

A Place Between Heaven and Earth

Synopsis

In pre-colonial Mexico, TANGAXOAN II, King of the Tarascan Empire and MOTAS, his mute, mentally challenged shaman are beheaded by soldiers of the Spanish army. Their remains are secreted away by their people and buried in the tomb of boundless treasure. The mighty, golden scepter of Jauntinapa, giving the king the power to control the elements is lost. Over five hundred years later the tomb is found by CARLOS, the evil, abusive uncle and reluctant guardian of a troubled, young Mexican boy named FRANCISCO. Carlos begins looting the tomb of its treasures and unknowingly awakens the spirit of the dead king and shaman.

Francisco learns through a series of strange encounters with Tangaxoan that he is the king's direct descendant. The king causes the death of a steer that was left in the care of Francisco by his uncle. Carlos upon learning of the loss of his steer gives the boy a brutal beating. The Ghost of the king appears to Francisco superfluously allowing the boy to call him Grandpa. Tangaxoan backhandedly enlists the help of Francisco to help find the golden scepter, get back

his treasure and restore his tomb. Francisco finally having enough of his uncle's cruel ways is persuaded by the king to run away to his cousin's home. Tangaxoan tells Francisco that his, thought to be deceased mother, is still alive.

Searching for a new life he runs away to the home of his cousin's MARIA and ESTEBAN to get some answers. Carlos pursues the boy fearing that he will divulge the secret of the treasure. In the streets of a near by town Carlos's effort to grab the boy is foiled by the King's shaman Motas who trips the uncle as he is about to grab the boy.

Francisco gets a ride with a mailman to the town where his cousins live. Along the way fate and the ghost of the King throws Francisco a curve by forcing him and the mailman to sloppily deliver a baby at the local post office.

After a harrowing journey, Francisco finally arrives at the home of his cousins. Unbeknownst to Francisco, however, Esteban is helping Carlos to sell the looted treasure. Maria is appalled at the beating that Francisco has incurred and to her dismay, Esteban decides to inform Carlos where to find Francisco. The following day, while making a delivery, Esteban and Francisco are ambushed by

thugs sent by a collector to find the source of the treasure. Tangaxoan and Motas intervene driving the thugs away with a dust-devil filled with hornets. Esteban loses his courier job because of the mishap however finds new employment from the father of the woman whose baby Francisco had delivered.

Some days later Francisco finds the golden scepter and narrowly avoids falling to his death from the dizzyingly heights of the statue atop the island of Janitzio. Carlos receiving a letter from Esteban learns the whereabouts of Francisco. During the Day of the Dead festival he goes to the cousins to get the boy, take him to the tomb and silence him forever. On the way to the tomb they are followed by the thugs sent by the collector. After capturing Carlos and Francisco in the tomb the thugs fight amongst themselves leaving only one alive.

Matos once again intervenes pulling Francisco and his uncle from the depths of a deep, cinder cone lake near where the tomb is located. Finally Francisco is able to place the scepter in the mummified hand of the king giving his spirit the power to take care of the final thug and restore his

tomb. In a final desperate act Carlos tries to silence the boy, his cousin and would be stepfather. His mother Juanita intervenes having to kill Carlos and save the day.

Francisco returns to the ranch happy, his life restored and the spirit of his ancestor finally at peace.