SHARPBALL



EL SALADO

Miguel Jiménez & José Luis Jiménez

con sentimiento para nuestra agua viva,
Betico y Pepita:
con el más profundo amor,
el mayor orgullo e
infinita inspiración, ¡nojoda!

EL SALADO
PEACE THROUGH WATER

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SHARPBALL

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SHARPBALL

EL SALADO

A STORY BY
The Brothers Jiménez

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A LONG TIME AGO.

BEFORE THE BEGINNING THERE WAS NIETHER DAY NOR NIGHT TO HELP KEEP TRACK OF TIME.

JUST AN EXTENSIVE AND ETERNAL ***DARKNESS*** THAT COVERED THE VOID FROM TOP TO BOTTOM.

IN THIS DARK WORLD THE ORIGINAL SETTLERS, ***THE OBSCURES****, WERE PERFORMING EXPERIMENTS ON THE INFINITE.

THEY PLACED STONES ON THE EARTH, BUT WERE IN NEED OF SOMETHING MORE. SOMETHING TO ENLIGHTEN AND FATHOM THE DEPTHS OF ***THAT*** IN WHICH THE WORLD RESTED: ***THE LIVING-WATER*** WHERE EVERYTHING LAY. AFLOAT.

*THE FIRST APPEARANCES OF INDIGENOUS ***ZENÚ*** COSMOGONY.

THEY CREATED ***THE CHARMS***: THE SUN, THE MOON AND THE STARS, TO MEASURE THE SIZE OF THE WORLD, AND KEEP TRACK OF TIME; DAYS THAT ENDED AND NIGHTS THAT BEGAN.

AND SO ***THE LIGHT*** STOWED BY THE CHARMS WAS SENT TO THE LAND OF ***THE FIRST MEN***, THOSE WHO HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF WATER.

FROM THAT LIGHT A DOVE BELONGING TO THE WORLD OF THE OBSCURES ***FLED*** AND MADE ITS WAY.

WITH THE FLAP OF ITS WINGS IT DISSOLVED THE MISTS AND CREATED THE WINDS. IT GAZED BELOW AND ***WAS UPSET*** BY THE EXCESS OF DARKNESS AND LACK OF WATER.

IT LANDED ON THE HIGHEST POINT IT COULD FIND, THE BRANCH OF AN OLD SAMAN TREE, AND UPON SEEING HOW THE LIGHT WITH WHICH IT CAME LIT THE LAND OF THE FIRST MEN IT ***REJOICED***.

IT BECAME SO EMOTIONAL THAT ***A TEAR*** ROLLED FROM ITS EYE TO ITS BEAK...

AND ***SLIPPED***.

IT ***DROPPED*** INTO THE DEEPEST BASIN THERE WAS AND ***FILLED*** THE VALLEY WITH WATER...

PLUNG

...BECOMING A BEAUTIFUL AND ***SPRAWLING SWAMP***.

THOUSAND OF YEARS LATER IN ***LOS MONTES DE MARÍA, EL CARMEN DE BOLÍVAR***.

WITH THE ARRIVAL OF LIGHT, THE FIRST MEN SAW ***THEIR LAND*** FOR THE FIRST TIME AND HOW FAR THE GLOW OF THE SUN, THE MOON AND THE STARS COULD REACH; FROM THE SWAMP TO THE VALLEY AND THE VALLEY TO THE MOUNTAIN, WHERE THE WORLD ***SPLIT IN THREE***. WHERE ALL WAS GENEROUS, RICH AND PLENTY. WHERE THE WATER WAS LIFE-GIVING.

AND BEFORE THE ***ENCHANTMENT*** OF THE CHARMS...

TOWNSHIP OF **EL SALADO**.

OH KIDDIES, IF YOU ONLY KNEW.

AND **THEN**?

WHAT US **GRANDPAS SAY**: "THEY WERE FULFILLED TO THE POINT OF...

PLUM

CAREFUL, OLD MAN!

FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR.! THAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU LOOK AT **THE BALL** AND NOT WHAT'S IN FRONT OF YOU.

OK, OK! SORRY.

FRANK **'THE TANK'** NÚÑEZ WITH THE BALL.

STRIKES A PASS TO EL **PIBE** VALDERRAMA.

EL PIBE **TAKES** IT. DRIBBLES.

HE **DODGES** THE DEFENSE.

EL PIBE **PLAYS** IT TO NÚÑEZ WITH A HAT-TRICK.

TRIS

NÚÑEZ SEES AN **OPENING**.

HE **SLIDES** STRAIGHT INTO THE BOX.

SUAZ

HE'S **OPEN**!

NÚÑEZ GETS **READY** TO TAKE IT DOWN WITH HIS CHEST AND...

TRIS

GOAL?

NAH... SUN GOT THE **BEST OF ME**. IT'S **FEISTY**.

REALLY? TOO BAD.

TRUTH IS THIS PIECE OF HEAVEN MAKES **EVERYONE** SOMEWHAT FEISTY.

FEISTY LIKE A **WORLD CUP**.

WELL...

...NEXT TIME JUST GIVE IT SOME MORE **PERRENQUE** AND THAT'S IT.

SO... DO YOU LIKE IT?

TIC-TIC-TIC-TIC-TIC-TIC-TIC-TIC

WELL, **YADIRA**... YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE A 'REAL' SOCCER BALL INSTEAD?

OH, MY BOY. JUST SLAP IT ON AND SEE IF IT FITS.

GOSH, BUT YOU MADE IT FOR **THE MACANCÁN**.

HA! AS SOON AS THIS **VINTAGE HAT** STOPS DANCING ALL OVER YOUR HEAD IT WILL BE BECAUSE YOU ARE 'THE MACANCÁN'...

WHAT?

YOUNG MAN, IF ONLY YOU KNEW **THAT** WHICH DRIVES ALL MEN CRAZY... **MORE** THAN **SOCCER**.

WHAT?!

YOU'RE STILL **TOO YOUNG**.

WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S GOT TO BE PURE **RUBBISH**, YADIRA.

BALL IS ALL, Y'KNOW? **NOTHING** CAN COMPARE.

YOU'LL SEE, FRANK...

...THERE'S ANOTHER KIND OF **GAME** THAT PLAYS WITH THE **DREAMS** OF MEN...

...AND THAT ONE NEEDS, **ASIDE** FROM PERRENQUE...

...**CAÑAÑA**.

DAMN.

FEBRUARY 16, 2000.

YEE-HAW!

"LLEGA **LA FIESTA** DE LA PATRONA, AHÍ VA LA CHICA **GUAPA** Y **MORENA**...

AND THEN THE **MINOR LEAGUE** TALENT SCOUT ARRIVES...

HERE WE GO AGAIN.

AND **ME**... FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR., THE **YOUNGEST**.

I.

PLAYING LIKE **THE KING**. WITH HIS **MOJO ON**.

...EL **TORO CRIOLLO** SALTA A LA ARENA...

SOME TRICKS **HERE**...

...A GOAL **THERE**...

...Y EL MÁS COBARDE SE **ENGUAPETONA**...

...HERE'S FRANK **'THE TANK'** READY TO TACKLE ANY **PICKLE**.

PLEEEASE, DON'T TALK 'BOUT FOOD...

...I'M EATING **FOR TWO THESE DAYS**.

HOW 'BOUT CLEANING UP THE **MESS**.

PIPE DOWN! I'M ON THE VERGE OF EXPLODING.

I EXPECT AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT...

SO YOU'RE **EXPECTING**?

HA... HA... **HUSH YOU!**

COME HERE, YOU. FEEL IT?

LET'S SEE.

THE GIRL **KICKS** LIKE A MULE, RIGHT?

GOD BLESS THE LORD, **MATILDA**...

...SHE'S A **STRI-KER**.

I **HOPE** YOU'RE NOT THINKING 'BOUT...

BRUUU

WHAT'S UP WITH THIS **CHILL**?

NO CHILL, **BONITA**.

...**CORREN** LOS BESOS Y LOS RUMORES...

IT'S JUST **HEATING** UP.

...Y UNOS **OJAZOS** ENSOÑADORES...

UH-HUH.

...SCORES **EVERY-TIME**.

...LLEGA **LA GENTE** Y A MANANTIALES...

FIRST HALF IS **OVER** AND THE SCOUT **COMES** UP TO ME AND SAYS...

...**"HEY!**...

"HEY, **STAR**. THE TRIALS FOR THE **MAJOR LEAGUE** ARE TOMORROW".

GOSH! I TOLD YOU **THAT ONE** ALREADY?

NO, **NEVER**.

JUST A BAZILLION TIMES.

FRANCIS, LET'S TAKE A BREATH. I'M GETTING **WOOZY**.

I MEAN **LOOK AT ME**. CARRYING THIS **BALL**.

EASY THERE...

...NOS **ASESINAN** COMO PUÑALES".

HERE COMES ***THE ZAPEROCO.***

TWO DAYS LATER

FRANCIS,
WE'RE MAKING
TOO MUCH NOISE.

JUST WHAT'S NECESSARY, PLEASE.

BUT WE NEED TO BE READY FOR THE ***WORST***.

PLUS, WITH THAT ***RACKET*** THEY AIN'T GONNA HEAR A DAMN THING.

IT'S BEEN DAYS ALREADY, ***MATILDA***...

...AND IT MIGHT BE WEEKS, OR YEARS... OUR ENTIRE LIFE!...

WHAT-EVER HELP THERE IS ***IS NOT*** ON IT'S WAY. AND ***WHO*** KNOWS ANYTHING?

THE LORD, FRANCIS.

WELL, HE ***BETTER*** STEP ON IT AND MAKE AN APPEARANCE...

FRANCIS.

...AND ***LET'S HOPE*** IT'S HIS ***ALL-MIGHTY*** SELF...

FRANCIS.

...THE MIRACLE-***WORKER***...

¡FRANCIS!

BUT, BONITA... ***CAN YOU HEAR THEM?***

DANCING, SINGING AND DRINKING ***WHILE*** THEY-'RE AT IT.

THEY'RE PARTYING!

WHAT MONSTERS.

YES, BUT... THERE'S ***KIDS*** AROUND, FRANCISCO.

SPEAK SOFTER.

...mmm...

WHY SCARE THEM ***EVEN MORE***? RE-MEMBER...

...JUST WHAT'S NE-CESSARY.

Bienvenidos a El Salado

SHOULD BE ***ALL*** THAT'S NEEDED...

SO? SHOULD WE TURN BACK? SHOULD WE STAY? SHOULD WE PUT UP A ***FIGHT***?

I'M SORRY, ***BONITA***. IT'S JUST ***WRONG***.

I KNOW IT AIN'T EASY.

I WISH I COULD DO MUCH MORE.

ALL OF US.

FORGIVE ME TOO.

OH, MY BONITA...

AND HOW ABOUT A TRUCE? ¿OK?

FOR NOW WE DO ALL THAT'S ***NE-CESSARY***.

FINE BY ME.

'CAUSE IF IT'S ABOUT ***ALL*** THAT'S NECESSARY.

WE'RE GONNA NEED ***ALL*** THE FAITH AND ***ALL*** THE HOPE OF ***ALL*** THESE FOLKS RIGHT HERE.

THE ***LAST*** THING WE LOSE, FRANCIS.

IF THERE'S ***ANYTHING ELSE*** WE CAN ACTU-ALLY LOSE...

FRANCIS.

...***ANYTHING MORE*** TO LOSE...

¡FRANCIS!

OK, OK. SORRY.

TRY 'N GET ***SOME REST***, BONITA.

NOW GET OVER HERE, ***FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR.***

mua

OK. NOW, ***MY LOVE***, WISH PAPA A GOOD NIGHT'S REST TOO.

DAMN! ***SHE'S SO STRONG. SHE'S GOING TO MAKE THE STARTING 11...***

FRANCIS.

OK, OK. ***SORRY***.

SWEET DREAMS, MY DEAR ***CARMEN***.

TWO YEARS LATER.

Bienvenidos a Salado

CARMEN QUERIDO, TIERRA DE AMORES...

...HAY LUZ Y ENSUEÑOS BAJO TU CIELO...

CHAZ

Y PRIMAVERA SIEMPR...

¿EH?

CHAZ

CHAZ

...SIEMPRE EN TU SUELO...

BAJO TUS SOLES LLENOS DE ARDORES.

CHAZ

SO, THE OLD MAN'S ONE ***TOUGH NUT TO CRACK***, AM I RIGHT?

FRANCIS! THAT'S NO WAY TO SAY HELLO.

OUCH!

DON EMILIANO, ***PLEASE*** EXCUSE HIM. YOU KNOW ***HOW RECKLESS*** HE CAN BE.

OH, OUR LITTLE TOWN... ...LOOKS LIKE THE LOST CITY.*

*ANCIENT INDIGENOUS CITY AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE FROM THE ***SIERRA NEVADA*** OF ***SANTA MARTA***.

UNFORGETTA-BLE, MY CHILD.

BEEN A WHILE, HASN'T IT?

TWO YEARS GIVE OR TAKE.

I'VE BEEN COUNTING THE DAYS AS IF EACH ONE WAS THE LAST.

WE'LL STAY HERE IN ***LA TRAMPA**** AND THE REST OF YOU CAN GO TO ***EL PINDÁN****.

BUT NOT A SINGLE DAY LONGER. YOU'RE LIKE AN OAK...

...OR SHOULD I SAY A GUAYACÁN*.

LIGNUM VITAE, AND THANKS.

WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT KEPT ME GOING AND MY HOPES UP AS WELL.

THE LORD HEARS YOU.

**THE FIRST WATER HOLES IN THE TOWN.*

NATIVE TREE FROM THE REGION. "TREE OF LIFE" **IN LATIN.*

AND SPEAKING OF THE LORD...

WHAT'S THIS LITTLE GIFT OF GOD CALLED?

***THIS** GIFT OF GOD... IS CALLED?...*

CAR-MEN.

***YAY**, MY LOVE... SAY HI.*

H-H-HI.

HI, ***CARMEN***. WELCOME TO ***EL SALADO***.

WHAT DO WE SAY?

TH-THANKS, MON MI-LIAN.

***HA!** SMART **LIKE** HER MOTHER.*

THE WATER ***DOESN'T*** LOOK SO GOOD.

***LOOKS** LIKE IT'S GOING TO SEND US **STRAIGHT** TO THE **FLUSHER**.*

SO THE ***ONLY THING*** SHE GOT FROM ***PAPA'S*** HEAD WAS THE ***HAIR***.

DON EMILIANO!

HOME IS ***HOW*** YOU LEFT IT.

TAKE ALL THE TIME YOU NEED.

THANK YOU SO MUCH.

MA, I-I'M... ...SLEEEPY...

SIGH...

NOW... ...SHHH...

HUSH, LITTLE BABY DON'T SAY A WORD...

...MOMMA'S GONNA BUY YOU A MOCKING...

FRAN...

...CIS!!!

THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE HOUSE!

WHAT THE...?

IS ANYONE THERE?!

HEY!

ANYTHING?

NOTHING, BONITA. DIDN'T FIND A THING..

DEAR LORD, FRANCIS. THIS IS TOO WEIRD. THERE'S NO WAY WE'RE SPENDING THE NIGHT HERE, ESPECIALLY WITH LITTLE CARMEN.

YEAH. WE NEED TO SCRAM. LET'S MAKE THE MOST WHILE IT'S EARLY.

THIS TOWN'S STILL HAUNTED. I'M OFF.

OK, OK. WELL, SINCE THERE AIN'T ANY MORE OPTIONS...

...I'M STAYING WITH THE OLD MAN, BONITA.

WHAAAT?!

FOR GOD'S SAKE, FRANCIS, THE THINGS YOU DO TO US.

EASY THERE, BONITA. EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE ALRIGHT. HERE'S FRANK 'THE TA...

NOT NOW, FRANCIS. PLEASE.

JUST SIMMER DOWN. WHY SHOULD WE BE SAYING GOOD-BYE ALL SHOOK UP?

BUT WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?

WELL AT LEAST A LITTLE SMOOCH SO I CAN GET SOME SHUT-EYE.

FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR., YOU'RE UNBELIEVABLE.

BUT WITH SOME LOVE.

AND ONE FOR THE ROAD.

OK, OK. HERE.

...MMM...

HOW 'BOUT ONE FOR THE BABY...

LORD, GIVE ME PATIENCE.

AND ONE MORE TO DREAM WITH YO...

STOP MESSING AROUND!

BUT...

BUT NOTHING, THIS IS SERIOUS.

BU...

I'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING...

THAT NIGHT IN CARMEN DE BOLÍVAR.

...FOOL.

MEANWHILE IN **EL SALADO**.

NO WAY, OLD MAN. **AGE BEFORE BEAUTY**. THE YEARS DON'T COME CHEAP, YOU KNOW.

¡HA! I BET THIS OLD MAN **SHAKES THE HIPS** LIKE YOU NEVER COULD.

BUT **OF COURSE**. AND RATTLE LIKE **A BAG OF BONES**.

KID, THAT'S **WHAT** THE PUDGY THINK. THAT **THE SKINNY DON'T EAT**.

LOOK AT YOU, CAN BARELY GET OFF THE HAMOC. GOTTA LAY OFF THE **AREPAEHUEVO***, A PAIR OF HORNS AND YOU'LL LOOK **JUST LIKE AN OX**.

***COUSINE**. TYPICAL FRIED SNACK OF THE CARIBBEAN COAST.

THAT SO? I'D RATHER BE STRONG LIKE AN OX THEN SLOW LIKE A FOX.

LATE FOR YOUR OWN BIRTH, **HUH?** IT'S **SWIFT** LIKE A FOX, BLOCKHEAD.

YOU SURE, OLD MAN?

YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, FRANCIS. **THE YEARS DON'T COME CHEAP**.

LISTEN TO THE OLD MAN. GET SOME REST 'CAUSE TOMORROW'S WORK IS NOT EASY.

I'LL DO THIS SHIFT... TRUTH BE TOLD, SINCE THAT MOMENT I'M **BARELY SLEEPING**.

IS **THIS** ABOUT WHAT **MATILDA** THINKS SHE **SAW**?

NO, FRANCIS. AFTER EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED, **NOTHING** IN THIS WORLD **CAN SCARE ME**...

...BUT I'M **AFRAID OF MY DREAMS**; TO LET MY GUARD DOWN, CLOSE MY EYES AND HAVE MY MIND **TAKE ME BACK** TO **THAT** MOMENT WHEN...

OLD MAN?

THEY MADE ME **LOOK**, FRANCIS... WATCH **EVERYTHING THEY DID TO US**.

DON EMILIANO, LET ME GIVE YOU A HAND. **COME HERE**. I'LL DO THE SHIFT.

THANKS, KID. YOU DO KNOW **HOW LUCKY** YOU ARE, **RIGHT?**

LIKE NEVER BEFORE.

ALRIGHT, FRANCIS. NOW **GET SOME REST**, AND **REMEMBER** THAT IN SPITE OF **EVERYTHING** THAT STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE...

...WE NEED TO **KILL THE FEAR**.

OF COURSE, OLD MAN, COUNT ON IT. GOOD NIGHT AND THANKS... **FOR EVERYTHING**.

...YOU'RE...WEL... ...CO...**ZZZ**...**ZZZ**...

GOOD NIGHT, **MY LOVES**.

THE NEXT DAY.

4:45 A.M.

7:00 A.M.

11:30 A.M.

12:30 P.M.

WHO'D LIKE...?

*AREPAEHUEVO.

...ME!

1:30 P.M.

3:00 P.M.

5:00 P.M.

6:00 P.M.

TUNC

TUNC

TUNC

TUNC

WHAT THE...

...@#*$%!

TIME WENT BY **AMIDST** THE **ADVERSITY** UNTIL...

ALRIGHT, FOLKS. EVEN THOUGH THIS GIVES ME ***THE SHIVERS*** THERE'S SOMETHING WE AIN'T DONE YET...

...AND IT'S A ***MUST***.

THE NEXT DAY, BUT AT **NIGHTTIME**.

AND SO, THAT'S WHEN ***YOU LOOK ONE WAY***...

...BUT ***TWIST*** THE HIP ***THE OTHER WAY***...

...AND THEN YOU LEAVE EVERYONE ***LOOKING FOR THEIR OWN SHADOW***.

THAT'S WHAT I CALL ***DANCING*** YOUR WAY OUT OF A ***FACE-OFF***.

FRANK, CAN I PLAY?

PLEASE?

WHAT DO WE SAY?

YEAH! GO GET 'EM, GIRL.

YAY! THANKS.

DAMN, REALLY?

THE TANK?

FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR.?

YUP, ***REALLY***.

WHAT DID I ***MISS***?

A TALE THAT DON EMILIANO KNOWS LIKE ***YOU AND I***.

WHICH ONE?

THE DAY THAT FRANK 'THE TANK' ***CRIED*** EL SALADO ***A RIVER***.

DON EMILIANO, TELL US THE STORY.

COME ON!

HA!

I REMEMBER IT LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY...

HERE WE GO AGAIN.

EASY NOW, FRANCIS... THIS HERE IS A ***TALL TALE*** FOR THE ***BOOKS***.

ALRIGHT, FOLKS...

...GATHER UP!

WINTER WAS ALIVE AND KICKING, AND WE WERE ROUNDING-UP THE HORSES TO GO LOOK FOR THE CATTLE THAT ***LADY CARMENZA*** HAD LOST UPON WAKING UP. AND SINCE FRANCIS HAD ALREADY STARTED TO FLIRT WITH HER DAUGHTER, AND COULDN'T MISS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRY AND IMPRESS HER, WELL "THE TANK" JOINED THE ***SEARCH PARTY***. BUT BEWARE... ***HA!*** THE KID DIDN'T HAVE A CLUE ABOUT HORSEBACK RIDING, BUT HE DIDN'T LET HIS SECRET SLIP. I ***SUSPECTED*** BY THE WAY HE TRIED TO 'MOUNT' ***BABIECA*** AND DECIDED TO STEP-IN TO AVOID A ***CATASTROPHE***. SO INSTEAD, I TOLD HIM TO GET ON TOP OF ***RUCIO***, THE MULE. AND THANK GOD, IN SPITE OF HIS STUBBORNESS, HE TOOK MY ADVICE.

AND SO WE LEFT. LADY CARMENZA ON ***PALOMO***, MATILDA ON ***BABIECA***, FRANCIS ON ***RUCIO***, AND MYSELF ON ***ROCINANTE***. AND WE WENT LOOKING FOR THE CATTLE. I TURNED BACK EVERY NOW AND THEN TO CHECK ON FRANCIS AND COULD SENSE THE POOR BOY'S WORRIES. BOY WAS HE ***SHOOK UP***. HE PATTED AND PATTED HIS CHEST, PRESSING HIS HANDS AGAINST HIS SHIRT'S LEFT POCKET. I SWEAR IT WAS THE NERVES, BUT IF ONLY I HAD KNOWN... TURNS OUT FRANCIS HAD IT ALL FIGURED OUT: HE WENT TO ***YADIRA'S*** AND ORDERED A CUSTOM-MADE CIGAR, THE SIZE OF A PRETTY GIRL'S RING FINGER, AND PUT ON IT A ***BEAUTIFUL RING*** HE HAD BROUGHT ALL THE WAY ***FROM CARTAGENA***. NOW THE REST OF HIS PLAN, AT LEAST IN THEORY, MADE PERFECT SENSE. SINCE MATILDA DESPISED WHEN FRANCIS ***SMOKED***, ALMOST AS MUCH AS THE THICK AND HEAVY BEARD HE USED TO SPORT IN THE DAY, AND WAS USED TO PULLING THE TOBACCO STRAIGHT OUT OF HIS MOUTH; FRANCIS WAS GOING TO WAIT UNTIL SUNSET TO PULL OUT THE CIGAR AND LIGHT IT UP, AND AS SOON AS MATILDA GRABBED IT, SHE WOULD NOTICE IT WAS... ...HMMM... LET'S SEE... ***ENGAGED!*** BUT OH, FOLKS, IF ONLY YOU KNEW...

WHAT?

¡JA! BECAUSE THE GROUND HAD BEEN SO ***PUNISHED*** BY THE RAIN OF THE PREVIOUS NIGHT, THE HORSES WERE WALKING, BUT WITH ***A HEAVY STEP***. AND SINCE MATILDA HAD HER WAY WITH THE BEASTS, ALMOST AS MUCH AS CARMENZA, THEY DIDN'T MIND ***DOUBLING*** THE PACE. I WAS KEEPING UP, BUT I COULD FEEL THE BOY BEING LEFT BEHIND, SO I TURNED BACK TO TAKE A LOOK. FRANCIS, WAY BACK AND ANXIOUS AS HELL, DECIDED TO ***MAKE HIS MOVE***: HE LOOKED DOWN, ***LET GO*** OF THE REINS WITH ONE HAND AND PUT IT IN THE POCKET OF HIS SHIRT. BUT WHEN HE PULLED UP HIS FACE... SEE, KID? THAT'S WHY YOU ALWAYS LOOK AT WHAT'S AHEAD...

AND SO?!

AND SO... HOLD YOUR HORSES, FOLKS. HE HEAD-BUTTED ***A HORNET'S NEST***, AND GOT THE BUGGERS STINGING. IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE HE WAS COVERED IN A CLOUD OF WASPS, PASSING US AT ***FULL-SPEED*** AND TRYING TO GET A HOLD OF RUCIO. BUT ***THE BEAST TRIPPED*** IN THE MUD, AND WITH A FIERCE ***JOLT,*** YOUNG FRANCISCO NÚÑEZ JR. RICOCHETED HEAD-FIRST INTO ***A PUDDLE***. AND IF THAT AIN'T ENOUGH BAD LUCK, THE LITTLE MULE CAUGHT MOMENTUM, DID A CART-WHEEL, ROLLED OVER AND ULTIMATLEY BURIED HIM INSIDE ***THE SLUDGE,*** BEFORE GETTING UP AND LEAVING ***RIDER-LESS*** BY ITSELF. GOSH, AND LADY CARMENZA, INSTEAD OF FEELING SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR BOY'S PHYSICAL INTEGRITY, ***SCREAMS*** AT THE TOP OF HER ***'I'M-NOT-THIS-MAN'S-MOTHER-IN-LAW-JUST-YET*** LUNGS: "FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR. FOR GOD'S SAKE GET UP AND GET THAT MULE! ***THAT SADDLE'S*** WORTH A FORTUNE...

I TOOK ONE FOR 'THE BOY' AND WENT FOR RUCIO. WHEN I CAME BACK, BOTH MATILDA AND LADY CARMENZA WERE AWE-STRUCK. I SAY THAT NO ONE, ***EVER***, HAD SEEN HIM LIKE THIS: KNEES DRIVEN INTO THE MUD, WAVING HIS HANDS INSIDE ***THE MUCK***... DESPERATE, SAD AND WORRIED... WITH EYES LIKE ***AN OVERFLOWING DAM***, BUT WITHOUT SHEDDING A TEAR. THE SUN BEGAN TO SET AND MATILDA WAS NOW GETTING WORRIED. SUDDENLY, FRANCIS FROZE. HE WAS STILL FOR A FEW SECONDS ***PETRIFIED***, AND THEN STARTED TO ***LAUGH*** LIKE ***A LOON***. I SAID TO MYSELF: "THAT'S IT, HE'S LOST IT. KID'S GONE CRAZY". THE PROMISE FOR ***LOVE*** HAD ***DEFEATED HIM***. MATILDA CLOSED IN ON HER HORSE, ASKED HIM IF HE WAS ALRIGHT AND THIS IS YOUR PART, MY GIRL...

WELL, ***THE BEST PART*** OF THE STORY: FRANCIS ***LOOKS UP*** AT ME, COVERED IN MUD FROM ***HEAD TO TOE***...

...WITH HIS FACE LIKE ***A PINEAPPLE*** FROM ALL THE STINGS, AND SAYS TO ME, ***CONFIDENT*** LIKE NO ONE ELSE...

"***WHAT THE HELL!*** THE ONLY THING THAT AIN'T A PAIN IN THE ASS IS THAT I'M ALREADY ON MY KNEES".

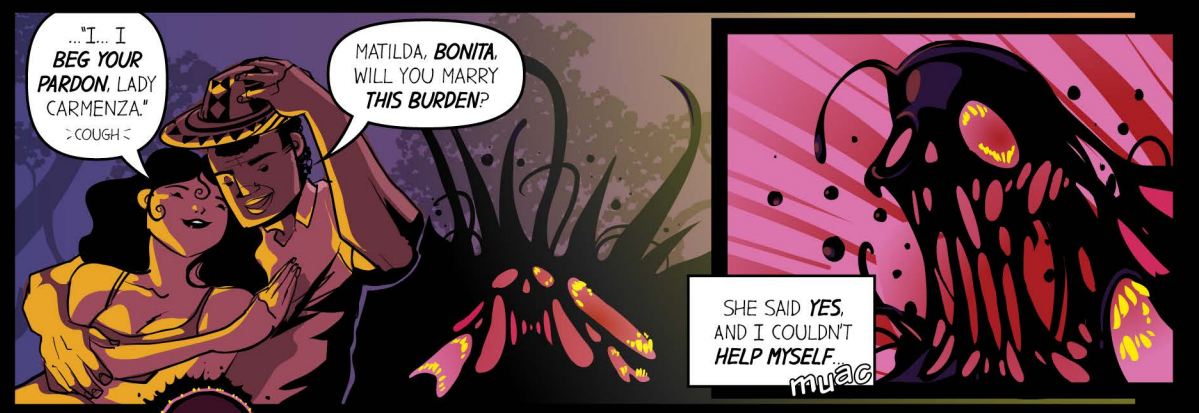


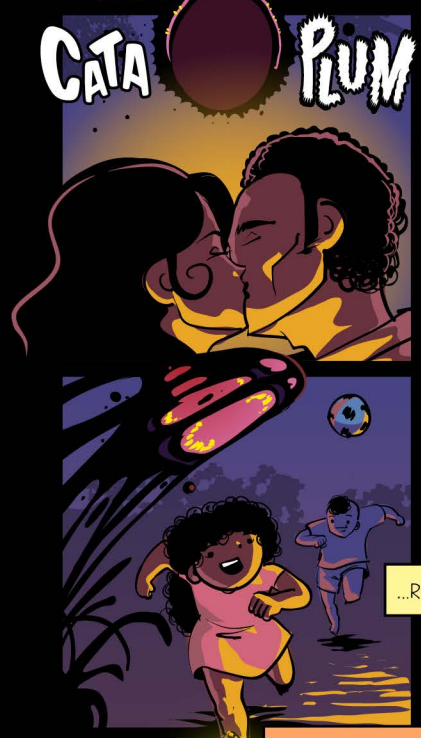
...DAMN! THIS BOY'S ***A BURDEN***".





THEN HE ***PULLED*** HIS HANDS OUT OF THE MUD AND SHOWED THEM OFF, BUT ALL WE COULD SEE WAS A BIG ***BALL*** OF MUD. ***POOR KID***. IF MATILDA COULDN'T MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF IT, MISS CARMENZA, WHO WANTED TO ***BEAT HIM SILLY***, HAD NO CHANCE. BUT RIGHT AT THAT MOMENT, HE TURNED HIS HANDS, JUST ***A TINY LITTLE BIT***, AND WITH THE LAST RAY OF LIGHT, A SPARKLING GLOW LEFT US ***BLIND***. ALL OF US. IT WAS THEN WHEN WE HEARD HIM SAY...











***POPULAR LEGEND OF COLOMBIAN FOLKLORE**. A FIERCE AMPHIBIOUS CREATURE THAT BARES THE APPAREANCE OF A HAIRY TOBBACO-SMOKING MAN THAT CAPTURES WOMEN TO OFFER THEM GOLDEN PRESENTS.

WHAT! YOU JEALOUS BUNCH.

HA! ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT NOW. TRUTH IS HATS OFF TO YOU, SIR FRANCISCO NÚÑEZ JR., THE MOCKERY IS INDEED CAUSED BY JEALOUSY, BUT OF THE GOOD KIND. 'CAUSE...

...*"SOME HAVE A CRYSTAL CROWN AND THEY ALL HAVE PEARLS FROM THE SEA, BUT IN MY HEART YOU'LL SEE...

...YOU ARE THE QUEEN."*

*TÚ ERES LA REINA, DIOMEDES DÍAZ.

NO, PLEASE. STOP IT. I'M BLUSHING.

HEY, WAIT... AND THE CATTLE?

TRUE. WE ASKED HERE AND THERE, BUT ALL WE WERE TOLD WAS TO STOP LOOKING FOR THEM AT ALL.

LET'S SAY THEY GOT LOST...

NEVER TO BE FOUND.

BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE ***WE FOUND*** THAT DAY.

WHAT?

WELL, A WAY TO ***STAY TOGETHER*** WHEN THE ***TIMES ARE TOUGH***.

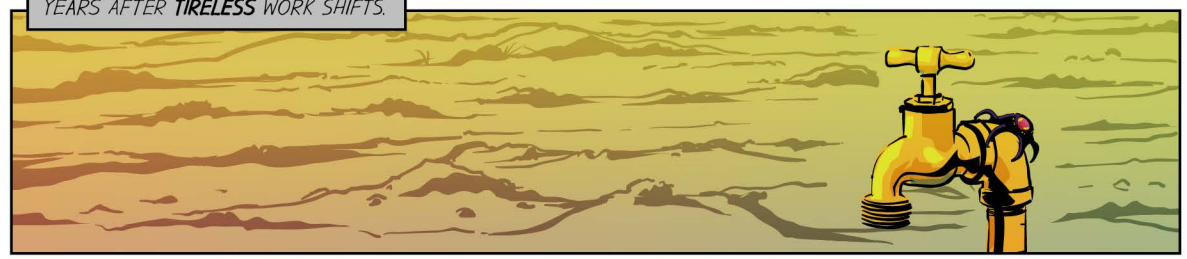
'CAUSE IN THIS WORLD YOU CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH JUST ***BY YOURSELF***, RIGHT?

RIGHT.

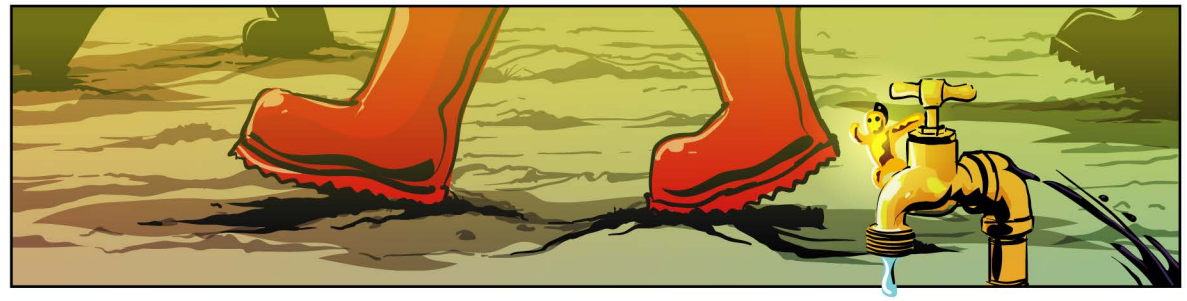
LET'S DO THIS.



YEARS AFTER ***TIRELESS*** WORK SHIFTS.









WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?
AND IF THE POWER RUNS OUT?
HUSH!
THAT'S WHY WE'RE GOING TO BACK IT UP WITH SOME ***SOLAR ENERGY*** PANELS.
BUT YOU HAVE TO ***PREPARE*** AND TAKE ***RESPONSIBILITY*** OF THE INSTALLATION, THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.
IT'S A ***SUSTAINABLE*** METHOD OF POWERING THE NEW ***PIPE SYSTEM***.
TODAY THIS IS ***YOURS***, BUT FROM TOMORROW ONWARDS IT WILL BE FOR YOUR CHILDREN, AND ***AFTER*** THAT, ***THE CHILDREN OF YOUR CHILDREN***.
FROM ***THIS DAY FORTH***...
FOR US?
BY ***ALL*** OF US.
SO?
WE HAVE TO BREAK THE PIGGY BANK.
HOW COME?
BECAUSE WE HAVE TO?!
NO. 'CAUSE ***ONLY LIKE THIS*** CAN WE ***MAKE A DIFFERENCE***.
BE A TOWN WITH ***AS MUCH*** HISTORY AS MEMORIES.

WHAT A SIGHT.
A PIECE OF HEA-VEN, AM I RIGHT?
YUP, ***IT'S*** BEAUTIFUL.
CAN SOMEONE TELL US ***WHAT*** YOU'RE LOOKING AT?
HA! FRANCIS, CAN YOU TELL US ***WHAT*** YOU'RE LOOKING AT?
THE ***FUTURE***, MY FRIENDS.
CAN WE COME DOWN NOW?
DO YOU ***HAVE*** THE PAINT?
YEAH. AND THE CAMERA TOO. ***THE TIME'S*** PERFECT.
IT'S A BIT HIGH, DON'T YOU THINK?
LET'S ***SEE***.

FINALLY **THE MOMENT** ARRIVES.

DO YOU THINK...?

QUIET.

YES, GOD... DAMN!!!

TRAS

@#:$%!

TRAS

WHAT WAS *THAT*?!

COULD IT BE?

NOT *AGAIN*.

Plic

THAT IS THAT WINTER IS HERE, FOLKS.

IS THAT...?

NEVER IN MY LIFE HAVE I SEEN IT RAIN LIKE THIS.

HOW DO YOU FEEL, KID?

WHAT A FEELING!

MMM... LET'S SEE... "I'M FEELING SATISFYING."*

FRANK!

*PHRASE COINED BY **ALEJO DURÁN**, MUSICIAN AND VALLENATO LEGEND.

GETS *PRETTIER* BY THE DAY, *RIGHT?*

WHO? *ME?*

HA! YOU STILL *NEED TO HEAR IT* FROM TIME TO TIME. RIGHT, MY GIRL?

WHY NOT?!

LOOK AT HER. I THINK SHE *GOT THE BEST* OF THEM BOTH.

SHE REMINDS ME SO MUCH *OF HER.*

IT'S *THE* MOVES, RIGHT?

INDEED.

AND THE TOBBACO ROLLING AND *VUELTIAO** KNITTING.

EVERYTHING.

ME TOO, *DON EMILIANO.*

ALL OF US.

MY YADIE...

BONITA! THE SONG... TIME TO *SHINE.*

DON EMILIANO, *WOULD* YOU TELL *CARMEN* A STORY WHILE I HIT THE DANCE FLOOR WITH *OL' FRANKIE?*

DEPENDS, *MY GIRL.* THE WORD DOES *WONDERS* AND RHYMES WITH *EASE.*

MOOOM! PLEASE.

HEAR HER, DON EMILIANO? SO *YOUNG* AND ALREADY *LECTURING* ME.

>COUGH<

PLEASE.

WITH PLEASURE, MY GIRL. BUT ON ONE *CONDITION.*

SAY NO MORE, *DON EMILIANO.*

YOU GIVE ME *THE NEXT* DANCE.

DEAL.

GOSH, SONG'S ALMOST OVER! *DAMN,* MATILDA.

FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR.! WATCH YOUR MOUTH IN FRONT OF THE GIRL.

?!

OK, OK. *SORRY.* AFTER YOU, BONITA.

AND PARDON ME, *MILLIE OL' MAN.*

FRANK.

*THE *TRADITIONAL COASTAL HAT.*

HOW *I MISS* HER.

"COMO LAS MIELES QUE DAN SUS CAÑAS...

...TIENEN TUS HEMBRAS LOS LABIOS ROJOS...

...TODA LA FIEBRE DE TUS MONTAÑAS...

...LAS LLEVAN ELLAS DENTRO'E LOS OJOS...

...TIERRA DE PLACERES, DE LUZ, DE ALEGRÍA...

...DE LINDAS MUJERES...

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ALRIGHT, *CARMEN.* IF MY *OLD MAN MEMORY* SERVES ME WELL IT GOES *LIKE THIS...*

AND ONCE LIFE SETTLED IN THE LAND OF THE FIRST MEN, THE OBSCURES DIVIDED THE WORLD INTO THREE: A ***CELESTIAL WORLD*** OF THUNDER, LIGHTNING, RAIN AND HURRICANES WHERE THE CHARMS WOULD ROAM; AN ***EARTHLY WORLD*** SCATTERED WITH THE MEN AND WOMEN OF EACH AND EVERY COLOR, THE GOLDEN ANIMALS AND THE SPIKEY PLANTS; AND THE ***UNDERWORLD*** OF ENDLESS HOLLOW TUNNELS THAT CONNECTED EVERYTHING WITH THE EVER-FLOWING ***LIVING WATER***, WHERE EVERYTHING WAS BORN AND NEEDED TO FEED OF IT TO LIVE. AND WHEN THE MEN AND WOMEN OF EACH AND EVERY COLOR, THE GOLDEN ANIMALS AND THE SPIKEY PLANTS FELT THAT ***WATER*** WAS THAT WHICH SURROUNDED THEM...

WELL... THEY ***FELL*** UNDER THE ENCHANTMENT OF THE CHARMS, AND JUST LIKE US GRANDPAS SAY...

...AH, MY GIRL, IF YOU ONLY KNEW.

WHAT?

"THEY WERE FULFILLED TO THE POINT OF FULFILLMENT".*

DAMN!

CARMEN!

...CARMEN, ***TIERRA MÍA***.**

YEE-HAW!

NOW.

*ADAPTED FROM **JUAN SÁBALO**, LEOPOLDO BERDELLA DE LA ESPRIELLA.

****CARMEN DE BOLÍVAR***, LUCHO BERMÚDEZ.



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¡Enhorabuena!

GLOSSARY*

Atravesado	Reckless, daring, bold.
Avispado	Smart, shrewd, cunning.
Bulla	Noise, hullabaloo.
Camello	Work.
Cañaña	Courage, desire.
Carreta	Lie, unlikely story.
Cipote	Reaffirm the size of something.
Cotudo con paperas	Expression of redundancy.
Cule	Reaffirms the action.
Chicharrón	Problem, mess.
Enguarapados	Tearful, weeping.
En pila	Attentive.
Erda	Expression of dislike.
Fogueo	Ability to face adversity.
Huesera	Something boring, bad or uninteresting.
Jodido	Difficult, complicated to solve.
Levante	Couple. Hook-up.
Macancán	Person of great stature and strength.
Nojoda	Expression of disbelief/admiration.
Párale bolas	Pay attention.
Parranda	Party, celebration.
Pegote	Upstart, impertinent, burden.
Perrenque	Courage, desire.
Salar	Spoil.
Turruleto	Stunned. Like crazy.
Vacilar	Hesitate. Annoy. Goofing around.
Viendo un polvero	Unfit. Left cold.
Yeyo	Temporary discomfort, fainting.
Zaperoco	Problem, mess, fuss.

*complement for the Spanish version

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Ferrovial is a global operator of transport infrastructure and services for cities, focused on operational excellence and innovation within its projects. Through its Social Programs, the company sees investment in the Community as a strategic instrument for the development of society. Their projects seek to train and promote the mobilization of the community in favor of care and access to water.

In its project to improve the availability and access to quality drinking water in the town of El Salado (Colombia), Ferrovial participates with the NGO Ayuda en Acción and its partner Fundación Semana. The objective is to help the inhabitants of this population enjoy a continuous supply of quality water.

SHARPBALL

SHARPBALL is a company created by The Brothers Jiménez with the aim of conceptualizing, developing and producing original content for different transmedia entertainment outlets that's inspired by Colombian cultural customs.

Their catalog ranges from illustrations of intional circulation to celebrated graphic novels, passing through unforgettable animated shortfilms, risky music videos and, most recently, daring film productions.

Currently their work is recognized for a healthy and genuine balance between conceptual identity, narrative challenges, artistic ambition and notorious messages of social awareness.

They're known under the alias of the creative pit.



JOSÉ LUIS

THE BROTHERS JIMÉNEZ

Tunja, Boyacá, Colombian natives José Luis and Miguel began their career in the arts from an early age. Attracted by an innocent luring towards action figures, comic strips and animated films, they went astray in the multidisciplinary tasks of the creation of universes; drawing of characters, writing of scripts and performing the soundtracks for the tricks of their minds.

Over the years and marked by the dailies of living in Colombia, their style begins to brood a fatal but hopeful tone, characteristic of the duality of the country's news. They exhibit it in their first book "The Eleven", an undertaking celebrated by critics, which is followed by the theatrical release of the animated shortfilm "The Nabbing", the publication of the successful graphic novel adaptation of "The Vortex" by José Eustasio Rivera and, currently, the live-action short film "One Of These Nights".

When they are not attending the customs of everyday life, they deal with the creative pit's alter ego, the extreme metal band A.C.P.

They are known under the alias of the cultural dealers.

MIGUEL







The people of El Salado lived in an earthly paradise, between the blessings of nature and the care of The Charms, until the day they were displaced by the arrival of a violent and fearsome invader, the horrifying Zaperoco.
Years later, in the middle of an aggressive drought, Francis and Matilda return with their family and the rest of the town to face their biggest fears and, with unexpected help, bring harmony back to their land.

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FOR ALL

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