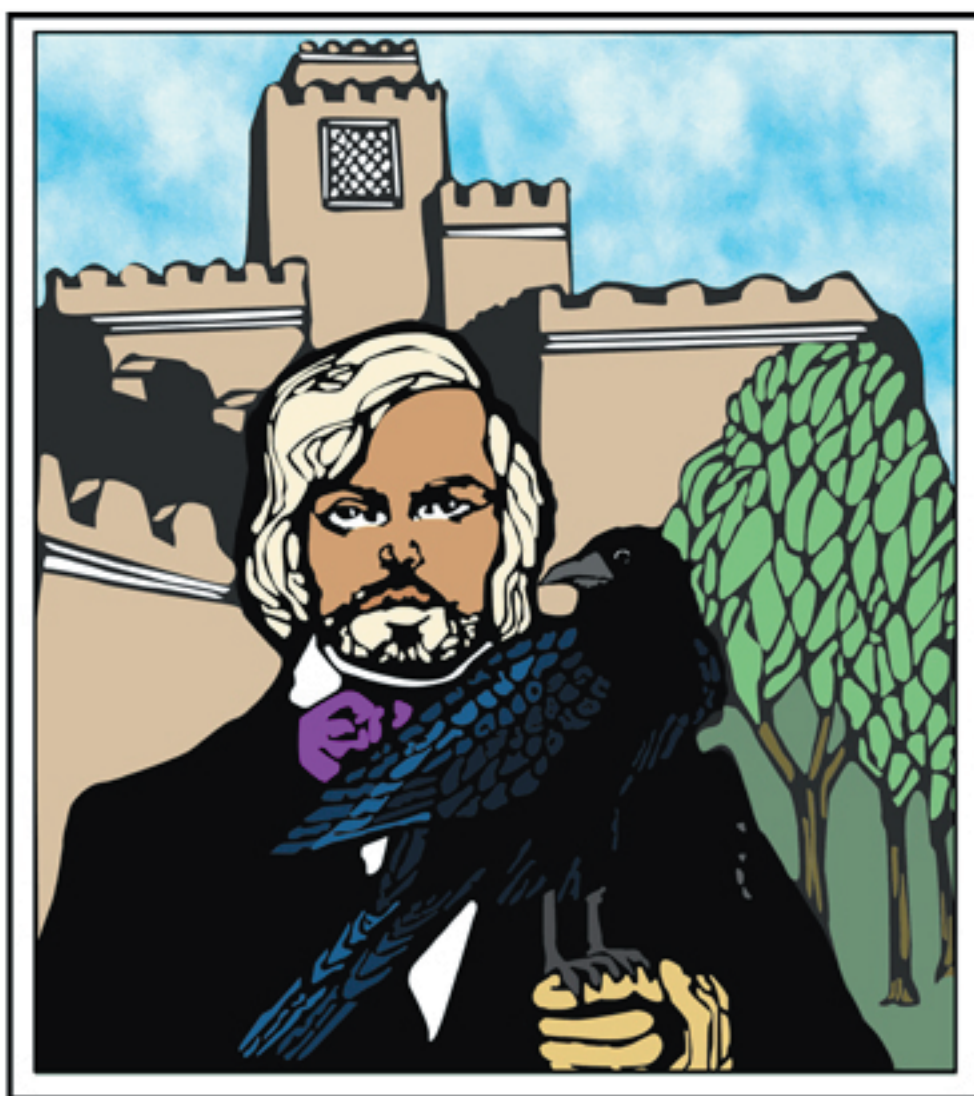


The Legend of Rudolfo



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Alan M. Hofmeister

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Alan Hofmeister, author

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Chapter 1:

The Arrival

In the hush of the empty countryside, a bright blue car drove along the dusty road. It seemed strangely out of place. Except for the car, all was still. The burning afternoon sun gave a golden glow to the silent land.

Callie Jungemann rolled down a window of the car. A hot, dry breeze blew across her face. Callie could hardly believe it. Not too many hours before, she had been in New York. Then there had been the airplane ride. Now here she was driving along a dirt road in the middle of Spain!

Callie looked into the front seat of the car. Her mother was driving. Her younger brother, Matt, was fast asleep, still holding the map of Spain in his hands.

"Are we there yet?" Callie asked her mother.

"We're almost there," laughed Mrs. Jungemann.

Callie sat on the edge of her seat and looked into the distance. She saw nothing but sand and dust, dust and sand. When the car rounded a sharp turn, Callie saw a pink and green spot of color off in the distance.

"Look, Mom!" she shouted. "That must be it! That must be the *Villa de Rudolfo*!"

"So it is," smiled Mrs. Jungemann. "Doesn't it look pretty, with its pink houses and green trees?"

"Matt!" called Callie. "Wake up! Look, Rudolfo is right in front of us!"

Matt sat up slowly, letting the map of Spain fall to the floor. He rubbed his eyes, ran a hand through his curly hair, and looked around.

"It looks small," he yawned. "I'll bet they don't even have a baseball field."

"No, Matt," laughed Mrs. Jungemann. "I don't think many villages in Spain have baseball fields. They don't play much baseball here."

"No baseball, no television, no swimming pools, no restaurants," said Matt. "This is going to be a boring vacation."

"You'll find things to do," said Mrs. Jungemann. "Just wait and see."

The blue car pulled into the town square of Rudolfo. Callie looked out of the window at the village. She thought that it was the most beautiful place she had ever seen. A row of little pink cottages lined the dusty street. Green trees gave much-needed shade from the hot sun. This was going to be a great vacation!



Mrs. Jungemann stopped the car and leaned her head out of the window.

"Do you know where I can find Archie Fox?" she asked a man who was standing nearby.

"The Fox--*El Zorro*," said the man. "*Sí*, he is in the big house on the corner."

Mrs. Jungemann started the car and drove up in front of the big house. The sign over the door read: ARCHIE FOX IS THE MAN FOR YOU, HE'LL RENT YOU A COTTAGE, OLD OR NEW! Callie, Matt, and Mrs. Jungemann got out of the car and went into the house. A tall, thin man with a black mustache was sitting in front of

a big fan. His feet were propped up on a desk. He seemed sound asleep.

"Pardon me," began Mrs. Jungemann. "I'm looking for Archie Fox."

The man opened his eyes and looked at the three people. Suddenly, he jumped to his feet and ran out from behind his desk. "*¿Como Está?* . . . I mean, hello."

"You must be Mrs. Jungemann," he replied charmingly. "I've been waiting for your arrival." He turned to Callie. "And who might this pretty little girl be?"

"I'm Callie Jungemann. This is my brother, Matt," Callie answered coldly. If there was one thing she didn't like, it was people who called her a pretty little girl. Callie frowned.

"How do you do," said the man with a sinister grin. "I'm Archie Fox. Most people just call me '*El Zorro*'."

"You wrote that we could rent a vacation house from you for a few weeks," said Mrs. Jungemann.

"Yes. Have I got a place for you!" exclaimed *El Zorro*. "It's not just a house. It's a mansion! It once belonged to the Rudolfo family. They founded this town. When they lost all their money, I became the owner."

"Is it quiet there?" asked Mrs. Jungemann. "I'm a writer, and I'm writing a new book. I need a quiet place to work."

"Quiet?" said *El Zorro*. "Why, let me assure you. It's the quietest place in Spain. You can move in right now." *El Zorro's* voice suddenly got much softer. "There's just one thing. I'd like you to pay for two weeks now, if you don't mind. You know how these things are."

"I understand," said Mrs. Jungemann. "Here's your money."

Archie Fox took the money. He counted it carefully. Then he quickly put it in his pocket.

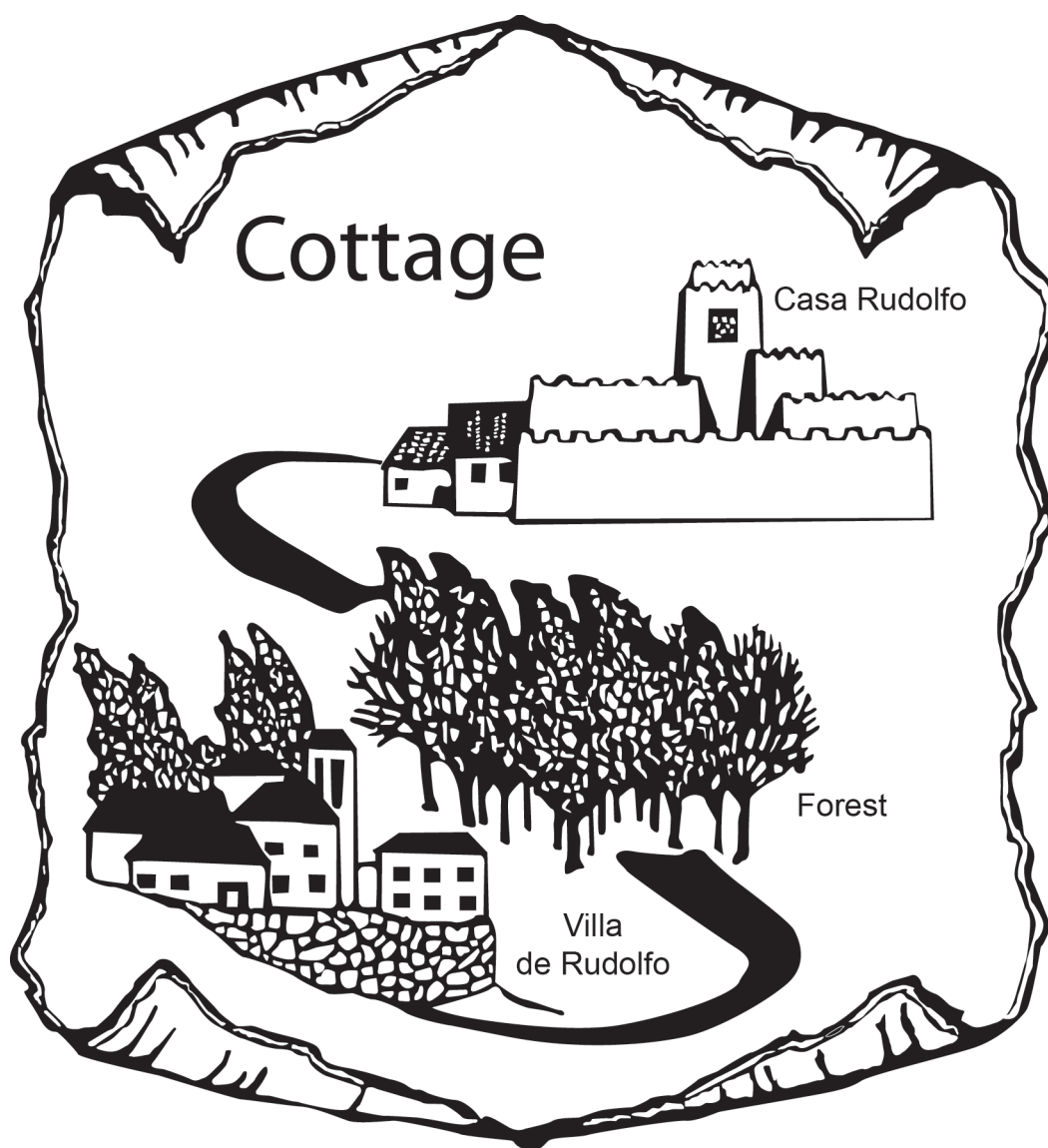
"Now," he said, his voice suddenly becoming loud again. "I have a map for you to follow. Drive a mile down this road. You'll come to a small forest. Park your car and walk through the forest. *Casa Rudolfo* is just on the other side."

Mrs. Jungemann, Callie, and Matt thanked the man and began to drive away.

"One more thing," *El Zorro* shouted. "The people of this town have a strange story about the Rudolfo mansion. Don't pay any attention to it. It's just an old legend."

"Thanks for warning us," called Mrs. Jungemann.

"A strange legend!" thought Callie, as the car pulled out into the street. "I wonder what it could be."



Chapter 2:

A Mysterious Legend

Before going to the house, the Jungemanns decided to stop for food. They drove slowly down one dusty street after another. They saw men and women getting water from a well. They saw people hanging laundry on a line. Callie thought that life in the village did not seem at all hurried. From what she could see, life in Rudolfo was slow. It was quiet. Most of all, it was peaceful.

The blue car turned the corner. Matt noticed a woman carrying a straw basket. It was filled with fruits and vegetables.

"Look, Mom," he said. "That must be the grocery store."



Mrs. Jungemann stopped their car. They got out and went into the small shop. It was certainly like no grocery store Callie had ever seen. It had only one wooden shelf. On it were a few cans of food. All around the shop were wooden barrels. They were filled with fruit, rice, corn, and peppers. An old man, dressed in white, stood behind a wooden counter. Several people from the village were filling their baskets with food.

Mrs. Jungemann walked through the little store. She picked out the food she wanted and handed it to Callie and Matt to hold. When she was finished, the three approached the counter. The old man took their food and began to add up the prices. Callie thought it would be nice to introduce herself. She spoke to the old man dressed in white.

"Hello," she said. "I'm Callie Jungemann. This is my mother, Mrs. Jungemann, and that's my brother, Matt."

The old man smiled at them and began to put their food in a straw basket.

"We're going to be staying in the old Rudolfo mansion for a few weeks," Callie said.

Suddenly everything in the shop became very still. The old man dropped the red pepper he was holding and looked at the Jungemanns.

"Did you rent the place from *El Zorro*?" he asked.

"Yes," smiled Callie.

"And he didn't mention it?" asked the old grocer.

"Mention what?" said Mrs. Jungemann.

"The legend of the House of Rudolfo," answered the man.

"Oh, he did say something about a legend," said Mrs. Jungemann. "He didn't especially want to tell us what it was."

The old man pushed the straw basket aside. He leaned over the counter and looked very closely at the three people. He spoke almost in a whisper.

"The legend says that anyone who lives in the House of Rudolfo, who is not a member of the Rudolfo family, will not live there long."

Callie and Matt looked at each other.

"That's a very mysterious legend," Callie said. "I don't understand what it means."

"No one in our village knows of anything beyond the legend," said the old man.

"But we do know that it is not just a story. We have seen it happen again and again."

"Seen what happen?" asked Matt. Callie thought his voice was shaking a little as he asked the question.

"People come here for a peaceful vacation," explained the man. "They rent the Rudolfo mansion from *El Zorro*. He insists that they pay him immediately. Then they journey to the mansion and stay the night. They always leave hastily--and with great

fear--the next day. They are never heard from again."

"What are they running away from?" asked Mrs. Jungemann.

"We have heard stories about ghosts, strange noises, and frightening creatures," answered the old man. "No one in our village knows if these stories are true. No one wants to find out."

The old man finished putting the food into the straw basket. Then he handed the basket to Mrs. Jungemann.

"*Adiós*," he said. "Heed my warning. Do not go to the House of Rudolfo."

Callie, Matt, and their mother thanked the man. They took the basket and walked out of the shop. After they climbed back into the car, Mrs. Jungemann turned to her children.

"Well," she said. "What do you think we should do now?"

"I think we should go home," said Matt. "I don't know about you, but I don't want to spend two weeks with a family of ghosts--especially when I'm not a member of that family."

"Matt," said Callie. "You're just being silly. You heard what Mr. Fox said. He told us not to pay attention to the legend. It must be some kind of superstition among the village people. Besides, there are no such things as ghosts. Isn't that right, Mom?"

"I don't believe in ghosts," said Mrs. Jungemann. "I'm certain that, as Callie says, this is just a superstition the village people have. Let's go to the Rudolfo mansion. I'm curious to see what it's like."

"I'm with you, mom," said Callie. "What about you, Matt?"

"Well," said Matt. "If you two aren't afraid, then I'm not either."

"Good," said Mrs. Jungemann, starting the car. "Then it's on to the mansion."

"Let's get going!" shouted Callie. "*Adiós, Villa de Rudolfo*. Mansion of Rudolfo, here we come!"

Chapter 3:

Casa Rudolfo

The Jungemann's car pulled out and headed down the road. They left the village in a cloud of dust. When they had gone about a mile, they came upon the forest Archie Fox had told them about. They parked the car by the side of the road, took a few suitcases and their basket of food, and got out. Together, they walked into the forest. The trees were so close together that no sunlight could get through the thick canopy. It was as dark as night.

Mrs. Jungemann took both of her children by the hand. Slowly, they made their way across the thick, overgrown forest.

"I don't like this," said Matt. "It's too dark in here. I'm scared."

"Don't be scared," said Callie. "Just pretend you're going through the Holland Tunnel in New York. We'll be on the other side in no time."

They walked on in silence, feeling their way through the tall, whispering trees. Finally, they saw a stream of sunlight not far ahead. The Jungemanns ran quickly toward the light. They stepped out of green and black forest and into the bright, golden afternoon.

It took a moment for Callie's eyes to adjust to the light. At first, she could not see a thing. Then, suddenly, the house loomed above her. It looked like a haunted Halloween castle. The Mansion of Rudolfo was more, much more, than she had ever imagined it would be!

It was something like a castle, but it resembled a fort. It was spread along the top of a steep hill, resembling an oversized decoration on a cake. The mansion was made of gray stone and appeared to have at least a hundred rooms hidden within those dark walls. Green moss covered almost all of the gray stone. The moss had even grown over most of the windows and doors.

On one side of the castle was a small cottage. It seemed surprisingly new and bright next to the old gray mansion. On the other side stood a huge tower that looked as if it could have been used to punish robbers and rascals. Perhaps it had been used to hold frightening beasts of days gone by. The entire mansion gave the chilling feeling of being filled with dark secrets from the past.

"Well," said Mrs. Jungemann. "This place certainly looks mysterious, doesn't it?"

"It looks like every haunted castle I've ever seen on television," shuddered Matt.



"There's that ghost talk again," said Callie. "Matt, just think of the adventure we can have here. Come on. Let's get up this hill and have a look at the old place."

"I don't think we'll see even one ghost up in that tower," said Mrs. Jungemann.

"Besides," giggled Callie, "what can one little ghost do to us?"

Matt wasn't too happy about it. Slowly, he picked up his suitcase and dragged it up the hill with his mother and Callie. He kept his eyes glued to the ground as he walked. If there were ghosts floating about, he didn't want to see them. Finally, they reached the top of the hill. Matt suddenly sensed that a dark shadow had fallen over him.

"Look at it," said Callie. "It's huge."

"It is very intriguing," said Mrs. Jungemann. "Just imagine how old it must be."

Matt was afraid, but, more than that, he was curious to see what they were talking about. He looked up and saw what was in front of him. He saw what had cast the dark shadow over him. It was a fountain, although it had no water in it. In the middle of what was once a pool, there was a large, copper statue of a handsome man on horseback. Callie and Mrs. Jungemann were standing in the shadow of the fountain, looking up into the statue's face.

"I wonder who he is," Matt said.

"Look," said Callie. "There's a sign on the bottom of the fountain." Like every other part of the property, it was covered with moss. Callie scratched some of the moss away. She bent down to see the small, copper sign. She could hardly read the words.



"I think it says *Casa Rudolfo*," she said. "Doesn't that mean the House of Rudolfo?"

"Yes," answered her mother. "This must be a statue of one of the first members of the Rudolfo family. My, he's handsome."

The three Jungemanns stood silently, staring up at the huge statue. Suddenly, the silence was broken by a voice that seemed as loud as thunder.

"¿Les puedo ayudar?" asked the voice from behind them.

It was a deep, angry voice, meant to frighten the visitors away.

Chapter 4:

Fear, Fright, and the Butler

The sound of the voice took the three Jungemanns by surprise. Callie, Matt, and their mother all wheeled around as fast as lightning. Before them stood a handsome, gray-haired man with a short beard. He was wearing a black tuxedo and a spotless white shirt. On his right shoulder sat a large, black bird.



“May I help you?” repeated the man in his deep, thundering voice.

It was a moment before anyone dared speak. Finally, Mrs. Jungemann swallowed hard and stepped forward.

"We are the Jungemann family," she said. "We've rented this house from Archie Fox for a few weeks."

"You wish to stay in *Casa Rudolfo*?" asked the man. "Are you sure?"

"Yes, why?" asked Mrs. Jungemann.

"Have you heard about the legend of Rudolfo?" asked the man, lowering his voice to a whisper.

"We know all about the legend," said Callie. She came forward to face the man as she spoke. "We also know that it's just a story, nothing more."

Suddenly, the bird on the man's shoulder let out a loud noise. It was a terrible, squeaking whistle. The noise frightened Callie. Before she could stop herself, she jumped away from the man.

"You'll have to pardon Fright," said the man. "He doesn't like people very much."

Matt, his eyes as big as bowls, looked up at the gray-haired man in the tuxedo.

"Fright?" he asked.

"Fright is my raven," said the man, petting the raven on the head. "I named him Fright because the name seems to fit him so well." The man smiled a strange smile.

"Don't you think it's an appropriate name for him?" he asked.

"I can't think of a better name," said Matt. He was staring very hard at the man's face.

The gray-haired man walked toward Mrs. Jungemann.

"Allow me to introduce myself," he said. "My name is Carlos. I am *el mayordomo*, the butler of *Casa Rudolfo*."

"Butler!" said Mrs. Jungemann. "*El Zorro* didn't mention any servants."

"He doesn't like to talk about us," answered the man. "We live in the stone cottage by the side of the mansion. My wife, Juliana, is also a servant in this house. Our daughter, Antonia, helps also. We will do everything we can to make your stay in *Casa Rudolfo* interesting. We will make you as comfortable as possible. Now, let's go up to the house."

The Jungemanns and Carlos continued walking toward the front of the mansion. The large, wooden door opened slowly. It made a low, squeaking sound, as if it were groaning with old age. Standing just inside the door was a tall woman. She had shiny, black hair and deep, dark, troubled eyes. She was Juliana, Carlos's wife.

"Come in and make yourselves comfortable," Juliana said to them. "*La cena estará en la mesa en un ratito*. I must finish cooking now."

Carlos took Callie, Matt, and Mrs. Jungemann inside the mansion. Juliana disappeared down a long hallway. Callie's eyes left Juliana. She looked around the

inside of the house. The once-beautiful, wooden floors were covered with scratches and dust. Chips of old paint, that had long since fallen off the walls, cluttered the corners of the rooms. A grand stairway, covered with a tattered, red carpet, led to the upstairs hallway. The green moss that grew over most of the windows kept the sunlight out. It made the house seem dark and sad. Callie could tell that *Casa Rudolfo* had once been great and beautiful. Now everything appeared to be very old and crumbling.

"I'll put your suitcases in your rooms upstairs," said Carlos. "Juliana will have dinner ready in five minutes."

Carlos picked up the suitcases. He slowly made his way up the decaying stairway.

"Isn't this place interesting?" Mrs. Jungemann said when Carlos was out of sight. "What a change from New York."

"It's just what I had hoped Spain would be like," said Callie.

"Well, I don't like it one bit," said Matt. "That Carlos looks just like the statue of the man in the fountain."

"So what?" asked Callie.

"So what!" repeated Matt. "It's easy to see what's going on here. Carlos is the ghost of that statue in the fountain outside. This is a haunted house, and Carlos is its ghost!"

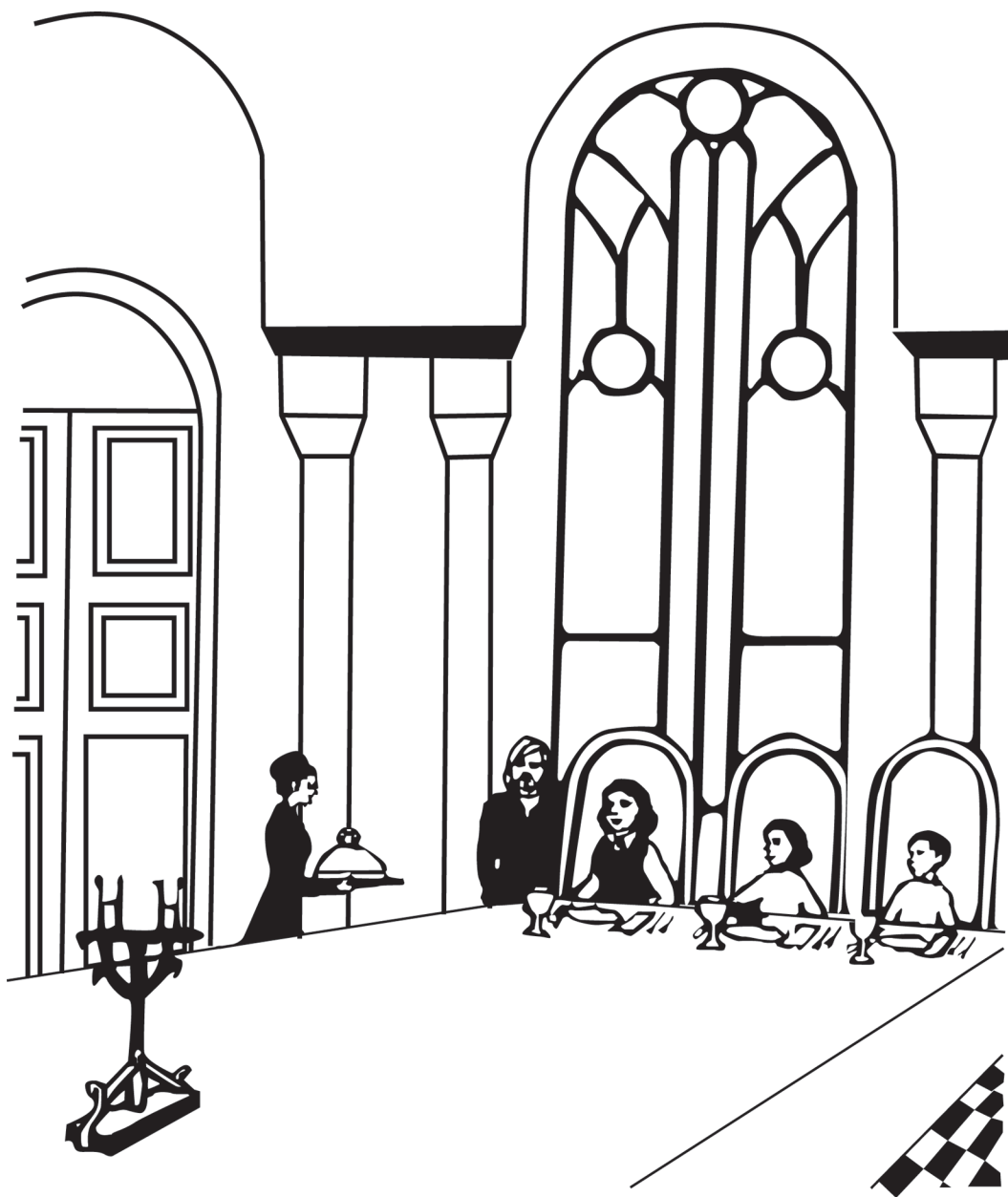
"Matt," said Callie. "You're being silly. Carlos is as real as we are."

Their conversation was suddenly broken by a loud, squeaking whistle. Then Carlos, with Fright on his shoulder, came into the room.

"Dinner is ready," he said. "Follow me to the Blue Room."

Callie, Matt, and their mother followed Carlos down a dark, carpeted hall and into the Blue Room. If, indeed, the room had once been blue, it certainly was not now. Like everything else in the house, it was gray. In the middle of the room was a huge table. It was long enough to seat at least forty people. Placed at one end of the table were three, large, high-backed chairs. They looked as if they had been made for kings. Carlos helped each of the Jungemanns into one of the chairs and stepped back to stand by the door of the room. Juliana put dinner on the table. Then, she took her place next to Carlos at the door.

As the sun went down behind *Casa Rudolfo*, Fright squeaked his awful squawk. Callie, Matt, and Mrs. Jungemann hungrily ate their first dinner in Spain.



Chapter 5:

Strange Happenings

No one said a word during dinner. Juliana and Carlos stood at the door. They stared at the Jungemanns. They did not speak a word.

Callie and her mother ate in silence. Matt was too restless watching for ghosts to be bothered with his food. Fright kept up a stream of loud whistling and squeaking. He seemed to enjoy the dinner hour.

After dinner, Carlos suggested that the Jungemanns spend the evening in the Rudolfo library. He led them out of the Blue Room and into a long, dark hallway.

Matt felt his way along the wall. "I wish someone would turn on the lights around here," he said.

"We have only candlelight here," said Carlos, his deep voice echoing down the narrow hall.

They followed Carlos's shadowy outline down one hall and up another. Suddenly, from out of the stillness, there came a rumbling clatter just in front of them. Matt and Callie stopped dead in their tracks.

"Help!" they heard their mother scream. "I'm caught!"

"It's Mom!" yelled Matt. "They've got her!"

Matt and Callie ran down the hall and crashed into Carlos. He was bending over their mother, who had fallen onto the floor. Matt reached out and tried to push Carlos aside.

"Leave her alone!" shouted Matt. "Leave her alone, you ghost! I'll save you, Mom!"

Mrs. Jungemann sat up and took Matt by the arm. "Stop shouting!" she said to him. "Carlos was only trying to help me get up. I tripped over something in the hall."

"You mean that's all that happened?" asked Matt.

"I was not tripped by a ghost, if that's what you mean," smiled Matt's mother. "Carlos, what made me fall? It certainly made a clatter!"

"I'll get a candle from the library," said Carlos. "It's just next door. Then we can see what tripped you."

Mrs. Jungemann stood up and brushed herself off. Carlos disappeared into the darkness. He returned shortly with a candle. He moved to where Mrs. Jungemann, Callie, and Matt waited. The candlelight spread eerily across the narrow hall. The shining outline of a large, golden man glowed in the candle's beam.



"Wow!" said Matt. "It's another statue!"

"Sí," answered Carlos. "It is a kind of statue. This is the suit of armor that belonged to the Knight of Rudolfo. It was he who built the great family of Rudolfo and made it powerful. It was he who built this mansion over three hundred years ago. Some say his spirit still lives in this house. But, of course, that can't be true, can it?"

"Now we have spirits too! This place gives me the creeps," whispered Matt to Callie.

"I'm so sorry I fell over the knight," said Mrs. Jungemann. "I'm sure it's of great value to the family. Carlos, I'll help you pick it up."

When the knight's suit of armor was once again standing in its place, Carlos led the Jungemanns into the library.

"*Con permiso*," he said. "I'll go downstairs now and help Juliana in the kitchen. If you need me, please pull on one of the tassels located next to the door of each room."

Carlos left the library. Callie and Mrs. Jungemann sat down. Matt was still restless. He began looking at the books.



"This library will be the perfect place for me to write," said Mrs. Jungemann to Callie. "It will suggest lots of good ideas for that new story I'm writing."

"Hey, Callie!" called Matt from a corner of the room. "Come over here. Look at all the creepy books on this shelf!"

Callie walked over to Matt and looked at the books.

"Why is everyone in this place so interested in ghosts?" asked Matt. "I'll tell you why. It's because ghosts live here; that's why they're interested!"

"Matt," whispered Callie, turning around suddenly. "Be quiet for a minute. I think I hear something."

Callie went to the door of the library to listen. There was a noise in the hallway-- a slow, clanking sound. Gradually, the noise seemed to be getting louder and louder. Eventually it grew softer and farther away. Then the clanking disappeared. All was quiet again. Callie ran to the door of the library and threw it open. She peered into the hallway. What she saw made her gasp. Then she screamed!

The suit of armor was gone!

Within a minute Carlos came running into the library.

"Did someone call for me?" he asked.

"Carlos," said Callie excitedly. "It's gone. The suit of armor is gone!"

Carlos walked to the door of the library. He looked out in the hall. Then he came back into the room.

"So it is," he calmly answered.

"Do you think Juliana might have moved it?" asked Mrs. Jungemann.

"No, I don't think so," said Carlos.

"Then that means," said Matt, "that the suit of armor walked away by itself!"

"As I've told you before," said Carlos, "strange things have been known to happen at *Casa Rudolfo*. There is no way of explaining them."

Carlos stared at the three visitors. Then he smiled a strange smile.

"Now it's time for bed," he said. "There is a separate bedroom for each of you at the end of the hall. *Buenas noches*. Sleep well."

Carlos walked out of the library. He closed the door quietly behind him. Callie, Matt, and Mrs. Jungemann were alone in the glowing candlelight.

Chapter 6:

Mom is Gone!

“Separate bedrooms!” said Matt to Callie and his mom. “Is he serious? I’m not going to stay alone tonight!”

“Perhaps it would be a good idea if we stayed together here in the library,” said Mrs. Jungemann.

“Did you hear him say, ‘sleep well’?” questioned Matt. “How on earth could he say that? A suit of armor is clanking around the halls by itself. This old library is filled with books on ghosts and goblins. These people keep a creepy black raven named Fright for a pet. Ghosts are popping out of every corner of this mansion. And he tells us to sleep well! That old Spanish ghost is trying hard to frighten us!”

“I wish I could make some sense of this place,” said Mrs. Jungemann. “There must be some explanation for this mystery. I know there’s no such thing as ghosts. I know a suit of armor doesn’t walk around by itself. I can’t understand it.”

Callie kept very quiet. She was trying to think of some way to explain the strange happenings. She thought and thought. Perhaps Matt was right. Maybe there really were ghosts in the old place. Maybe Carlos was the ghost of Rudolfo. The thought made her shudder.

“I think we should leave right now,” said Matt. “I don’t want to spend one night in this place. It’s just too creepy.”

“We can’t leave now,” answered Callie. “We’d have to cross that awful forest in the dark. What do you think would happen to us there?”

“Callie’s right,” said Mrs. Jungemann. “We’d never find our way to the car. We have no choice but to wait until morning. Children, come over here by me. We’ll stay very close together tonight.”

Callie and Matt moved to the couch where their mother was sitting. They made themselves as comfortable as possible.

“We’ll leave in the morning,” whispered Mrs. Jungemann to her children. “Now, let’s try to sleep.”

Callie rested her head on her mother’s shoulder and closed her eyes. She kept thinking about the mysterious legend the old grocer had told them. “Anyone who dares to live in *Casa Rudolfo*, who is not a member of the Rudolfo family, will not live there

long,” he had said.

At the time, Callie thought it was just a legend, a silly superstition. Now she was not so sure. In the glowing darkness of the Rudolfo library, the legend seemed all too real.

The long night passed peacefully. Callie was very tired. She soon fell fast asleep.

Morning came. Golden streams of sunlight poured in through the open window. Callie sat up and looked around. To her surprise, the old library didn’t look so mysterious in the light of day.

As Mrs. Jungemann and Matt were waking up, the door to the library opened. In came Carlos. He was carrying a tray with some bowls on it.

“*Buenos Días*,” he smiled to the Jungemanns. “I have brought you a delicious breakfast. By the way, you may wish to leave *Casa Rudolfo* after you eat. If so, I’ll be glad to carry your suitcases to the car.”



Carlos smiled at them again. Then he left the room as silently as he had come in.

Callie turned to her mother and Matt. "This place doesn't look so bad in the morning, does it?" she said.

"I was thinking the same thing," answered Mrs. Jungemann. "Isn't it amazing how things always look different in the morning?"

"You know, Mom," said Callie, "last night I was beginning to believe in ghosts and goblins. This morning, all that seems silly to me."

"It does to me too," said her mother. "I think we were just very tired. We were ready to believe anything."

"I'm not so sure of that," said Matt. "You forget there are a lot of questions we still can't answer. What about that suit of armor?"

"Well, I'd like to stay here today," said Callie. "We can leave later. I want to have a look around."

"I'm all for that," said Mrs. Jungemann. "I'd like to do some writing in the library this morning. You children can go outside and play."

After breakfast, Matt decided to stay in the house. But Callie ran down the old stairway and pushed open the heavy wooden door of the mansion.

Outside, the air was hot and clear. The delicious smell of flowers was everywhere. Callie skipped from the house to the moss-covered fountain. There she noticed Antonia, the daughter of Carlos and Juliana, sitting beside the fountain. Antonia didn't look very happy.

"Hi," Callie said to her. "Would you like to play hide-and-seek with me?"

Antonia stared at Callie. She didn't answer.

"I'd like to be your friend," said Callie, "your *amiga*."

Antonia smiled at Callie. She reached out and took her hand. Suddenly, Carlos appeared beside the fountain. He said a few words to Antonia in Spanish. Antonia looked sadly at Callie and quickly ran into the stone cottage by the side of the mansion.

"Antonia does not play with the visitors, and you are a visitor," Carlos said sharply to Callie. Then, he turned and walked away.

Callie sat down by the fountain to think about what had just happened. She was abruptly interrupted by a scream from Matt.

"Callie! Come quickly!" Matt yelled from the door of the mansion. "Hurry, it's mom. She's disappeared. Mom is gone!"

Chapter 7:

The Secret Passage

Callie ran to the door as quickly as she could. She grabbed Matt by the hand and looked searchingly into his frightened eyes.

"What happened?" she asked. "Matt, tell me what happened."

"Mom was in the library doing some writing," moaned Matt. "I was thirsty so I went to the kitchen for some water. When I got back, all her papers and pencils were on the desk, but mom was nowhere around. I called for her several times. There was no answer. I even looked in some of the rooms of the mansion. She's gone, Callie. Mom's disappeared."

"Did you ask Carlos or Juliana if they had seen her?" asked Callie.

"Yes," said Matt. "I saw Carlos on the way to the door. I told him Mom was gone. He gave a half smile and said he was sure she'd show up. I know that man is a ghost. He's captured Mom and hidden her. I can feel it."

"Maybe we should go into the village and ask *El Zorro* to help us," suggested Callie.

"He'd never help us," answered Matt. "He got us into this mess in the first place. He knew this mansion was haunted when he rented it to us. That's why he had us pay him all that money in advance. He's a crook."

"Then we have only one choice," said Callie bravely. "We'll have to look in every room of this mansion. We'll search every corner until we find Mom."

"Callie," said Matt softly. "Aren't you afraid?"

"Just a little bit," replied Callie, patting Matt gently on the back. "Don't worry, little brother. Everything is going to be all right."

Callie was more than a little bit afraid. She was scared from head to toe; however, she knew she shouldn't let Matt sense her fear. Clearly, one of them had to be brave and strong. It looked as though it had to be her.

Together, Callie and Matt entered the decaying old mansion. They crept up the stairway to the second floor. As they looked down the long hall, they saw door after door after door. Callie took a deep breath. She pushed open the first door on the right. Slowly she and Matt crept inside.

The room was dark. In the shadows Callie could see a huge bed with a red velvet bedspread on it. At the windows hung heavy, red, velvet curtains. A beautiful old dresser stood in one corner of the room. The dresser had a cracked mirror hanging

over it. In another corner Callie saw a wooden desk with antique writing tools sitting on top. It was clear that long ago this had been the bedroom of a very important, very rich person.

Callie and Matt crept around the room. They looked for any sign that their mother had been there. The only living thing they found was a big, black spider. It ran out when they opened the closet door.

When they had finished looking in that room, the two children went on to the next door down the hall. This room was very much like the first one. Everything in it was grand and beautiful. Everything was older than anything they had ever seen. Again there was no trace of Mrs. Jungemann anywhere.

Callie and Matt continued down the hall. They opened each door. They looked in every corner of every room. There was no sign of their mother at all. Finally, the two children pushed open the last door in the long hallway. To their surprise, they found themselves in the library.

"Oh no," moaned Matt, "we're back where we started. We've searched every room. Now what do we do?"

Callie walked to the stone fireplace that took up most of one wall of the library. She leaned heavily against the fireplace. She put her head in her hands and tried to think. Just then she heard a creaking sound. She turned around and discovered that the entire fireplace had moved slightly. She leaned harder on the wall. The fireplace moved a little more. It was like a swinging door, leading to unknown places. Callie turned to Matt. He was watching her. His mouth dropped open in surprise.

"I think we've just found the answer to our question," Callie whispered to Matt. "This is a secret passage that probably leads to some other part of the house. I'll bet Mom found it and went exploring. No doubt, somewhere inside this passage we'll find our mom."

Matt shuddered at the thought of entering the dark, damp passage. Yet he knew Callie was right. He knew that Mrs. Jungemann had probably discovered the swinging fireplace. He also knew that his mom's curiosity would drive her to explore unknown passages.

Matt and Callie pushed on the fireplace. They made an opening big enough to squeeze through. Inside, the passage was as black as Carlos's raven. They could not see one speck of light. Matt and Callie took a few uneasy steps into the cold, dark passageway. Then they heard a quick, sharp, creaking sound. They turned to see the wall of the fireplace snap shut behind them. They were locked inside!



Chapter 8:

A Living Portrait!

Callie groped in the dark to find Matt. "Take hold of my hand. Don't let go, no matter what happens," Callie told Matt, as they felt their way along the dark passage.

Matt squeezed Callie's hand tightly. He hoped that somehow it would make his fear disappear. Callie held on just as tightly to her brother.

"I feel like we're walking downhill," Matt whispered to Callie. "We must be under the mansion now."

Callie couldn't see a thing. She had no idea where she was walking. The secret passage was cold and slippery. It had the awful smell of a damp, underground tunnel. Callie began to feel a little dizzy and sick. Suddenly, she felt Matt's hand tighten around hers. He grabbed her arm.

"Do you hear that?" he asked.

Callie stopped walking and listened. She didn't hear anything.

"There it is again!" said Matt.

This time Callie heard it. It was a strange noise. It was like the rustle of trees on a windy day. Callie shuddered. She sensed a spooky figure moving along the side of the narrow, dark passage.

"It's following us!" yelled Matt. "Run for your life. Quick!"

Still hand-in-hand, Callie and Matt raced at top speed down the secret passage. They didn't know exactly what was chasing them, but both of them were certain that they must not let it catch them. The secret passage seemed very, very long. The two children dashed this way and that, trying to escape from their follower. At last, out of breath, Callie and Matt stopped to rest for a second. It was then that Callie noticed a glowing light not too much farther down the passage. Without waiting another moment, Callie and Matt ran toward the light.

Callie could see that the light was coming from under a closed door leading into the hallway. Within seconds, the children reached the door. Callie pushed on it with all her might. The rusty old door creaked open. Matt and Callie escaped into the candlelit room. They slammed the heavy door shut behind them.

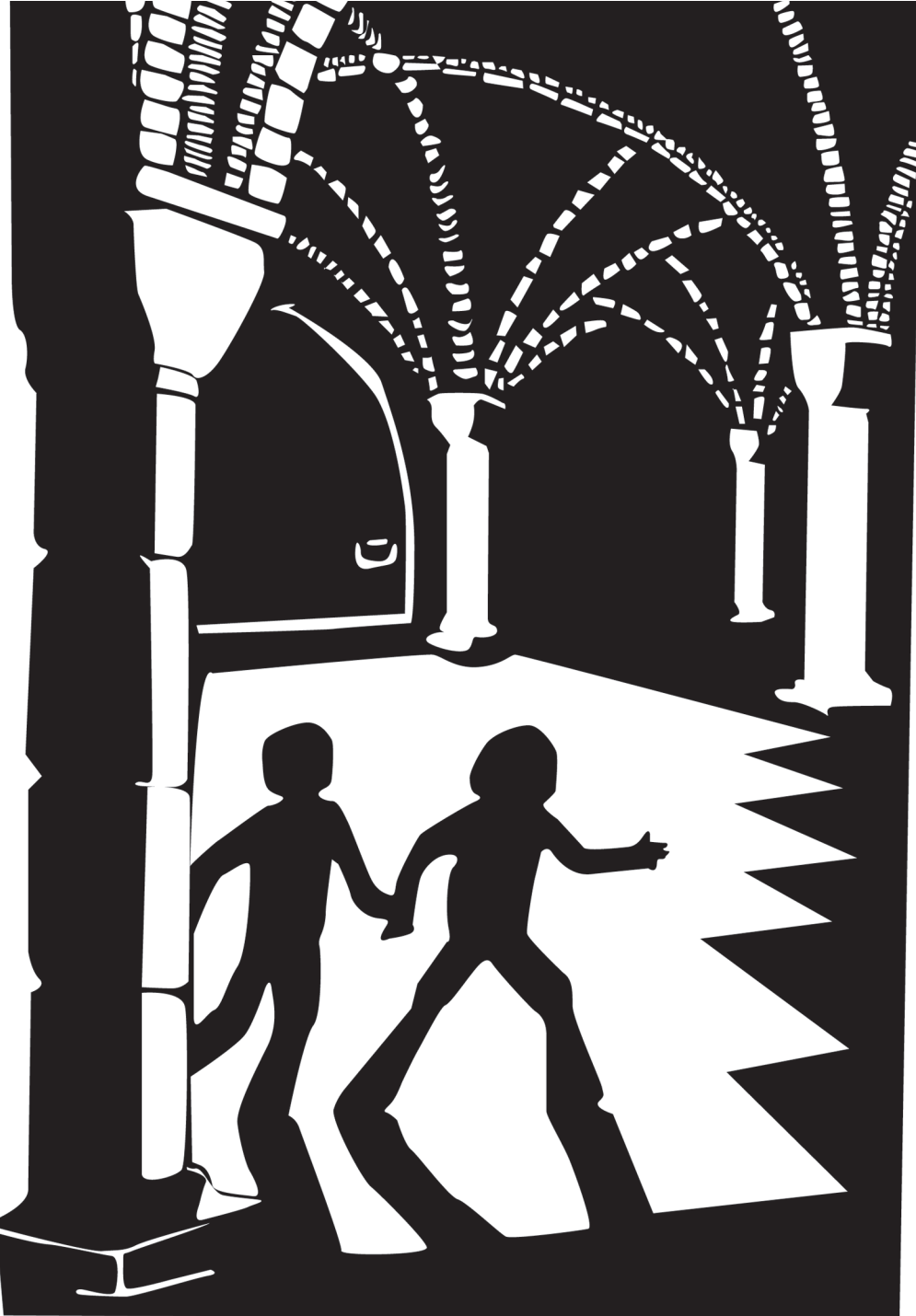
"We made it," said Callie. "I think we're safe for a while."

"What do you think was following us?" Matt asked.

"It was probably nothing," said a soft voice from behind them.

At the sound of the voice, Callie and Matt jumped. When they whirled around, they could hardly believe their eyes. There in the candlelit room, standing in front of them, safe and sound, was their mother!

"Mom!" yelled Callie, as she and Matt both ran to her side. "We thought we'd never find you."

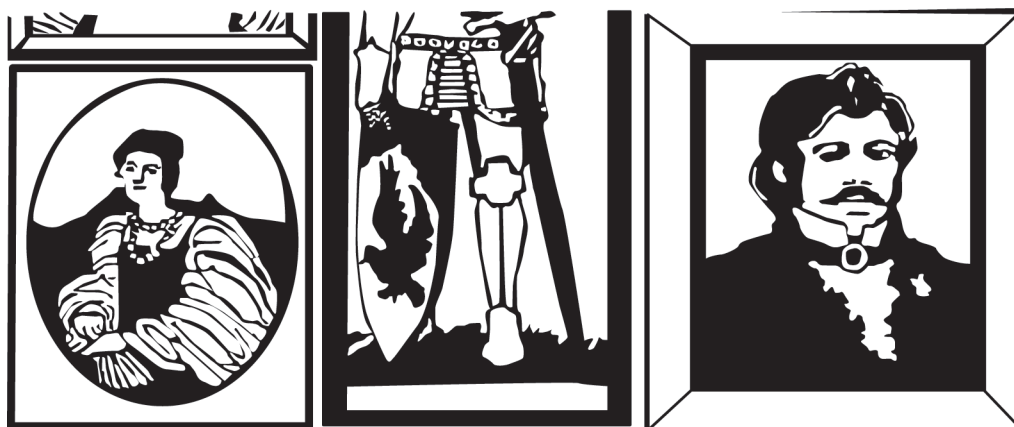


"After Matt left the library," explained Mrs. Jungemann, "I discovered the secret passage. I made my way down here. I've been very busy looking through this interesting room. I guess time slipped by me. I'm so sorry I caused you to worry."

It was an interesting room. On each wall hung many portraits--portraits of handsome men and beautiful women. They were all dressed in rich velvets. They wore expensive jewels. Most of the portraits looked very old.

"This is the Rudolfo portrait gallery," said Mrs Jungemann. "In the past, most rich and powerful families kept portraits of all their members."

"Look at this," called Matt, staring at one of the newer paintings. "This is a portrait of Carlos."



Callie looked at the painting. Indeed, it was Carlos. He looked young and handsome in a black tuxedo and spotless white shirt.

"I wonder why Carlos would have his portrait hanging in the Rudolfo gallery," said Callie.

"That's easy," answered Matt. "Carlos is not really the butler here. He's the ghost of Rudolfo!"

Suddenly, a loud shrieking noise shook the walls of the gallery. It came from behind the portrait!

"That portrait's alive," whispered Matt. "Look, the eyes are moving!"

It was true. The eyes in the portrait were looking all around the room.

"A living portrait!" moaned Callie. "Mom, what should we do?"

"Come with me," Mrs. Jungemann said quietly. "I'm suspicious."

Callie and Matt followed their mother out the door of the gallery and into the

hallway. A few quick steps led them to another door. Mrs. Jungemann pushed open the door. Inside the darkened room was the shadowy figure of Carlos. His eyes were pressed up against two small holes in the wall. He was shrieking at the top of his voice.

"There is your living portrait with the moving eyes," said Mrs. Jungemann with disgust.

Carlos turned quickly. He stared at the Jungemanns. They had surprised him.

"When I woke up this morning," said Mrs. Jungemann, "I suddenly understood what's been happening. This proves that I'm right."

She turned to Carlos and made solid eye contact. "You've been trying to frighten us, haven't you?" she said. "The rustling sounds and the mysterious happenings, like the walking suit of armor and the living portrait, were all part of a clever plan. You wanted us to believe *Casa Rudolfo* was haunted. Why did you do this?"

Carlos, looking at the floor with shame. He said, in a soft voice, "It's a long story. Come with me. I'll explain the secret of Rudolfo."

Chapter 9:

The Secret of Rudolfo

Mrs. Jungemann, Callie, and Matt followed Carlos along the damp, underground passage until they finally reached a small, rusty door. They walked through the doorway and found themselves in the sunlit living room of Carlos's stone cottage. Antonia was feeding bits of corn to Fright. Juliana was sitting by the window. They looked up in shock at the sight of the three unexpected visitors.

"They know about us," Carlos told Juliana. "They have unraveled the mystery. I'd like them to know the real story."

Juliana got up and pulled out a chair, providing space for the Jungemanns to sit on the couch.



"Please, sit down," she said. "I know you have been very frightened. My husband, Rudolfo, will explain everything to you."

"Rudolfo!" said Callie. "I thought his name was Carlos."

"My name is Carlos Rudolfo," said the butler, sitting down next to Juliana. "I am a member of the family of Rudolfo. My father was a 'Knight of Rudolfo,' as was his father before him. I am a member of what was once the proudest and grandest family in all of Spain."

"Things certainly have changed," said Matt. "What happened?"

"For many years the Rudolfo family was very wealthy," said Carlos. "The fields for miles around the mansion were farmland."

"Sí," said Juliana. "People came from all over the world to buy our grapes."

"Five years ago, our troubles began," Carlos went on. "One day it started to rain. It rained for over 30 days and nights. When the rains finally stopped, all of our lands were flooded. All of our vines had been destroyed."

"How terrible!" said Mrs. Jungemann.

"Sí," said Carlos. "It *was* terrible, but the worst was yet to come. The next year we planted new grapevines. That year, no rain came. It was the driest year Spain ever had. Again we had no grapes. The sun destroyed everything."

"What did you do?" asked Callie.

"We had no money," said Carlos. "We had spent everything to buy the new grapevines. Archie Fox knew we were desperate. He asked to buy *Casa Rudolfo*. At first, I refused to sell the mansion. It had been in my family for hundreds of years. Finally, I had no choice. We had no food and no money. So I sold *Casa Rudolfo* to *El Zorro*."

"He gave us very little money -- almost nothing -- for the mansion," said Juliana.

"I knew that fellow was a low-down crook," said Matt.

"When the time came for us to leave," explained Carlos, "we couldn't go. *El Zorro* said he would pay us to stay on as servants. For one year we lived in this cottage and waited on the people who rented the mansion. *El Zorro* never paid us. When I asked him about the money he had promised, he just laughed. It was then that I thought of this plan."

"We thought," said Juliana, "that if people heard the house was haunted, they would stop coming here. Then we would not need to be servants. We hoped to earn a little money to plant some grapes. We hoped that, over time, we could earn enough money to own our home once again."

"The plan worked well," said Carlos. "As you have seen, we can be very frightening. Everyone who came here thought that there were ghosts in the house. Soon, even the people of the village believed it. That's how the Legend of Rudolfo began. We were the only ones who would stay here. So the people came to believe the legend. They were

sure that anyone who was not a member of the Rudolfo family would not live long in this house. Each year, we had fewer and fewer visitors.”

“What about your money?” asked Mrs. Jungemann. “Do you have enough to buy the house?”

“Not yet,” answered Carlos, “but we hope to have enough money very soon. We’ve planted grapevines this year. We are hoping for a good crop. We will sell the grapes, and with the money we earn, *Casa Rudolfo* can once again belong to our family.”

Mrs. Jungemann stood up and took Callie and Matt to a corner of the room. They talked softly for a minute. Then, they came back to talk with the Rudolfos.

“We have decided,” said Callie, “to leave *Casa Rudolfo* today. If you are to have a good crop of grapes, you need to work your farmland. We are just in the way.”

Carlos and Juliana smiled at each other.

“We thank you very much,” said Carlos. “We will always remember your kindness.”

Later that afternoon, Juliana, Carlos, and Antonia walked with the Jungemanns out of the old mansion and through the forest to the waiting blue car.

“In Spanish,” Carlos told the Jungemanns, as they were getting in their car, “we have the word ‘*orgullo*’. This word means ‘pride’. It is because we have *orgullo* that we felt it was necessary to frighten you. We are proud of our family and our house. I hope you will forgive us.”

“Oh! We do,” said Callie.

“It’s good to have pride in your family and accomplishments,” said Mrs. Jungemann.

“*Adiós*,” said Matt. “Good luck to you.”

“*Adiós*,” replied Carlos. “We’ll never forget your kindness.”

The Jungemann’s bright blue car started up. In a cloud of dust it headed slowly down the winding dirt road. Callie and Matt turned around and waved a last goodbye to their new friends from *Casa Rudolfo*.

Epilogue

"Well," said Callie, as the Jungemanns drove back to the village. "That was probably the shortest vacation I've ever had; but, without a doubt, it was the most exciting."

"It was very short," said Mrs. Jungemann. "We'll have to think of something exciting to do with our remaining two weeks."

"There's still one more thing we have to do before leaving," said Matt. "There's a certain low-down crook I know who deserves a visit."

Callie and her mother smiled. They thought Matt's idea was a fine one.

The Jungemanns arrived in the pink and green village. Mrs. Jungemann stopped the car in front of Archie Fox's office. They got out and silently walked up to the door. Inside, two people were sitting by the desk. *El Zorro* was trying to convince them to rent *Casa Rudolfo*.

"If it's a quiet vacation you want, then I have just the place for you," said *El Zorro*. "It's not just a house. It's a mansion. It once belonged to the famous Rudolfo family."

Callie, Matt, and Mrs. Jungemann smiled at each other. They pushed open the door. *El Zorro* looked quite surprised to see them.

"Ghosts!" yelled Matt. "The Rudolfo mansion is filled with ghosts!"

The two people looked, in astonishment, at the Jungemann family.

"Did you say ghosts?" they asked.

"We just came from there," shouted Callie. "*Casa Rudolfo* is filled with ghosts!"

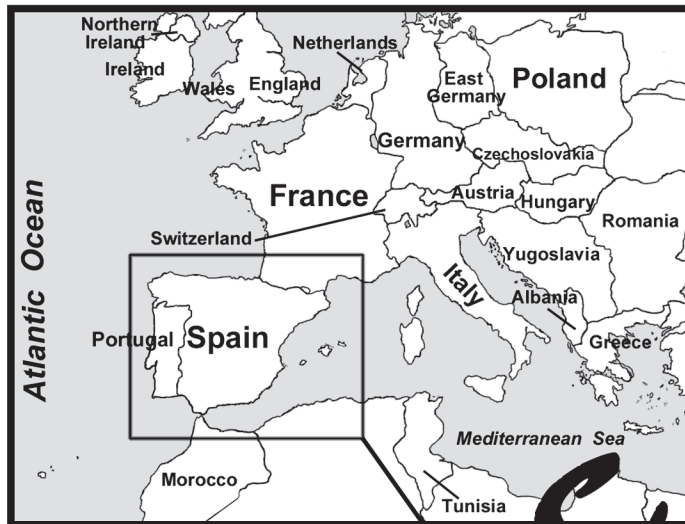
"They're as real as we are!" yelled Mrs. Jungemann. "Take our word for it. Stay away from *Casa Rudolfo*."

The three Jungemanns ran from the room. They jumped into their car. As they sped away, they saw the two people hurrying out of Archie Fox's place. *El Zorro* was chasing after them.

"I guess we outfoxed *El Zorro*," laughed Matt.

"We did, didn't we?" chuckled Callie. "I don't think they'll be staying in *Casa Rudolfo* tonight."

The Jungemann family laughed and laughed. They drove back to *Casa Rudolfo*. They wanted to tell Carlos and Juliana that *El Zorro* might be eager to sell the mansion to them. The picture of Archie Fox running after the two frightened people was something all of them would laugh about for a very long time.



Reading for All Learners – Fluency Builder Series This map may be copied for non-profit purposes.

Spanish-English Dictionary

<u>Spanish word:</u>	<u>English word:</u>	<u>Page #:</u>
Adiós	Goodbye	7
Amiga	Friend	23
Ayudar	To help	11
Buenas Noches	Goodnight	20
Buenos Días	Good Morning	22
Casa Rudolfo	House of Rudolfo	3
¿Como Está?	How are you?	3
Con Permiso	Excuse Me	18
Día	Day	22
El Zorro	The Fox	3
La cena estará en la mesa en un ratito.	Dinner will be served shortly.	14
¿Les puedo ayudar?	Can I help you?	11
Noche	Night	20
Orgullo	Pride	35
Sí	Yes	18
Villa	Village	1
Villa de Rudolfo	Village of Rudolfo	1

“Fluency Builders”

Model Lesson Plan Summary: Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension

Step 1. Review of Vocabulary from the Previous Chapter (*approximately 2 minutes*). The instructor reviews the 10 most difficult words from the previous chapter. See Step 7 of this Lesson Plan for more information. Any very difficult words should be added to the Step 7 list for further review.

Step 2. Overview and Vocabulary Check for the Chapter (*approximately 5 minutes*). Students read the chapter and prepare their own written list of words they cannot pronounce, decode, or understand. The instructor discusses and explains these words. Students demonstrate their understanding of difficult words by using the word in a sentence in another context. Building on the discussion of the vocabulary, the teacher asks questions to elicit the main ideas of the chapter and generate a summary of the actions, major characters, or concepts. This discussion should serve as a brief, introductory overview of the chapter.

Step 3. Fluency Practice in Speed and Accuracy (*approximately 10 to 15 minutes*). The instructor should model the appropriate fluency skills by reading the first paragraph at an appropriate pace. That is, approximately 120 words per minute and with appropriate expression. The instructor should “randomly” select students to read a paragraph aloud. To ensure active participation by all students, the instructor should occasionally stop the student reading in mid-paragraph and ask another student to finish the paragraph.

Step 4. Comprehension Instruction (*approximately 5 minutes*). Assign each student to prepare a comprehension question for the group. Students should be assigned to prepare either a “how,” “what,” “why,” “when,” or “where” question. Each student should then pose a comprehension question to the group; the answer should be discussed by the group.

Step 5. Oral Comprehension Check (*approximately 5 minutes*). This is a discussion session that explicitly applies comprehension concepts to the chapter. The teacher should generate questions to elicit such issues as “What is the main idea?” “What was the motive?” “What was the sequence?” “What happened first? Last?” “Summarize the chapter.” The instructor should ensure that students have practice with literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension questions. The discussion for Step 5 should serve as a gentle, yet firm, reminder that students are accountable for reading with understanding.

Step 6. Reading with Expression (*approximately 5 minutes*). Students should practice reading individual paragraphs with expression. This should be a fun experience. Focus on expression, not on speed and accuracy. Students may practice using different voices for different characters, changing intonation to indicate a question, and reading with pauses to build interest and anticipation. Each student should be given an opportunity to read at least one paragraph to the group.

Step 7. Prepare a Vocabulary Review List for the Chapter (*approximately 3 minutes*). The teacher and group should prepare a list of the chapter’s most difficult words to decode and understand. This should be a 10-word list based on difficult words encountered in the lesson. Each student should be required to review this list of 10 words as a homework assignment and be prepared to read and use each word in a sentence to demonstrate understanding. This review will be done as Step 1 of the next lesson on the next chapter.

Step 8. Individual Rate and Accuracy Assessment (*approximately 5 minutes*). Using “Assessment Step Sample” for the chapter, assess students on rate and accuracy. Record data for each student for each chapter. Check to see that students continue to meet the assessment standards from chapter to chapter. Do the reteaching when needed for individuals or the group.

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 - **“Fluency Builders”** A program for Grades 3-8, to teach fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and reading with expression.
 - **“Decoding For All Ages”** A reading program for learners from Grade 5 to Adult. The program teaches phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension through 175 lessons.
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