



## CHAPTER ONE

# *Juan Montoya*

Not so long ago but far, far away there was a godly young woman named Twila who loved the Lord. She lived in a country called Bolivia near the village of Santa Rosa del Sara.

Twila had not been born in Bolivia but in a faraway country where she had learned that many people in the world do not know the truth about God. Quite a few

Christian families had moved to an area near Santa Rosa del Sara and started a small community. With the blessing of her local church and her parents, Twila had joined them, wanting to help in any way she could. But the people of the region were very wicked, and they did not want to know about Jesus. So the Christians had built a church building where they gathered often to worship the Lord and to pray for the lost souls of the wicked people of Santa Rosa del Sara.

Twila lived by herself in a small house next to one of the elders. She had cows and chickens and a horse named Good-Boy. Twila was a hardworking young woman. Every morning she would get up early and pray. Then she would milk her cows, make some cheese, gather the eggs, and bake some fresh bread. She would go into the pasture and catch Good-Boy, groom him, and put on his harness. While he was eating his grain, she would put the milk, cheese, eggs, and fresh bread into the wagon. When he finished eating, she would hook him up to the wagon, climb in, and drive into town while she sang hymns and praises to the Lord.

The people of Santa Rosa del Sara loved to hear Twila coming, partly because they enjoyed hearing her sing, but mostly because she was honest. The people in and



around that town would try to cheat each other when they sold anything. They mixed water into their milk to make it look as though their customers were buying more than they actually got. They sold eggs that might be old or even rotten.

But they knew that Twila sold only pure milk. And everyone knew that Twila's eggs were always fresh. And then, of course, there was Twila's bread. It had not taken long for everyone to learn that she baked the best bread in the region. So the people all liked to buy from Twila, and usually by noon she would have sold all of her milk, cheese, eggs, and fresh bread. Then she would turn her wagon toward home, say, "Get up, Good-Boy!" and would soon be busy helping the neighbors, working in her garden, or doing chores around the house.

Twila raised cows for milk. Sometimes a bull calf would be born, and bull calves will not grow up to produce milk. So Twila would sell those calves for meat. She would feed them very well so they grew quickly. Then she would take them into town and sell them to a man who had a meat shop. That man's name was Juan Montoya, and he was the wickedest man in Santa Rosa del Sara. He was the only person in town who bought calves, so Twila had no choice but to do business with him.



And so it happened one day that Twila took a calf into town to sell to Juan Montoya. He agreed to buy the calf but lied to her by saying that he could not pay for it right away. "I do not have enough money to pay you for the calf until I sell the meat," he said. "It will take me about three days to sell the meat, and then I will give you the money."

So three days later, after Twila had sold her milk, cheese, eggs, and fresh bread, she stopped at his shop to collect her money. Juan Montoya lied to her again. "Oh," he said, "I did sell the meat from your calf, but then I had nothing left in my store to sell. So I used the money to buy some more meat. But if you come back in two or three more days, I will pay you then."

Twila suspected that he was lying, but couldn't be sure, so she got back into her wagon, said, "Get up, Good-Boy!" and trotted home singing hymns and praises to the Lord.

When Twila returned after another three days, Juan Montoya had prepared yet another lie. "My wife became very ill and I took her to the hospital. I am so sorry, but I had to use your money to pay the bill, and now I do not know when I will be able to pay you. I will let you know as soon as I have the money," he promised.



Juan Montoya had been bragging to his friends about how he was cheating this young Christian woman. They all thought it was funny, but they were also a little concerned. They reminded him that many of the Christian men were big strong farmers, and that they could easily come and take the money from him by force if they wanted to. That worried Juan Montoya, so he loaded his rifle and leaned it in a corner near the door for protection. He did not know that the power of the Christian was in God, not guns. But he would soon find out.

By now Twila knew for certain that Juan Montoya was lying, because she had seen his wife shopping in the marketplace on the day she was supposed to have been in the hospital. Twila drove Good-Boy home, but she didn't know what to do. So she did what she always did when she didn't know what to do; she prayed, and then she walked next door to the elder's house for advice.

The elder's name was Abe Miller, and when she told him her problem, he excused himself and left her with his wife while he went into another room to pray. When he returned, he had a very peaceful expression on his face. He told Twila to go home and to fast, and when she felt the time was right, to open her Bible and study

