

## Easy Streets Lament

She was finicky in times of rotten luck, as the years seemed to cave in around her. Marisalle's Latina temper seemed to keep finding reasons to escalate these pains in the ass. Today was turning into one of those kinds of days, where grabbing a pack of smokes was easier than making a plan, to pay off her serious debt. The gambling at Harrah's with her meager earnings only added to what she and Ricardo owed. Thankfully, he never complained, to keeping his dreary day job at the bank. How he put up with her, was a complete mystery to Marisalle. "Marisalle please fetch my cigarette lighter from the den" Called out Felicia in her frustrated manner. "Yes Felicia, I am happy to bring it to you" Marisalle popped up off the blue velvet chaise lounge, in order to forget her mounting troubles, by tending to her uppity employer. "Felicia, I thought you wanted to ban smoking from the mansion. Plus, when your Grandkids visit they are extremely revolted" reminded Marisalle "Now listen here M, I have put my health first for longer than you can even remember. Give me my space and then when my Grandkids visit, I will deal with them" Felicia huffed "Yes Felicia, it is your life, I just want the best for you really. I will be in the kitchen if you decide to help with making your favorite lasagna, for dinner tonight, okay?" Marisalle smiled ever so sweetly. "Thank you M, I just might do that" Felicia smiled as she lit her Benson and Hedges cigarette, at the end of her intricately carved, beige ivory cigarette holder.

Upon arriving back at her apartment in the San Rafael, Canal, Marisalle noticed Ricardo had left the front door wide open. Carefully entering, so as not to alarm an intruder, she tiptoed in looking high and low. "Thank God none of the neighborhood thugs took off with anything today. Deus Meu I am going to get after Ricardo for his forgetfulness" she muttered under her breath. Carefully locking the door, to give herself a moment of peace, she took out the worn last letter her Mom had written to reread, for some semblance of home. As Deus Meu=My God

tears began to fill her deep brown eyes. She heard a loud knock at the door. "Marisalle, Marisalle, open this door immediately" cried Ricardo "Coming, I thought you had a shift at the Bank today, and forgot to lock up our apartamento" Marisalle nagged. "I wanted to surprise you with this Manx bonita gatinho. It is just crying out for your tender touch" Ricardo sweetly gestured toward her, to hold the very large black kitten. "You look like you have been crying, was Felicia in another one of her grumpy moods today?" "Oh Amor, this gatinho is such an Amor, how can I ever stay cross with you?" Marisalle smiled while pecking him softly on the cheek. "I am going to name him Meia-Noite for our brazen elopement on New Year's Eve" giggled Marisalle "You always say the cutest things when it comes to our estimacao" Ricardo said while leaning in for a smooch. "You are my preferido Amor, especially when you add to our family with this bonito gatinho. A Manx yet, just what I have always wanted" Marisalle said between kissing Ricardo everywhere under the sun.

Upon arriving at work in Ross, Marisalle had the biggest smile on her plain weathered face. While looking at the to do list Madame Felicia set out for her during the week, Marisalle noticed #5 said to take out the playpen. "Deus Meu what on earth will Felicia do, when taking her chill pills, to cope with her Grandkids today?" Marisalle mentioned to herself. "Marisalle, made sure to empty all the ashtrays around the house, and outside too. I don't want little Tony to get his grubby little hands on any butt's. You hear me M?" shouted Felicia from the kitchen. "Yes, Felicia, you put that as number # 1, on my to do list for today." Marisalle pleasantly replied. "Thank you for having such a great attitude M, you have been a Godsend to me now for years" Felicia mentioned while swigging down a number of chill pills. "Felicia I am grateful for this job, but Ricardo, and I really want to move where the prices are better" Marisalle

Bonito gatinho = Lovely Cat, Amor = Love, Meia-Noite = Midnight, preferido= favorite,

said, while dumping a number of cigarette butts. “I will hate to lose such a good employee as you, but you gotta do what you gotta do huh?” Felicia said, while dashing off to answer the front doorbell.

Later at their apartment Marisalle put her feet up, on the worn brown corduroy easy chair, while stroking Meia-Noite somewhat impatiently. She wanted to make a plan with Ricardo to use their recent Harrah’s’ windfall, to move to Favacal soon. It was all she could do to somehow get off this work treadmill, that came with an addiction to pain killers. On top of that, she could not take too many more days of Felicia’s moodiness. She decided to tell Ricardo, as soon as he got home, that his dream of living closer to his family, was just what they needed at this time. Marisalle decided to make his favorite dinner of Espetadas, Caldo Verde and Pastel de nata for dessert, in order to get Ricardo in a more compliant mood. Luckily, her swanky, purple, silky, nightgown was back from the cleaners too. Marisalle lay it out on the bed, with a chocolate kiss on top, to ease Ricardo into a romantic evening, after another dreary day at his job. She showered, and used the latest bottle of channel #5 sparingly, that Ricardo had given her for her 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Upon hearing Ricardo at the door, Marisalle refreshed her burgundy lipstick, and took her place at the kitchen stove, where dinner was rapidly cooking. “Hello Marisalle, what comida smells delicioso this evening?” Ricardo said when sauntering into their modest fifties, yellow tiled kitchen. “I am making your favorite meal, since you have been the best Marido to me, and the best Pai to our cozy gatinho. “Marisalle replied while smiling from ear to ear. “Well, well, well let me go get into something more comfortable, so I can enjoy seconds

Espetadas= kebob, caldo verde=soup, pastel de nata = custard tart, Pai=Dad, comida=food

tonight Amor” Ricardo said, while giving her a huge hug, and smooch. When he reached the bedroom, where her nightie was shining brightly in plain sight, he decided to take a quick shower before dinner.

At the dinner table set simply for two, with gold candles lit to set the mood, Ricardo stared ever, so sweetly into Marisalles’ huge brown eyes. Between dainty bites Marisalle decided to take a large swig of the Douro wine that Ricardo saved for special occasions, before launching into her proposal. “Amor, I want to get down to brass tacks, on my plan for us to make a life closer to your Mae, who is certainly getting more frail, as the day is long.” “I think we can use our cash winnings to purchase a pequena casa nearby her. Who better than us to keep a closer eye on her, don’t you think?” “What with all the crime that has been taking place in our neighborhood, we would be way safer in Favacal, than living, so close to parolees, child molesters, and drug traffickers.

Ricardo hugged Marisalle passionately and said “Amor I love your idea. I have been day dreaming of going back to Mae’s aldeia in Favacal to enjoy a simpler, healthier lifestyle, at a fraction of the cost of living in Marin. All the remaining residents are, so kind. They would give a person the shirt off their own back.” “Your wish is my command. We will be off to Favacal sooner than you think Amor.”

“You mean we can move there soon Amor? “I can just picture us daily walking the cobblestone streets and breathing the pure fresh air” Marisalle said while hugging him tightly, and kissing his thick neck. “Calm down Amor there is a matter of us finishing up our jobs, and closing out our responsibilities too. On top of that we need to get papers for our gatinho, and us also” Ricardo said frustratedly.

Amor=Love, Mai=Mother, pequena casa = small house

As the weeks passed by in the Canal, Ricardo continued with his dreary job while dreaming of starting a new life in Favacal. Marisalle tied up their loose ends, got their travel documents in order, and gave Felicia two weeks' notice. Ricardo's phone call to Mae in Favacal was met with happy tears. As soon as all their papers were in order Marisalle, and Ricardo packed up, and happily said goodbye to their stressful life in Marin.