



The Story behind Simón

by CHAÉ

Simón was born from the loneliness and silence of homeless children on the streets of Colombia.

Based on my childhood experience, filled with curiosity to discover the world and at the same time sadness for the rejecting environment where I lived with my family and siblings. The children at school were cruel and abusive to me simply because I looked different from them in race and color.

But even though the bullying was severe, it wasn't a reason to run away from home to the cold streets of Medellín, Colombia. Then, I learned stories of other children who ran away from home due to violence and abandonment by their parents.

It was there that I met the sad, desolate, and hungry child wandering the city streets begging for food. Society calls these children "Gamines" and they are considered "disposable" children, as many call them, a derogatory indication that this child and human being has no value to society. When I settled with my family in Cartagena, I saw that this city also had homeless children on the streets. I thought for a moment that this only happened in large, cold cities, but I was wrong. The coastal cities of my country also have homeless children. Some are from the coast, but others travel from the cold cities to warmer places to protect themselves from the cold and seek new horizons.

However, the cold that hurts them the most is the coldness of the human heart, which doesn't hesitate to throw them out onto the streets outside their restaurants, hotels, or public places, especially where tourism and money predominate.

This is where Simón was inspired to express the voice of this child who suffers but also laughs in his poverty and revels in his freedom. For him, the street is his school, his home, his world, and his essence; there he is the king.

For the children who did have families, we partly wanted to imitate that sense of freedom of the homeless street children. When we were allowed to play outside, right in front of our house, we felt free too. Out on the street, our imaginations would run wild, creating the most intricate games, toys, and characters, all filled with wholesome fun.



The children in my neighborhood would play tag, pilgrim tag, or cooking, making a childish racket at every game. We would climb trees, play soccer in the rain with an old rag ball. The little boys would play with glass marbles, or climb inside an old truck tire and spin around inside it downhill with the joy and excitement of a bunch of kids from the neighboring houses.

Other times, some of these children would grab a bicycle tire and run after the rolling wheel activated by a tree branch. They also played horsey with a tree branch between their legs and a ribbon tied to the branch, imagining a real horse. Other times, we would compete with kites of all colors and extravagant tails to see which one could fly the highest. In short, all these experiences were the delights of our childhood, filled with wonderful dreams and fantasies of wanting to be Superman, or Bruce Lee, or simply the fireman, the policeman, or the Lone Ranger who wanted to help people, or perhaps Kaliman, the Incredible Man, a favorite comic book character for many.

For me, one of the comic books that entertained me the most until I reached puberty was called Fantasy, and it came from Mexico. It was the story of a white Dutch man and an African queen named Tuguela. The story took place in Southern Africa, with all kinds of intrigues and overflowing passions of the conquering white man over Africans and their culture. I never missed a Friday to get the latest edition. I dreamed of being Tuguela, a beautiful and powerful ebony woman who inspired many. But I never imagined how relevant that experience is in today's world.

How beautiful all those adventures and experiences were, as they helped us strengthen our interpersonal skills and develop our capacities and abilities to be the good men and women of today.

Simón is a call to reconnect with that inner child to reestablish our values and self-esteem in this current world full of existential emptiness, depression, and anguish, and driven by technology, materialism, and consumerism. Simón is a call to recognize who you are as a human being and the important and meaningful value this entails in the midst of a harsh society lacking in values.

Simón is a true, everyday story based on the adventures and experiences of children in my country, Colombia. I wrote it on a moonlit night perched on the roof of my house in Cartagena. This story took more than 30 years to come to light, through the magical notes of my guitar, the soft melody and the feeling of my voice, Simón brings to you the value of life and the value for people that begins with children, to then be the best men and women on the planet

