

## Jacob and the Mouse

### Out of Genesis

RG was a meteoric streak when inspired. Martin and Mayora Gracia, his parents, were amazed at the runt of the litter. He arrived quickly into the world with little warning. At certain times he was lightening, or like the streak of light in the night sky that teases the eyes for an instant, and then is gone. His parents felt his name meant “delivered grace”. Yet Martin and Mayora had to admit in other ways RG, or Raya de Gracia, appeared stupid. He did not always run as danger approached, only at the wrong times. What had they wrought when they prayed for a mouse with attributes of patience and courage?

Martin and Mayora tried hard to train him to be aware of danger. Sean, his brother, always told everyone, “It’s just his way. RG can’t be captured due to his speed, unless he’s peaceful inside. I know it seems crazy, but he has to wait until it’s the right time. When he runs it’s after he feels peaceful.”

RG’s parents were always watchful. Twice he had close calls with a cat. Only his brother Sean acting as a distraction saved him. The two brothers had a good affect on each other and the brotherly bond was very close. When they grew up Sean found a good partner in Sheila but it did not change the brothers close bond. Sean and Shiela soon had a family and the little mice loved RG. Soon they were asking questions. “What do you do Uncle?”

“That’s hard to say. I streak very fast like the meteor. I speak very slowly like the snail. I play with wonderful Nephews. I provide for myself, but not well. I watch for a Mrs. Mouse that might be as fetching and as true as your mother. I look for ways to use my speed that helps others, but not with much success so far. But until I see what to use it for, I just come here and see how wonderful you all are, kind and loving and that keeps me inspired to find my way.”

“Tell us again Tia Raya, of the time in Puebla you streaked across the street of death and the big machines crashed.”

“That story is just for you and your sisters. We wouldn’t like to worry grandma Mayora or Martin. And the truth is I don’t know why I did that.”

“Don’t worry Tia, we won’t spread the story. The mice we play with called us liars, so we don’t share the story any more. No one believes a mouse could cross La Calle de la Muerte, even at night. But I know you did it in the middle of the day. We know you are truthful. You even told Sheila when you ate our store of seeds. Dad says you don’t lie and dad’s friends saw you cross and return.”

RG sheepishly looked at Sean. “I sometimes raid the pantry. But it’s a wise father that puts food by. The day is coming when we will need to look after not only you, but your grandparents. It would be good if I could contribute.” Inside RG wondered why he was not good yet at finding food, but he did not get down on himself because a voice told him to be patient.

Several months later RG experienced a vision in the “big cave with colored light”. In the vision it was explained how his speed would be a blessing to his family and even to others he didn’t know, if he could be patient. As he came out of the peaceful state he was unaware of two very tall creatures at a distance.

“That will be the first thing to attend to.” said the taller one. His name was Diederick, and he was staring at RG. Can you imagine that creature running around during Sunday service?” Jacob listened but his eyes were trained on the garden where he put out bird seed. Jacob knew the mice partook of it. Diederick continued. “We’ve been fortunate so far.” Jacob’s eyes looked at the mouse; humans were something these outdoor mice always avoided. Thinking aloud the words came out. “...at Thursday choir practice they weren’t in evidence.”

It was true, RG’s extended family preferred the outdoors, despising people and avoiding large groups of any sort. Diederick looked into Jacob’s eyes.

“Granted they’re not in great evidence, none the less I would like you to put out the electronic cages I purchased today.” Diederick nodded his head toward an open closet. “The priority is Sunday’s service. All should be in good order for our special visitors. They have set a budget that includes extermination.”

The coming Sunday service was an encore for Diederick. The bishop would be there to announce Diederick’s successful interview for the post of pastor.

Jacob wondered if Diederick had the potential for the post. Very few could even fill a fraction of Julio's shoes. He was sure the congregation needed to feel more connected with Diederick. Most of the choir was hoping for a different kind of leadership. There were other churches where he would be in tune. Diederick had attended Harvard divinity school and was posted to some of the best churches in Holland. He was able to speak Spanish, English, Latin, and Dutch. He was so thoroughly familiar with scripture that he put them to shame. All questions at his interview were dispatched with ease. The bishop liked his formal approach and tidy habits. Jacob came out of his thoughts when he saw a grey streak out of the corner of his eye where the mouse had been still.

"I'll get the cages."

"Thanks. If you need me I'll be in the pastor's office working on the sermon."

Later in the day Jacob attended a Saturday brunch, an informal tradition attended by the church choir, committee members, and anyone who felt to come. It was held at a restaurant owned by one of the congregation. There was a crowd and most of them were looking to each other. The committee had let the news slip out about Diederick's successful interview. He was firmly in place partly because he had found favor with the bishop whose mother came from Holland. No one at the restaurant talked about his gifts: attention to detail, a strong work ethic, knowledge of scripture, and excellence sermons. Jacob knew there were churches that would be absolutely delighted to have Diederick. A general feeling of resignation, *que sera, sera*, was spreading, as if this was something to be suffered through and at hopefully everyone would learn and grow. No one expected Julio would be able to continue. Julio led by his example of hard work and was connected with each member. He understood each of them. Love and forgiveness were part of him. There were whispers and talk now that could be heard. Phrases such as "must be a way out" were heard here and there. Finally a senior member stood up. "Does anyone have any helpful suggestions?" There was not a member present who wondered what the words were in reference to. Complete silence reigned for a seeming eternity. Jacob was surprised to find himself standing to speak. "Our church has become strong on the basis of inner connections, a willingness to give way,

and informality. Let's face it, rightly or wrongly, we cherish these things." Heads nodded. "Diederick's a learned scholar and would be a real asset at the right church. So don't fret my friends. Relax. I know just what to do." Everyone knew Jacob to be insightful about spiritual matters. He was true Aztec. He found ways through impasses that had plagued committees in the past. He had counseled against high standards for new pastors. Nearly everyone accepted his words with real hope, but a hope mixed with puzzlement. The Bishop never changed his mind in matters like this that involved a fair and open process.

That night Jacob was quiet. Two hours slid easily by as he sat in the Parrish. Eventually he saw a mouse. He did not know that Sean and Mayora were watching in horror as RG calmly meandered out into the open cavern. It wasn't long before an electronic door closed on RG. Jacob looked at RG. It was the short tailed mouse that he saw earlier, the one that could disappear in an instant. RG's mother and brother watched helplessly. RG eventually went from peaceful to nervous and agitated. He was trapped and might never sprint again. Jacob sat quietly by him into the wee hours and dozed off. About the time Jacob dozed off RG accepted his fate. There was nothing to do. He had to surrender this; there was nothing else possible anyway. A sign had always come in the past that inspired him, even on the street of death. He would wait for that.

Jacob woke up about four AM and went to the bathroom. He stuffed a paper towel into one end of a toilet paper roll and took it to RG's cage. RG went into this small dark hole and slept.

Sunday dawn arrived and Diederick rose and dressed in his new attire, a white flowing gown accented by trumpeted sleeves. He carefully groomed himself before reviewing his sermon. The subject was the tower of Babel and God's plan for man. It would be easy to segway from God's plan for man into his plans for the congregation. He closed the bible and stood up and headed towards the men's room. On the way to the rest room he laid the heavy bible down on the lectern and smoothed his hand over its impressive dimensions.

While Diederick was in the bathroom RG felt a calm presence and warmth surrounding his body. He was happy with this new spot he now found himself in. It was cool and smooth and safe. He felt secure and peaceful.

When Diederick returned he sat next to Julio and talked of his plans for more emphasis on study groups. An overflow crowd filed in and came up to bless themselves with holy water. Behind the water were seven lit candles. The choir took their places near Jacob. A Bishop from the Monterey area and a Cardinal from Mexico City were in attendance.

Everyone sang the opening prayer and sat down. An introduction by Julio was made for the benefit of the many members who were not there last Sunday. Diederick walked to the lectern on cue when Julio nodded in his direction. Diederick was completely in his element. After a dramatic pause he looked over this new realm, his flock. He would now begin the work to bring them to his vision.

“Thank you Father Julio. Your words were certainly more than generous. On this holy day we might do well to take a deeper look at the meaning found in the Tower of Babel. Turn to Genesis 11:1-9. While the congregation fumbled for their bibles Diederick was pleased to see a camera recording his sermon. Diederick noticed a beautiful light streaming through the stained glass window. The shaft of light passed over Diederick’s left shoulder and pierced the darkness of Genesis just as Diederick opened the huge bible to Genesis. Unseen a small grey streak shot out of the bible and into a white tunnel of light, the drooping sleeve of Diederick. Diederick boomed “SH\_T, MEIRD\_” and began to move his arms and legs as if performing a war dance. When the crazy prolonged dance was finished the candles, the holy water, and a statue of the blessed virgin were demolished. There was a small fire on the carpet.

The choir looked at Jacob amazed. The Cardinal headed for the safety of the doors deciding it would be good to transfer Diederick.

(Based on a humorous story told by Bapak in Cilandak about a Chinese Imam. A humorous talk overall. 1974 CDK 2)

David McCormack

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D. M. wtgoG

for Marjam Karapetian.? Humor on tape then translated

Other Possible titles:

Streak of Grace – Raya de Gracia

or.. Light Grace