

Milagros

By Lauren Espinoza

Lupe was proud of himself; he had situated his study area to have the right view of the library, but from the second floor – so that women couldn't tell he was kind of a dog when he was checking them out. He would just casually look them up and down as they walked in, as if he was glancing up expecting someone. This space did have some drawbacks though, people looked funny at his homemade bifocals - reading glasses that he had to wear on top of his regular glasses. He was twenty-one for God's sake, why did he have to wear reading glasses. He blamed keeping his nose in books all through elementary.

He was on the second to last page of his schoolwork when the interruption came. He was perturbed because she snuck up on him in his "bifocals" and he couldn't get a good look at her as she mouthed at him through his headphones. He took his extra set of glasses and headphones off.

"I really hate when people do this, but can I share your table?" she said. "There's not another one and this one is kinda my favorite," said the newcomer.

Lupe hesitated for a moment before he relented, "Sure."

Lupe moved his stuff over to accommodate the newcomer and scoped her out: pretty girl, skinny with long, black, straight hair in a purple and black checked shirt with black jeans. Not being the kind of guy that turned down an opportunity when it presented itself at his table, he held out his hand as she sat down across from him.

"I'm Lupe."

"Hey, Lupe, that's my name, well Lupita. What's your miracle?" she asked.

"Miracle?" Lupe asked quizzically.

“Yeah, what miracle are you named after? It’s always one or the other, brother brought back from war, a miraculous cure, you know. So what’s yours?” Lupita persisted quite annoyingly.

“Oh, that I was born.” Lupe said plaintively.

He was a miracle, named after the Virg n de San Juan. His parents had been childless for the first three years of their marriage. Lupe’s mother went to pray at the Basilica and asked for a sign. That evening she went to her Grandmother’s house where her Tia gave her a card reading. Lupe’s mother picked her cards, and after consulting the Tarot, her Tia said, “Mija, you’re pregnant.” Not having received her period yet, she ran out to get a pregnancy test to confirm. And so Lupe was named.

Lupe’s miracle was two-fold. Not only was he born, he was born a hermaphrodite. No, thank you very much, that didn’t mean he was gay. But he was born with male and female genitalia. This didn’t affect him too much as the doctors had told his parents that Lupe’s genitals were more male than female; and, surgery had been performed when he was a newborn.

Lupe had not found out all this until recently, as like most other family things (such as the fact that his grandfather was actually his step-grandfather), they had been kept secret from him. Lately as he did his homework, he had started to become increasingly distracted by this bombshell that had been dropped in an argument between his parents. (Such were the consequences of still living at home while going to college.)

His parents had been fighting often lately. It seemed that they just weren’t happy with each other anymore. “Mark, I’m tired of that damn dog in the patio barking all night long.” Lupe’s Mom would always start in on his Dad about the yellow lab in the patio. “Well at least he obeys, not like your son over there who goes out at all hours of the night.” Lupe’s Dad was

touchy on the subject of his dog which his brother had given him before passing away and would sometimes lash out at Lupe. Lupe's Mom countered with "Just be thankful everything turned out ok after the surgery when he was a baby."

He stopped listening then, as they continued to argue about the dog. He heard enough of the fight to deduce he was fine, but he was embarrassed to talk about it with his parents. Instead, he asked his Tia-Madrina about it, who gave him the whole account firsthand. Including the first time his mother and father held him in his tiny blue blanket.

As he sat next to Lupita, Lupe contemplated his machismo. He felt that he was an appropriate male specimen: tall with dark hair and brown eyes framed by glasses. He always wore the surf designers like Volcom, Hurley, and Quicksilver. He had even gone out on dates, had crushes on girls, and (he was most proud) he had even gotten to third base; but then again he was never good at team sports and only excelled at individual sports – swimming and tennis. He was always more interested in reading, and if reading could be a competition he would be champion. However, this new life knowledge development had left Lupe with many questions.

Is this why he had been to the doctor so often as a child? Is this why he went to private elementary school? Is this why he had surgery when he was three (his parents had told him it was for his teeth)? Now that he thought about it, his three-year-old self probably would have noticed a surgery around his "private parts." He was normal, he assured himself; and went back to his literary theory textbook.

Just as he was beginning to underline a passage in the book, Lupita interjected. "That's a good one, but not uncommon," she said.

"I'm sorry, what are you talking about?" Lost in his own thoughts, Lupe had almost forgotten about the attractive girl sitting across from him.

“Your miracle. It’s not uncommon,” she repeated. “My mother thought that having me would save her marriage, so I was supposed to be a buy one, get one free miracle – Guadalupe Maria, but she just got stuck with one. My dad left her for another woman and they got a divorce,” Lupita rushed through the end of this and Lupe thought he could see the beginnings of a tear out of the corner of her eye.

Not wanting to draw too much attention to what might be tears, Lupe said, “That’s a rough deal. I’m sorry about that.”

“My mom still has me, so we’re all right,” Lupita sniffed a bit.

“Yeah, I live with my parents too. Speaking of which, I’d better get back to studying, my parents would kill me if I failed anything. Plus, I’m super behind on the readings and we have an exam on Thursday,” Lupe said it and he was sure his parents would have his head if he failed anything.

“Literary Theory, who do you have it with?” Lupita inquired.

“I have it with Belau, she’s pretty tough, and she has this awesome way of holding the chalk like it’s a cigarette when she’s lecturing,” as he said this, Lupe was reminiscing with a grin on his face.

As he was saying this, she took out the same literary theory textbook.

“We have the same book. Are you taking it with Belau too or are you just stalking me? My friends have told me that I update my Facebook status a lot, but I didn’t think too much of it.” Lupe trailed off at the end as he became slightly concerned that this girl he didn’t even know was following him.

Knowing she might be in trouble for this one, Lupita answered honestly, “Well, truthfully yes and no. I kinda go around collecting Lupe stories. I saw your picture on Shawna’s page and

she had you tagged as Lupe. I was coming to the library to study, and this is my favorite table. I recognized you and thought I might introduce myself and ask about your miracle.”

“I have to say that’s a little bit creepster. So why do you collect the stories?” Lupe said as he had forgotten about his homework for a moment, and was thoroughly intrigued by Lupita.

Lupita returned, “It makes me feel like all the Lupe’s are echoes of each other.”

“We should have coffee when we finish studying. If you have Belau too, it’s a lot of work, and it’s not often when I meet another miracle at my table.”