

In the quaint town of Cotulla, the annual celebration of Dia de los Puercos was more than just a festival—it was a cherished tradition that brought the community together. Every year, the county fairgrounds buzzed with excitement, alive with the smoky aroma of barbecue, the joyful sounds of laughter, and the vibrant colors of booths selling everything from handmade crafts to homemade delicacies. But this year felt different.

As the sun dipped low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the fairgrounds, a hush fell over the crowd. People stood still, stunned by what they saw—a grand parade honoring loved ones who had passed away.

Each float in the parade was a work of art, decorated with colors so vivid they seemed to dance in the fading light. Every float was unique, each beautiful in its own way. Music filled the air, carried by the melodies of Mariachi Cotuleño, our very own local pride. People from neighboring counties had traveled far and wide to line the streets of Cotulla, eager to witness the magic.

This was no ordinary parade, though. For this one weekend each year, the townsfolk believed that their loved ones returned from heaven—not just in spirit, but truly there among them. The floats didn't just feature banners and photographs; they carried the spirit of the angels who came back to celebrate.

At the heart of it all was Diana Reese, the event's tireless organizer, along with her cheerful assistant Mrs. Jackie Meyers. They ensured that every detail was perfect, every participant in place, and every float ready for the special occasion.

Finally, it was time for the parade to begin. As if heaven's gates themselves had opened, a stunning white horse appeared, its coat shining like pearl under the evening sky. Riding atop the horse was the legendary Mr. Neto Galvan. With the Texas flag in hand, he rode proudly down Main Street, his presence both regal and inspiring. As he reached the announcer's table, he took hold of the microphone and said with pride, "Let the Cook-Off begin!"

The crowd burst into cheers, their spirits high and hearts full of joy.

But just as the excitement peaked, a sudden disaster threatened to derail the celebration—a float broke down in the middle of the parade. A wave of disappointment swept through the crowd. A man stepped forward to inspect the issue and shook his head. "This is not fixable," he said.

From the back of the crowd came a familiar, confident voice. "Move over—there's nothing I can't fix."

It was Raul Muriel Sr., one of Cotulla's most skilled and respected mechanics. With tools in hand and an unshakable determination, he got to work. In under twenty minutes, he had the float running again. The crowd erupted into applause, their cheers echoing through the streets. Mr. Muriel had saved the day.

When the parade finally came to an end, the celebration continued at the fairgrounds. Families gathered with their loved ones—both earthly and heavenly—and spent the evening creating memories. The smell of brisket sizzling on grills filled the air, children shrieked with laughter as they enjoyed the carnival rides, and the sweet taste of funnel cake and iced tea brought smiles to every face.

As the night grew late, it was time to head home. The next morning was Sunday, and in Cotulla, there's only one place to be on a Sunday morning: Sanchez BBQ. There, the famous Ramon Sanchez served up his legendary barbacoa and menudo with a warm smile that made everyone feel like family.

After breakfast, the festivities continued with the South Texas Rodeo. Saulito Garcia, known for his skill and pride, opened the event by presenting the nation's colors on horseback. Once his ride was complete, Saulito stayed close, watching over the competition to ensure only the best cowboy earned the Top Hand Award. Though everyone knew deep down that no one could ever quite match the legend of Saulito himself.

As the Wild Hog Cook-Off weekend came to an end, the town felt a bittersweet sadness. Families said goodbye to their heavenly visitors, hearts heavy yet filled with gratitude. But that was the magic of Dia de los Puercos—it was the one weekend each year when heaven and earth came together, a reminder that no one is ever truly gone as long as they are remembered.

In Cotulla, they believe that love transcends time, and for one weekend, their angels come home.