

One day on that corner a tall, thin dog with short hair and spots like a Dalmatian stands out from the other skinny, mangy street dogs, not just for his size, but his demeanor: self-possessed, quiet, dignified and alone in the midst of the noisy dog drama surrounding him.

In the days following, I find myself looking for him. Sometimes our eyes meet in silent commune as I pass by, as if we know each other. In time, when I sit at the tienda, he'll come up to me and plop down at my feet like an old companion. He won't stay long. If I have food with me, I'll offer him a scrap, yet he never begs, and I feel I am sharing food with a friend. Sometimes he'll just sit and look at me, maybe looking into me, and I see trust and solace in his eyes. I try out many names for him-Amigo, Manchas for his spots, even Clyde- but, in the end, I just call him Corner Dog. It seems to fit.

At the end of each day, the street dogs settle around the shop while Rosita throws them leftover scraps of meat and tortillas. The dogs usually behave themselves, but occasionally snarl and bicker for Rosita's attention. I enjoy watching their relationship around food: here are the alphas, larger, more menacing, taking the first shares while the smaller dogs circle around them awaiting their turn. Rosita then chases the alphas away to ensure the others have a share. I ask myself, how can these dogs survive without Rosita's kindness? Then the thought occurs, how could I survive without her kindness?

Corner Dog doesn't participate in this game of survival. As far as I know, he's never present at the feeding ritual. Once I asked Rosita why he never showed up at that time, but she just shrugged.

Ese perro tiene su propio camino, she said, meaning, "That dog has his own journey."