

"Aye no Pepito, not that."

Silviana snickered at him, so Pepito stuck his tongue out at her. He lowered the awkward tube tv to the ground, looked at it longingly and pat it on the top with a hollow thump thump. A sizzle of static noise echoed back.

"Mami! Papi!"

"Sh!" His Mama held a finger to her lips.

"But-"he whined in a lowered voice.

All of the Mendoza's paused as the sound of a window opening from up the driveway drifted toward them. Pepito's brother and sister held onto an old dresser as it teetered halfway onto the bed of the old red pickup truck. Mama held onto a three legged stool and Papa was appraising a ratty off-white splotched couch. Half a dusty brown purse peeked ominously from the garbage cans. Papa made a motion for them to proceed. The dresser was set down. The couch was left where it was and the three legged stool was hefted up onto the truck. Pepito watched the house, waiting for the owners of the ratty furniture to appear. A crackling from the old TV caught his attention again. The sun was bright and there was a glare on the dusty screen. As Pepito watched, he could faintly make out the outline of an elephant on the screen and then it was gone into the reflection of palm trees. He rubbed his eyes, staring wistfully at the TV.

"Come on, Pepito, vamonos."

A curtain swept aside in the house and a girl, pigtails framing a tanned face peered out at him. She glanced toward the TV and then back at Pepito. She jumped up and down and waved her arms, the tutu around her waist bouncing up and down with her.

"Let's go, mijito."

Pepito glanced back at the window, but the girl had disappeared. He jumped into the bed of the truck with his brother and held onto the loose furniture. Silviana pulled the bricks from behind the back wheels and hopped in next to him. The truck sputtered to life, backing up before moving forward with a cough. They had only to go halfway down the road before more discarded furniture came into. Pepito sighed as he hopped down to help his parents lift long-abused chairs and tables into the truck until it was heaped full of the wrecks.

Friday night. Other boys Pepito's age would be skateboarding or going to the dollar movies, or maybe even the real movie theatre and he was stuck picking up used and forgotten furniture with his family. The faint image of the elephant came to Pepito's mind.

It was dark by the time the Mendoza's truck was fully loaded and they were headed back to the trailer park they called home. Flashing lights lit the sky. Pepito, Silviana and their brother Jorge ducked under the furniture, crawling further beneath the mass of legs and dust. The truck stopped and swayed back and forth without the anchor of the bricks.

"License and registration," drawled the voice.

"Yes, yes, here."

Scuffling.

"Please step out of the vehicle."

The car door creaked open, causing the truck to back up another foot.

"Please blow into the Breathalyzer."

A silent moment passed.

"Hm, it's clean. Well I guess you can be on your way... Mr. Mendoza."

The door shut and they were on their way again, arriving in the trailer park neighborhood grimy and tired. Pepito hopped onto his bike and pedaled as fast as he could.

"Right, left, left, straight past the big sign," Pepito muttered to himself. The streets were lit by long slanted poles of light and he raced up and down the streets until he found the tv. He dropped his bike onto the grass and stared at it. Nothing happened. He ran a finger across the screen, accumulating a fine fingerstache of dust that was promptly wiped onto his pants. Without anything better to try, Pepito pressed the 'on' button and the screen lit up, sound blasting out of the set. Pepito fell over and scrambled quickly to his feet, looking up and down the street to see if anyone had been disturbed by the sudden onset of sound.

"But wait, there's more! If you call within the next five minutes we will include an extra set of gourmet lollipops for free, you just pay separate processing and handling." The man in the TV winked at him, "You may even get the beer-flavored lollipops! Not for the kids. Har har har."

The screen blanked out with a pop and something flew at Pepito. He picked it up and started unwrapping it, but thought better as he sniffed the stale stench of beer through the thin paper. Throwing it to the ground with a "yuck" he glanced back at the TV in wonder.

His finger quivered as he pressed the button again.

"Never have you seen such a fine collection of earmuffs, I daresay these are collector's items." The pop of the screen shutting off hit him at the same time as a pair of fluffy yarn-yellow earmuffs.

Huh? Pepito pushed the button again and again.

"I want something good," he sat cross legged in front of the TV, waiting. Nothing appeared on the screen, except Pepito could hear a growing trumpet of sound blasting from deep within the TV. He waited. The elephant flashed in front of his eyes and then, with a horrific bang and a sickly crunch, crushed the TV underneath its domed foot.

"Aw man," Pepito said to the elephant.

He got back on his bike and pedaled home. Maybe he could convince his mama to let him keep one of the other, newer TVs they had found.