



Socorro is a young vivacious Mexican Detective who pushes on the limits of love and adventure. The story moves from drugs in St. Louis to the rescue of her brother cartured by the Mexican cartels. Socorro's emotions run high throughout.

Socorro

By Dan Feltham

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Socorro



DAN FELTHAM

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The Edge of Time, 2013

Terror in the Gulf, 2014

Trade Winds Calling, 2015 (Revised Edition)

Mexican Standoff, 2016 *

Sahara Sands, A Memoir, 2017

Copper Canyon, 2018 *

Egyptian Gold, and the Wages of Love, 2019

O'Taheiti Dreamin', 2020

Under the Southern Cross, 2021

* Precursors, with Socorro, to this Novel

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Chapter 1 – The Summons

When she entered Bud Phillip's 8th floor penthouse, Socorro looked around and was immediately impressed with the Hollywood style décor – bright colors - professionally designed - expensive. As she returned his welcome home kiss, Socorro looked past him through the condo's ocean view sliding glass doors.

“Wow! Oh Bud, c'mon. Show me where we are. Show me the view.”

They walked out onto the long balcony. Socorro spread her arms wide, inhaled the fresh Southern California ocean breeze, and exclaimed, “Oh my, it's fantastic. I love all those Queen Palms, the wide sandy beach and the sudden contrasting blue of the ocean. It's beautiful. Is that our Santa Catalina Island floating way out on the horizon?”

“The very same my dear – 26 miles from here according to the song. That thin gray bumpy line is where you and I first met, you and your yellow bikini. I remember, that suit was all you had – meeting you in Cat Harbor was probably the best surprise of my life. Since then you have been one surprise after another.”

“We do have some wonderful memories, don't we Bud?”

“Yes, and I want us to have many more, just you and me from now on.”

Socorro returned to Bud's arms to rekindle a few good memories. They held each other for long quiet minutes, Socorro relishing the view, the memories, the joy of Bud's

warmth and of being together on his turf instead of the deep canyons of northwest Mexico.

Socorro was accompanying her man to FBI field offices in St. Louis on a special project. Don't come without her they had told Bud. Socorro was looking forward to a new adventure as if she hadn't already had enough recent excitement. She wondered if she would ever change, if being married and someday having children would transform her to a stay at home, boring housewife. *Hopefully not; when that time comes I don't want to lose any of my enthusiasm for living life to the max.*

That night in bed after making love, Socorro whispered to her fiancée, "Mmmm, Bud, I like the looks of this Santa Monica. It seems like a great example of upscale Beach Town USA. I could live here, can we, are we?" But, she added to herself, *if not in Mexico.*

"It is yours if you want it sweetheart, or perhaps that little town in your country where you said you would help me write my book about all the good facets of Mexico."

"Ha. That might be a very short book; the idea of somewhere in Mexico suits me. I hope that will happen soon as a married couple. I'm tired of referring to you as my fiancée – it sounds so temporary, so very maybe-ish as an excuse to be sleeping together. I want you as my full time husband."

Several days later, the two lovers were overnighting at a hotel near Vale, Colorado, on the way east. They had driven I-

15 with an entertainment stop in Las Vegas and then the I-70 with another overnight stop high in the Rockies. They wanted more quality time together than they had shared recently. They were at early evening rest, sipping golden margaritas on a forest view veranda, spending more vacation time before driving on to St. Louis. Bud was reading a dog-eared Mickey Spillane novel – *I The Jury* - that had been left in the hotel room. Socorro was reading a two-day old lobby copy of Madrid Spain’s El Pais Daily News. Suddenly, Socorro broke into a combination of blubbery sobs and tears.

“Oh, Bud, nooooo, it cannot be!”

Socorro read the article to herself a second time – visibly shaken.

‘MEXICAN MILLIONAIRE KILLED IN PLANE CRASH.

Rancher, entrepreneur, rumored cartel drug baron and political activist, Don Carlos Hernan Guerra, is thought to have died instantly when a small charter aircraft, Paris to Madrid, crashed deep in the Pyrenees Mountains. Guerra was reported to be in route to Spain to see his wife and two children. Two charred bodies beyond identification were found in the wreckage. A reliable source, who preferred to remain anonymous, said that Guerra planned to ask for a divorce from his socialite wife. Friends said that he and his wife had been estranged for several years. It is not yet clear as to how his millions of pesos, cattle ranch and business interests in Mexico will be distributed, or whether at middle age there was another love interest. Spain’s Civil Guard is investigating. There will be no funeral.’ (AP).

Horror and dismay crashed down on her like a rogue ocean wave. The words ‘*died instantly, charred bodies, another love*’

reverberated in her mind. She read it a third time dissecting every word. *What could have gone wrong, he was always so in control?* She squeezed her eyelids shut as tight as she could, hoping in the darkness that the vision of a crash scene would go away. It didn't. The four magical days and nights with Carlos at Playa Las Tortugas on the coast of Nayarit, Mexico played through her mind, again. Her brain screamed and she thought she might get sick, *but no I can't, not here in front of Bud.*

“Oh, I'm so sorry, que terrible! Oh, Bud; I think perhaps he died because of me. It almost says so right here. He could have been such a good man. Bud, hold me.”

“What are you talking about? Let me see that.”

Bud embraced Socorro, and grabbed the newspaper from her shaking hands to read about the man that had become his sworn enemy.

The once spoken words, *'May we love as long as we live, live as long as we love,'* resounded through Socorro's mind. *Your life wasn't long enough Carlos. I will always remember you - forever.....* Socorro took the newspaper back from Bud, calmly tore the article out, folded it neatly, and stuck it in the pocket of her slacks. She forced herself to regain emotional control.

“Oh Bud, I am only 25 years of age. I have already experienced every human emotion I can think of – fear, excitement, danger, awe, wonder, sorrow to say nothing of lingering love. I know I have only scratched the surface of what I will feel through the rest of my days? I'll confess, even to

you, Carlos was part of several of those feelings; his memory will remain and grow old with me. I'm sorry."

Bud's only comment was a gruff, "Good riddance; he was wrong for you."

She pulled back from Bud's arms to glare into his eyes and then again tried to soften them.

"Please forgive me old friend. It is you that I truly love; it has been since we met at Catalina; I promise it always will be you. Kiss me."

But she couldn't forget those magical days and nights or even before as a kidnapped hostage at his mountain ranch where her strange fascination for such a dangerous man first began.

She wanted to read Madrid's El Pais Daily article again, and look between the lines for any room for error. Socorro excused herself to take a solitary nature walk along some aspen tree-lined mountain paths. She needed to calm herself. There in the darkening semi-wilderness she had herself a long cleansing cry. She unashamedly emptied her guts twice off the trail, but knew that some memories cannot be so easily purged. The days she and Carlos had spent at the beach might never be forgotten. She thought to herself, *why should they?* Not so long ago the cartel boss had possessed her mind, her heart and her body. Now in the forest, she pledged herself to tuck those memories away and try to think no more about him. She had Bud.

Chapter 2 – St. Louis

From the Rockies, down through Denver, across the Great Plains of Kansas – was almost a straight line. The blue, cloudless sky stuck with them and stretched to infinity. For Socorro the trip across the western United States was a wondrous experience. She marveled at all the farms and the miles of wheat, and not a mountain or a bump of a hill in sight. They drove at a constant 80, top down, music wailing. After 530 something miles, they stopped at a Holiday Inn just off the freeway in Salina and spent much of the time playing in bed trying to rekindle possible lost flames. They were partially successful. The following day they pulled into St. Louis.

By the time Bud and Socorro arrived at the entrance of the Hilton Hotel at the Arch, Socorro had recovered from the immediate shock of Guerra's death - the older and very wealthy cartel boss had declared his love and she had, at the time, declared with equal certainty her love back to him. She told her fiancée that Guerra's memory was now in her regrettable past, that it was probably the man's own damn fault for crashing his plane into Spain's Pyrenees Mountains.

Socorro could see hurt in the age lines of Bud's face – lines from war and worry – as he said. “Let's not talk about it any more, okay? You know how pissed I get at the mere mention of his name and much more so when my imagination gets to thinkin' about that rogue with you in bed together. I don't like sharing - anything!”

“So it is okay for you men, but not for us gals?” (Long Silence.) “Okay Honey, yes, let’s drop it? Please! Know that I’m totally over him, and so should you be the same.” *I didn’t know that these older men can still be so sensitive. How do they think we get the experience they want?*

“I’ll try Socorro, but you think that is easy now that he is dead and I’m the leftover.”

“Well, at some point in time we are all leftovers; get over it. I’m here; don’t be jealous of the past. I’m sure not going to fly to Spain and cry over his bones. But I do keep thinking about my brother Sonny down in Copper Canyon living like a stone-age monk. Remember that Carlos helped us locate him. We at least owe him thanks for that.”

The only thanks I owe is that he is dead. May his bones rot in hell, thought Bud trying to quell a rise in temper and coldly said. “Don’t try to justify what you did.”

While they waited for a parking attendant, Bud tried to keep it light. “Socorro, let’s not argue. I’ll check us in then maybe we can relax, but don’t unpack. We need to find out what the FBI has planned for us. I doubt they’ll want to foot the Hilton’s bill for very long. I already padded my expenses more than I should have down in Mexico.”

Socorro retrieved a laugh. “Yeah, I wondered about that; we were living pretty comfortable in Nuevo Vallarta except for those free days in the canyons.”

At the reservation desk Bud asked for a king suite on the second floor facing Market Street. Socorro knew of his personal rule about ‘No higher than a hotel’s second floor’. She

knew that in case of fire, one could always jump and maybe walk away. She wondered about his penthouse where *I guess view trumped safety?*

“Nice to have you back sir.”

“Thanks Rodney, nice to be here.”

At the door to Room 2008, Bud kissed Socorro and asked, “May I carry you across the threshold my princess?”

“I’d love that, but let’s wait ‘til when we are legal some future day in Ensenada. I want to be carried across a threshold just once in my life. But, c’mon, let’s test the bed.”

Socorro walked over, lay down, yawned, and stretched her limbs. “This will do us just fine. C’mere you big lug.”

She sounded a low lioness like growl and beckoned to her man, all thoughts of her past romance gone, or why they were there.

“Yeah, I sure would like, but don’t get too comfy. I need to call our contact. One of my many bosses is expecting us this afternoon.”

As he eyed Socorro’s invitation, Bud keyed in the St. Louis FBI offices on his cell phone. He was transferred to Special Agent Richard ‘Rick’ Myers, newly appointed FBI Director of Narcotics.

“Where ya been Phillips? You’re holding up the works here.”

“Sorry bout that. We are in town Myers, just now checked into the old Hilton.”

“I hope that ‘we’ includes Señorita Castillo; if it does, get your buns down here ASAP. If it doesn’t, go back and get her.”

“Yes sir, she’s with me; we’ll be there in thirty minutes.”

“Second floor conference room!” Oh, and Phillips – you in the Hilton’s penthouse?”

“No sir.”

“Good.”

Click.

Socorro had roused herself and was freshening up in the bathroom, brushing road dust out of her almost waist length coal black hair.

“Com’on, we gotta go, you look fine. *You always look fine.* “There’s no time for a rest or anything else. They want us there as close to now as possible.”

“Okay, give me a few more minutes. I think I’ll wear my new fawn-skin pantsuit if it’s not too wrinkled. That should look business-like enough.”

She knew it would also show off her curves in a way that any man would notice, even an FBI Field office director. Her goal was not to attract, but instead to distract. She had found that distracted men tend to provide more information and detail than they intended, and Socorro was an expert at extracting information in her subtly seductive way.

“Hurry it up Babe.”

“Okay, okay, okay. Don’t push. You should know by now that we women don’t like being hurried and sometimes take pride in being a little bit extra late. You said that I’m the guest.”

Bud threw a Navy-blue jacket over his flowered Hawaiian shirt and grey slacks, then replaced worn Mexican huaraches with his black dress shoes, no socks.

“You look like a Hawaiian 5-0 TV cop,” said Socorro walking out of the bathroom finally dressed.

Dan Feltham

“You look like the beginning of a wet dream,” he countered.
They went out the door arm in arm - again both happy.

About the Author

Dan Feltham is retired and living the quiet life in Southern California with his loving wife, Erika. He was born in Long Beach CA in 1934. He is a graduate Geologist of Stanford University with further studies at UCLA. After living three years in North Africa in petroleum exploration, he switched disciplines and pursued an extensive career with the IBM Corporation doing what he prefers to call ‘problem solving’ with systems, marketing and people management including several years each in Hawaii, Southeast Asia, Saudi Arabia and Southern California. He has enjoyed international travel and also owned and raced sailboats most of his life. Dan is the author of twelve e-Pub adventure novels, *Trade Winds Calling*, *The Catalina Connection*, *Mount Rushmore’s Legacy*, *The Edge of Time*, a San Diego County award winner - *Terror in the Gulf*, then *Mexican Standoff*, *Sahara Sands* a Memoir, *Copper Canyon*, *Egyptian Gold*, *O’Taheiti Dreamin’* and *Under the Southern Cross*. As background material for sailing episodes within a few of his books, Dan can refer to bareboat sailing charters in Caribbean, Mexican, Hawaiian, Tahitian and Fijian waters, extensive cruising and racing including the 1976 Olympic Qualifying Trials and three TransPacific yacht races to Hawaii. Dan also self published a non-fiction account of his personal Vietnam War experiences entitled, *When Big Blue Went To War, the History of the IBM Corporation’s Mission in Southeast Asia During the Vietnam War*. The book has been praised by many as a one-of-a-kind close look at war from the

Dan Feltham

civilian contractor's personal point of view while living within the war zone. It describes a life changing experience for Dan and his Band of IBM Brothers. Dan can be reached via e-mail at danfeltham77@gmail.com.



Dan Feltham – “WELCOME ABOARD”



Socorro is a young vivacious Mexican Detective who pushes on the limits of love and adventure. The story moves from drugs in St. Louis to the rescue of her brother cartured by the Mexican cartels. Socorro's emotions run high throughout.

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