

Figeroa's Journey

By Natalie Ochoa

Figeroa woke up sweating on a warm winter morning. He had a nightmare—a bad one. He dreamed he was accused of killing a man and shooting him with a firearm. How evil.

He rose from his bed and began preparing for the day. He cleaned his shoes, brushed his teeth, and ensured he looked presentable. Figeroa was gay.

He preferred men, something he had always known about himself. Despite this, he was a very clean and polite person, traits he likely inherited from his father.

At the time, being openly gay was still not widely understood. Many people saw it as a social issue, something to be debated or ridiculed. Some even dismissed it as absurd.

Inside, Figeroa struggled. He didn't want to be gay. He wasn't into Judaism or rap music, and he was drifting further away from religion. It was a time when the demand for cheap labor and poor working conditions was beginning to push hardworking, honest men out of their jobs.

My faith had been tested before, but I wanted to trust Figeroa.

I had known him all my life, and I couldn't believe he was changing so drastically. If he stayed gay, he wouldn't be accepted at church, and that worried me.

I prayed a lot, believing in angels and divine guidance.

Despite my beliefs, I decided to stand by Figeroa. I struggled with my own doubts, as I believed being gay was wrong, but I couldn't abandon my friend.

Life was tough for him. People often gave him judgmental looks, and being around him was always challenging.

Even so, I kept reading the Bible and praying. Figeroa was always in my prayers.

Later, he joined the church and took inventory of his personal battles. He confided in me that he saw his struggles as a war—a fight against evil men who had put his home into debt.

He became a strong man and, eventually, no longer identified as gay.

God helped him see through the fog and overcome his insecurities.

He inspired me to become a better person.

He was also pretty good in bed.