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# MONTERREY
## 1929 to 1935

Since Tampico, in the state of Tamaulipas, continued to remain a disaster area for some time after the cyclone, the Mexican Red Cross finally moved the evacuees by train to the town of Monterrey, in the state of Nuevo Leon, some three hundred miles to the northwest. This was in 1929. José remembers the train ride well. During this period a revolt was in progress in the Huasteca area of Tamaulipas, with the Cristeros, those loyal to the church, fighting the Federalistas, those who hoped to eliminate the powerful influence of the Catholic church from Mexico. (The Federalistas eventually won.) All over the country, thousands of priests and nuns were captured and killed. From the train window, José could make out the Cristeros riding on horseback, carrying flags displaying

pictures of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and trailing clouds of dust from the thundering hoofs of their horses. He could see dozens of them galloping in the distance, shooting at the enemy. Machine guns were mounted above on the roof of the train, and soldiers armed with guns rode inside each car. That train ride was an experience that José never forgot.

Once in Monterrey, the family rented a room in a two-story building at Zaragoza 502, a very fancy corner of town. There, they opened their shop selling tobacco and candy. The building itself was plain, but the inside rooms were beautiful. José still recalls the wall of its main room, a wall made completely of onyx. The building was located near the Santa Catarina Canalon, a lovely canal which no longer exists today. (The nearby river has since been diverted in a different direction, and there is no longer a canal in the town.) At that time, however, this corner on the canal was an extremely popular gathering place. Boys and girls would teasingly throw confetti at each other there. People came to rent boats and to sail on the Santa Catarina Canal. In the store, Laib made his own seltzer water, which was very popular with the customers, and Rachel would prepare her own ice cream. In 1930, this store was among the first of its kind anywhere in the country but, later, others of its type became popular throughout Mexico. Their corner was regarded as the elegant and fashionable place in town to visit. Many distinguished people patronized the store, among them General Alvaro Obregon, who was then campaigning for election to become President of Mexico.

Another notable customer who came into the store, from time to time after performing in a theater nearby, was Agustin Lara, Mexico's famous and prolific composer. Agustin Lara has always remained José's favorite songwriter; Lara composed over two hundred songs, with lyrics of incredible beauty and imagery. On only one or two of his songs did he collaborate with anyone else, and then it was with his sister. In all of his other songs, Lara wrote both the words and the music himself. The melodies were unforgettably lovely, but it was the imagery and color of the words that were even more dazzling, romantic, and exquisite. The following lines, taken from one of Lara's songs, illustrate this:

"Son tus redes de plata,
Un encaje tan sutil,
Mariposas que duerman
En la noche de zafir,

Como brilla la luna
Sobre el lago de cristal
Asi brillan tus ojos
Cuando acaban de llorar"

In English, this reads as follows:

"Like nets of silver,
An embroidery ever so subtle,
Butterflies that slumber
In a night of sapphire—
How the moon shimmers
Over the crystal lake!
Thus glisten your eyes
When you have just finished weeping."

Among some of the best known songs by Lara are "Granada," "Valencia," "Noche de Ronda," and "Solamente Una Vez" (later made popular in English under the title of "You Belong to My Heart"). Other songs by Lara that José also adored were "Rosa," "Santa," "Señora Tentacion," "Solo Tu," "Talisman," "Mujer," "Caminante," and "Farolito."

Even as a child, José was filled with awe at finding himself in a situation where he could personally serve orangeade to Agustin Lara. This he did in his father's store in Monterrey and, although the only words that Lara ever spoke to

[1] The photo appeared in a large, beautiful book entitled *Imagenes de un Encuentro, La Presencia Judia en México Durante la Primera Mitad Del Siglo XX*. José happened to be looking through this volume immediately before sitting down to a seder dinner at the home of his friends from Mexico, Mario and Susana Rafalin, who now lived in Philadelphia. Suddenly he came upon Page 288, where he saw a photo that showed José's teacher at the Shul, José Vinietski (who usually wore glasses, although he was without them in this photo). In the picture, Vinietski is shown seated among his students and other faculty members. Directly behind him, in the next to the last row, is the child, José Rabinowitz (although his name is not mentioned on the page.) Above the group hangs a sign reading "Israelita Hatikva, School of Monterrey, 1932". (On a visit that he made to Mexico City in 1994, José was able, at last, to purchase his own copy of this book, but in a later edition.)

**José in European-style clothing.**

him were to order his drink, José never forgot the experience. He recalls Lara as a reserved man, skinny, and with a blotchy complexion. As a singer, Lara had a somewhat weak voice but, as a composer and lyricist, he remained unsurpassed. Of the many dozens of records, cassettes, and compact disks that José was later able to collect when living in Philadelphia, few had Lara's voice on them. In these few, Lara both introduced and performed his own work. However, most of the songs in José's large collection were performed by other singers with much better voices, and these songs make for an outstanding compilation.

José entered both Yiddish Shul and the first grade of public school in Monterrey. Many years later, in the year 1993 in Philadelphia, he was startled when he unexpectedly came upon a photo of his class from the Yiddish Shul of Monterrey.[1]

In public school, José was the only child in any of his classes who was neither Indian nor mestizo. His mother continued to dress him in the European fashion of white, girlish clothing, and she compounded the problems that this created by also refusing to cut his hair. He looked like a little girl, and all of his classmates made fun of him. No amount of pleading with Rachel could convince her to change either his attire or his hair style to conform with those of the other boys in his class.

One day, José finally took matters into his own hands. Conspiring with several of his classmates, he got them to chew gum and then paste wads of it onto his scalp. When he arrived home from school that day, there was nothing for Rachel to do but cut his hair short to get the gum out. After this, she finally relented, allowing him to wear short pants instead of the frilly little white petticoats in which she had previously dressed him. From that time on, José began to look more like a Mexican boy and, as such, he soon became fully accepted by his classmates, even though everyone, teachers and students alike, still continued to refer to him as *the Foreigner* or *the ruso* (*the Russian*).

José soon learned to defend himself physically from the rougher students in the school. As a young child, he was somewhat short in height but, even so, he managed to fight back adequately so that, when some of the other boys would occasionally pick fights and attack him, he was able to protect himself. Early on, he learned the code of peer behavior: never squeal on an offending classmate; always do your best work without publicly demonstrating too much academic accomplishment (especially when called upon to recite in class); always answer the teacher's questions succinctly, but without showing off.

A traumatic incident happened to him in Monterrey. When he was about seven years old and in second grade, he accompanied his mother, one day, to the home of one of her friends, an optometrist. In the yard, a dog (a spotted pit bull terrier) was chained to a tree. After the visit, when they had left the house and already walked for about a block or so, Rachel suddenly remembered that she had forgotten her sweater. She sent José back to fetch it from the optometrist's. Immediately after their departure, however, their host had unchained the pit bull, allowing him to roam loose about the enclosed yard. No sooner had José opened the gate and entered the yard than the dog attacked him. The snarling animal sprang at José and tore at his legs. The owner rushed forward, Rachel came running frantically and, between the two of them, they finally managed to pull José free from the vicious dog. It was a horrible and frightening experience. José's legs were badly torn, and they required many stitches. He had to be kept in bed for a week. To this day, he still bears scars just below the knees, with occasional slow blood circulation and a sensitivity to cold in that part of his body.

While José was recuperating from this accident, the newspapers in Monterrey made an announcement that the latest airplane, a Ford trimotor, would soon be arriving in town to give fifteen-minute sight-seeing trips over the city, courtesy of Chesterfield Cigarettes. To get the ride, one had to present a hundred wrappings from empty packs of Chesterfields. Laib began a campaign of buying these empty wrappers so that he could treat José to a plane ride. (José was then still recovering from the dog-attack.) Laib was eventually able to get two hundred of these wrappings by getting his customers to sell them back to him. As a result, when the plane finally arrived in Monterrey, Laib and José (now completely well) became the first pair of the lucky twenty-five passengers who could be accommodated on the Ford trimotor plane.

It was an unusual looking craft, with three uncovered engines in the front. Inside, the pilot and copilot both sat on a box several feet above the floor level, while all the passengers could watch them operate the controls, because there were no partitions anywhere in the whole interior. It was very exciting seeing the city from the air. José was the only child on board. When the plane finally landed after the flight, he gasped with excitement, and then vomited all over the people sitting around him. Despite this, however, he found it a thrilling experience to see

[2] José had had to leave for a lecture tour of Puerto Rico the day before Rachel's departure, and Josy, accompanied by their three children, her cousin Adek, and his daughter Barbara, all went to North Philadelphia Station with Rachel to see her off safely.

the city, and especially the mountains surrounding Monterrey, from an airplane.

After the incident involving the dog-bite, Rachel had vehemently insisted that the pit bull be put to sleep, but the owner continued to refuse. The two families never spoke to each other again. Rachel was a strong and resilient woman. She had, by now, suffered a great deal in her life. She had already endured many traumatic experiences: the shock when her mother's leg had to be amputated; the rejection inflicted by her family (both in dispatching her off to the Crimea as a young child, where she suffered a severe fall and a loss of memory, and in having her publicly flogged for breaking the Sabbath when she tutored); the pogroms in the Ukraine, during which she sometimes remained hidden, shuddering, under her grandmother's mattress while Cossack raiders roamed the house; her bout with typhus; her emigration to the strange, new world of Mexico, a culture so foreign to her own, and to which she slowly managed to adapt, but with great difficulty, fighting along the way a severe case of malaria and several bouts with intestinal worms; and, finally, the anguish that she had to endure upon the kidnapping and lengthy disappearance of her baby, José. From all of this, Rachel came to develop a resourcefulness and strength of will that never left her. The bitterness from all this suffering probably helped to account for the bizarre nature of some of her behavior. Rachel seemed to take pleasure in boasting repeatedly about how much she had suffered during her life. Sometimes she would weep into a towel as she spoke about her past experiences.

She could also be almost childlike in her extreme sensitivity. Once, after a visit to Philadelphia in 1963, for example, Rachel was waiting with Josy and her grandchildren[2] at North Philadelphia Railroad Station for the train which was to take her back to Washington State, where she now lived. Suddenly, without relating to anything in the preceding conversation, Rachel burst forth with a vehement directive for Josy.

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[3]Once, in the 1960's, and in the presence of several other people, Rachel approached her daughter-in-law, Sandy, towards whom she had always behaved coolly. (She never did approve of Sandy as the second wife of her younger son, Mario.) On this particular occasion, Rachel handed Sandy a small package and announced, with a broad smile, "I have a present for you!" Sandy was overjoyed. At last, she thought, she was finally winning her mother-in-law's favor. With anticipation, and in front of everyone, Sandy opened the package. Imagine her dismay when she found that it consisted of a tube of depilatory cream. Rachel brightly announced to everyone that, now, Sandy would be able to rid her legs of excessive hair, thanks to Rachel's inspiration and the gift.

"I want you to find a man for me – Beryl Feeh!" she ordered.

"Who is Beryl Feeh?" asked Josy, startled.

Rachel explained. Some thirty-seven years earlier, in 1926, she had brought José to Philadelphia for medical treatment and, while there, she had decided to look up a distant relative from the Ukraine. His name was Beryl Feeh and, she was told, he was now living in Philadelphia.

She now related how, on a snowy night, carrying the baby in her arms, she had at length managed to find the house of Beryl Feeh. Rachel knocked at the door and, through the curtained window, she could dimly make out the family, seated around a table, eating supper. A very old man soon came to the door. In Yiddish, Rachel identified herself. The old man agreed that, yes, he did come from her town in the Ukraine and that, indeed, he was her relative. Then, abruptly, he excused himself, explaining that the family was at dinner, and that this was not a convenient time for her to be calling. Without further ado he shut the door in her face, leaving Rachel standing alone outside in the snow with the baby in her arms. Now, in 1963, the hurt of this incident still festered in her memory, and she suddenly decided that now was the time to do something about it.

"But, what was his name, again?" asked Josy, not quite understanding.

"Beryl Feeh!" Rachel repeated impatiently.

"How do you spell it?"

"Feeh! Feeh!" Rachel's voice rose shrilly, without any further clarification.

"But do you at least know his address?" Josy continued. "Where did he live? In which neighborhood?"

Rachel was unable to remember.

"How can I find him, then?" asked Josy, "and what would be the purpose of looking him up now? Even if he should still happen to be alive, which is most unlikely, this is thirty-seven years later! What should I possibly do if I found him?"

"Tell him that I'm offended!" snapped Rachel.

Rachel always prided herself upon what she referred to as her own personal "honesty." Unfortunately, this often came through as blunt outspokenness, and it frequently offended others deeply.[3]

Rachel claimed, however, that, despite their professed objections, most people really wanted to know the truth about themselves, and that many of them would keep coming back to her for advice, knowing that they could trust her to cut to the core of a problem and never mince words with them. "I am so wise!"

she would sigh (modesty was never her way). "I can help everybody except myself." And then, again, she would begin to weep.

Through her intensely varied experiences, Rachel grew resourceful beyond belief. The adversity that she had encountered in a variety of locales and through a wide range of experiences, had taught Rachel to become exceedingly practical, ingenious, amazingly insightful and, sometimes, even cunning. She felt deeply, and sensed many things about others with amazing accuracy. Frequently, Rachel would arrive, almost instinctively, at conclusions which were acutely on target and minutely accurate. From these conclusions, she was often able to convert losing situations into winning ones. From almost nothing, she could build and turn things to her advantage.

She was constantly alert to opportunities and situations that enabled her to benefit from something on the spur of the moment. One summer evening, for example, a vendor selling watermelons came pushing his cart through Rachel's neighborhood. He refused to cut any of his melons, insisting on selling all of them whole. Rachel, unwilling to invest in an entire melon for her small family, approached a neighbor, suggesting that the two of them buy one melon together and share the cost. At first, the other woman remained cool to the idea. Rachel, however, went on to promise that, if the neighbor would pay for half of the melon, she, Rachel, would then explain how to serve it in three completely different ways. Intrigued, the neighbor finally agreed. Together, they paid for a whole watermelon, divided it into two parts, one for each family, and then Rachel kept her part of the bargain. The first way to use the melon, she demonstrated, working over her kitchen sink, was, of course, to serve it cut into slices or

**Rachel, José, and Laib at their store in Monterrey in 1930.**

chopped into cubes. A second way, she continued, while trimming off the outer green layer, was to split the white rind into chunks and save these for pickling. The third method, she then explained, would be to spread the melon seeds onto a flat pan, allow them to dry completely and, later, sprinkle these with salt for toasting in a warm oven so that the seeds could then be cracked open, shelled, and eaten as nuts.

Poverty and dire times had taught Rachel how to pinch pennies, to save everything without exception (no matter how trivial it seemed to be), and to waste nothing. She would find uses for things that others would generally throw away. Throughout her lifetime, Rachel would often hesitate to use articles that she already owned, storing them away for a later time when she might find a greater need for them. More often than not, the utility of many of these items had long since expired by the time Rachel got around to using them. (This happened, more than once with rolls of film, which turned out to be spoiled by the time she would finally put them into her camera.)

Throughout her lifetime, Rachel rarely permitted herself any luxury, whether it was a vacation or a material possession. The only exception that she ever made was when somebody else was bearing the cost. Once, in the 1940's, when José and Josy were visiting Vancouver (in Washington state, where Laib, Rachel, and twelve-year-old Mario now lived), they accompanied the family to a picnic given by the lumber company where Laib worked. At the end of an enormous meal served at outdoor tables, the crowd was invited to visit the dessert stand for ice cream. Even after everyone in the family had finished two portions apiece, protesting strongly that they were too full, Rachel kept urging them to go back for more.

"Eat it! Eat more!" she kept pressing, bringing back extra helpings herself to the picnic table. "It's all free! We don't have to pay for it!"

On another visit to Vancouver in the early 1980's, José wanted to treat Rachel to dinner in a fancy restaurant. He also wanted to invite the Ernie Weinberg family. (Ernie had been a post-doctoral fellow for José years earlier in Philadelphia and, since settling as a practicing dentist in Vancouver, he had been exceptionally attentive and kind to Rachel.) José wanted to show his appreciation by treating Ernie and his family to dinner at an extremely elegant restaurant. Knowing full well that Rachel had a vehement dislike of restaurants (she invariably refused to go, complaining about restaurant food, insisting that she could prepare the same items far better and cheaper), he resorted to a ruse. A couple of

days beforehand, he called Ernie, explaining the situation to him, and they agreed on the following plan. Ernie phoned back and, in an apparently spontaneous manner, issued an invitation for José and Rachel to be his personal guests at a restaurant. He clearly specified that the meal would be his treat. Hearing this, Rachel immediately accepted. The next day, the Weinbergs called at the house for Rachel and José, driving them to one of the most elegant restaurants in the area. There, they had a splendid dinner. Rachel ate heartily, appearing to enjoy herself enormously. Later, back at home after the Weinbergs had left, José asked her, "What did you think of the dinner?"

"Well, I could have cooked it much, much better myself!" Rachel replied. "And much cheaper, too, of course! But," and she nodded sagely, "since he was paying, and not you, the meal wasn't so bad!"

José and Josy concluded that Rachel's frugality probably stemmed from the periods of financial uncertainty earlier in her life, and that this excessive thriftiness must have given her a deeply-needed sense of security. Once, in 1952, on a visit that she made to José and Josy in Philadelphia, Rachel received there a package from Laib back home in Vancouver. It was tied with a piece of coarse yellow rope and, after the bundle had been unwrapped, Josy reached over to throw the rope away. Rachel stopped her. "Don't throw it out!" she admonished. "It can be used."

"How?" asked Josy, puzzled.

"Take your fingers, spread out the rope like this," Rachel answered, demonstrating, "and flatten it out as much as you can. Now you have a scouring pad to scrub dirty pots and pans!"

Rachel failed to accept that her family's income might be spent on anything other than the basic necessities of life. When José had been about nine or ten years old, he took what money he had earned from selling newspapers (and from occasionally shining shoes on the streets of Monterrey) to buy Rachel a bouquet of flowers for Mother's Day. He presented them to her proudly on the morning of the holiday, only to have her fly into a rage. She grabbed the bouquet from his hands, threw it into the trash, and upbraided him for having squandered money on something so frivolous.

"What should I have bought you, then, for Mother's Day?" he sobbed, tears streaming down his cheeks.

"Something practical!" she shouted. "Something I really need, like a new brassiere!"

Hers was a powerful and a complex nature, evoking strong reactions in everyone with whom she came into contact. No one ever remained indifferent to Rachel. Although she was a petite woman, not quite five feet tall in her platform-sole shoes, she nevertheless remained one to be reckoned with. She had great inner strength and an extremely powerful personality. Few challenges proved too difficult for her to take on and, in most cases, conquer. Rachel was a woman to admire intensely, once one could get past the unusual aspects of her behavior.

Laib, on the other hand, had a completely different type of personality. Remaining completely oblivious of his own classical good looks, which others openly admired, he was open, direct, and, in many senses, highly impractical. Laib was unable to hold on to money. Anyone who came to him with a sad story would receive, unasked, a donation. Laib would repeatedly walk into the house around dinner time, bringing with him, unannounced, guests he had never forewarned Rachel about. "Bring the wine!" he would call to her jovially, as she stood by, astounded.

One day, he and José left the house together to take a walk in the direction of the Indian market on the outskirts of Monterrey. Here, a poor, disheveled Indian woman got to talking to Laib. The woman told him that she was not well, and that her baby, too, was ill. Before long, Laib had given her almost all of the money he had with him. She, in turn, presented Laib with the two gigantic baskets (each about six feet high) filled to the brim with over-ripe strawberries. These she had been trying to sell all day. The baskets proved so heavy and bulky that Laib and José needed to pay someone to help cart them home.

When they finally entered the house, lugging the baskets after them, Rachel had just finished cleaning the kitchen. It had been a long, hot, and wearying day. Spotting the strawberries, she exploded. A huge fight broke out between her and Laib. Rachel shouted furiously, not only over the large amount of money that Laib had given away but, also, because of the enormous amount of work that salvaging the strawberries would now entail. They finally settled down to preparing immense batches of strawberry marmalade. José was sent out to buy a tremendous sack of sugar, and to rummage about for dozens and dozens of

[4] When José remembers how excessively fond Laib was of little girls, he becomes even sadder at the fact that Laib never got to see his own granddaughters. (Laib died suddenly in 1953, just three weeks before he was scheduled to take the train from his home in Washington State to Philadelphia. Here, he hoped to see, for the very first time, his own granddaughter, Malva. She was then sixteen months old, and his only grandchild at the time. But it was not to be.) His second granddaughter, Lois, born four months after his death, would be named for him.

Mason jars in which to place the finished product. They all worked for almost two full days and nights to complete the task of cooking and preserving the berries so that these could be used up before they completely rotted.

The family had strawberry jam for years to come, even taking some of it to other cities when they later moved out of Monterrey. In their store, everybody was served strawberry jam on top of their ice cream, whether they wanted any or not.

Laib was extremely fond of small children and, when it came to little girls, he would go wild with excitement and delight trying to amuse them. José remembers that once, when he was on a trolley car with his father, a woman seated across from them was holding a small, two-year-old girl on her lap. Laib started waving to the child and, as she smiled back, he began to make funny faces, clucking noises, and increasingly odd grimaces. He slowly built up his act to perform all sorts of pantomimes for her and, as he ended up squatting in the aisle, the child shrieked with laughter.[4]

Laib always remained a dreamer. He was somewhat naive, trusting almost everyone and, regardless of numerous disappointments in his life, he always remained an idealist. He was kind to an extreme, invariably taking up the causes of those whom he considered to be oppressed. Laib seldom anticipated that certain situations might turn into eventual problems for him, nor was he generally on the alert for circumstances that might prove to his own advantage. Rachel felt that she had to remain constantly on the lookout to protect Laib from becoming involved in what could later become troublesome for him. She always claimed that, because he was so much older, she used to acquiesce with most of the judgments that he made early in their marriage. Later, however, as she came to realize his vulnerability in practical matters, she often overrode his decisions and, by then, he would usually accept her judgments.

For a man with only a minimal amount of schooling, Laib advanced far in many respects, thanks to his insights, life experiences, and familiarity with several languages, as well as his acquaintance with an extraordinary variety of places and people. At various periods of his life, he gained positions of considerable power and prestige but, many times ill luck and forces beyond his control deprived him of what he had accomplished, and he had to begin all over again. Laib's kindness and enormous compassion inspired confidence in others, and he was loved by almost everyone he met. Unbidden, he would go out of his way to help whomever he could, even at a cost to his own benefit and security. Laib was

passionate about what he saw as inequities in the social structure. He always remained active in political and labor union matters and, frequently, he took personal risks for what he believed in. He wrote many articles in Yiddish which were printed in *Der Veg* and other Mexican-Jewish publications, and he always remained continually, sometimes even recklessly, outspoken about his beliefs.

The store that the family operated in Monterrey was partially supported by the Carta Blanca (Cuauhtemoc) Company. Carta Blanca controlled the beer concession in most of Monterrey. The company paid substantial fees to Laib and Rachel for advertising their beer with large signs. These signs appeared, not only in the store, but also up on the roof of their building. They had to be changed and updated every month.

Before long, a court battle ensued between Carta Blanca and its competitor, the Dos Equis Moctezuma Company. Dos Equis wanted a corner location from which to advertise and sell their own beer. Their representatives had, earlier, approached Laib, asking him to replace the Carta Blanca in his store with their own brand of beer (called "XX"). The Carta Blanca Company, however, convinced Laib to retain only their beer and their advertisements, insisting that he refuse and fight the Dos Equis offer.

The court battle that followed between the two companies grew extremely bitter. Even though Carta Blanca beer was produced locally in Monterrey, Dos Equis eventually won. The day after the court case was decided, José came home from school to confront an appalling spectacle, the shock of which he never forgot. Outside the store, strewn about on the pavement, lay all of the family's personal possessions. Furniture, pictures, papers, clothing, mattresses, and dishes were all lying about on the street. The Dos Equis Company representatives and their guards had forced their way inside the building, thrown everything out, removed the beer signs of its competitor, and moved in themselves, completely taking over the store.

It was a traumatic and agitating experience. A small private kindergarten, about half a block away, finally agreed to house the family for the next few days. Discouraged, Laib and Rachel decided, at last, to move out of Monterrey. Once more, they had to leave their home, their town, and their livelihood. This time, they would head for the city of Pachuca, in the state of Hidalgo. It was a distance of about five hundred miles to the south.

In the five years during which they had lived in Monterrey, José had done very well in his studies. His teacher suggested that he receive credit for the entire

fifth grade, even though the school year was still incomplete when he left. Rachel, a great believer in the value of a good education, decided to remain with José in


a boarding house for several weeks so that he could stay in Monterrey to take the required exams. José remembers, with immense gratitude, his mother's gesture and the impetus that it gave to his own sense of values regarding education. By

allowing Laib to set out alone several weeks before she and José would follow, Rachel succeeded, even though it meant both financial and personal sacrifice for the family, both in saving José a year of schooling, and in instilling in him a sense of how very much education was to be prized.

Before leaving without them, Laib had given José a gift (an erector set) and this, José played with incessantly during the time that he spent alone with his mother in Monterrey. He always continued to prize this gift from his father, and he remained ever impressed by his parents' dedication to his education and grateful for the efforts that they extended towards it on his behalf. This was how the family came to move to an area which was about one hundred miles northeast of Mexico City, to Pachuca, a town that had only one industry, silver mining. Here, they hoped to find brighter opportunities, a more serene way of life, and better luck.

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