DIARY OF AN ESPACEMAN

By Gina Ruiz



Day…

I don’t know what day it is, so I ain’t saying the days. Just marking how many I think I’ve been here. I’m going to keep a journal like something outta that Star Trek shit with the vatos in weird pajamas… I had to stop and whistle the tune, but that doesn’t mean I watch it. No que no.

So, yo. It’s me. Carlos Antonio Marin, aka Dopey, the guy they think got dead by aliens.





Day 3?

Well, what happened then? That was me got sucked into that nasty mouth when shit went down in the park. That happened and it was foul. I didn’t die though, I’m here on this crazy planet quien sabe how far from home and Elena. I don’t know how I got here. All I remember was the purple things, being sucked in and then darkness, till I woke up here in another room from this one. Turns out though, those purple fuckers, they were just the harvesters, not the actual vatos in charge. They were just grunts.



Day 3? / continued

So here I am in my wrinkled, but clean Dickies and Ben Davis, in a cold white room and every so often these tall, Chupacabra-looking mother fuckers come in and try and talk to me. One of ‘em takes notes like Elena used to. Not on paper though - I don’t know what that black shit is but it ain’t paper. More like tar on aluminum foil in an oval shape. Kinda the shape of the ship the purple ones came in on - like a chancla. It writes with a thing that looks like a wire, all shiny and thin and every so often it flashes.

But me, I ain’t talking any sense to them. They have figured out English and Spanish, and try and talk to me, but I play dumb. They can’t seem to figure out Caló or Nahuatl so I be pulling out old school Pachuco ese, talking Caló; trying to remember my grandmother’s Otomi and my grandfather’s Mixteca Nahuatl, all in this crazy mix that makes them stare.





Mostly, though I talk in my head to Elena and that, they can’t listen to. So much for aliens being able to read our minds. They can’t, yo. No way.



Day 4

I can’t be the only one they took. I’ve searched and searched though, but can’t find any of my homies.

Day 6

They let me roam free. Well, it’s not free because there are no exits. I can’t figure this space ranfla out. No doors, no windows, nada. Just a big chancla-shaped box. I seen worse jails, but this is a jail. No doubt about that.





Day 7

I miss home. I miss my homies. I miss Lorca, my beautiful green carrucha and most of all, I miss Elena, my own personal angel. Yeah, I know she’s dead. Y que? I know she lives in my carrucha, well her ghost does, and living or dead, Elena is for me and I’m for her so we go along like she ain’t dead. She’s my angel, no matter what.



Day 7 / continued

I wonder what they want. Are they gonna waste my ass? Do experiments on me like in the movies? Am I going to wake up in a cornfield somewhere one day and be 100 years old? Fuck man, this shit makes my head hurt a la chingada. I rub my head and six Chupacabras jump up and put their cold, clammy claws on me. They have eight fingers yo, eight! Their fingers are long, almost the length of my forearm.

I can hear Elenita in my head, getting all scientific like she used to and she's saying, "Document this Carlos, write it down." Well, they won't give me one of those wire chingaderas, so I'll write it here, in my head, in my memories and go all oral tradition and shit, like my ancestors…wait…my ancestors wrote shit down in beautiful pintura on paper made of mulberry bark, called codices. Goddamnit! I want an alambre pencil too. I signal to the Chupacabra that is writing and point at his pencil then at myself.





I refuse to let them know I speak English or Spanish. His weird, froggy eyes in a wacky shade of blue follow my finger and then, it looks like he's smiling, only it's way creepy because his teeth are so long and well, vampiro-looking. It makes me trucha and I don't have my puñal. For some reason, metal didn't make it here with the rest of me.



Day 7 / continued

Damn, I wish I had a frajo, but I gave that shit up when I got out of the pinta before Elena died. I'd even started going to college because Elena, she was and is the kind of girl that makes a man dream. Not about winning the lottery or shit like that, but real, authentic-type dreams - of education, citizenship, a life in the real world, not in the shadows and back alleys of barrios, wasting time and energy on pleito and drama.

Good dreams, nearly impossible but totally reachable dreams that begin and end in books, home and familia. Now look, Elena's a ghost, I'm here in space with the Chupafuckingcabra - what a fucking great story this would be. If I ever get home, I'm going to write a book and dedicate it to the one I love.





"This is dedicated….to the one I love." I pull my fists in and close my eyes, and I'm dancing with Elena to that song. Yeah, man. That's firme.



Day 10, yo creo

I finally got my wire pencil, yo, only it ain’t wire. It’s some kinda weird material that feels silky and slick. The Chupacabra I named Serrote handed it to me the other day with that weird smile of his. He even gave me this chapupote etching chingadera and I can write on it like paper.

I write and Serrote pushes a button and there is everything I write, all on the black tar, all lit up like in silver chrome, like the hubcaps on my ranfla. I say, “Hey Serrote, and he turns to look at me, blue eyes gleaming like he’s proud of me and shit, and that ghastly, fangy smile of his just gets bigger.





I laugh because he answers to Serrote, which if you are reading my diario, and don’t know what it means - it means a big old piece of shit. A masa, a turd, a caca. The Chupacabra answer to Serrote and that makes me crack up.



Day 20

They tried to get me to give up my ropa and put on some weird-feeling shit. I ain't wearing that crap. No chale, it's my clothes, but I sure wish I had an iron. I try signaling to these foolios, but no one gets what an iron is. Damn. Fuckers all high-tech and shit and they ain't got an iron. What the fuck? At least there is water to wash my stuff in. I wash things out every night just like when I was locked up. Damn, I hate the wrinkles though. I'd kill a fucker for a bottle of Niagara starch and an iron.

Day 45, I think…

I'm starting to get stir crazy in this place. I gave up trying not to talk to the fuckers because I want answers. They just keep saying whacked out shit like, "you'll love your new home." Yeah and then they eat me. Uh huh. I ain't no specimen, in a lab. I'm not a commodity, I'm a human being and I deserve respect. I should just shove my fist in their face y haber que pasa.





Day 50

What IS this shit they be feeding me? It tastes and looks like mocos. Can't they just make a fucking taco? Here fool, look…where's your cocina? Do I need to throw down with the harina and show you fuckers how to make a tortilla? Blank stares are all I get. Blank, eerie blue stares. Give me some harina, some manteca, salt and some water, you pinche Chupapendejo and I'll make some goddamned tortillas.



Day 62

I think these fuckers want to breed me like a caballo. I saw some drawings on Serrote’s screen of my reproductive system, like we had in health class back in junior high. It seems like that’s what they are studying. Hmmm….they’re crazy if they think I’m getting down with some Chupacabra chick. I gotta get out of this place.

Day 75

I slugged one yesterday. His face went squish and he looked shocked. Um, well you can’t be stealing vatos from their homies and shit, assholes. Don’t try to look all non-violent with me now, when I’m the one got sucked down a freaky alien’s throat a while back. Whatever you saved me for, it ain’t for anything good. I see how you stare at me like I’m meat.





I watch Twilight Zone. I read books and I saw those drawings. You fuckers are death and I’m going to have to take you all out. Entiendes, Mendez? They didn’t do anything though, other than stare at me. It creeps me out. Then it occurred to me that they really are saving me for something sinister. Why didn’t they hit back?



Day 80

Been studying these fuckers and this ranfla. Trying not to miss anything. Like how everything is made from this weird, white freaky form of plastic, how there’s no metal, how they communicate with each other. They think I’m stupid, but I’m trucha and I’m learning their language, but keeping quiet and listening. I can figure shit out. I am starting to pick out words. I hear the words and they are starting to make sense.

I started making a dictionary in my head. I stopped writing in the tablet thing because I don’t trust it. I just draw pictures of this dudes and of Lorca. I don’t draw Elena because I don’t want her here in this prison.





Day 86

I ain’t been writing. I’ve been on a huelga. I won’t eat that slop they call food. I want a fucking taco from Manny’s or my abuela’s tamales. I ain’t wearing their shiny-assed shit clothes even if they did make them look like what I’m wearing. I threw the pinche writing tablet at the wall and they looked up shocked and then Serrote started writing very fast. I think I scare them. Good to know. What I wouldn’t give for a knife….



Day 90

I figured something out today! I found the homies! At first, I kept passing this wall that was smooth as manteca and just as white. Walked past it every day, jogged around it every day before my push-ups. I thought I heard something and turned just so, and saw it. The thinnest sliver of light. I would have missed it forever if I hadn’t have turned just at the right time. That wall is a door.

I looked around for a long-assed time before I finally managed to find it - my school I.D from ELA College. That was buried deep in my pockets and I guess the Chupacabra never figured it was dangerous since it was plastic. Pfft. A smart vato can make a weapon out of anything, and a plastic card? Shit, that’s a knife, sabes? So, I slide my I.D along the thin sliver of light and pry it up little by little and peer inside.





What do I see? A fucking freezer just like when Elena and I went to see Rocky at the drive-in and he was boxing that meat. Only hanging there ain’t meat, it’s my homies! I want to yank them out of there now, but I know it ain’t the time. Besides, they are probably dead in that freezer. I gotta plan shit.



Day 91

This is war. It’s on motherfuckers. I am plotting. I am not Ruben with his tactics and crap, but I’m a thinker. I remember stuff Elena told me from her books. I watch them. I’m always trucha.

Day 92

Starting to feel down. Miss my Elena. Not going to let this defeat me. Even if the homies are dead in there, I’m gonna get em out and get them home.





Day 95

Fuck this, I started thinking like a baby for a while there. Now I’m going pinta-style, Che Guevara guerrilla, eses. I’ll make a weapon and get my ass up outta here. No metal? No problem. I’ve seen enough of space and Chupacabras. I have shit to do. Man on a mission. Save the homies.



Day 97

RIFA! I made that wire pencil into a weapon and wrapped it around Serrote’s green, warty neck. The writing tablet, I filed that mother fucker down and broke it into pieces sharp as hell. Crept up outta my room and snuck up on ‘em. Stuck the motherfuckers all, except Serrote. Him I got flying this motherfucking space carrucha back to my planeta, my life, my home and my ghost-woman. If he fucks me over, well we’re both dead. If he thinks he can take over…asshole is landing in Lincoln Park - he ain’t getting out alive when the homies get to him.

The homies in the freezer are still there. I can’t figure out how to get in and get them out, so the plan is to get home, get the ones that survived and take this pinche space ranfla apart. We’ll get em out. I know it.





Quien sabe que va pasar? Holy shit! That looks like my fucking ranfla Lorca down there! Elena! I’m home mija. I’m home. As we start to land in the dark parking lot of Plaza de la Raza, I see homies running and what the fuck? They aiming….is that Aqua Net? Con safos…El Dopey, out.