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The Terrifying El Cerdo Esqueleto

El Cerdo Esqueleto is a ghost story that everyone in the town of Cotulla has heard growing up. El Cerdo Esqueleto was said to be the first pig that was burned alive at the stake in honor of the first “Dia de los Puercos”. It was said that every 13 years “El Cerdo Esqueleto”, would come back to haunt the people of Cotulla. I always thought that it was just a ghost story to scare little kids about the “Dia de los Puercos”, but I guess I was wrong. Let's start from the beginning, March 8, 1993.

It was a regular Wednesday afternoon and mama had been making pies all day preparing for the Dia de los Puercos. Manuel, I need you to run to the market to get some flour for the pies. “Apresurate Manuel, I need the flour before tonight.” I'm coming mama, Dia de los Puercos isn't until tomorrow its 12 in the afternoon. “I know Manuel, that's why I need it now before they sell out, apresurate, here's a dollar”. “That should be more than enough for some flour and nothing else Manuel”, okay mama I'll be right back. “Manuel make sure to be back before 9 or else El Cerdo Esqueleto will get you”, she yelled. “El Cerdo Esqueleto” is gonna get me, I'm 16 years old and my mama is still trying to scare me with ghost stories as if I was still a little kid.

Even though Dia de los Puercos was tomorrow it didn't feel like it. I mean yea everybody was putting up their stands, baking their sweet treats, and getting everything ready, but it didn't feel right. For some odd reason this year felt like something was coming, something big. As I got to the market I saw my best friend Diego. He was at his abuela's stand helping out

with her delicious candy apples. “Hey Diego que estabas haciendo?” “ Nothing, just helping my abuela with her stand.” “Hola Manuel, are you eating?” “ Te ves tan flaco hijo mío,” sí señora I just came by to pick up flour for my mother. “Well, be careful with El Cerdo Esqueleto,” I will senora, Diego do you want to come with me to go get the flour? “ You bet Manuel, I've been outside in this sun all day.” I giggled with Diego as we walked to go buy the flour. “Manuel look!” What Diego? As I turned around I saw who Diego was pointing at, it was Maria. “I’ve had a crush on Maria since the 8th grade.” Diego, stop pointing! “Maria!” “Hola Diego, hola Manuel,” “Maria estas lista para el Día de los Puercos?” “Yes, I'm excited. I love seeing all the festival lights at night.” “Well I’ll see you boys later, bye Manuel.” As Maria said goodbye, her smile made my heart flutter, “Manuel! Did you see that? “She was totally flirting with you!” No she wasn’t Diego. “Earlier today I saw this stand that was selling all types of things, flowers,candies,jewelry.” “ There's gotta be a gift that you can find to give to Maria,” Diego told Manuel. When we got to the stand there was a frail old woman with short white hair, and a mole on her cheek. I had never seen her in town before, “Hola hijos, is there something I can help you with?” “ We are just looking,” “See anything that you like for her”? Diego asked. I looked around and saw a beautiful gold necklace with a cempasuchil flower on it, and right in the middle was a red stone. This would be perfect for Maria. How much is it? “ It's on the house hijo, I've had that old thing for far too long.” Thank you so much, I said to the frail women. “You be careful boys, tomorrow night can be full of surprises.” That night I layed in bed wondering what the old lady meant.

I was so excited to give Maria her gift. It was sealed nicely in a little box with a red ribbon tied around it. That night I put on my best button up, belt and boots. I was there at the festival with Diego. I couldn't help but wonder what I was going to say to Maria when I gave her

my gift. I haven't seen her and it's almost time for la iluminacion del cerdo to start. I hope she won't miss it. "Diego, there she is," as she started to walk over. Diego left to go get a lemonade. "Hey Maria, you look gorgeous." "Hola Manuel you don't look bad yourself." "I have something I want to give you, Maria." As I handed her the box she looked so happy and took out the necklace. The golden sunlight hit the necklace perfectly and her eyes sparkled as she smiled.

Suddenly the sky turned pitch black and all I heard were the screams of people shouting, "El Cerdo Esqueleto is here! " At that second I saw him, "El Cerdo Esqueleto". I yelled for Maria to run as El Cerdo Esqueleto was coming right for us. "Manuel! come over here," Maria was under the stands. "What was that?" Maria screamed, I think it was El Cerdo Esqueleto. "I thought that was just a story?" We both screamed as the table cloth from the stand quickly raised. " "Hola guys!" Diego, you scared me! We need to figure out why El Cerdo Esqueleto is here. "We don't even know how he even got here in the first place, Manuel." "This all happened once Maria took the necklace out of the box. Maybe the necklace has something to do with this. We need to find the lady. "I'm coming with you Manuel", Maria said. "Maria you need to say safe," "I'm coming Manuel," okay fine. "Okay love birds, let's hurry to find the lady before El Cerdo Esqueleto comes back."

Diego, Maria, and I went looking for the old lady's stand but it was nowhere to be found. "Where is it Diego? Look there she is! Senora, we need your help" Maria said. "What can I do for you?" "It's about this necklace. Do you remember where you got it from?" "I've had that necklace since I was a little girl," the old woman explained. "It has been passed down through generations." "Although this year felt like it was time to find a new owner for a new story." "What do you mean by a new story?" The women then explained to Diego, Maria, and myself, how when she was a little girl her grandmother would tell her the origin of the necklace. The El

Cerdo Esqueleto's spirit was trapped inside of it. She told the story of him being a kind sweet pig. He was raised by the people of the town and had always been treated kindly. Until one year the night before the very first "Dia de los Puertos", he was excited for the celebration until he accidentally wandered too far from home and got picked up with the other pigs in the area. A wicked man convinced the people to pick a pig to be burned at the stake in remembrance of the first "Dia de los Puertos". Unfortunately no one could find him, they searched and searched but no sight of El Cerdo Esqueleto. El Cerdo Esquelto was chosen as the one to start off the festival. The lady explained how all El Cerdo Esqueleto really wanted was for his story to be remembered and to be heard for all the people's wrong doing.

This is exactly what Diego, Maria, and myself set out to do. We waited for El Cerdo Esquelto. When he found us, we were face to face with all the anger, all the sadness, and all the mistreatment. I could feel all of it and I just began to cry. El Cerdo Esqueleto came right for me as I dropped to my knees and stared at him.. Face to face I looked at him and all I said was "I'm sorry!" As El Cerdo Esqueleto lowered his head I thought this was it. His head touched mine, the light of the golden sun came back and El Cerdo Esqueleto slowly faded away into the sky doing one simple jester before he was gone. All he did was simply nod his head, and he was gone. At that moment I couldn't think of anything else than what had just happened. Some things never stayed the same after that.. Diego still brings up how El Cerdo Esqueleto almost got me. Maria and I are finally together after the incident. I finally got the guts to ask her out. And Mama, well she still makes her pies. But one thing that will never change is the warmth of the golden sun I feel every day that reminds me of that day. "Dia de los Puertos."