

The Devil's Troubadour

by Michael Parker

(Inspired by the motion picture, *The Wind Journeys* [Columbia, 2009], directed by *Ciro Guerra*)

The desert was thirsty. Its face, cracked and peeling. The wind's blast was hot, even the setting sun burned the horizon a brimstone red and stoked the land's furnace. The Devil's laugh was the screech of wind. Ignacio Carillo heard Him as he dug the grave that would hold the body of his beloved wife.

Ignacio knew misery was the harvest he sowed. He desired fame and women and got it making a deal with the troubadour who beat the Devil in a duel, winning His accordion. "I'll take your place so you can be free to live your life."

The Devil's troubadour agreed.

Ignacio traveled Colombia for ten years. Wherever Ignacio played, he was never want of food, drink, or women.

But in a small town, Ignacio found the woman he wanted to spend the rest of his life with. He vowed then he would never play again. And he didn't. The Devil, in his fury, took the life of Ignacio's wife. Devastated, Ignacio chose to return the cursed accordion to his mentor.

One morning, Ignacio left the town of his wife on a donkey and headed north to the shore of the Caribbean sea. After a half-day's ride, he sensed another presence. Turning the donkey around, Ignacio saw a young man following. "What do you want?" Ignacio bellowed.

“Are you the troubadour who plays the Devil's accordion?” the boy asked confidently.

Ignacio's heart grew heavy. Coincidence, he pondered. No, the Devil doesn't play that game.

