

**Michael McGuire**  
**La Ultima Cena**

The sons, or the brothers, depending on your point of view, and each in his own way, viewed the sisters, who must have been daughters once, but certainly weren't any longer, with some longing.

"It's not as if we have to choose," said Jorge. "They're exactly, precisely, the same."

"Perhaps one has a little blood blister in her eye," said Juan, who was always willing to give evidence of his only advantage over his brother, his good eyes, his superior vision.

"Even if it's there, and I have my doubts, *hermanito*, it's only an added attraction," said Jorge, sipping his beer and looking over his heavy glass at the two beauties.

Both sisters had hawk-like noses which, strangely, did not detract from their looks. Both had the black eyes and black hair typical of their race, so black that that black had to be startlingly echoed in another place, even when velvety skin mimicked the color of good dark beer. The sisters were dark, meaning dark. Dark spirited too, Jorge would guess, because what made them striking was not their striking beauty or even their identity, but...

Their intensity.

One pictured an unlit mine, veins of gold that had never seen the light of day, seams that would have to be dug, dug, dug...

Blasted.

"I'll take the one with the blood blister in her eye," said Jorge, the elder, the brother whose sense of humor rarely deserted him and who was used to making a division of labor that usually panned out.

Perhaps the agreement between the brothers was noted by the man, the man with the laugh, the bartender who showed by his unremitting delight when business was good that he was also the proprietor, *el jefe*, and, as the girls' employer, maybe knew a little something the brothers didn't.

"The girls, *pendejos*, ain't to be had," he might have said, but he only found an opportunity for a little chuckle here and, otherwise, kept his mouth shut.

So much for him. Let's get back to our brothers and, eventually, to their father for, in the end, it's his story.

Juan was not your dark beer man. Juan was sipping his overpriced *añejo* and looking over the back of his hand at the sister with the blister, as he termed it to himself. Both brothers were used to some advantage. After all, weren't they sons of *el candidato*, sons who had accompanied his campaign all over the country, visiting pueblos so small it was unlikely anyone would vote in them, and if they did would vote the way their parents had, the way their grandparents had: for PRI, *el Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, not an upstart party that wanted to upset the applecart, and not for PAN, *el Partido Acción Nacional*, the party that kowtowed to business, maybe the Church too, which couldn't help itself when it had a chance to crawl in bed with property.

Lázaro, father of the sipping lads, one of whom was positively leering over his dark beer, was candidate of a fragile alliance of parties, best left unnamed. While Lázaro's name might appear more than once on the same ballot as candidate of more than one party, if you x'd his name more than once you'd messed up your ballot, your vote was just where it had gone in all those years when the PRI trucked the ever-willing teachers to polling place after polling place and stole yet another election.

Tonight was not exactly a victory party. It was just the last campaign stop before the mandatory days of non-campaigning prior to the election. Lázaro should be winning. Hadn't he done half a dozen pueblos for every one visited by the major party candidates in their chartered jets? But everyone knew he wasn't. His men hadn't exactly conducted polls, but word-of-mouth told them and everybody else: the people were voting as they'd always voted, for little considerations that were sure to come their way, like a refrigerator. The election was a done deal.