



Video Story Transcript

No Aguantara

By: Storyteller Carrie Sue Ayvar

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Link to YouTube Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gxdogoir53s>

Note : The following is a transcription of a spoken story performance and may not reflect textbook perfect English. It will guide you as you listen (or read) along.

My name is Carrie Sue Ayvar and just after I graduated high school, I went from Pittsburgh, PA to Zihuatanejo, Guerrero, Mexico. (No aguantará) It'll never last! That's what they said! (No aguantará) It'll never last! They were like wisps of rumors, never said to us directly but rumors that wisped around and spoken always in concerned tones, mostly to our families and friends.

It was 1973. I was only 17 when I met Facundo but there could hardly have been a more romantic setting. It was a warm, sunny day that January morning and it was on a small island just off the west coast of southern Mexico. The air was filled with (breathing in fragrance) mango and coconut oil, salt sea breezes and pheromones.

I watched as a muscular, strong young man, probably about 20 years old, carried several scuba tanks up onto the beach. Oo! The salt water and the sweat made his coppery skin glisten and his long dark hair had streaks of red and gold in it from days in the sun. Oh ho... I had never seen a more beautiful, gorgeous human being in my entire life! Like an Aztec Adonis emerging from the waters! When I could finally catch my breath again, I remember thinking, "The guy's gotta be a jerk! I mean, no one is that good looking and nice too!"

But (como dice el dicho) as the saying goes, (caras vemos el corazón no sabemos) we see the faces but we do not know the hearts. Now on the surface, Facundo and I had very little in common. He was a Spanish-speaking, Catholic, indigenous, brown-skinned Mexican from a very small fishing village and he lived on a beach while I was a fair-haired, green-eyed, English-speaking, Jewish, white American who lived in a three-story brick building in a very large city.

And our experiences growing up were completely different. I mean, while I watched Tarzan's adventures on TV, he lived them slicing green hanging vines for cauldrons of water, climbing tall palm trees to gather coconuts, diving off cliffs into beautiful blue tropical waters. I mean, while I went ice skating, he was free diving. From my father, I learned how to make flower arrangements. From his father, he learned how to build dugout canoes.

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Para cemos conocemos! But we did get to know each other. And we got to know each other's stories and each other's hearts. (E descubrimos) We discovered (las dos querer) that we both loved (el mar) the ocean and the feeling of weightlessness during those underwater dives. (El sabor) the taste of salt on our tongues when we came up for air. (El sonido) The sound of the waves drumming against the sands. (E también descubrimos) We also discovered (los dos querer) that we both cherished (familia y mis les) family and friends (mas que) more than everything. (Nos conocíamos) we got to know each other (e nos enamoramos) and we fell in love.

Now it was amazing how many people were there to tell us, "No aguantará, it will never last!" From both sides of the border, there were so many people who disapproved. They would say things like, "Oh, you know he's only using you to get a green card." Or (Ay, esos gringos de como de es sabe) You know how those gringos are, man! (rico e consentido) They are rich and spoiled, (ya sabes) you know! Or "Ah, what a shame! She couldn't find a nice Jewish doctor?"

But all of those things didn't really phase us! Even when we finally announced our engagement and, to our surprise, we heard rumors of a pregnancy that we knew nothing about! But, as I said, all those doubts and criticisms didn't really bother us. I mean, we were happy and, to the surprise of many, so were our families. I mean, Facundo had actually met my parents a year before I ever met him; they're the ones who actually introduced us to each other there on the island. Jesus, his papa and his parents - (madre tomas su propia hija) they treated me like their very own daughter. Dona Christina, his mother, used to say, "(Tenemos que cuidado de ella) We have to take good care of her. (Sus propios padres están tan lejos) Her own parents are so far away."

So really, what did it matter to us what other people thought? I didn't think it mattered at all... but sometimes it does. Since it was hard for my grandparents and other elderly relatives to travel to southern Mexico where we lived, we decided that we would have the wedding in my home town of Pittsburgh, PA.

Now after a 12-hour overnight bus trip, we finally arrived at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City. Under a smoggy, gray sky, we waited for hours and hours to finally speak to an American visa clerk. And when we finally did, instead of helping us, instead of telling us what kind of visas we were eligible for, this unfriendly, unhelpful, unhappy little bureaucrat of a man lied to us. Lied to us repeatedly and began to make things up. Let me ask you, do you know how hard it is to get a copy of a form that doesn't actually exist? Oh, yeah, he knew that he controlled the information and the situation.

But much to his dismay, we did not give up and go home like he wanted us to. Ah, ah, every time we went back, he looked more put out, like, like he was sucking on sour lemons or smelled something foul in the air. I mean, he was, quite frankly, openly disapproving of us. He told us that we were too different and finally, he dismissed us with an arrogant look! "Just go back to your own kind! You are young, poor, powerless and you don't even realize that I'm doing you a favor!"

(Sigh) Well, (pobres) We were poor; we had little money. (E jóvenes) We were young! Powerless? (Las caras vemos corazones no sabe) You see the faces but you do not know the hearts! His attitude only strengthened our determination - pulled us together! Facundo and I, we found our voices and our power! We did not give up; we went back to that embassy again and again until, at last, we found someone who would listen. Though I will admit, it did take months, a career ambassador, a 3-star general and a United States senator to finally resolve our case!

But we did get a visa and we did get married. Now maybe we were naïve, I don't know. I know as it was pointed out to us again and again, we looked different and we sounded different. We had different religions and we came from very different cultures and experiences. And (nunca sabes) you never know; there are no guarantees in life anyways. But I do know that we just celebrated our 35th wedding anniversary and, yeah, we're still happy! (Como dice el dicho) As the saying goes, "Look at the faces and see the hearts