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# DEAD MAN'S GUIDE TO MALLORCA

*William Eastlake*

"During the Spanish Civil War," Dr. Villanueva told us on the terrace of the Hotel Londres, "the Italians, Mussolini, took this Loyalist island, Mallorca, for Mr. Franco. We are not far from the Spanish mainland here, about forty miles. It was an excellent base from which to bomb the Loyalist government at Barcelona, and this the Italians did every morning with big Savoia Marchetti bombers. The Marchettis had three engines. They were very powerful and always quite low when they flew over my house. I could see the pilots' faces. But the bombing was a small part of it. It was the terror that was the thing. While the Italian military was in charge it was not so bad, but then Mussolini sent his own man from the Fascist Party. He was a Black Shirt Party man called Rossi. That began the terror. Every night there were at least fifteen killings. The Italians would cover the countryside in trucks, kicking in doors, take the whole family sometimes, kill them near the cemetery so they could be buried easily in the morning. Every afternoon Rossi would drive crazy through Palma in an open Lancia. He always had a general on one side of him and a priest on the other. I guess the priest was to legitimize his moral insanity. Rossi was always putting generals in prison, so each time he drove through Palma he had a different Italian general. The priest's name was Cadello. I knew him; he was a Franciscan. The order wears brown robes and these were always trailing out from the Lancia. Rossi had Father Cadello shot before Rossi returned to Italy. From this terrace you could watch the prison ships at night; Rossi had them all lit up. The prisoners were not fed and most died. The bodies would float in to the beach here in the morning but the families did not dare claim them.

"Yes," Dr. Villanueva said. "Yes. While we were bombing the government of Barcelona—. Because I am alive I say we bombed them, but what could we do?" Dr. Villanueva opened wide his hand and looked out again in the direction of Barcelona. "I think this is typical," he said. "The government anarchists in Barcelona held the telephone exchange and when the President of the Republic called the Prime

Minister of the Republic and they had been talking for five minutes the anarchist's voice from the telephone exchange interrupted them. 'Listen,' he said. 'You are boring us. We are no longer interested in your talk. Stop boring us and hang up!' The Prime Minister and the President hung up." Dr. Villanueva ran his delicate fingers along his heavy chair. "That," he said, "is what we were bombing. But we should not talk about this now," he said.

"You brought it up," I said.

"Yes," Dr. Villanueva said. "But we are supposed to be gay, care-free Spaniards. You notice we always sing while we work. It is not that we are forbidden to talk about this. We are discouraged but not forbidden to talk about this. I suppose it is a medical thing, a psychosis, a block, that has affected a whole people. We cannot yet talk about it because we cannot free ourselves from our past. It is only when we can talk about it that we will be a people again."

"But certainly among yourselves—"

"I believe very little," Dr. Villanueva said. "They have not found a way yet that it can be discussed without opening up ugly wounds in the mind. That hurts very much," Dr. Villanueva said. "It is not a Spanish problem, it is a human problem." Dr. Villanueva looked at his watch. "But I have talked enough about it. That is all the therapy I will have for today."

We had met Dr. Villanueva the second day we were on Mallorca. Martha was still suffering from something she caught at Casablanca and the Hotel Londres had given us Dr. Villanueva's address. He said that almost everyone caught this at Casablanca and he gave her a pill. He wanted to talk in English. He said his therapy had not reached the point where he could talk about Spain in Spanish. When he learned I was a writer he was curious about that. He said, "Our writers write about nothing." And he said, "What is there to write about?" He said, "When people have no past how can they have a future? You can have a kind of present," he said. "You can sing, talk about the weather and the bull fights. That's about it," Dr. Villanueva said. "Did you know that I too was a Fascist?" This had come out quickly and I figured he had been planning it for quite a while. He had wanted to get it off his chest. There was no proper way to say it so he had blurted it out.

"I was very young then," Dr. Villanueva said. "Now I do not know what I am. The easiest thing to say in Spain is that you are a Monarchist. You will hear that frequently on the mainland, but what does that mean in this day and age? It means nothing. It means I do not

think. It means I refuse to think." He paused. "Yes, death is the goal of life," he said. And then he said, "I do not tell you about all this because you are a writer but because you are a foreign person. What will you write about? Nothing happens on Mallorca. What will you write about? I can tell you where to go and what and who to see, but what will you write about?"

"I don't know," I said.

"Later you will know," he said. "And your Martha? She is your collaborator?"

"More than that," I said. "Much more. She does the spelling and the typing."

"Pobre Marta," Dr. Villaneuva said. "Pobre Marta brava." He paused again, staring blankly at the end of his cigarette. "Something did happen once upon a time. But we must not think about it. I refuse to think."

Poor brave Martha and I left Dr. Villanueva who was still refusing to think and rented a car to take a drive around the island. The car rents for two hundred and thirty pesetas, about five dollars, plus gas, but with unlimited mileage. They are Seat 600s with a water-cooled engine in the rear, about 35 horse-power, but as an Englishman told me, "They are nippy," and they are excellent for the narrow roads of Mallorca with hairpin turns in the mountains.

Speaking of the English, they have taken over Mallorca. Having quit all the colonies they have founded a redoubt here in a part of Palma called Torrena beneath a Fourteenth Century castle. Their fortress is the Gran Hotel Bretaña. The first impression you get of the British is that they are insensitive and arrogant. Yesterday there was an English lady on the terrasse of the Gran Bretaña that overlooks the harbor in the direction of Ibiza. She was complaining about the weak tea to a Mallorcan official who was trying to explain to her that now, after six months, her visa would have to be renewed, and between complaints about the weak tea she kept repeating in a strict voice, "No, no. I haven't the time. This will cause Spain trouble. Very much trouble. You will be punished for this. Oh, yes, the Spanish will be punished," she said, waving her long arm vaguely in the direction of Gibraltar.

I said the British arrogance and insensitiveness is the first impression, but the big thing is they have a sense of humor about themselves. Not a humor directed cruelly at other people, but a humor about themselves. There will always be a duchess on the terrasse waving the Spanish government vaguely toward Gibraltar, but the duchess will give you a wink when she does it. "Oh, I may be a bit of a fool, but I am enjoying

it very much thank you. Americans, I believe? Strange people. Strange people, the Americans."

We swept past the duchess now, bounced past the duchess in our Seat and made it out of town towards Inca on the Via Puerta road. We were going to Puerta de Pollensa near the Cabo Formentor to a pension on the beach run by a Señora Tarrogona that the doctor had recommended. The island is about forty-five miles long and thirty miles wide. We were going down the length, down the spine of the mountains along the west coast. We went through a town called Valdemosa and Martha asked me why we didn't stop. "The glass factory," she said.

So we went back and saw the glass factory. It was a dungeon in a medieval setting, emitting a tall pillar of smoke and filming up, shooting out myriad stars of light from a molten crucible surrounded by small boy workers, children in the brilliant light, each gathering a ball of molten glass at the end of a sword stick and bearing it away like a giant lollipop to the maestro who gathered it and blew it, at the end of a pipe he played, into a shimmering globe of light. Now he kneaded it on the anvil into a vinegar carafe with quick Cellini movements while the child went back to the crucible and returned bearing more glittering taffy. This was dropped by the Maestro, a thin stem of it, on each side of the carafe making the point of contact hot enough, weak enough, so that when he blew into his carafe again a hole appeared into the stems. More blowing and they became tear-shaped and hollow, then he waited long seconds until they were brittle and clipped them off with a knock on the anvil, and he had an oil or vinegar carafe fit for the Borgias, selling for two hundred pesetas—three dollars and eighty cents; more than the children got each day, more than the maestro. In the half hour we were there the children and the maestro made six of them.

"But there are difficulties and expenses," the dueño, the owner, told us. He was standing amidst the shattered coca cola bottles his art was made of. "Then too," he said, "something of quality does not always sell."

We bought one of them to show him that they sometimes did, and made our way back to the Seat through the crowd of children bearing more baked red apples of glass on sticks.

When we got back to the Seat Martha said, "While we're in Valdemosa we should go and see the monastery where George Sand and Chopin lived."

"Do you think you can make it?" I said. "Chopin lived there and said it was cold and dank and the roof leaked. Do you feel up to it?"

"I don't feel up to it but I can make it," Poor Brave Martha said.

I had always imagined a forlorn ancient pile of rocks on a lonely mountain side. The monastery stood alongside the church and was right in town. There was a narrow road that swept around the mountain and up to an escarpment where the monastery was. It was the same trail that George Sand had got Chopin's piano up when he complained about the lack of this instrument. She tried to fix the roof when he complained about that, and did her best to get some heat when he complained about the cold. When he complained about her cigar butts in the bedroom she just threw rocks at him. Anyway, that's the way the story goes that brings the visitors here. There are so many romantic legends, so many spiritual myths that Valdemosa has decided to go with a tough one, so they had it that George Sand conned Chopin into coming down here under the pretext it would cure his T.B., that it was a beautiful warm monastery in the sun where the peasants danced all night and the burros were so sweet they melted at a touch. She hadn't mentioned a leaky roof or her cigar butts and when Chopin wanted out there was no boat so he spent his lonely hours in a wistful vigil on the turret tower of the monastery watching for a sail that would take him back to Paris, but there was only the distant pillar of smoke moving up the mountainside of Valdemosa as George Sand made her way back to the bedroom with a Corona-Corona.

The interior of the monastery was a magnificent sight, vast vaulting corridors, noble and endless, running off fountain and Arabic-tiled patios, a riot of mosaic. The fountains were working now. They hadn't been when Chopin was there. He had complained about that too. Off the Gothic fluted corridors were the rooms where the lovers had dwelt, opening out on magic casements and the distant sea. Each room had a guide dressed in silk medieval costume to tell you what happened there. There hadn't been any medieval costumes in 1840 when the lovers were here but it looked good. The first room we went into was a study that kept all the books that George Sand had written. The guide was looking out the magic casements, a young girl in a red turban picking her nose and blowing a bubble with bubble gum that was already as big as the window. We left before it burst. We went into the room where all the trouble had begun, the reason for the trip, the failure, the success, the gossip, the Champs de Mars, the bedroom. The room was pristine, tidy, impeccable, with all the cigar ash tidied up.

"It shows you what a hundred years can do," Poor Brave Martha said.

A child guide was asleep on the bed, her moccasin shoes out of J. C.

Penney soiling the counterpane. She will hear from Chopin about this, not George. Evidently George Sand would take anything.

We were out in the vaulted hall again. George Sand had exquisite taste in monasteries and perhaps in lovers too. We would never know. It would be the big secret the ruins never revealed. On the way out the child who had blown herself up with the bubble gum was waiting for a tip. She had a Walt Disney Donald Duck watch on her wrist as she extended her olive hand. I gave her a duro, five pesetas, and we were off in a cloud of children who had come running, but too late, when they discovered there were Americans. My last view, my last memory was the child guide blowing another huge bubble into which the ghost of Chopin stepped, then exploded in a cloud of smoke.

Poor Brave Martha had stood up well. When she closed the door of the Seat it came off, but on our trip to Deya she held the whole car together with her will power. Deya is the town of poets. Robert Graves lives here and a cult, a covey, of poets has settled in the foothills. Deya clings to the sides of precipitous rock-strewn, uninteresting hills and the only inspiration you could get is the thought of getting out. For local color there is a gas station from which it is impossible to get gas if another car is coming down the cliff. We found this out and decided to try to make it to Pollensa before we filled up. My memory of Deya is not good but it must be a fine place for poets.

Before we got to Pollensa we ran out of gas and Poor Brave Martha got out and pushed. "If you can just make it up that rise," I said, "just one more little rise and we can sail into Pollensa. It's all down hill." But it was an optical illusion. When finally we did get going into Pollensa and Martha was inside with the Seat door on her lap she said she was beat. "Now I know how Chopin felt," she said.

There was a gas station before we got to Pollensa. It was on a slight rise but we swept up to it and got to the pump using gravity. I went inside and had an anise. Poor Brave Martha had a Pepsi Cola. I asked her how it was. After the first sip she said it was better than anywhere else. "It may be that it was just a good year," I said. "It probably doesn't ship well."

The owner came in now with a friend who had a dog. The man with the dog said the dog was very intelligent and could understand six languages. The man ordered a cup of coffee and gave one of his two sugars to the dog. I thought the dog took the sugar very intelligently. I told the man with the dog that out here in the hills was probably not a good place for a precocious dog. In the city there would be more opportu-

nities, I said. The owner of the station felt out of it and he brought out a bird in a cage that he said was very intelligent. It was a mountain thrush and he said it was more intelligent than any dog. I thought the dog owner took this well. Martha took some more of the Pepsi Cola and couldn't make up her mind. "The mountain thrush," I said. "How many languages does he speak?"

"None," the bird owner said. "Why should he bother?"

"That's very intelligent of him," I said. "He's probably an Existentialist bird."

"What else?" the bird owner said.

"Or something worse," the dog owner said, fighting back for the first time. Poor Brave Martha took another sip of the Pepsi Cola and said she was going to be sick. The dog owner insisted we go up on the roof and see the ocean five miles away. "In the other direction you can see the poets," he said. "And the house of George Sand and the man who played the piano. But that was a long time ago," he said with a sigh, as though there were no need for us to go on the roof.

"But the poets are still there I think," the bird owner said.

Poor Brave Martha was picking up the door of the Seat when we got out, and arranging it on the side of the car. "I'm warning you," she said as we swept down the hills to Pollensa. "Don't run out of gas again. That's the last time I'll push."

"Which was the best," I said, "the dog or the bird?"

"The Pepsi Cola," she said. "It ships better than you think."

The Puerta de Pollensa is a miniature harbor that lies just below the break in the mountains. Cola San Vicente and the Pension Ultimo of Señora Tarragona, according to Dr. Villanueva, was somewhere close. "Muy cerca." We found it at the bottom of a granite canyon just off the harbor. It had a private white beach that shimmered from way up. Poor Brave Martha didn't want to go down. "Can the car get back up?" she said.

The Pension Ultimo had twelve rooms on two levels. The Señora Tarragona had her own apartment on the beach level where we were sitting now while she was talking.

"So Dr. Villanueva sent you?" she said. "He's always doing that. Even in the off season. He must know I am closed now, but he wants to remind me."

"Remind you of what?"

"That he still has his guilt," she said. "He told you about the war, didn't he? He calls it a catharsis therapy, but it is his obsession. How far



did he get?" she said. "Did he get to the part where they drove through Palma in the Lancia? And where they threw the bodies near the cemetery?"

"Yes."

"He is going through his phase of morbid melancholia again," the Señora Tarragona said. "He speaks of that time as the moral insanity of the world." The señora touched her pointed chin with her long fingers and looked at us to see if we were worthy. "He was part of it you know," she said. "He was in that Lancia too. He will tell you that later. He will tell you all about his moral insanity later. He must have told you about the prison ships with the search lights on them at night. That was my home during the war," she said. "That's why he sends me customers now. This obsessive guilt, then morbid melancholia. It would have been easier for him if his side had lost. Then he could have been punished. But his side won and nobody punished him. Even after the Second World War he expected the Americans to land and to punish him. When you called on him about your wife he must have thought you had come for that reason. You disappointed him," she said. "And because no one has punished him he has decided to punish himself. The next time you see him he will tell you the part he played. He is working up to his catharsis. He is about to punish himself again. Moral insanity is his favorite word when he enters his phase of morbid melancholia."

"You must have studied medicine," I said.

"Before the war, before Dr. Villanueva's moral insanity, I was a doctor too," she said.

Señora Tarragona had a long, dusty, olive face with huge eyes under too delicate eyebrows that swept back and gave her a kind of tragicomic look. She sat stiffly and delicately as though fragile and a sudden movement would break her.

"That is why he sends me customers," she said. "Because he can no longer send me patients."

I gathered that Dr. Villanueva had ruined her, destroyed her as a doctor when he was powerful, his moral insanity, but I did not want to push it and I changed the subject.

"Is there some place else you can recommend?" I said.

"This side of the island is no good," she said. "There are prevailing winds here all winter. Why don't you go to Madrid and see the Prado?"

"Martha would like to get some sketching in and I thought I would work here a while," I said. "Get some writing done."

"Before you can write," she said, "you should have something to

write about. Go to Madrid and see the Prado. And do not be overwhelmed by Goya," she said to Martha, placing a long finger at her temple and staring at us intently. "Goya always overwhelms everyone at first. You have to learn to live with Goya. Ten, twenty years and then he does not overwhelm you and you can appreciate Goya. You can always appreciate El Greco. Velasquez takes more work, but he is worth it. When you come back to Goya, when he no longer overwhelms you, then you can appreciate his subtleties, his tremendous color, his impeccable sense of form and organization. You can shorten this period somewhat," she said, "by turning a Goya upside down."

When we left Señora Tarragona's pension the Seat 600 made it up the cliff okay that Martha had been concerned about.

"It doesn't have much power, but it has four gears," I said as we made our way toward Puerta de Soller for lunch. To get to Puerta de Soller you have to drive inland again and go back through the Monasterio Lluch and Fornalutx, through incredibly steep splendid mountains and switchbacks where you have to come to a dead stop and you can see all the way to Ibiza. Puerta de Soller is another natural harbor that the sea has cut out of the rocks. It is about two miles wide, a dark, deep, indigo blue all the way from Sa Calobra where the light house is, over to the esplanade where we sat in a broad outdoor sidewalk cafe after Martha got some Bisontes from a corner kiosca shaped like a castle. Martha asked the waiter for the mapa. After she had asked the gas station attendant for a carta to tell the roads it was natural that she should ask the waiter for a mapa to tell the foods, but he brought her a carta anyway.

"You're wrong," she said to me. "They speak Spanish here and they brought me the menu."

"They speak Mallorquin here," I said, "and they bring everybody the menu."

We had the turistica, a prix-fixe lunch whose price is controlled by the government depending on the category. This category was 1B and it cost fifty-five pesetas, about a dollar, vino de la casa included. The Mallorquinos are loyal about their wine, but I find it a little rough, a surprisingly aggressive wine to be cultivated and encouraged by people who are so gentle.

"That's an Italian ship in the harbor," I said, looking out and noticing the flag. "So Dr. Villanueva's Italians have returned."

"But this time," Martha said, looking up from her mapa, "without the moral insanity."

I noticed now there were Italian sailors sitting around the cafe. They were being treated like anyone else.

"People don't forgive," I said, "but they forget because they have to forget, because it's too painful to remember."

"Not Dr. Villanueva," she said.

"He's a special case," I said. "Not only that he did more but that he should have known better."

"He's the only one who wants to talk about it."

"Maybe he's the only one who has to," I said.

I tried out my Italian on a sailor who was sitting alongside us. We had crossed on an Italian ship, the Leonardo da Vinci, and had worked at learning Italian. I asked him how he liked it here. He said the food was not bad but he found the wine a little sharp. Then he added as an afterthought, the people are a little strange. Then his comrade broke in with, "I don't like the way they look at us. You'd think we were criminals."

"Yes," the first Italian sailor said. "You'd think we had done something wrong." Then he leaned back his head in recollection, but he could think of nothing, and then he said quickly, as though recalling, "We helped them during their war. What more do they want? That is, I believe we did. I am too young to remember."

"That's right," the other sailor said. "We are all too young."

Then the first sailor took a drink of his wine and set down the glass carefully. He had a short, close-cut beard and a face that was dark, as dark as a Spaniard's. "All I can remember," he said carefully and in genuine thought, "is that in their war we helped them. If it went wrong it must have been their doing."

"Remember," the other sailor said, "when it happened we were not born."

They got up now to go back to their freighter that was leaving. They left a ten peseta tip on the table and when the Italians left the waiter handed the tip back to them.

"And we were not born," the bearded Italian protested spreading his hands palm up to me before they turned for the ship. "We were not born."

We wanted to get back to Palma before it got dark so we cut over to Inca, a flat road down the center of Mallorca that would avoid the mountains. It went by an endless phalanx of huge robot windmills out of Cervantes that must have been here before anyone was born, never.

In Palma we had dinner inside at the Formentor. We had the lan-

gostas a la parilla with a Spanish wine from Andalucia which cost only a few pesetas more than the local. Then we had cafe-solo, the best coffee in the world, before we went back to the Londres.

At the Londres the desk clerk said that Dr. Villanueva had called three times and I was to call him at this number. I told the clerk it would not be necessary but he kept holding out the piece of paper as though I did not understand. I took it to relieve him and we climbed the three more flights up to get to our room. You already had to climb up one flight to get to the lobby. When I took the room I told the clerk that three flights would kill Martha and he told me that the lobby floor was reserved for people who took the full pension. He said if we took the full pension mi esposa would not be killed. I said the food on the full pension would probably kill her too and she preferred to die climbing because the Formentor just outside was probably the best restaurant in Spain and that is the best way to die.

"They're always talking about me dying," Martha said as we climbed all the way up and put our coats on the big delicate brass bed. "I'll be all right as soon as I get over what I caught in Casablanca. Dr. Villanueva said there was nothing more he could do for me, that it would just take a little time."

"I don't think we'll be seeing Dr. Villanueva any more," I said.

"I don't think we will either," she said.

Dr. Villanueva called very early in the morning, at about six o'clock and I refused to take the call. At nine we went out for breakfast at the Formentor. In the lobby the clerk asked me if I had learned about Dr. Villanueva. I said, no, I was not interested. When we started down the final marble flight of stairs the clerk hollered after me, "He did it with a small Italian pistol, a Biretta. Dr. Villanueva es muerto. Dr. Villanueva is dead," the clerk said.