

Prologue: Bienvenidos / Welcome

Chapter One

As the steamship turned eastward in the calm waters of the Gulf of Mexico, there was enough of a jolt to awaken Fernando. He had managed to get a decent night's sleep, even though his "bed" was really a long wooden bench, and he had slept in the sitting position. Like for many of his fellow passengers, his youth, not quite 18 years of age, had made this possible. The 22- hour journey from Havana had been uneventful, and short.....much shorter than his eight-day crossing from Santander, Spain to Havana four years earlier.

"Please begin organizing your passports and related documents for processing in about one hour!" shouted a crew member.

This was followed, mercifully, by a translation into Spanish. As the young man complied, he began walking across the cabin to a doorway leading to an exterior deck, eventually making his way to the bow of this vessel, and saw his first view of the United States dead ahead. As they passed through a somewhat narrow strait, he was amazed at how flat the terrain was. Before him was an incredibly large estuary. A fellow Spaniard who was returning from a visit to Havana approached him.

"Sabes lo que es esto?" he asked Fernando. The older gentleman had asked if Fernando knew what he was looking at.

"No" he replied.

"Esto se llama La Bahia de Tampa. Y muy cerca queda el pueblo de Tampa, y su vida nueva. Bienvenido!" His travel companion had

pointed out the waters of Tampa Bay and warmly welcomed him to the booming town of Tampa and a new life.

The humble ship, Mascotte, steamed toward Port Tampa from Havana.

Chapter Two

"Prepare to disembark!"

Even before the translation, Fernando understood, as the few English speakers hurriedly began organizing their baggage and documents. He grabbed his satchel, a "farewell" gift from his family in Spain. Holding his passport and immigration permit in hand, he anxiously made his way toward the line forming near the Mascotte's exit point.

As they approached the docks, he became aware, surprisingly, that his heart was racing with anticipation, and a bit of uncertainty. Cuba had been within his comfort zone, culturally familiar.

"Esto es Los Estados Unidos...inglés, sí...español, no!" he thought. Would he be able to adjust to the United States, a non-Spanish culture and language? For the first time since leaving his small village of San Román, Fernando felt a twinge of doubt.

A slight thud announced the arrival of Mascotte to the docks. As the gangplank was lowered, there was a collective anticipatory shuffling among the passengers in line. Fernando noticed that a small group of well-dressed passengers were escorted off the ship first. He wondered who they are.

"Quienes son ellos?" Fernando asked a Cuban man standing next to him.

"Son los turistas Americanos regresando de La Habana", explaining that they are the American tourists returning from Havana.

As Fernando descended the gangplank, he noticed how small and modest the port was.

"Tampa no es una ciudad, creo que es un pueblo"...Fernando had decided his new home was not a city, but a small town.

"Foreign passports to the left! Have all papers out for inspection!" Instructions were emphatically being shouted out, then translated into Spanish.

At the bottom of the gangplank, the young Spaniard briefly hesitated, lifted his right foot, then emphatically placed it on land. A combination

of anticipation, optimism, pride and trepidation raced through his mind as he took his first step in the United States.

Chapter Three

Fernando hesitated and anxiously looked toward a group of people who were gathered just beyond official looking men checking papers. He was hoping to see his best friend, Ignacio, who had offered to meet him. He was gently nudged to continue moving forward in line.

"Next!"....followed by the translation..."Próximo!"

Fernando stepped forward and handed his passport and papers to the official. A translator stationed between the two checkpoints was doing his best to assist both stations simultaneously. Though there was not a very large number of passengers to process, the result was a bit frenzied. Fernando did his best to follow the rapid flow of translated questions and answers:

"Name?"

Fernando Suarez Menéndez.

Birthplace?"

Spain.

Province?"

Asturias.

Town?

San Román de Candamo.

Date of birth?

November 17, 1882.

Age?

17."

The official continued to process this information, not looking up at all.

The translator looked at Fernando and gave a "it's OK, don't worry" look, with a slight smile.

"What will be your address in Tampa?"

"Su dirección en Tampa?" asked the translator.

Fernando somewhat nervously searched for yet another piece of paper in his pocket. He handed the paper to the translator. Turning to the official the Spanish-speaker said, in accented English, "1822 14th Avenue East. Ybor City".

After a bit of shuffling and lots of rubber stamping, the official handed Fernando his passport and some of his papers. He then handed Fernando yet another paper, this one unfamiliar to him.

"PORT OF ENTRY: PORT TAMPA, FLORIDA

DATE OF ENTRY: NOVEMBER 9, 1900"

The older gentleman, sensing his curiosity, translated it for Fernando.

Without looking at the young Spaniard, the official gently waved him past the check point. Before moving on, Fernando turned to the translator.

"Señor, muchas gracias por ayudarme. Como se llama usted?"

Fernando wanted to know who to thank for helping him.

"De nada, joven. Me llamo Armando Nogueira Yglesias, y te deseo la mejor suerte posible!" The older gentleman had introduced himself and wished Fernando the very best of luck.

Chapter Four

Fernando continued walking past the immigration checkpoint, still searching for his friend Ignacio. He noticed a small railway depot ahead of him. Gathering near the station were some fellow passengers as well as other travelers from another ship that had arrived shortly before Mascotte. For some reason, Ignacio had told him to wait near the modest train station and he would find him. He joined the others near the platform.

The well-dressed and impressive-looking Cuban gentleman with whom he had briefly chatted on the ship approached him, his hand outstretched.

"Me llamo Belarmino Pedroso. Encantado conocerle". Fernando was impressed with his engaging smile and his use of the formal, versus familiar, reference to the grammatical second person in introducing himself. The manner of speech seemed simultaneously Cuban and continental Spanish.

"Soy Fernando Suárez Menéndez. Igualmente, un placer". Fernando had politely reciprocated the introduction with a smile and a firm handshake.

Belarmino's act of kindness had put Fernando somewhat at ease, as he continued to somewhat apprehensively search the crowd for Ignacio. He was grateful for the man having reached out to him.

The two men began an exchange of pleasantries. As the conversation continued, Fernando continued to detect in Belarmino's speech pattern a hint of the rhythm and accent typical of many Afro-Cubans he had met during his years in Havana. However, it was not quite the

same. His curiosity must have shown on his face, as the Cuban's smile widened.

"Estás un poco confundido, no?" Belarmino had asked if he was confused. With a chuckle he explained that his dad was a Spanish tobacco grower and his mother, an Afro-Cuban descendant of west African slaves, was a cook and house maid in the plantation manor.

At this moment, Fernando felt somewhat embarrassed that his curiosity had been so obvious.

"Con calma, por favor! Estoy muy cómodo con quien soy. Entiendo bien ambos mundos, y llevo mucho orgullo de ser de ambos mundos!"

He had assured Fernando that no offense had been taken, and he was quite comfortable with himself, and proud of his biracial heritage.

The young Spaniard was in awe of this confident, intelligent man. Belarmino appeared to be just a bit older than he, but he exuded a confidence and maturity that belied his youth.

Belarmino, glancing at his exposed arm, exclaimed, with a smile: "Me puedes llamar por mi apodo....Café con Leche".

The endearing Cuban had told Fernando to call him by his nick-name, "Coffee With Milk", a reference to his exotically beautiful complexion.

The young Spaniard sensed that perhaps a friendship was in the making.

Chapter Five

Fernando noticed that a train was pulling into the railway station. As it stopped, passengers began filing out rapidly from its three cars. Fernando smiled broadly as a familiar face emerged from the crowd.

"El Zapato Que Habla!" He called out to Ignacio, using his nickname....."The Shoe That Talks". It was the norm in small villages across northern Spain to refer to people, especially men, by their nicknames, rather than their given names. This custom emerged to avoid confusion since many shared the same first names.

"El Gaitero Candamín!"....responded Ignacio. Back home Fernando was known as "The Bagpiper From Candamo", references to his reputation as a good bagpipe player and the county of his birth, Candamo.

The two men raced toward each other, embracing as if they were two long-lost brothers. As they exchanged a warm kiss on each cheek, they began simultaneously speaking. The two life-long friends were frantically trying to make up for the four years since they had last seen each other.

Belarmino had followed Fernando toward the train and was standing bedside the two Spaniards. Realizing his unintended rudeness, he pulled Café con Leche toward them.

"Belarmino Pedroso, le quiero presentar a Ignacio Préndes González. Zapato, te quiero presentar a Café con Leche".

Fernando had introduced the gentlemen, and they were now on "nickname familiarity"....a gesture of warmth and sensitivity in the Spanish and Cuban cultures.

Ignacio pointed them toward the train, displaying two tickets in his hand. As they approached the entrance of the train car, Fernando politely stepped aside to allow Belarmino to enter the car ahead of him. He noticed that Café con Leche had abruptly paused and he sensed an awkward, silent uneasiness in both the Cuban and Ignacio. Before Fernando could process what was happening, a conductor standing nearby grabbed Belarmino by the arm and pointed him toward another car at the very back of the train.

"Gracias, caballero. Pero nos vemos después", Belarmino commented to Fernando. He had thanked him, saying they would see each other later. With suitcase in hand, he walked toward the last train car, as instructed.

Puzzled, Fernando hesitated to board the train. A nudge from Ignacio broke his hesitation. Sensing his friend's confusion, he whispered to him..."Después te lo explico, Gaitero". Ignacio had told Fernando that he would explain what had happened shortly. The two Spaniards took their seats.

Chapter Six

As the train slowly departed the station, Fernando remained curious as to what had transpired while boarding the train. Glancing around the car, he recognized many of his fellow passengers, but some were unfamiliar to him. Many were speaking Spanish, others a language he recognized as not English, and strange sounding to him, though an occasional word sounded almost Spanish. His silent curiosity was interrupted by Ignacio speaking.

"Gaitero, ahora te explico lo que pasó allí, hombre." Ignacio was about to satisfy Fernando's curiosity as to the awkward scene with Belarmino.

"Estamos en un estado estadounidense sureño. Aquí hay leyes que mandan la separación de las razas, hasta en trenes y tranvías."

He explained to the new arrival that they are in a state which lies in the southern USA and specific laws prohibit the mixing of races. He added that this extended even to trains and streetcars. As a biracial man, Belarmino was prohibited from riding in the same train car as they. Those of black or mixed ancestry rode on crude benches in the baggage and freight car.

Fernando recalled having heard of mandated racial segregation in some parts of the USA but hadn't given it much thought. While Cuba was also a multi-racial society, segregation there was driven by societal norms, rather than by laws. Whereas in Cuba private societies are free to exclude whom they choose, public accommodations were equally available to all, regardless of race. Considering himself to be a fair and just person, he now found himself awkwardly trying to quantify, and "rank", varying degrees of injustice. He felt that this, in itself, was inherently immoral, as he felt that all forms of prejudice are wrong.

Ignacios's voice took Fernando from his internalized morality play back to the practical. The two young men had always shared a sense of curiosity in their surroundings, and Zapato relished this opportunity to introduce Gaitero to his new surroundings.

The train proceeded through the port area and Ignacio pointed out the docks from which troops and supplies had been sent to Cuba during the Spanish-American war two years prior. Fernando recalled well the brief but geopolitically very significant war that ended with Cuba transitioning from a province of Spain to a US protectorate. The young men confessed to each other that though they were Spaniards, they had supported the cause of Cuban independence, having unpleasant memories of the burdens that the Spanish monarchy, together with the Catholic church and the aristocracy, had placed upon the masses. It was a yoke from which they had chosen to depart.

Chapter Seven

Fernando became aware that his arrival point, Port Tampa, was a small town distinct from Tampa itself. Soon after the train had emerged from the moderately sized maritime complex, the scenery abruptly changed to flat, vast, emptiness. Never before had he seen mile after mile of empty land, broken only by occasional stands of

curious looking pine trees. After the euphoria of seeing Zapato after so many years, Fernando's face must have revealed the renewed sense of trepidation and concern that this unfamiliarity had caused him.

"Gaitero, no te preocupes tanto, hombre! Tampa no es toda salvaje y selva." Ignacio had assured him that Tampa was not entirely wild and a jungle. Fernando hesitatingly smiled, though he was already nostalgic for the vibrant, urban atmosphere of Havana, or the verdant, mountainous familiarity of his native Asturias.

Fernando turned his focus to a family seated a few rows ahead of Ignacio and him. He was fairly certain they had not been on Mascotte from Havana. As they spoke amongst themselves, Fernando knew they were speaking a language other than Spanish or English. He whispered to Ignacio.

"Sabes que idioma están hablando la familia esa?" He had asked if Ignacio knew what language they were speaking. Ignacio discretely leaned forward slightly in order to hear them.

"Siciliano.... y probablemente llegaron en el otro barco desde Nueva Orleans. Reconozco el idioma porque hay muchos en el barrio de Ybor y también trabajo con algunos. Como muchos españoles llegan

por La Habana, mucho de ellos entran por Nueva Orleans, donde hay una colonia Siciliana grandísima"

Ignacio explained that they were speaking Sicilian and probably had just arrived from New Orleans. Fernando remembered having noticed another passenger ship at the Port Tampa docks. Ignacio recognized the language because many had settled in the Ybor City neighborhood of Tampa. Apparently, New Orleans was "their Havana" in that as most Spaniards traveled to Tampa via Havana, many Sicilians entered via that huge port city, home to a vast colony of fellow countrymen.

Approximately 40 minutes had passed since leaving Port Tampa. As the train rounded a slight curve, Fernando noticed that the stark landscape had given way to the trappings of a modest, but growing, small city. As the train proceeded, more and more buildings came into view. Shortly before crossing a river, he noticed, to his right, the morning light reflecting off of a series of silver metal minarets. These most unusual looking structures were atop a sprawling red brick building equally exotic.

"Zapato, que coño es eso?"

Fernando, pointing to the strange building, had asked Ignacio was it was.

"Un hotel, para norteros ricos que quieren escapar la nieve y frío del norte".

Zapato told him it was a hotel for rich northerners wanting to escape the snow and cold of northern winters. Fernando was intrigued by both the building and the idea of the wealth that would sustain it.

"Ybor City station in 8 minutes!"

Ignacio nudged Fernando, indicating to gather his belongings. No translation was necessary for either of the Spaniards. As the train came to a stop, they descended the car onto a modest, wooden platform. The air was crisp and refreshingly cool. The new arrival inhaled deeply through his nose. A wonderful blend of familiar aromas, those of baking bread, roasting coffee, and fresh tobacco leaves renewed his spirit.

El Gaitero Candamín was quickly beginning to feel at home.

Chapter Eight

Fernando was relishing the refreshingly cool, almost cold, breeze...the first he had experienced since leaving Spain four years ago. He had been aware that Tampa had noticeably cooler winters than Havana, and he welcomed the change from the almost unrelenting heat of Cuba. He turned to Ignacio.

"Quiero esperar a Belarmino. Me siento muy mal por él."

He told Ignacio that he wanted to wait for Belarmino and that he felt badly for him. Ignacio agreed, but assured him that all was well....or as good as it could be, for him. He explained that Belarmino was well-known in the immigrant community as a smart, confident, activist for workers' rights. He knew his way around the system and could take care of himself.

"Hola, caballeros!"

Belarmino was approaching the Spaniards with a booming "Hello, gentlemen". He accompanied them as Ignacio pointed away from the train station and they began walking. Fernando followed, unaware of where they were going. Ignacio had assured him that all was under control and he had planned for his arrival in Tampa.

Fernando noticed wooden street signs marked in Spanish. He was relieved and surprised, having thought everything would be in English.

"6a Avda/Calle 16".

The Ybor City train station was on the corner of 6th Avenue and 16th Street. Glancing down 16th street, Fernando could see row after row of curious looking wooden houses, fairly narrow but rather long. They were lined up like dominos...their roof lines almost touching. He had never seen anything like these. They were almost identical looking, with gingerbread trim along the small front porches. He stopped and directed the attention of his companions toward the structures.

"Por favor. Explícame algo de esas casas."

Fernando had asked Belarmino and Ignacio if they could tell him more about the houses.

"Esas se llaman "casas de escopetas" porque dicen que puedes disparar una escopeta desde la puerta principal y no golpear ninguna pared. Las pelotillas saldrían por la puerta trasera."

Ignacio had explained that these were called "shotgun houses", because supposedly one could fire a shotgun through the front door

and not damage any walls. The pellets would exit through the back door! The front and rear doors were aligned along the left side of the house, all rooms to the right. He elaborated that this had evolved because many of the home builders were Sicilian and they had copied the style that was very prominent in New Orleans. Ignacio, always curious, was told by a Sicilian carpenter he knew that this style of house had been brought to New Orleans from West Africa via Haiti, with which old New Orleans had many connections. Many immigrant families were able to afford living in them because the prominent cigar manufacturers had the houses mass-produced and offered them at reasonable rents or purchase prices. This was intended to motivate the workers to stay in Tampa. Ignacio reminded Fernando that it was the arrival of the Cuban cigar manufacturing business that essentially created the boom town in which they were standing. The success of this industry, and that of Tampa, depended on a stable and prosperous work force.

While Fernando had been impressed with the physical appearance and interesting history of these homes, he was even more impressed with the concept of affordable, private housing. Perhaps the "American Dream" was truly a possibility.

The men had walked one block north. At the corner of 7th Ave. and 16th St., Ignacio signaled them to stop. In front of them was a large wooden building. Zapato grabbed Gaitero's arm and pointed to it.

"Amigo, esto será tu segunda casa...por supuesto...el foco de tu vida aquí en Tampa."

Ignacio informed Fernando that this building was certain to become his second home....the focus of his life here in Tampa. Fernando's curiosity peaked. What was this large, wooden building that lay before him, and why was it to be so important to him?

Chapter Nine

Ignacio's comments concerning the imposing building on the corner of 7th Ave and 16th St peaked Fernando's curiosity. As they approached the entrance, the new arrival noticed the strong aroma of cigar smoke wafting through the doors and windows. This was accompanied by a familiar and distinctive sound...the "clickety-clack" and occasional loud bang of dominos being shuffled and slammed onto wooden tables.

The game, a Spanish and Cuban tradition, had clearly found its way to Ybor City. Gaitero's feelings of uncertainty and alienation were quickly disappearing. Ignacio gestured to his two companions to enter.

A familiar scene was before Fernando. The room was crowded and smoky. Only men were present. Adding to the cacophony was the also-familiar sound of practically everyone speaking loudly and simultaneously. Politics, religion, work...all topics were fair game. There seemed to be an implied dress code, as few were not wearing their "boina"...the black berets so very popular in Spain. His thoughts drifted to how Spanish cultural pride perhaps clouded reality. He grew up believing that the Spaniards had introduced the beret and the omelette to the French, and the bagpipes to the Scottish! His whimsical mental wandering was interrupted by Ignacio.

"Gaitero, bienvenido al Centro Español de Tampa. Te sentirás como en casa aquí, seguro!"

Ignacio explained that they were in the Spanish Center of Tampa, and he was surely to feel at home here. Practically every Spanish male, including himself, was a member. He went on to explain that it had been founded nine years ago, originally as an exclusive gentlemen's club for wealthy cigar manufacturers. Since Spanish immigration to Tampa was rapidly increasing, membership had been opened to all males who were born in peninsular Spain. "Criollos" or Creoles, those born outside of Spain, but of Spanish parentage, were not eligible for membership. Fernando had belonged to a smaller club for Spaniards

in Havana and was surprised at the exclusivity of this one. At the same time, he was comforted by the familiarity of the surroundings.

Belarmino, silently observing, put his arms around Zapato and Gaitero.

"Tengo que irme, porque mi prima Paulina me espera en casa. Ojalá que nos encontremos otra vez pronto."

Belarmino politely excused himself, indicating his cousin Paulina, with whom he lived, was waiting for him. As the trio left the building, they hugged and shook hands. Cafe con Leche proceeded down 7th Ave in one direction, the two Spaniards in the other. Ignacio explained that the Cuban's cousin, Paulina Pedroso, was probably the best-known labor activist in Tampa, and had worked closely with José Martí. The latter was considered the "George Washington of Cuba", the leader of the Cuban revolution against Spain. A writer and a true intellectual, he had spent much time in Tampa raising funds for the effort. Sadly, he did not live long enough to see his island nation free itself from Spanish rule.

"Pero exactamente donde vamos, Zapato?"

Fernando had asked his friend where, exactly, were they headed? Once again, Ignacio reassured him that all was under control. Always trusting of his close friend, Gaitero simply smiled.

Chapter Ten

Fernando and Ignacio continued walking eastward along 7th Ave.

"Zapato, parece que esta avenida es la calle principal del barrio, verdad?"

Gaitero had asked if they were on the primary street of the neighborhood.

"Sí, y nosotros llamamos a esta propia zona entera "La Séptima", no solo a la calle misma. Es el centro comercial de Ybor."

Ignacio responded in the affirmative and told him that locals referred to the whole area as "The Seventh", and it is the commercial center of Ybor City. Fernando was impressed by the dense nature of the neighborhood. While infinitely smaller than Havana, it was similar in that there was a distinct urban atmosphere. Shops and businesses of all kinds lined the street. Fish mongers, dry goods stores, and meat markets sat alongside small cigar factories, pharmacies, blacksmiths,

and a few houses. Electric streetcars provided public transportation. Spanish was clearly the dominant language. Sicilian, which Fernando had quickly learned to recognize, could also be heard. The atmosphere belied the small size of Tampa...it had the feel of a much larger city, except for the streets made of dirt.

"Una pregunta, Zapato. Me gusta lo que veo, pero por qué las calles son de arena?"

Fernando told Ignacio that he likes what he sees but wonders why the streets are made of sand.

"Recuérdate que, hace solo quince años, donde estamos parados era una ciénaga. En esa época Tampa tenía menos de mil habitantes...un pueblo de pesca. Ha crecida muy rápida en pocos años, y va cambiando y mejorándose."

Ignacio reminded Fernando that only fifteen years ago, there was a swamp where they were now standing. At that time, Tampa had fewer than a thousand inhabitants...a fishing village. Tampa had grown very quickly and was changing and improving. As if to emphasize his point, Zapato pointed out workmen who were stacking bricks alongside the street, preparing to pave 7th Ave.

When they reached 19th St, Ignacio gestured to the left. As they continued walking north, Fernando noticed that the commercial district had given way to a predominantly residential concentration of shotgun houses and that the dominant language had changed to Sicilian. He shared his observations with his friend and was informed that this was an area known as "La Pachata", populated by many Sicilians and named after a Cuban landlord who owned many houses in the neighborhood. Gaitero remained fascinated by this new world.

In front of them was a wooden building with the name "La Joven Francesa" ("The Young Frenchwoman") written across the top of the door. The wonderful smells drifting onto the street left no doubt as to the fact that this was a bakery. Ignacio opened the door and signaled Fernando to enter.

There were many people in the bakery. Behind the counter a man yelled over the throng of waiting customers.

"Hola Zapato! Como estás hoy?"

In good but less than perfect Spanish, he had warmly greeted Ignacio.

"Hola Francesco. Muy bien, gracias, y tu?"

Ignacio had returned the greeting. Turning to Fernando he explained that the man was Francesco Ferlita, the owner of the bakery, and a Sicilian from the small town of Santo Stefano Quisquina in the province of Agrigento. This was the area from which the vast majority of Tampa's Sicilians had emigrated. Fernando expressed surprise at how well Mr. Ferlita spoke Spanish. Ignacio told him this was not unusual. Most of the Sicilians he knew were quickly adopting Spanish as their second language, and he pointed out that even the name of the bakery was in Spanish.

Francesco smiled and pointed at Ignacio. He was next to order.

"Quieres lo de siempre, amigo?"

The Sicilian had asked Ignacio if he wanted "the usual".

Fernando suddenly felt very much at home.

Chapter Eleven

As Francesco turned away to complete Ignacio's usual order, the Spaniard added another item.

"Y también una docena de galletas de giuggiulena!"

Fernando understood that Zapato had added a dozen cookies, but was puzzled, never having heard the word "giuggiulena". Ignacio explained that it meant "sesame" in the Sicilian language, which was distinct from, but somewhat similar to, Italian. Ignacio not only loved these traditional treats but took pride in having embraced elements of another culture. The new arrival was surprised and pleased that Tampa, though small, was such a cultural mosaic.

Francesco returned with the sesame cookies and three loaves of bread, one of which looked very familiar to Fernando. The other two looked totally bizarre to him...very long, narrow, and their crusty tops had long, thin leaves in the middle.

"Hombre, que clase de pan es esto?"

Fernando asked Ignacio what type of bread it was. He explained that it was a local bread called "Cuban bread", and had recently become very popular in Tampa. Gaitero was puzzled by the name and told Zapato that he had never seen anything like it in Havana. Why was it called "Cuban" bread?

"Creo que fue los americanos que empezaron a llamarlo 'pan cubano'. Para ellos, cualquiera cosa que sale de Ybor tiene que ser cubano. La verdad es que creo que solo se encuentra aquí en Tampa, inventado

aquí. Es delicioso, y barato"

Ignacio clarified that Cuban bread was a local "delicacy", probably named by the Anglo-American community that tended to label anything in Ybor City as "Cuban". In any case, it was delicious and, more importantly, cheap!

"Dieciséis kilos, por favor".

The bakery tab was sixteen cents. As Zapato was paying Francesco, Fernando was struck by two things. Sixteen cents was a fair amount of money, and the word for cents, "kilos", was distinctly "Cuban Spanish" as opposed to "centavos", which was used in Spain. He had learned this while in Cuba. It appeared that in this small, multi-cultural city, the emerging "lingua franca" was Spanish with a Cuban "accent".

The two Spaniards left the bakery and continued walking north on 19th St. When they reached 12th Ave, Ignacio paused, reaching for Fernando's arm. Typical of the area, this street had a high density of shotgun houses. Zapato gestured in both directions.

"Casi todas estas casas están ocupadas por familias asturianas, y algunas gallegas. Aunque todavía estamos en La Pachata, aquí tenemos un trocito de nuestra tierrina, hombre! Esta zona se llama 'La

Pequeña Asturias."

Ignacio had explained that even though they were still in the predominantly Sicilian neighborhood of "La Pachata", the houses on 12th Ave were occupied by mostly Asturian, and a few Galician families. This was a small piece of their beloved homeland, and of their neighboring province, Galicia. Locals called it "Little Asturias".

While sharing some of Ignacio's pride and nostalgia, Fernando also asked a question. He wanted to know why there appeared to be so many more houses occupied by Sicilian families, as compared to ones with Spanish families. It was known that there were many more Spaniards than Sicilians in Tampa. Ignacio explained that, for a variety of reasons, the Spaniards who immigrated were mostly single men, while the Sicilians tended to immigrate with their wives and children. Fernando recalled that this was also the case in Cuba.

The two men had continued walking. At 14th Ave, Ignacio stopped. On the northwest corner of the intersection, there was a rather attractive three-story structure. Each level featured a large porch. Surrounding the building was a well-maintained garden, surrounded by a picket fence. Just beyond the entrance gate, there was a sign:

" 'LA GALLEGA'

POSADA PARA CABALLEROS

dueños: Aniceto Fernández y Maruxa Varela"

The sign indicated a boarding house for gentlemen called "The Galician Woman", and the owners' names were proudly displayed.

"Gaitero, estamos en casa!"

Ignacio announced to Fernando that they were home.