



Guardians Angels: To Light, To Guard, To Rule, To Guide

Carmen Mechikoff—the Mexican Taxi

Carmen grew up in a colony in Mexico with her parents, four sisters, and one brother. Her mother, Rosario, was a very intelligent, hard-working, and God-fearing woman. Carmen describes her mother's faith in God as amazing and remembers her as always reaching out to others in kindness and love. But her family was always Rosario's first priority.

As others saw him, Carmen's father was a friendly, outgoing man, well-liked in the community. When the family moved to the colony, he became friends—more accurately, "drinking buddies"—with the neighbors next door.

At home, Carmen's father was very demanding and often abusive, especially when he had been drinking. One day after drinking with the man next door, he came home after dark. There was a terrible row. Even now Carmen remembers hearing her mother scream and how she and the other children rushed in, trying to save their mother from serious injury. His anger spent, Carmen's father stormed out of the house into the darkness. He worked from 10:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M. at a filling station some distance away.

It was clear that life could not go on like this. Carmen's mother decided that now was the time to bring an end to the vicious cycle of violence in the home.

The best way, she thought, was to reason with the neighbor next door, so she went to the neighbor and told the man that it was not right for him to encourage her husband to drink. "Look what happened," she said, showing him some of the bruises she had received.

Instead of listening and being reasonable, the man next door became very upset. Angrily he said, "I'm going to go and get your husband. He'll know how to deal with you."

It was no idle threat. Carmen had often heard her father say that he never wanted his family to embarrass him in front of others. What went on in their house was to be kept a secret from everyone else. If anyone told, her father said, he would do something drastic to them. Now Carmen's mother had broken the code of silence. The enraged neighbor was on his way to her husband's place of work. Her husband would come home, Carmen's mother knew, and the earlier abuse would be mild compared with what would follow. She feared for her life.

Rosario rushed into their home. "Start packing!" she ordered the children. Turning to her teenage daughter and eleven-year-old son, she said, "Go out and try to find a taxi."

The children knew that the streets would be deserted, that it was unsafe to be out in the colony after dark, and that because of this there were no taxis, especially in the area of town where they lived. They could also see the desperation of their mother, and they knew how violent their father could be. Desperate times call for drastic measures. The two children did not argue. Going out on the dangerous streets seemed less of a risk than meeting their enraged father when he came home.

To their surprise they found a car with two young men waiting in the street. The strangers came into the home

and immediately took charge. No explanations were needed—the men knew what was needed without being told. They supervised the packing of clothing and helped carry things to the car. Everyone in the family listened to them and responded immediately. Feeling that they were being rescued, they gave their implicit trust to two people they had never before seen.

One of the men said, "Hurry! Hurry!"

Quickly the family rushed out to the car. "Hurry up!" the man insisted. "He's almost here."

They crammed into the car: mother, six children piled three-high on each other's laps, the two men and a cage with two birds wedged somewhere on top. The driver started the car and pulled quickly into the street. The family froze as they saw the vehicle with their father coming toward them. Instinctively they tried to hide, but there is no place to hide in a car filled with nine people. They saw their father, but he did not notice their car as it passed. Was it because he was not expecting his family to leave and thus paid no attention to a passing car? Or was it because he was so consumed with his anger? Or was it divine intervention?

They drove quite a distance in silence until they came to the house of one of Rosario's friends. In a few words the mother told her friend what had happened. "Come in, come in, you can stay here!" the friend invited.

The family tumbled out of the car, each one (except the baby) carrying in some of their belongings. The two men brought in what was left. Rosario turned to thank her benefactors, but they were not there. She hurried out the door. The car was not there, nor was it to be seen on the street. They had had no time to drive away, and Rosario could see the deserted street for some distance.

"It's strange," Carmen states as she recounts the story. "Our family was saved by two men, but we do not

remember what their faces looked like. All we can remember is that there was a kindness and love that radiated from their faces. We instinctively knew that we could trust them with our lives. When we were safe and had time to think, we asked several questions. How was it they were there waiting with a car? How did they know what needed to be done without being told? Why did we follow their directions without question? How could they know that my father was almost home? How could two men and a car disappear?"

Their mother, a woman of deep faith, knew the answer. "They were angels," she said. Carmen has never doubted her.

Joyce Talmachoff—Angels in Goblin Valley

Joyce enjoyed exploring new places with her motor home. On this day she had set out with her mother and her daughter, both named Mary, to see Goblin Valley, Utah. It was a beautiful day without a cloud in the sky.

The road into Goblin Valley was in poor repair. It was like driving on a washboard, and Joyce was concerned because the motor home was continually being jarred. Her mother, reading the map, said, "There is another road on the map. If you'd like to try it, I'm game, but it's up to you."

"Let's go for it," Joyce said. When she turned off, the road was smooth, but it soon became sandy. From time to time they crossed the dry creek beds and Joyce could feel the back of the motor home fishtail a little bit but not enough to be concerned about. It appeared to be a good, sandy road.

As they turned a corner next to a rock embankment crossing another dry creek bed, the motor home got stuck in the sand. Joyce was unable to get the motor