superstitious person but many of the customs and beliefs I grew up with continue to guide my actions and decisions. After reflecting on these personal narratives, I conclude that maybe they were just coincidences or simply stories that are told within families but even so, we still do certain things anyway—just in case, you know... why take the risk?