

Spain Game & Fame (Could the diamond be hidden in Spain?)

Well, that was one gritty pitfall predicament, a complete sandy washout. I'm still picking sand granules out of my storage units. Yes, and, unfortunately, my fortune in Egyptian gold is currently *-un*. Not. It's sand that's scratching between my skin-roll shelves, not golden treasures. Left everything in almost-perfect pyramid position and got outta there. Besides, I'm after a diamond, not a lumpy trunk of gold. Must say, takes a lot of grit to let go of the gold and go after a diamond thief. But, I was swimming in Egyptian grit at the time. So... And, in case you're wondering how I managed to escape that sand-sucking scoundrel, the diamond thief; sorry, can't tell. Top secret. Let's just say it involved one mummy, one rope, a lot of belly dancing up a rock wall.

"Hello, hello there," I wave back to the friendly people who call out from an upstairs window.

"Buena suerte! La victoria es suya! Fantastico!" A group of people call out to me. Others hoot and holler as I pass, pumping their fists into the air. Wow, the people in Spain are so friendly; I wonder what they're saying to me. Good thing I'm a shrewd detective and remembered to bring my Spanish dictionary. Because I'm so adept, I am able to flip through the pages of my dictionary while tromping down the cobble-nobble stone street at the same time.

"Buena suerte! Buena suerte!" Onlookers continue to wave their red scarves and cheer to me as I pass.

Hmmm... *Buena suerte*...means... *good luck*. *La victoria es suya*...means... *victory is yours*. Oh my goodness; the people in Spain must know about me—the Great Detective Dilbert. They've figured out I'm going to locate the Hope Diamond. I had no idea I'm famous in Spain. Energy surges through my body; I feel great. My muscles are bulging; my head is high. I'm so tall; I'm a giant. (But I guess this means it's time for a new disguise. See, a real professional like myself doesn't let the glory go to his head.

He just remains fixated on the task at paw.)

I can see a group of people a couple of buildings ahead; they're leaning over the barrier that lines each side of the street, hooting at me. Well, I guess my fans are eager for my approach. Hey, barriers on each side of the street—people clapping and cheering as I pass. For crying out loud, I get what's going on. This is a parade and the main attraction—the only attraction—is me! *I thought I smelled admiration in the air*, I think to myself. Lifting my bionic nose, I wait for the readout that will soon print across my eyeballs. Here it comes... That's weird. It doesn't print the word *admiration* or the word *parade*; it prints... **Bull... SH...** (Well, I won't repeat the next word; let's just say it prints **fertilizer**.) I guess I better get my built-in printing system checked at the vet.

Cheerful music is drifting through the town. My fans keep waving their red handkerchiefs at me. Hmmm... Maybe I should sign a few autographs to show my appreciation. On the other hand, there are so many people. I could get stuck here for hours signing my name. Oh well, the life of a great detective is always full of sacrifice.
It's my duty.

I begin to cross to the side of the street where a group of detective wannabes are longing to meet me. I'm about halfway there when I see him. Does he think he's hidden

in that crowd? There's that rumpled trench coat and that lopsided hat. His stupid, fake mustache is starting to fall off. A creamy white substance is in the corners of his mouth. And then, our eyes meet. His beady eyes peer at me from under his hat's rim. I freeze in my tracks. Instantly, I lift my bionic nose, expecting my printer to work this time. It does. The words **cologne**, **apple**, **hay**, and **coconut** print across my eyeballs without a glitch.

Suddenly, a hand-held rocket blasts through the sky overhead, twisting this way and that. Then, a loud cheer rises into the air and engulfs the town. *Huh, I wonder what all the commotion is...*

My fans are now screaming at me. "Los toros! Los toros! Andalay, andalay! Arriba, arriba!"

Their faces look serious; their eyes are huge; their voices sound fiery. They seem upset. Why are my fans yelling at me? Don't they want me to catch the thief?

I try not to lose track of the perpetrator—even with the commotion. But they won't stop yelling. Now the thief is joining in. "Los toros! Andalay, andalay! Arriba, arriba!" Everyone has a crazed look in their eyes; it's as if they're angry as they shout. I'm not sure I like this parade after all.

All at once, an ineffable intensity permeates the surrounding air. There's a rumbling sound that seems to grow louder and louder by the second. I take my eyes off the devious suspect—you know, the guy with the fake mustache—to look up the word *andalay* in my Spanish dictionary. It means... *let's go*. Hmm... Why do my fans want me to go? They want me to leave? I don't get it. Without hesitation, I turn the pages of the dictionary to the word *toros*. It means... huh? Why are they yelling that word? The rumbling grows louder. I turn my head toward the noise. A tsunami of terrified men are bolting toward me. What's going on? Some of the men in the distance appear to be wearing weird hats that have horns sticking out. I peer a little closer. Wait! They're not horns on hats; they're horns on... BULLS! I turn and look the thief right in the eye...

"Aaaaaahhhhh!" I scream, looking right at the thief.

"Aaaaaahhhhh!!!" He screams in my face in return.

For the first time in my life, I'm frozen with shock. The bulls are massive beasts, each with the power of a hundred bulldozers. Terror fills the eyes of the men who are being pursued. Their mouths hang open; they stretch their legs as far as they will go, and they paddle the air with their arms, trying to go faster. But I—I can't move. Frozen stiff. This doesn't seem real. A runner on my left doesn't slow down as he approaches; he just shoves me to his right, getting me out of the way. Seconds later, another panic-driven man shoves me to his left and keeps running without even looking at me. The runners pass me by. Now, it's just me and the bull. It's seconds away, and I'm just standing there, stunned. Will I be flattened?

And then, the strangest thing happens; the thief tosses me a rope, a lasso. It's like he wants me to live or something. But I've never lassoed anything before in my life. Have you?