

Twins' Luck

Mateo's apartment was on the second floor of the building, over the bakery. The house always smelled of sugar and vanilla, even though his mother cooked spicy foods at home, like **asopao**¹ and **mofongo**².

Mateo was ten and had a twin brother named Marcos. They did not look much alike. Marcos was short, with wide hands and thin hair, like an old man. He couldn't speak and could walk only by dragging his left foot behind him. He never got far. When they went out, he used a wheelchair.

Some days, while he was getting ready for school and while his father and mother were getting Marcos ready for the day, Mateo wondered what it would be like to be Marcos. They would bathe him and dress him. They would put him in a soft chair in front of the television. Then his father would leave for work and his mother would feed him a soft-boiled egg or a bowl of corn mush. She would put a bell at his side in case he needed anything. All his needs would be taken care of by someone else.

Mateo wondered how the two of them, who started out together, had wound up so different. Was it luck? Why wasn't life fair? When he was younger, he thought that Marcos was the lucky one, getting so much attention when *he* had to do things for himself. Mateo's parents never seemed to have time for him. Mateo never got to stay home and watch cartoons all day. Then one day, it hit him. The idea surprised him because he couldn't see how he hadn't realized it before. Marcos wasn't as lucky as Mateo thought.

¹ **asopao**: a type of rice soup

² **mofongo**: a food made with meat and fried plantain (a banana-like food)