

Sirotolica: The Last Conquistador, by Chelsey Delaney

He woke from terrible nightmare: that bastard had discovered the fountain of youth, and Ponce de Leon, not Sirotilca, a *real* explorer, would be awarded the gift of a Catholic virgin bouquet. All Sirotilca felt upon waking was a body inflamed of emotion, his heart trotting faster than beasts of the wild, and that he must flee to the chapel.

The streets of Madrid ripened in the sunset with smells of baked grains and odors of damp, sweating poverty. He felt as if demons had chased him through the alleyways, possessed passer-by, and could condemn him to hell with the solid gaze of a beggar. The chapel was empty when he arrived, and seemed possessed too in its darkness. The candles were lit, but the bishop was not present. Sirotilca strode down the main aisle, barely able to catch glimpses of the empty pews with his left, lazy eye. He had had it since birth—His mother had been older when she had gone into labor, and had subsequently died. But Sirotilca thanked his father more than anyone for making him a man. It was indeed *most* important to be a man.

At the altar, he knelt and made the sign of the cross.

“En el nombre del Padre, y del hijo, y del esipiritu santo, Amen...”

He became silent and confessed his sins within his mind. His chest felt tight and the arch of his eyebrows began to harbor liquid anxiety. He tried to keep praying, but nothing could keep his mind off of the rendezvous he had later with Queen Adelina. Not only was he going to receive his assignment for conquest in the New World, but he was also going to (hopefully) find in her eyes the same passion that enraged him...And her body... Another frontier unmapped—planes not plotted---valleys and oceans buried underneath the skin of a celestial core... Yes, he would love her; he would find the

accolades along her shores. But first he must prove to her he was worthy—an easy feat! He grinned to himself while his loins began to ache and warm amongst the candlelight. He had forgotten he was in the chapel and viciously looked side to side. He made a hurried sign of the cross again and excused himself before anyone could enter and notice his excited state.

Queen Adelina was fanning herself in an ornate carved wooden chair—purchased in Persia and inherited from her father (God save him)-- while her servants rolled her long dark locks atop her head and pinned them there, there, and there. She wanted to appear not withered by the heat—She would send out the men today, and she wanted to look her best, her most confident, and her most noble (the quality for which she was named). She was, after all, awarding the explorers who retrieved the greatest riches (pray: the fountain of youth) with some of the finest virgins she could find: barely aged 13, and barely menstrual. The Queen herself was not a virgin—No, her father had touched her at a young age, or at least she suspected. She half-remembered it happening: his tongue in her ear, his hand soaring down her small infantile backbone. She had dreams about it but could never particularly see it, and his death had been so sudden, his role so vacant, that it was really all she could remember: a blurry tongue in her ear, and a giggle bubbling out of her naive esophagus. She still had not decided how it affected her, or if it should be a real effect at all. Was it real if no one else knew about it? It was her, alone, spewing demands beneath a crown—a single, sexless being with power.

“Reyna...,” her servant approached her with a curtsy. “Sirotilca esta aqui.”

Adelina waved off the servant without a word. The other three women in the room scurried like rats in a closet exposed to artificial light; they grabbed for mirrors, gowns, shoes, and handkerchiefs. She floated behind her dressing shade and quickly emerged: a figure in sunspot red, lips afire, eyes like garden lanterns. She was short and had a small, strong frame—particularly in her upper body, where the Spanish sun had applied an amber gradient. Her heels barely elevated the top of her head to the chests of the noblemen who sought the prize she was willing to bear for the advancement of her kingdom.

To her, the virgins had no opportunity for a better life than this.

“Mi reyna,” Sirotilca beckoned and bowed low. He was the first to receive orders, and unbeknownst to him, the Queen’s favorite.

Upon returning to his full height, his stare climbed up her decadently clothed body. Sirotilca had never touched a woman--Yet still he felt that touching any street woman probably would not compare to touching Adelina. Parts of her went undiscovered, and might always be.

She did not smile or frown or make a move. Instead, she fastened herself further into the chair, balling up on its wide seat with the flounces of red velvet framing her lower half.

“I was a friend of your father’s. I knew you as a little girl. You are a woman now and more than fit to be the Reyna de Espana. I shall honor the legacy of your family with my findings.”

He bowed again.

“You will leave at sunrise. Two men will travel with you. I am only sending two because I expect this journey to finish fast,” she said folding her hands in her lap, and then promptly undoing the handed-knot to yawn into them. “Your ship’s name is the Dulcita. She will be docked when you arrive.”

He seductively smiled. He had wanted to look at her this way since he saw her at age 12, her mother brushing her hair, counting each stroke, while nestled by a warm fire in the sitting room. Adelina was always cross-legged and holding up a silver mirror—always wearing a white sleeping gown that had rejoiced to outline the new curves of her body.

“Thank you, Queen.”

She looked down and smiled a little smile to the floor so that he could not see, then dismissed him.

Sirotilca’s crew sat legs-off-dock watching the sun rise over the Atlantic. From left to right, there was Alfredo Sazon and Luis Sazon. They were identical twin brothers, Luis the younger, and thus the latter in the alphabet, by 11 minutes (and coincidentally by 11 letters). Alfredo sat stuffing his mouth with a fresh roll, and Luis, the more outspoken of the two, made up for the words Alfredo could not say upon ingestion.

“What do you think we will find ‘Fredo? Do you think we will find the fountain? I am sure we shall find gold... Ah yes, with Sirotilca we can find the very best!”

His saliva dried the top edge of his lip and he spit into the smooth water.

Alfredo chewed for a good half-minute, swallowed, and put a hand on his brother’s shoulder.

“Brother, we shall be the richest men in Espana. But we must protect ourselves, and each other. I want you to know that our blood comes before the blood of the noble. I will protect you before Sirotilca. Promise me the same. Then we can share the fortune.”

Luis extended his right arm to Alfredo’s shoulder and nodded, but remained silent.

Alfredo took another bite of roll and smiled with the masticated dough puffing out the sides of his mouth. He moved his hand from a few inches from Luis’ left shoulder to its corresponding shoulder blade and patted.

“When we come back, we shall find wives,” Alfredo said spitting a few crumbs onto the weathered dock. “Beautiful wives!”

“Good day to you, young men,” Sirotilca bellowed. He had been standing behind them for an unknown amount of time—Alfredo almost choked on his bit in fear of how much the explorer had heard of the conversation. “I am Oscar Sirotilca.”

“I am Luis, and this is Alfredo,” Luis said jumping to his feet, pulling his brothers shirtsleeve up with him. “We are the Sazon brothers.”

At that instant, the horizon line seemed to encapsulate the three men. The sun had finished rising and the sea gurgled like the belly of God. Three shadows appeared long and lean on the creaking dock, and then disappeared onto the waves.

The journey across the ocean proved to be nothing less than the cliché term “treacherous.” Because the ship crew was comprised of the typical toothless degenerates, Sirotilca and the Sazon brothers congregated only amongst themselves, creating a three-person dynamic that often ostracized one of them for any period of time.

The social progression would flow like this: one brother would be sleeping, eating, or working with the crew, and the other would hover and vie to win Sirotilca's favor. It was only in the sleeping quarters did the brothers get along, acting as if each were planning to conspire with the other in the concluding days. Sirotilca had no favorite, however—After months at sea, he still could not tell them apart--nor did he care to. He called them both "Sazon," which alleviated the pressure of ever deciphering which was which. Occasionally the three would drink together at night, as Sirotilca had brought an extraordinary amount of aged Spanish wine on board, and they would share stories about Spain. Every time this occurred, Sirotilca's thoughts always swiftly traveled back to Madrid and Adelina.

"It's not that I love her, it's that I just want to touch her," he said one night to the Sazones, influencing uproar. Sirotilca smirked, his eyes devilish, and silently excused himself to his bedroom for obvious reasons.

The Dulcita hit land one calm, breezy eve while Sirotilca and the Sazones were drunk and asleep. The ship's crew became responsible for docking the boat, and after they did so, raided what was left of the Spanish wine. The three explorers awoke to the sound of an evolving brawl—one of the men had refused to observe from the crow's nest due to a fear of heights, and hence was called a "chicken." The fight ended once the crew realized they had arrived in the New World—Sirotilca pulled a pistol from inside his coat and shot at the men, intentionally missing (barely).

"Gentlemen, please. We have arrived."

Once the ship unloaded, many of the members felt ill from the cruel combination of the sun, the waves, the journey, and primarily, the wine. The crew of 10 men sprawled on the ivory beach, clutching stomachs and calling names.

Luis Sazon walked by each and spit.

“Good-for-nothing crew,” he muttered. “We could be out finding things if you ninnies weren’t crying.”

“You’re just upset because there is no more wine left,” Alfredo commented, standing with his arms crossed on the beach and looking up at the sky.

“What is that supposed to mean,” Luis snapped back. He waddled towards Alfredo, obviously still drunk from the night before and tripping into the holes his sinking feet created in the sand.

Alfredo looked down to the earth and ignored the threatening intonation in his brother’s voice.

“I’m hungry. We should see what we can eat around here,” he said looking up again to examine the coastline.

“Yes, let’s. Sazon...,” Sirotilca butted in and pointed to Alfredo. “Come with me and we will see what wildlife we can find. You stay here and watch the crew—the bunch of infants,” he said pointing to Luis.

Luis nodded, his reluctance not transparent enough for refutation.

Sirotilca and Alfredo dressed in their traditional armor for the first time in months and said goodbye to Luis and the crew for a few hours, at least. It wasn’t long before the two adventurers were treading a path through the deciduous forest of...whatever they were going to call the damned place.

“What should I be looking for, Sirotilca?”

“I told you. Wildlife,” Sirotilca said gruffly. He was in a terrible mood from reaching the New World in such a disastrous fashion. Had savages attacked, they surely would have died, leaving their Queen and their country with no explanation. Luckily, if that had happened, Sirotilca also would not have been alive to show his embarrassment and encounter the consequences of a bad reputation.

“What are those,” Alfredo whispered.

The two men stopped suddenly. Within the forest was a clearing that hosted 20 small huts appearing to be the homes of some savage tribe. It was obvious the tribe had been in the area long; the huts were built from the forest paraphernalia that the explorers saw around them. The establishments appeared weathered and in a state of constant repair.

Sirotilca put his hand to his pistol almost involuntarily.

“These people do not understand our religion,” he warned the Sazon brother. “They are hedonistic pagans. If they refuse to abide by our ways, we shall kill them after learning how to survive in their environment.”

Alfredo nodded, dumbstruck. His legs trembled. He made the sign of the cross and reached into the lining of his trousers to grasp his Holy Bible for spiritual protection.

Alfredo began whispering the Apostle’s Creed, but then stopped fast in reaction to a rustling sound coming from the opposite side of the clearing. Both men knelt down very low to the ground, leaves crunching a bit beneath their armored feet--armor arranging itself in the cue of metallic decibel--and peaked over a barrier of tall brush that was further hidden by a circular arrangement of trees. The figures were difficult to make out,

mostly because savages don't have the same kind of civil characteristics *we* do, Sirotilca thought. But he soon realized that the figures were actually 10 women whom had returned from collecting berries. The women were naked except for an animal skin covering the lower portion of their bodies, but as soon as they entered the clearing grounds, they removed this piece of cloth.

The 10 sat in a circle, eyes closed, chanting some barbaric praise in the midst of their collective nudity. Sirotilca and the Sazon brother could only sit in a nervous stillness, for they did not know what kind of ceremonial ritual this could be.

Moments later, the males of the tribe entered the clearing in an orderly line, and sat at the midpoint of the female circle. There were fewer men, and most of them were remarkably younger than the females of the tribe, who all coincidentally looked around birthing age.

When the men sat, the females did not acknowledge their presence—they just kept chanting. The men made no sound, but each seemed focused on the hymns recited by the women.

“Women have the power,” Sirotilca explained to Sazon in a shivering whisper.

Sirotilca's hunch was proved right, because just as he said it, the male inner circle bowed down, foreheads touching the forest floor, and worshipped the lower halves of the females. Or so it seemed.

To the explorers, the scene was quite preposterous. Both of their expressions exceeded the description of “utterly confused,” yet they still wanted to wait to see what else could happen before they could make a startling, out-of-this-world appearance. As far as they could gather, a woman's sexual organs seemed to be the prime ruler and

spiritual authoritarian according to the tribe's people. This was a common occurrence with uncivilized savages who had yet to hear the word of God and had yet to accept the correct lifestyle—Sirotilca had seen it in Africa, too. He shook his head with disapproval.

“What's the plan, jefe?”

“Shhh...,” Sirotilca hushed Alfredo. The tribesmen had pulled out a large animal skin (a beast unidentified by the explorers) with some sort of illustration etched onto it—The graphic resembled a flower—like a lily or lilac—they could not remember which was which.

As the group grew silent, now looking like a mandala surrounding a tiny flower diagram on the ground, Sirotilca stepped closer, revealing him self. Alfredo stayed where he was. He figured that if Sirotilca was attacked, he could safely retaliate. He was also too scared to move.

Sirotilca's effort to show gentleness was honored when no one in the tribe even heard him creep up to the congregation. It wasn't until a young girl (somewhere around 13 years of age) whose face was directed at Sirotilca peaked an eye open in suspicion of a rattling noise that he was noticed—the rattling noise being his armor. She hurriedly patted the women's knees in emergency, who then forced the men in the smaller circle to stand in aggression.

Sirotilca smiled the smile of a cherub and put out his hands to infer subordination. The young woman who had first seen him slowly approached him, backed up by a naked female battalion. She made a hand gesture towards her genitalia, as if asking Sirotilca to bow before it as the men in the tribe had done. Perhaps this was their queen, he thought.

He did not know if bowing before her would be a sin—hopefully she was not considered some goddess—but he *must* bow or he would thus risk his safety. He later accounted the gesticulation as an act of respect on behalf of the Spanish kingdom.

While he continued to shakily bow, the clan passed around the animal canvas and subsequently placed it on the ground affront him. He could now see the figure completely. The young woman lifted his chin with her hand and pointed to her body and then pointed back down to the skin. It was then that he realized, very near to the skin and very near to the woman, that the etching was in fact a drawing of a human female sexual part.

The men signaled him to again bow his head in reverence by bowing their own heads. He returned his blank stare back to the animal hide and kept it there until the woman decided to give her name.

“Makawee,” she said referring to herself with another hand motion. “Ma-ka-wee.” She repeated the name slower.

“Sirotilca,” he repeated the gesture without disclosing his first name.

“See-rot-eelka,” she said with a dawning smile. “Seer-at-eelka.”

He nodded.

She bowed to him. The rest of the tribe copied with confidence. Alfredo estimated that this time was the most suitable to instill a first impression.

“Alfredo,” Sirotilca said, presenting Alfredo with an open palm.

“Al-fred-o,” she repeated with a slight uneasiness.

Suddenly, something occurred to Sirotilca. Maybe this etching had something to do with the fountain of youth. His excitement boiled until he realized he had no way of asking. He pointed to the figure on the hide.

“Gichi,” she said. “Gi-chi man-i-doo.”

Before he could repeat it, Makawee grabbed his hand and brought him inside a hut for another visual representation of “gichi manidoo,” further confirming that the worshipped was an anatomical region on the woman.

“Makawee,” she pointed to a woman drawn near the object.

She handed him some clay and encouraged him to write on the skin beneath the picture drawn of her. He wrote in letters his surname. She touched the hide where each letter had been painted on and then called for one of the men.

The man, Iagoo, had escaped from further north where many colonists were and had witnessed such writing. He could read it from time to time when he recognized specific letters and specific combinations, though the Spanish language was new to him.

“A-C-L-I-T-O-R-I-S,” he spelled out Sirotilca’s name backward to forward. “A-clitoris.”

Sirotilca shook his head.

“Sirotilca,” he said.

The man gave him a confused, almost threatening glance. The woman bowed before him. She then led him outside where the clan and Alfredo still remained in an awkward silence. Both parties had been bowing at one another the entire time.

Alfredo heard Sirotilca and Makawee and jumped to his feet.

“Sirotilca,” he whispered. “They think we are gods because we came during their ritual, I think.”

Makawee called the attention of the crowd.

“A clitoris,” she said. “A clitoris.”

She pointed to Sirotilca, and then down to herself again. She had renamed the mystical part, “a clitoris.” Sirotilca frowned. *Savage idiots.*

Alfredo had not been clued in to what any of this meant, but he would soon know, for the tribe decided to continue with the aforementioned ritual to show appreciation for their explorer friends, who must have looked like they were from the constellations.

After two years, the explorers and crew (who now felt much better but still drank until sickness on occasion) returned to Spain on the *Dulcita*. The queen—still single, still powerful, and somehow more beautiful—received word within a half hour of their arrival. She was eager to see what they had brought back, and what kinds of stories they could share for, at minimum, entertainment value.

Sirotilca had reached the entryway, and in his hands, was absolutely nothing. She tried to quiet the angered beat of her heart, justifying to herself that the fountain of youth could surely not be brought back with a grab.

“I have been named after a region in the New World,” Sirotilca said. “It is a part only found on the female that, when touched enough, produces ultimate happiness and often leads to life-bringing.”

Sirotilca pointed to the ruffled “v” shape of the Queen’s dress.

“It’s there.”

The court fell silent. Sirotilca had been away at sea too long—They could tell. His hair was long and his face very dark—His eyes had a crazy look to them, and his legs were thin from malnutrition. He was speaking some sort of crazy-speak.

But the Queen's silence was the only that had occurred out of curiosity and not doubt. While he had been gone, she had grown lonelier and felt even less like a woman than she had before. Time seemed to only weaken her fire. Perhaps she needed to know about this—It wouldn't hurt, would it?

She motioned her maid to her father's chair and whispered, "Send him to my quarters."

Adelina undressed before the mirror and squinted at her lower body. Where was this part--this saving part that she had never known or had heard of? She shyly examined herself.

Sirotilca knocked and entered. He saw her naked and immediately spun around.

"No," she said calmly. "It's alright. Tell me where it is...Or show me. Is it called 'Sirotilca'?"

"A clitoris... Clitoris," he stammered, cautiously revolving back to his original direction.

He retired then to his knees, where Adelina's hipline became his horizon line. He extended one finger, the hand washed and the nail cut down, and touched the part of Adelina no one else had touched. It was the part of her that may have never been discovered had he not journeyed to the New World. It was also the part of her he may have never seen had he not accepted the conquest.

No Spanish conquistador ever found the fountain of youth, and many never found riches. But it didn't make them phony explorers—Their names still claim good portions of history books.

Sirotilca and Adelina marked its existence in the 16th century. Once called “vestigial,” the clitoris became recognized but never acknowledged, sought after but never completely found. And those who bear it, such as Adelina and the sacred tribeswomen, could never quite speak the same language—either literally or metaphorically—to relay having it in their possession.

And the other men of Spain, who did not have the honor of having their names encompass a sacred part of the woman, never fully quite understood the hype—With the explorer and the Queen, the societal value of the clitoris died—once again becoming sexless, buried beneath crossed legs.