

## *Don Rey Hombre de Arizona*

*A Short Story in English and Spanish, based on the wonderful novel, Don Quixote, Cervantes*

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### *El Capítulo Uno*

*Un tiempo para vivir y morir...*

Chapter One: A Time to Live and a Time to Die

Years of useless endeavors and failed attempts yielding one heartbreak after another had left Gilberto without a romantic future, as he had seen it. The relentless passage of time was a certainty, while love remained abstract and obscured behind a wall he could not scale. Then, from nowhere, as it often does, came love in the form of Desideria, a woman of intellect and distinct beauty.

Gilberto himself was intelligent enough to know that this meeting – this sudden serendipitous confluence of time and being – was to be his last, his only chance to capture that which he had hitherto been denied. Grasping both the thought and the moment, he managed to stumble through his first chanced meeting and bring Desideria close to his heart, right from *el primer momento*, the first moment, when they first gazed into one another's eyes.

And from there, Gilberto's life changed forever, for the good, for the sweet, for the sublime: *la vida perfecta*, a perfect life. Together Desideria and Gilberto lived their life (in its singular yet applying to them both as one – *Como una sola persona. ¿Si?*, Like only one person) as though all others were only passing shadows on the shades of their existence, acknowledged to *be*, yet not allowed entrance.

Happiness, tranquility, and peace descended upon them all the days of the years that followed: He no longer craved money because he came to know that he now possessed immense wealth just by being seated in the same room as his beloved Desideria. He became something he had never been: Content, as in *Contento*.

Every evening of solemn joy was followed by every morning that they would awake by each other's side sensing presence, devotion, love, and a oneness only explicable through the movements of God and the Angels, that is, until one morning after many years of happiness, Desideria did not awake from her warm slumber and did not yield to Gilberto's gentle prods and teasing commands.

As the morning moved into afternoon, her flesh cooled, her eyes, which Gilberto had opened so that he may once again see into her being, had become opaque and distant: God had called Desideria home. Gilberto had come to understand this after several hours of disbelief followed by gentle curses. Like the last trill of a *Fado*, she had faded away.

What ensued was not for the faint of heart or mind, and required a strength, frankly, beyond the learned tenderness of Gilberto's persona.

For days, for weeks, and for the months after laying Desideria to rest, Gilberto aged rapidly, as though all time that had been held at bay by Desideria's constant love and protection had been released to wreak its will on Gilberto's body and mind reducing both to a languishing shell, *como si hubiera desaparecido dentro nada*, as if he had disappeared into Nothing.

As he always had, he turned inward to his books biding time as it passed outside of him and waiting for the moment when at last he might rejoin Desideria and continue an ethereal marriage of two souls as one under the heavenly vision of God's sight.

He did nothing else. He ate only when the pain of hunger overwhelmed the agony of his mind. He cleaned himself only when his own stench rolled over his ever-waning sentience. His second great love, the ugly old dog who was his constant companion and had no name, and around whom was an aura of stifling pungencies which Gilberto no longer noticed, was begrudgingly fed and watered, mostly, every day.

His house, once the treasure of both Desideria and he, became a shambles in and out, a monument to his grief, recognized by neighbors to the left, right, and for many streets around. "That's Gilberto's hovel. He still grieves the passing of his wife, Desideria," the woman said to her friend when they happened to meet as they were passing on the street.

"I understand she was very beautiful," her friend, a soundly built woman of about 50 years, replied.

"O, yes. And loved him so. Too bad God had torn her pages from his book so soon. Although in their sixties she was still young, in the important ways; you know..."

The woman asked, "What does Gilberto do all day? Certainly not weed his garden."

"They say he sits alone in his house with that smelly dog by his side and reads...endlessly. He lives in a fantasy ever increasing. His children, all grown, are refused entrance. You know they are by another woman much earlier in his life?"

"No, I did not know that."

"Yes. She also had one of her own, but her daughter is very grown."

"So they had loved before..."

"*Si*. But no one had captured Gilberto's heart as she, Desideria, had. Theirs was a love of extreme power and blessed by God for many years. Too bad they could not have met earlier so that they may have shared this love they had for many more years, than only the *many* they had."

Then, the other woman said, "Too bad you and I have never known a love like theirs for even a day. How wonderful that they had known something I have not."

"That is one way to look at it, I suppose."

“*Es la sola manera*, it’s the only way. Still, the darkness around him grows. I hope God takes him so that he may return to his woman.”

“Aye...” and they walked off in opposite directions eager to pass along the words they had exchanged.

### *El Capítulo Dos*

#### *La exigencia de la alimentación...*

#### Chapter Two: The Importance of Food...

Food does not last forever. And although acquaintances and concerned neighbors had been replenishing his meager supply of nourishment with some regularity, even for the ugly dog, Gilberto’s acerbic tongue wore on them, and tore their good wishes to pieces, and one day they just stopped coming. One day became the next, and the next, and soon several days had passed. Had it not been for the constancy of his stomach’s gurgle he might have continued to ignore the state of his life.

It was *unos pocos meses*, a few months, after having laid Desideria’s head to rest that Gilberto searched the cupboards seeking something – anything – for himself and for the dog, and found naught. He grumbled and spoke harsh words to himself and to the furry beast, although the dog was not within his sight.

Committed to God’s rule that would necessitate having to endure as much time as He saw fit before ringing his soul back to Desideria, for it would be a sin to circumvent His covenant, he hiked up his pants and with wallet in hand, although he knew not if he had either currency or still-valid credit cards within, he set out for the local market – a monstrosity of aisle after aisle beset by trundling carts and indifferent faces, some lumbering slowly along while gazing noncommittally at this brand or that, passing their lives in the same way, and with the same commitment, as if all through life they were only passing down an aisle of breads and rolls.

He and Desideria always marketed *juntos*, together, so it was that this expedition on his own would mark the first sojourn into the world they had known together, and one now he alone must make. His fear nearly overwhelmed him: just the *thought* without yet the *action*. And for far more than a moment he stood with his hand on the backdoor of the house waiting for a direction from God: Should he go or remain and bring his sorrow to a slow and probably painful end as hunger like a spider ascending an unwitting human crept slowly up his foot, to his leg, and into his heart?

The dog whimpered outside. She had not eaten for a day, even the soft foods he needed to feed her to compensate for the terrible state of her teeth, such as they were for those that remained.

Opening the door, Gilberto looked down at the dog and scratched her head, “I too miss my love, and I would rather be taken here now by God than sit another day alone in the dreariness of my soul. But it is not right for you, dear friend. We’ll go.” And with that he walked out back to where the small garage housed the two cars they had shared. The dog trailed solemnly behind, unsure of either their direction or her master’s intent.

He opened the garage door and looked blankly at the dusty remnants sitting idle and unused. Both were covered in a dust from where the edges of the drywall overhead had become loosened by the wind winding through the rafters and fallen into small heaps of chalk on the roofs and hoods and trunks of the small cars. The windshields appeared to be glazed with sugar.

He opened the car door and allowed the dog entrance, then himself. He closed the door and the sudden mix of odors, both dog and befouled human, simmered densely in the warm interior. The shake of his hand made placing the key in the ignition a very difficult task, but one he was able to accomplish by steadying one hand with the other. The dog watched: a look of sympathy passed through her eyes. Had she had a thumb, she would have gladly clasped the key for her master and turned it in the cylinder.

Eventually Gilberto turned the key: Nothing happened. Not even a near-silent click emitted so dead was the battery.

They exited the car and repeated the procedure in the next car with the same result. Gilberto's head fell to the steering wheel and he began to sob. Water from his eyes came forth like a very small rain, forming a tiny pool on the steering wheel and working its way down through the plastic cover leading into where the safety bag was housed. The dog mourned with him, whimpering softly, and in her own way shedding tears for her departed mistress whom she had known the whole 14 years of her life.

They remained in the car as the sun set and into and through the night, both fitfully finding some solace in the closeness of the car's surroundings and with each other. The smell would be embedded in the car's interior for years to come, but no matter: It would never be driven again.

It was the next morning when Gilberto found his true appellation.

### *El Capítulo Tres*

#### *El Nacimiento de Don Rey Hombre de Arizona*

#### Chapter Three: The Birth of the Knight of Kingman, Arizona

The brutal machinery of the garbage truck making its weekly rounds awoke Gilberto who had slept in relative peace in the front seat of the car with the dog's head resting languidly on his thigh. He was slow to stir and slower still to recognize his surroundings. The dog would not move and for a moment Gilberto considered that he may have lost her too. Quickly he pushed against the dog's head and she looked up as to say *¿Como?* But of course a dog cannot talk, at least not in a language most of us may understand.

This was not the case for Gilberto. He clearly heard the dog ask, *What?* as though the dog had spoken the word in his mother's native Spanish tongue, even to the point of detecting a very slight Argentine dialect, though he himself had been born in Phoenix, Arizona. Yet, he did not ask himself, *Why can I hear the dog talking after all of these years?* He did not inquire, *Why do I understand what my dog had just said?* It just became a part of his world, naturally.

"I thought you had passed," Gilberto said in reply, aloud, as people do to their dogs and cats and even their birds, whether they anticipate a cordial reply or not.

“God would not do that to you, Don Rey Hombre. Not so soon after losing our beloved Desideria.” Only the dog’s eyes spoke for her, but her words were as clear to Gilberto as Desideria’s had been. The dog with no name then sat up in the car seat next to him. Gilberto smoothed back the fur on her head and gave her a gentle pat.

“*Por supuesto*, of course, He would not. You are quite right, and wise beyond your years.”

“I am, in fact, very old.”

“¿*Quién de ustedes no lo es?*, Who among us is not?” Gilberto offered, and they sat in silence for a few minutes bringing their minds to the surface of the world, leaving sleep and the reality that had been, far behind.

Gilberto fidgeted with the key in the ignition. He withdrew it and discarded it onto the dashboard. “We have another vehicle: One better; one more powerful; one more suited to what we must do next.” He looked at the dog whose eyes held his gaze without flutter or distraction.

Gilberto opened the door and allowed he and the dog to exit. He walked around the corner of the building and dragged a faded blue tarp from the contraption beneath it revealing a dusty red motorcycle attached to a sidecar, although it was probably the sidecar attached to the motorcycle. Either way, like Desideria and Gilberto, they were inseparable.

Gilberto turned and looked at the dog, “Do you remember our rides together?” Of course she did and she smiled broadly. “Well, now we have something far more important to do with our remaining days here until we are called home. So much is happening around us, so much unhappiness. The causes are elemental and easily resolved. It will be up to us, dearest friend, to right these wrongs.”

Gilberto scratched his head and his hand lingered atop weaving nonsensical patterns in his now nearly-white hair, which like his beard had grown to be an immense shrub.

He had lost many pounds since Desideria had passed on, leaving his pants and shirt, stained and befouled by the detritus of his humbled life, loosely clinging to his tall frame. His boots, of the style of a *caballero*, unlike his clothes, were unworn and *not* in need of polish owing to his confinement for the many months preceding this day, and following the time of the funeral.

He said, “I will call you Sancha and together we shall adventure across this great land and wherever there is injustice we shall fight for equality. Wherever there is hunger, we shall provide food. Wherever there is hatred, we shall restore compassion. That, dear Sancha, shall be our quest.”

To this litany of future activities, Sancha responded, “I have had no name for fourteen years, and now on me you have bestowed a great honor, Don Rey Hombre. I shall always endeavor to live to your expectations.” And Sancha bowed her head to Gilberto, adding, “And you shall be always known from this day forward as *Don Rey Hombre de Arizona*: A knight of virtue and of uncompromising integrity.” Sancha’s tail wagged rapidly.

Gilberto...*perdone, excuse me...* Don Rey Hombre de Arizona listened enraptured by Sancha's brief treatise, and accepted it as it was meant: An affirmation of a vision he had earlier had while asleep just hours before, brought to him by an angel. He believed that he had always known that Sancha had the power of speech and that she possessed immense intelligence, and together they were destined by God to sally forth seeking adventures, and redeeming humanity from the ills which plagued it daily.

Gilberto found a rag nearby and began to clean the surface of the sidecar rig, taking care to inspect each component as he did so. He did not attempt to start the engine, because he knew that it would not fail him: the *Angel Beatrice*, had said as much in the dream.

Regarding the freshly cleaned vehicle, he announced, "We shall name this fine steed, *El Poderoso*, The Powerful One, in honor of Doctor Ernesto Guevara de la Serna, whom my mother affectionately referred to as *Ché*, for that was the name of his proud steed who carried him over a great distance very early in his life."

"Yes, I know," Sancha uttered.

With that assent Don Rey Hombre found a small can of yellow paint and a brush, and scrawled the sidecar's name across its starboard side in a flourish of what had seemed to him, fine handwork. He repeated this on the port side of the motorcycle on the tank, finishing with a flick of the brush. "There! She, like you, Sancha, is now aptly named." For a lingering moment both he and Sancha admired their new conveyance.

Without preamble Sancha asked, "Forgive me for my ignorance, Don Rey Hombre, but what shall you use as a weapon? Every knight requires something which he may use to vanquish those who will not surrender to the knight's will."

"So right, Sancha. And I have the answer here somewhere in these storage bins. Somewhere here..." Don Rey Hombre had walked to a stack of plastic bins many high in several rows that had lined the garage wall and found the one he had sought. Removing the snap lid, and rummaging inside he withdrew a sabre some three feet in length, sheathed in a black scabbard and crowned with a gold hilt.

"This shall do fine, I think!" He held the scabbard with this left hand and withdrew the blade. He regarded the sharp, reflective luster of it, engraved heavily with some type of vine that began at its tip, stretching the length of the blade and terminating crisply at the hilt, and he confided, "There is no finer example of Castilian steel than that which I hold here." His eyes shimmered in the brightness of the reflected light.

Sancha did not remind him that it was a trifle plastic sword: part of a pirate's costume long ago abandoned by Desideria who had carried it as part of her masquerade on October 31 many years before. Rather than gleaming, it dulled the light and barely contained its rigidity when even gently flexed. Instead, Sancha said, "If you declare it so, then it is a fitting and wonderful weapon."

"Do you think a breastplate would be appropriate, Sancha?" Don Re-Hombre drew his hands down his chest and considered the possibility. Sancha, too, considered.

He was the first to respond to his own inquiry, “No...too stifling here this time of year. I’d be certain to faint from the heat. But still...” His eyes trailed off.

Sancha argued, “It may be difficult at times, but it is right and just attire for a knight. It not only serves to protect the true heart of my knight, the vessel that yet today holds the spirit of our Desidiria, but signifies your rank as well. So, I would say, *Si*, you should wear at least the breastplate.”

“You are correct again, dear friend. I shall.” And after much rummaging, from another bin he withdrew a bronze breastplate of the Roman period with elegant scrolls and hasps with which to secure it. It was another costume piece made from a light plastic, and although Sancha recognized it as such, she said only, “*Espléndido*, Splendid Don Rey Hombre. *Tu es muy guapo*, You are very handsome.”

“*Gracias, gracias, mi escudero*, Thank you, my Squire. Now as to helmet I’ve decided on this black beret, very reminiscent of that which *Ché* himself wore: Appropriate for the work we are about to undertake.” Sancha nodded agreement.

Don Rey Hombre placed the beret on his head, bringing it to a slight jaunty tilt. He then placed the breastplate over his head and struggled to square it over his shoulders. Stooping over he shoved the hem of his pants into his boot tops, then gravely slid the scabbard holding the gleaming sabre into his belt on his left side, calculating that it must be placed there to allow full control of the motorcycle.

Straightening himself before Sancha he asked, “And what is your summation?”

Sancha regarded her master and followed the lines of his pants upward to the hilt of the sabre, to the armor, over the beard above, and finally to the beret. She announced, “*Perfecto, Don Rey Hombre de Arizona. Absolutamente*, Absolutely.”

“*Gracias.*” As he bowed, “*Eso es muy bueno para escuchar*, It’s very good to hear.”

Then Sancha ventured a query, “Don Rey Hombre...Master, what shall I carry as an aid in defense of my Master’s word? Certainly I am not to remain without defenses.”

Don Rey Hombre de Arizona thought for a moment, and then for another. His eyes rolled up to the ceiling as he searched his thoughts. Then slowly they set like the sun on Sancha. “Of course! I have it!”

“What? Please tell me?” Sancha grew eager.

“*¡Sus dientes!* You have many and they are formidable weapons, Sancha, capable of repelling any foe.”

“Perhaps you have not seen my teeth lately: They are mostly missing.”

“Cursed memory of mine! That’s right!” He snapped his fingers, “How could I forget, my dear friend.” Don Rey Hombre considered the problem further. “I’ve got it! I will prepare and affix, only when needed of course, a small lance through the top of your collar that shall extend two feet beyond your nose, like a burro with a carrot dangling off a staff.” He rubbed his hands together in contemplation. “In that way, when trouble we encounter, I may quickly ready you for battle. Of course there will be no

carrot or other inducement, for we move by the will of our soul, stirred by duty alone!” His right arm arose in acclamation.

Sancha regarded Don Rey Hombre, then asked, “Of what material shall this lance be made?” She added, “It must be light enough, yet strong...but you know, I like the idea very much. With practice I shall be able to assault the shins of fully-grown human combatants...”

And with building enthusiasm, Don Rey Hombre joined in, “...and entangle their legs causing them to fall solidly to the earth and thus allow me to withdraw my sabre and run them through! Such as this!” And Don Rey Hombre de Arizona withdrew his sabre and taking a few quick steps while Sancha watched transfixed, parried an imaginary blade then thrust through his opponent who was forced supine to the ground before him from Sancha’s footwork. “A-ha!” he yelled.

Sancha echoed, “Take that, scoundrel!”

They remained as that for a moment drinking in the glory of their bravery. Finally, he surmised, “A length of one-half inch copper pipe hammered to a blade finish. I have some in the workshop. I will attend to it immediately.”

Sancha cleared her throat and asked, “Master, what of food? We haven’t eaten for a full day now.”

Indignantly, “¿Comida? ¿Se piensa en la comida ahora? You think of eating now?”

Sancha was shamed, “I am new to the job, Don Rey Hombre. Please forgive me. I understand that our quest is of utmost importance...maybe just a dog cracker to tide me over?”

“Excellent. I think there are a few in a box in the pantry. I’ll fetch them for us,” and he left quickly from the garage returning less than a minute later with a half-box of *Bow Wow* brand cookies. Let’s sit in *El Poderoso* and become accustomed to our new conveyance while we enjoy our repast, Sancha.”

And they did: Sancha jumped nimbly into the sidecar and took her place behind the windshield, while Don Rey Hombre lighted lithely on the seat. They sat as this for an hour speaking confidentially and both slowly enjoying one dog biscuit after another for Sancha had to allow them to soften in her mouth before gnashing them into bits.

#### *El Capítulo Cuatro*

#### *Los gigantes que vivían en la montaña*

#### Chapter Four: The Giants Who Live on the Mountain

On the other side of the small valley of *El Cuidad Viejo*, The Old City, de Kingman, Arizona, from where Don Rey Hombre and Sancha lived, stood the Mountain of the Giants. There were five towering demons who domiciled atop a mountain partially visible from the Old Town center, and depending upon where one stood one might easily regard their flexing arms striking out in practiced combat with gleaming swords of forged steel, battling one another in preparation for the day when they might descend upon the citizens of Old Town and send them to their Christian God, for these giants certainly must be pagans of the lowest order.



Don Rey Hombre remarked to Sancha that, oddly, the Giants of the Mountain became revelrous and antagonized only on days when the wind wound its way up to the small valley with more than a mild gust. He told her, "So it is on a day like today when we must strike: When the winds are calm, they become strangely *lúgubre*, lugubrious, and ill-suited for battle." Sancha nodded. "We will need that advantage to quell the quintet quickly and quash them before they have the opportunity to strike back, for they are truly giants."

"How tall are they, Master?"

Don Rey Hombre considered Sancha's question as he brushed the remaining crumbs of a dog biscuit from his beard. "First, Sancha, understand that I have only regarded them in passing – brief glimpses..."

"*Si, entiendo, I understand.*" Sancha affirmed.

Don Rey Hombre continued, "...and from what I may assess they range from perhaps thirty meters in height to as much as fifty, or perhaps more. It is difficult to gain the proper perspective from a distance." He paused and considered, "But, *recuerdo*, remember, they are desperate and dangerous and daring and care naught for the ways of the peaceful. Mark my words, Sancha, they will show no mercy!"

Sancha trembled, then drew upon her courage and replied, "We shall defeat them, because they know not the power and the strength of Don Rey Hombre de Arizona. And we shall likewise show no mercy."

"Aye!" Don Rey Hombre confirmed. Then, withdrawing his sabre and bringing it high into the air, "Let us sally forth to our first battle, for the day is aging."

Sancha thought, *So am I.*

Astride *El Poderoso* with Sancha seated comfortably in the sidecar, Don Rey Hombre, with only minor trepidation turned the key in the ignition, positioned the tank valve open, and withdrew the choke lever on the carburetor. Don Rey Hombre crossed himself in the manner of one kneeling in confessional and whispered to only he and Sancha, "Thank you God for our small lives, and may You, dear God, bless us in our quest at this, our first hour of trial." He crossed himself again.

Sancha affirmed, "Amen."

Don Rey Hombre depressed the start button: Within two cycles of the engine *El Poderoso* sprang strongly to life, inspiring both Sancha and Don Rey Hombre to a cheer of thanks. He allowed the engine (and both he and Sancha) a few minutes to warm sufficiently to the challenge that lay ahead, then withdrew the clutch lever and engaged the transmission, and releasing the lever slightly, *El Poderoso* lurched forward eager to pursue justice and equality.

Although the journey required to reach the Mountain of the Giants appeared distant when gazing across the small valley, it was in fact only a little more than four kilometers from where Don Rey Hombre steered the vehicle out of the garage and onto the city's street. It was a quiet day and only two or three of the townspeople were outside of their homes, including *la señora Reyes, una chismosa terrible*, a

terrible gossip. Mrs. Reyes stopped midstride and held that position as the man she knew as Gilberto and the dog previously with no name roared by in the red sidecar she faintly recalled having seen years earlier. Only then, of course, Desideria occupied the passenger compartment.

She watched fascinated as Don Rey Hombre held the controls while regaled in some sort of armor, sword, and topped by a beret, she thought, and Sancha, wearing her bright copper lance, and peaking eagerly to the side of the windshield in order to catch the freshness of the breeze, passed her by. At the corner, after they had made a quick turn to the right, *la señora Reyes* pivoted on her outstretched leg and quickly paced back home, the better to proliferate what she had witnessed.

No matter to Don Rey Hombre: He and Sancha were about to encounter *The Giants*. He could see them on the cresting horizon: Lumbering, brutal, seething with ill-intent, they swaggered closely to each other and swung and carved the air fiercely with their swords cleaving the countryside to be left bleeding mortally from its wounds. Sancha fairly shook with fear and anticipation as Don Rey Hombre stood off just a few meters down the slope from the horizon. He shut off the engine and leaned to whisper to Sancha, "They are there. They are unaware of our presence. They expect nothing."

"But, Master, from my vantage point I can see the swing of their sabers silently slicing all that surrounds them. Surely we shall be reduced to dust by their ferocity," Sancha replied cowering down in the sidecar seat aware that the tip of her meager copper lance was protruding into view and reflecting the fading sunlight.

"Nonsense, dear Sancha. We will best them as no one else may. Before us they shall fall and relinquish the sum of the countryside to our domain, where we shall join with the local townspeople of Kingman and celebrate the demise of this previously formidable opponent." Then, leaning closer still to Sancha, "Do you see how they swing their swords, perhaps gracefully, yet far too slowly? *¡Eso será nuestra ventaja!* That will be our advantage!"

Don Rey Hombre started the engine of *El Poderoso* and, engaging the clutch caused the steed to move slowly farther up the hill. At the crest, finally in view, Sancha exhaled a long sigh of relief as she caught full sight of the giants, who were in fact only wind turbines whose massive blades churned the air and excited all that lay beneath each, generating electricity for the people of the town. "Master...Don Rey Hombre de Arizona, are you certain this is a battle to be fought? They look to me to be plainly mechanical..."

Quickly he interrupted, "They give that appearance, but let me assure you Sancha, that they are not. Now come! The time is nigh, lest you prefer to remain here with our mount while I charge the brutes and bring this first conflict to a quick and thorough end. If so, I shall understand, dear Sancha, for thou art rather small in their sight."

Sancha fast agreed, "I will guard the mount while you do battle Master, for they surely exceed my height by many, many meters."

Without a glance aside, Don Rey Hombre de Arizona withdrew his sword and made his way posthaste to close the distance between he and the first, the closest of his adversaries. Raising his sword high to the sky he exhorted, "I shall exile thee from the rim of this valley forevermore and bring absolute peace to

those who reside below *porque yo soy Don Rey Hombre de Arizona!*” And with that pronouncement he charged the short distance.

It is a scientific fact that the movement of metal, such as that rotating freely through the air by either a wind turbine or helicopter, *por ejemplo*, for example, generates a static electric charge in the surrounding air mass such that it may, should nature elect to do so, discharge an abundant amount of electricity, in the form of “Voltage” to anything or anyone foolish enough to journey within its perimeter of influence, such as Don Rey Hombre at that moment. La señora Joan Montanyà de Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, España, had written much on this subject. Don Rey Hombre had never included her in his list of extensive readings. Perhaps he should have...

Sancha watched nervously as her Master quickly approached the first of the tall turbines she now knew were not giants, and observed with horror, as he raised his sword just as a brilliant blue-white glow filled the air accompanied by a thunderous clap causing her Master to run a brief shade of blue then fall to the earth unconscious from the thrust of many thousands of volts of electricity, but thankfully not many amperes: meaning that although he lost consciousness, he would not, in all probability, suffer any physical difficulties. As to his mental state, she could not attest.

Quickly and carefully Sancha approached Don Rey Hombre who lay supine near the foot of the turbine, and gently, locking her few remaining teeth tightly to his shirt collar, drug him away from the area of likely harm.

Sancha licked his face into consciousness after several seconds of prolonged application of dog spit applied liberally to Don Rey Hombre’s brow and eyes. And to Sancha’s great relief, he awoke, and in his continued stupor allowed Sancha to guide him back to *El Poderoso* who steadfastly awaited its charges.

Resting on an elbow on the rocky earth at the foot of *El Poderoso*, Don Rey Hombre asked Sancha, “Did we best them, dear Sancha?”

Without hesitation Sancha confirmed, “They have been vanquished. You are truly a great and mighty knight, Don Rey Hombre de Arizona. The people of the village will surely see this greatness in you and so honor it.” After a brief moment more Sancha appended pleadingly, “May we return home now, please, Master?”

### *El Capítulo Cinco*

*“Dormir... tal vez soñar!” (Hamlet, William Shakespere)*

Chapter Five: To Sleep, Perchance to Dream...

The journey back to their home was brief.

As it happened, after they had left to vanquish their giant foes, Catarina, a woman of Galician roots who lived only a few houses away and who maintained a reluctant friendship with Mrs. Reyes, had through the selfsame friend learned of that afternoon’s sighting of Gilberto donned strangely in his theatrical

garb astride the sidecar as he departed across the valley. Curious, as she would be, she elected to pay a brief visit to Gilberto, as an excuse for which she assembled some modicum of food in a compact parcel.

Finding no one at home she placed the package inside the screen door at the front of the house. Sancha noticed it on return and mentioned it to Don Rey Hombre. Once fetched and unwrapped, the contents stirred Sancha with hunger. Reluctantly Don Rey Hombre took to the preparation of a meal for both he and Sancha, allowing her the lion's share of nourishment.

Postprandial both retired to their respective areas within the house and, given the late hour of the night and the events of the day, immediately *ambos se hundieron en un sueño exuberante*, both sank into a deep sleep, shedding the day's earlier trepidations.

*La luna llena esa noche sobre las montañas distantes*, The moon rose over the distant mountains. The freight trains pulled quietly along the tracks leaving only the faint rumble of their steel wheels to linger deeply in the earth *como un terremoto suave*, like a gentle earthquake. From somewhere in the neighborhood a lone dog called at a distant siren. A homeless man shuffled along Route 66 bearing the bulk of his life in a black plastic garbage bag clutched closely to his bosom, scanning the sidewalk in the half-light for a carelessly pocketed coin that may have bounced freely from its owner's control and meandered some short distance from his sight, lying disconsolately and awaiting the homeless man's grasp.

Although the hour grew late, *la señora Reyes* moped about the kitchen busying herself with trifle chores conflicted over how best to impute herself into Gilberto's life sensing that he may be slipping down the steep escarpment leading to insanity. Above all her imperfections she was a good and caring woman, and grew very concerned about her neighbor's apparently precarious mental state. *¿Qué está haciendo?* she asked him, although he was not there, and therefore the answer she didn't receive in return was understandable. She often spoke to no one since her husband had died many years before. She understood the appearance of sudden loneliness, *de la soledad*, solitude, and how one's reality may become distorted or opaque. She thought about Marquez's *El Amor en los Tiempos del Cólera*, Love in the Time of Cholera, and she became deeply morose.

Above all else, she felt sorrow for Gilberto and vouchsafed that the next day she would seek out Catarina and together they would pay a brief visit to Gilberto and assess his present state with the wish of bringing him back to *today*.

Interestingly, Catarina, too, hung loosely around the house busying herself with the business of busywork while the sonorous snores of her spouse filled the air with a subtle background for her contemplations. Earlier she had strolled out to her front porch and had seen a few lights on at Gilberto's defused through the front room shades. *So, he was home. So, he must have taken the parcel of food from the porch. So, he must have read the brief note identifying me as his benefactor. So, why didn't he call and thank me?* These were her thoughts, but they were not malicious and reflected only her concern, an inquisitiveness.

She made an assurance to herself that on the next day she would coordinate a brief visit to Gilberto with Mrs. Reyes, since it wouldn't do for a married woman to do so alone, even though her concern for Gilberto stemmed from nothing more than her deep affection for the whole of humanity.

*Mientras tanto, en la casa de Don Rey Hombre de Arizona*, In the meantime, in the house of... Sancha drifted in and out of *un sueño profundo*, but never lighted above the surface into wakefulness. Don Rey Hombre, however, fell deeper and deeper into the abyss, lost in a dream of the earlier battle as seen through the parallax of his mind's eye.

A thunderous crash echoed through the house startling Sancha from her sleep. Her head lifted quickly as her nose sifted the air to guide her to the rude sound's origin. Then a paroxysm resonated the walls, "*¡Cretino! ¡Sinvergüenza! Defender a ti mismo! Cretin! Scoundrel! Defend yourself!*"

Sancha lifted herself to the sound of glass shattering, and carried by her now unsteady quadrupedic locomotion, wound her way down the hall to the living room where, clothed *solamente*, only, in a tattered t-shirt, Don Rey Hombre struck viciously at the floor lamps that stood on either side of the couch with his withdrawn sword, verily slicing at every inch of air surrounding the formerly glass-globed torchierres causing them to collapse against a wall then to the floor. One light bulb was in its throes of death: the filament emitting a crackling fizzle being exposed to the surrounding atmosphere like a vampire caught in the light of the sun.

Sancha thought, *This doesn't look good!* Of course, since she was a dog she wasn't referring to Don Rey Hombre's apparent nakedness, since neither had she ever worn a skirt nor *pantalones*, but rather his state of, what she presumed to be mental collapse. She had no way of knowing that he was only deeply anchored to a dream reliving his first and most inspired battle against the *Gigantes de las Montañas*.

He was, in fact, only sleepwalking, perhaps with a bit more gusto than what one may typically encounter with the more usual sleepwalker, but he was after all, *Don Rey Hombre de Arizona!*

Her immediate course of action before her master could do further damage, was to charge his legs and nip at his ankles with a gentle gnaw. She did this to no avail. Next, proceeding upward, she exerted more pressure on his calf and, thankfully before it became necessary to attack areas of greater sensitivity, Don Rey Hombre was suddenly stunned from his sleep and his saber froze mid-swing.

He stood perplexed regarding himself and his surroundings critically, and trying to piece together the reality into which he had been perforce placed. He looked down at Sancha whose mouth still surrounded his calf "*¿Qué estoy haciendo? Y más importante? What am I doing? And most importantly, what are you doing to my leg you silly creature?*"

She released her grip and her eyes smiled, "You're back. Good!"

"Where was I?" Don Rey Hombre asked.

"On the mountain, fighting the giants, I think..."

"Aye. I was, wasn't I. *Ahora recuerdo*, Now I remember." And the saber fell to the floor. I am very tired, Sancha. I think I should return to bed.

As he walked the short distance down the darkened hall Sancha fell in behind and followed her master steadfastly to the foot of the bed where she settled in on the rug next to Don Rey Hombre's side, for he had not abandoned the habit of leaving room for Desideria to whom every night he bid a "Sweet dreams, my love..." before casting off the ropes that held his mind to that which is called the Conscious State.

And tonight, as always, he whispered, "Sweet dreams, my love."

Sancha whispered back, "To you as well my dear master." Her eyelids drooped like a falling theater curtain, abandoning herself, too, to dreams of days long ago.

The moon began to set in Kingman as dawn broke over a hillside three thousand kilometers to the east in a place where no one knew Don Rey Hombre de Arizona.

### *El Capítulo Seis*

#### *Para liberar a las esclavas*

#### Chapter Six: Freeing Slaves

Don Rey Hombre awoke early not remembering how the two lamps came to rest broken on the living room floor. He gave them a brief look as he passed and shrugged in a very Spanish way with this entire body, then walked into the kitchen. He retrieved the broom and dustpan and, returning, made quick work of the cleanup, bringing both lamps back to vertical, although one wobbled precariously on its base.

In the kitchen again he brewed a strong cup of loose tea and sat at the small table contemplating the mission before him, which had been revealed to him in a dream after he had recovered into a deep sleep following the complete thrashing he had levied on the lamps.

Some short time before Desideria had left him with only her faint fragrance and memory, then-Gilberto and an acquaintance had spoken of the treachery of a small group of men who had brought children to *los Estados Unidos* to serve in very unspiritual ways – in a manner that God no doubt found very offensive and Jesus would have condemned forthrightly – and they kept them, *niñas de tan sólo doce años de edad*, girls only 12 years old, in an unsavory motel room, nothing more than *una letrina de pozo*, a trench pit, really. For one reason or perhaps another, the police had been unsuccessful in apprehending the men responsible, and failed to free the children from their corrupt enslavement. Don Rey Hombre had taken an oath in his dream to succeed, where others had not.

About the time that Don Rey Hombre drained the last of his tea from the chipped white cup, Sancha wandered into the kitchen and blankly asked, "*¿Cómo te sientes?*"

"A little low today, my dear Sancha."

"No wonder! You had a very fitful night." She padded closer to him, her toenails clicking on the wood floor, "Is there any food left?"

“*Si, si*, yes, let me get you something...”

“And some water, please.”

“Of course. Water. You must be thirsty...” Don Rey Hombre moved to the sink and filled Sancha’s *inside* bowl with water from the tap and placed it on the floor. Then, removing a small bag of scraps from the previous night’s dinner, courtesy of Catarina, placed them in a paper plate next to the bowl. It was then that he noticed the note he had absently placed on the counter that had accompanied the box of food. It said, simply, *For you, my friend. Your neighbor, Catarina.*

Although Sancha had hoped for something different, she acknowledged the kindness of her master with, “*Mil gracias, Don Rey Hombre de Arizona.*”

Don Rey Hombre grunted a response then took his seat as before swirling the tealeaves in the small bit of liquid left in the bottom of the cup. Then, after a period of reflection, he spoke. “Sancha, we have a very important job to do today.”

“How important?”

“*¿Qué tan importante es la alma de una niña?* How important is the soul of a child?”

Sancha could not register the meaning of the question. She asked in return, “How important is the soul of a child? I don’t understand Don Rey Hombre.”

“Of course you do not, but you shall.” He walked to the sink and placed the cup nearby on the counter. Turning, a renewed intensity grew in his eyes like a small flame being gently stirred to fire. “I will tell you, Sancha.”

“*Por favor, hágalo, Don Rey Hombre*, please tell me.” Sancha quit feeding and straightened her back and all four legs, as though coming to attention to better consider her master’s words.

“*Hay un motel cerca de aquí donde las cosas terribles están sucediendo*, The is a motel near where terrible things are happening. Things involving children who must do things with grown men,” Don Rey Hombre ran his hand through his hair and contemplated how best to expound in a manner Sancha might understand: She was, after all, still only a dog!

“They were brought here under promise of opportunity, no?” Sancha asked.

“*Si*. They were. They came to the United States believing that they would have *la oportunidad de ser educado, a vivir con su familia*, to be educated and to live with their family, and instead, it was all a lie! A lie, Sancha! Despicable untruths to lure the release of innocents and wrest them from the protection of their loving parents whose only fault is a wish for their child to become more: More than they could provide in their homeland. Here now these children must do as those who bought them from the Coyotes who smuggled them across the border now require or face terrible consequences which no child should experience: Straitened deprivation and brutal acts...perhaps even death.” He allowed himself a moment. Sancha waited patiently.

Then he resumed, “The police are impotent: They are bound by laws that constrain what they may do and how they may go about doing what they know they must, but may not. As a Knight errant, I am not so bound to convention.” Don Rey Hombre thrust his right arm into the air and with a finger nearly touching the ceiling, he exclaimed, “*¡Hago lo que Dios quiera!* We do what God wishes!”

Sancha put in, “And God demands that we save these child slaves of the greedy, of the immoral, of the wicked, of the monsters who imprison them!”

Don Rey Hombre stood rigid. “Indeed, Sancha. God demands that we do so...perhaps at great personal peril for they are not men to be trifled with.”

“Then we will give them much better than a trifle in return, master!” Sancha regarded her food dish momentarily. “Can you place this back into the refrigerator, master? I don’t feel like eating much at the moment.” She pushed the bowl along with her nose toward Don Rey Hombre.

*Don Rey Hombre de Arizona* remained with his eyes cast up at the ceiling in spiritual bliss, in momentary lucubration, in sublimated prayer, then peered downward at Sancha. His eyes deglazed and softened becoming tremulous. “Of course, dear Sancha.” He carefully picked up the dish and turned to place it in the refrigerator. Closing the door he pivoted round to face Sancha, a renewed level of excitement burned in his eyes: Sancha could see the flicker of flames filling the sooted pupils while an amused inclination crested his brows. “It’s time. The hour of reckoning for the Devil’s disciples is nigh. Steel thyself, Sancha!” A growl deep in his throat now controlled his speech.

“*¡Estoy listo, Don Rey Hombre de Arizona!* I am ready!”

“Then, let us depart posthaste!”

\*

Replacing breastplate, sword and beret, and after reaffixing Sancha’s lance, they retreated to the garage and prepared to depart on their second, and not arguably, most important mission, for at its heart was the salvation of the lives of defenseless children – innocents who had been lured and trapped in a life of bestial servitude.

There they mounted *El Poderoso* and, attended to by the power of God and a devotion that only a Knight errant may possess, they flung themselves upon the roadway and began their journey toward destiny and the most assured *posibilidad de la muerte*, possibility of death.

*El pequeño motel* was a ramshackle hovel, set back from the main highway, wearing faded paint, hasty repairs, and a parking lot littered with broken asphalt. It never housed tourists, who preferred instead to stay at motels presenting a more manicured look, absent bottles, cans and debris, and where the class of automobile spoke more to the better heeled vacationer than the destitute.



Here at this motel, laundry was often strung across second story walkways displaying well worn clothes and even towels, although the motel had long since emptied the cracked and collapsing pool that served since as nothing more than a catch basin for summer storms and winter's drizzle.

The motel's guests came and went with an irregularity different than a traveller's motel where people arose in the early morning and struck out on the next leg of their highway adventure. Here, they lingered for hours, days, and sometimes weeks on end awaiting the return of something or someone or some reason to move onward. Sometimes, they never left.

On the second story, there being no higher, stood an end room with a faded red door above a chipped and bent white railing. In and out of this room with much greater regularity arrived and departed men of various ages and states of being, and although three adjoining rooms were occupied by the same tenants, only the one lone end door served as ingress, the others being locked and secured with a makeshift barricade of chipped and stained furniture.

At the end of the building was a rock escarpment that bordered and protected the building from strong winds from the east standing a bit taller than the roof of the motel. The crest of the hill served to obstruct the view from the highway it faced protecting it further from probing eyes and curious minds.

Word amongst the town's *pervertidos*, pervers, was spread through local saloons and alleyways, as sickness and death travels along with rats in the sewers, keeping the clientele fervent and flowing.

Inside, sequestered in the two adjoining rooms, kept in darkness and torment, starved, half-naked, and carrying the filth of countless men, two children, Valentina, who was thirteen years of age, and Mariana, twelve, shivered from fear – a deep, resonate trembling driving them day and night without respite, without relief, without reprieve, as though God had abandoned them, forsaken them for lost.

But He had not for their salvation was only minutes away.

\*

*Don Rey Hombre de Arizona* braked to a sudden stop just short of the motel's driveway clinging closely to the curb. Sancha reckoned that they had arrived and Don Rey Hombre confirmed her suspicion asking, "*¿Ver la puerta en el extremo? ¿En el segundo piso?* Do you see the end door on the second floor?"

Sancha's eyes gazed steadily along the walkway following the railing from west to east until they rested on the last door of the second story. "*Si.*"

"*Es el lugar*, That's the place," Don Rey Hombre whispered pondering the distance of the door from where they sat, contemplating approach, attack, and tasting impending victory as it salted his tongue overshadowing what trifling trepidation had momentarily surfaced, squashed like a snail under the boot. Desideria's will and God's word allowed *fear* no quarter in his mind.

Engaging the engine he moved slowly up the drive keeping a steady eye on the door for activity. At a halt, Sancha said, "Look there! The curtain in the window just fluttered."

Don Rey Hombre had missed it and asked, “¿Qué ventana?”

“*La segunda a la izquierda. ¿Míralo?* The second from the left. See it?” Sancha pointed with her paw toward the second window from the right at a stained threadbare curtain that was just coming to rest after being released.

“*Si, si, si, si...* I do, dear Sancha. It could be one of the children, or it could be their Watcher.” Don Hombre straightened himself and added, “Act nonchalant.”

Sancha turned to him and gave him a quick look. “How shall we do that astride *El Poderoso* equipped with our weapons of war, dressed as we are, while gazing fixedly at the room’s door?”

“That is what I mean! Act nonchalant! Pay no attention to the door or the curtain.” Don Rey Hombre cast his right arm out across the highway toward the distant peaks and exclaimed loudly, “¿Qué hermosa montañas! What beautiful mountains!”

Sancha looked toward the direction he gestured then returned her gaze to Don Rey Hombre, “Is that supposed to distract anyone watching us from wondering why we are here?”

“Ah, Sancha! What do you know.” He slipped *El Poderoso* into gear and moved them closer up to the stairway.

Inside the end rooms the children had no men visitors and were slumbering anxiously, as they always did, fitfully casting about in their minds for some dream that might take them momentarily away from the hell they found themselves.

In the room into which “*los clientes*” entered, their two slovenly and soiled Watchers sat regarding a silent television screen displaying a fútbol game from somewhere in Mexico. Umberto, closest to the door, reacted to the throttling of the motorcycle engine. He lifted his large girth from the chair and ran a nicotine-stained hand through his oiled black hair. He pushed back the curtain on the second window only a little and peered out and down, his eyes landing immediately on Don Rey Hombre and Sancha. The sight was quite unique and elicited a, “Humph!”

Vicente, the other Watcher was lost in a haze of beer as he reclined on the couch facing the television. He managed a, “¿Qué es?”

Umberto responded, “I don’t know...exactly. It looks like some old fool on a *Moto* with his dog, but it’s what he’s got on.”

Vicente never took his eyes off the television’s screen, “Well if he comes up here tell him he has to leave his dog outside. We don’t want some dog pissing in here.”

Umberto asked, “Would we notice?”

Vicente smiled and shook out another cigarette. Umberto let the curtain close and returned to the chair. From between the cushion he withdrew the .45 pistol and put it easily on the table next to him. Vicente glanced over, “¿Problema?”

“Nah! It was poking me in the ass.”

Vicente smiled again and returned to his television, flicking ashes into the tray, when he remembered to do so.

Down below, now parked out of view of the second story, *Don Rey Hombre de Arizona* and Sancha readied to ascend the stairs. Prepared for battle, Don Rey Hombre had loosed his sword and tested its blade, unnoticing still its flimsy nature. Sancha, recognizing the likely peril in which her master would be placed, vowed to overtake him at the top of the stairs and to reap as much carnage as possible, hopefully delivering Don Rey Hombre from the death she knew he craved.

As this happened, the young desk clerk, Carl, recently hired after returning from service in the United States Army, and awaiting being called for promising employment with the local sheriff's office, glanced out the motel office window just as Don Rey Hombre withdrew his sword. This caught his attention fully.

Carl had been told that the three rooms on the second floor were for more or less permanent guests who appreciated their privacy and paid well for it. The motel's manager also told him that he was to pay no attention to the men who frequented the room, regardless of the time of day or the appearance of those who plodded up the stairs and entered the rooms. But the sight of the “crazy man” astride the sidecar and his dog was beyond what Carl expected.

He dialed 9-1-1 and quickly told the operator about the strange man dressed in “some sort of armor” with a sword accompanied by a dog who wielded a copper shaft from the top of his body. As he hung up the phone, he heard the man yell, “Now, Sancha, upward to Heaven! Let us free the innocent from the tyranny of the Devil's manservants!” which were not words Carl expected to hear either.

And, although he had been instructed to remain in the motel office by the 9-1-1 operator, he did not. Rather he quickly strode up the stairs following the path taken a moment before by Sancha and Don Rey Hombre.

What had happened while Carl looked on was, Don Rey Hombre and Sancha dismounted *El Poderoso* and stood momentarily at the foot of the stairs while he swirled the sword above his head gathering strength and momentum for the conflict that lay before them. It was then, after another moment that he proclaimed “Now, Sancha, upward to Heaven...” as the motel clerk had heard through the plate glass door.

Before Don Rey Hombre could complete his decree, Sancha bolted up the first of the stairs and cleared the last of them heading toward the suddenly opened door, for Umberto's curiosity had been engaged again by the shouting below. Sancha neared the legs of Umberto who stood astride the doorway as Don Rey Hombre gathered speed now having reached the upper flat of the walkway, followed momentarily later by Carl. In the near-distance a siren could be heard.

Umberto stood transfixed at the sight of Sancha approaching at a gallop bearing a shiny copper lance attached to the top of her body, followed by the crazy man wielding a sword while shouting in words he did not readily understand. It wasn't until Sancha engaged his legs with the copper lance and leapt forward snarling and snapping with her few ragged teeth that Umberto struggled to grab the pistol only a few feet away.

Now in his hand, he cocked the hammer and quickly drew down to Sancha who tore ruthlessly at the cuff of his pants, yelling through her snapping teeth, "*¡Bastardo! ¡Abusador de las niñas! Bastard! Child Abuser!*" but, of course, all Umberto heard was, "Grrrrrrr, grrrrr."

To Umberto, Don Rey Hombre quickly presented the more formidable threat, so he lifted the barrel from Sancha who ground tighter against his leg when she sensed the shift of the pistol away from her. Umberto shook more fervently against the pull of the dog and was momentarily distracted by the odor, but it would not be enough to stem what was to happen: Umberto, taking quick aim at the fast-approaching "crazy man" fired once, then again, easily piercing the plastic armor.

All of the time in the universe – every moment of the past, today, and what will be the future throughout the Kingdom of God - stopped at that moment.

### *El Capítulo Siete*

#### *¡Esto es la Gloria!*

#### Chapter Seven: To Pass into Glory!

When the window of time opened again, Sancha became enraged and filled with the spirit of a demon sensing that her master was now near death and seized every aspect of Umberto's leg in such a violent struggle that she caused the pistol to be knocked from Umberto's hand and sent it sliding behind her nearly to the hand of Carl, who plucked it from the walkway, paused for a moment and fired one round into Umberto.

Feeling the impact, Sancha released her grip and quickly returned to her master, now the life draining away from him on the chipped walkway's surface just as Vicente, overcome by the commotion, retreated further back into the room.

Both Valentina and Mariana had been startled awake by the shouting, struggle, and gunshots and huddled together, clinging to one another as though lost in a roiling sea, in the corner of the second room away from their Watchers.

Carl inched closer to the open door and led his way with the barrel of the pistol. Spying Vicente he ordered him facedown on the floor while he moved slowly to the room to where the girls shrunk from his view as he approached. Carl knew the pistol frightened them and extended his left hand as he tilted the pistol aside back toward Vicente, and Valentina made the first move forward toward Carl, followed immediately by Mariana. "You're going to be alright," Carl said.

The fear melted from their faces, and they asked uncertainly, "*¿Qué?*"

Sancha had tended to her master and watched as the *Angel Beatrice* had gathered up his soul for the short journey to where he would be joined again with Desideria. After that, Sancha knew that what was left was only ash. Now, tearful as only a loving dog may be, she stood at the open doorway to where Valentina and Mariana slumped and said to them, “*La agonía está terminado, niñas, gracias a este hombre y el más grande de todos los caballeros, Don Rey Hombre de Arizona.*” Then she added, “*Soy Sancha a su servicio.*” Sancha bowed slowly. “Your agony is over thanks to the greatest Knight-errant of all. I am Sancha, at your service.”

Carl heard the dog whimper and emit short yips: nothing more, but Valetina said, “*¡El perro habla!* The dog speaks!” in astonishment and embraced Sancha, curling her nostrils at the close scent of her fur. Mariana stroked Sancha’s face. Carl was too shaken by the events of the day to understand, *si hubiera hablado español. Qué triste para él.* The girls would never know the true story of the Knight errant, *Don Rey Hombre de Arizona*, but Mrs. Reyes made certain others did. Valentina and Mariana only came to vaguely know that, in some way, the strangely dressed man who had died at their doorway was a hero.

### *El Capítulo Ocho*

*Despues de la caída*

*Chapter Eight: After the fall*

The police arrived the moment after and began struggling to make sense of what had happened. Shaken, but sure of what he had done, Carl recounted events.

An interpreter had been called in and helped decipher the girls’ stories of abduction and portage and, ultimately, of bondage in the vilest way. At one point, Valentina urged the interpreter to ask Sancha if what she said was not correct. The interpreter asked, “*¿Quién es Sancha?*”

Mariana pointed at the dog and said, “*¡Ella es!*”

The interpreter, a very kind and understanding woman named Lucinda, held a hand of both girls in hers and said, “*¡Ah! Entiendo, I understand,*” and sat quietly for a moment. Sancha only looked wistfully at them seated on the floor.

After providing their narrative through the interpreter they were sent immediately to the care of a foster home wherein they were tended to in the most careful way given their fragile state following the torment of the weeks preceding.

Sancha was sent with them at their begging, and, in fact, remained with Valetina and Mariana for two years following their return to their home in Mexico, biding her time as she awaited her return to her master and mistress, who, as we speak today, lay as they did in their earthly life, side to side speaking of their dreams and the depth of the love one felt for the other.

It was his reward for being a very brave knight: the bravest of all Knights-errant, *Don Rey Hombre de Arizona, un hombre ingenioso y honesto. Puede él descansar en paz:* The Knight-errant of Kingman, Arizona. May he rest in peace.