

OLE!

She had been a good-looking child from a very early age and gradually acquired good social skills, so she was an overwhelming success with boys. Everyone, both at school and in high school, fell in love with her, some of them did not want to admit it because they knew they had little chance of getting their desires, others pretended they did not care about her and the fewest, who were usually the most attractive and daring, were shamelessly after her. There were fights, bites, kicks, insults and so on. It was not about fair play but about getting the prize.

Eventually, the absolute winner must have been my father. This I cannot say for sure, because when my mother reached this point, she stopped talking dramatically and, grimacing with displeasure, went off to the kitchen to finish her chore.

For as long as I can remember, I have known that the future can be foreseen. When I was about eight, my mother was studying for a competition exam. One day, a yellow underlined paragraph of a lesson she was struggling to learn appeared on her forehead. It turned out that this was one of the questions in the exam. So, she decided to take advantage of these –according to her- supernatural gifts.

After two years training, she finally managed to visualise, for three weeks in a row, the number which the following Saturday would win the first prize in the national lottery draw. She then requested information to find out where the number she had visualised was being sold. Without thinking twice, she went to Cordoba on the high speed train and returned just in time for dinner. My father kept grumbling with his ragged tongue: what was she doing in Cordoba, did she think the lottery would be won just like that, was she paying attention...? After dinner, as she did every day, she kissed me, sent me to bed and then filled the bathtub, poured in the salts and dived in. He was still going on and on about it. At midnight, they were both snoring at the top of their lungs.

Saturday was a strange day. All the figures on the first prize matched those on my mother's three tickets. I was very happy but she was not so happy. After checking again, she waited for my father to come home and, at the door, she told him that, since he had not collaborated in the project, he was to stay there and she was leaving with me and the money. He was so upset that he collapsed like a plank on the floor. He made a dreadful noise. His eyes rolled back on his head. He was not breathing. He had died on the spot, a galloping heart attack, it was clear.

I, more perplexed than frightened, became very serious and pointed out that I thought it was terrible what her decision had unleashed, that the way she had acted was not acceptable. She looked me up and down and then up and down and again up and down and finally blurted out:

- Don't meddle in the affairs of adults.

I did not listen to her words because I was very sad and distressed. The way things were going –I thought- she would be locked up in jail and I would end up in an orphanage or, even worse, in a juvenile centre.

I turned around to look at the dead man. A torrent of water was pouring down on his head. He opened his eyes in horror. My mother was coming with another bucket. After receiving the second downpour, he got up like the devil in a flash. He stumbled a few times and, pointing his index finger at her, wanted to say something but nothing coherent and clear came out of his mouth, as usual.

Now, some years after these events that so marked my life, my father, although his hair is grey, already speaks clearly, my mother goes to the hairdresser twice a week and I, by chance, live in Cordoba with a woman from Jerez and, from time to time, I dance sevillanas.

“Stories without Mufflers” (2006 -)