



MEXIKID

A GRAPHIC MEMOIR

by
PEDRO MARTÍN



**GUPPY
BOOKS**

MEXIKID: A GRAPHIC MEMOIR

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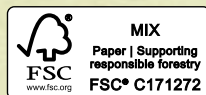
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FOR MY WIFE, GINA.

The love of my life, my best friend, and my North Star.
She makes me want to be better.

FOR PEDRO MARTÍN. APÁ.

The funniest, most loving dad in the world.
His almost-daily calls at "tequila o' clock" have
given me endless things to write about.

TO MERCEDES MARTÍN. AMÁ.

My inspiration.

CHAPTER 1

READY. SET. GO?!



They call me **PETER...**

but my
REAL name is
PEDRO.

If your family's
from **MEXICO**,
like mine is, you
usually have a
couple of names
you can go by.

Some people go full-on Mexican
and keep their real names.

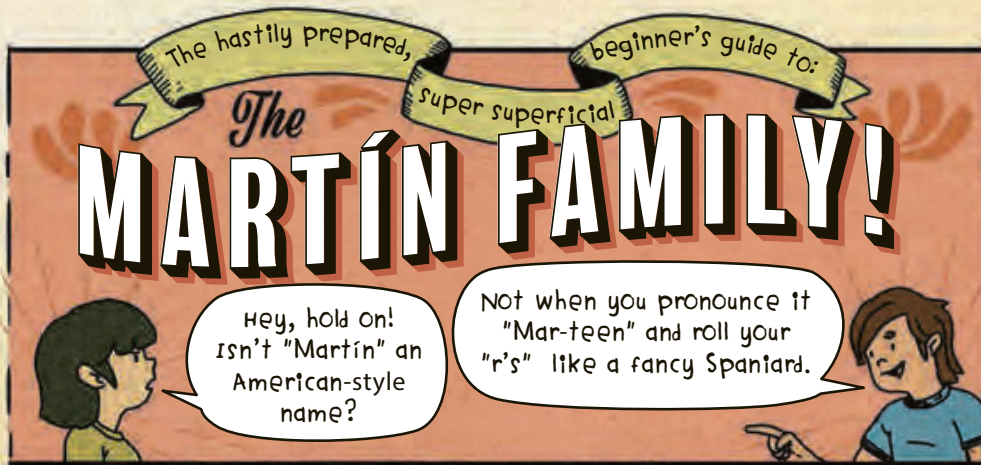
Some of us slip and slide
between an **AMERICAN-STYLE**
NAME and a Mexican one.



I come from one big
MEXICAN AMERICAN family,
and I mean **BIG**. I'm the
seventh of **NINE** kids!

NINE!

Let me introduce you:



APÁ
Pedro Sr.
(A-S.N.)*
DAD

Inventor,
farmer, and a
crackshot with a
slingshot.



AMÁ
Mercedes
(A-S.N.) **MOM**

She knows how to
heal any wound,
real or imagined.

Plays
harmonica!



SALVADOR
AKA **CHAVA**
(A-S.N.) **SAL**

Science
enthusiast.

He can grow a
beard...if he
wanted to!



LIDUINA
AKA **LILA**
(A-S.N.) **LILA**

Historian
and tree hugger.
The nice one.



*AMERICAN-STYLE NAME

LEÓN
(A-S.N.) **LEON**
(some of us get off
easy on the name-
switch thing.)

Half of the
"Leon and NOE
punching and
pranking team."



NOÉ
(A-S.N.): **NOE**
(pronounced
"No-ee")

He loves
flowers!

Kidding.
He loves
PUNCHING.

RUTH
(A-S.N.): **RUTH**
(In Spanish it
sounds like
"Root.")

Business-
minded
adventurer.
Ghost
whisperer.



HUGO
(A-S.N.): **HUGO**
('Cuz in spanish
it's "Oogo." It's a
no-win scenario.)

Best guitar
player in the
family. Also the
only guitar player
in the family.

ALEJANDRO
(A-S.N.): **ALEX**

The baby.
All-around lovable
smart-ass and
poop-stirrer.

ADÁN
(A-S.N.): **ADAM**

Half of the "Adam
and Alex team of
Amá's favorite kids."

He's almost totally
unflappable.



AND THEN THERE'S ME...

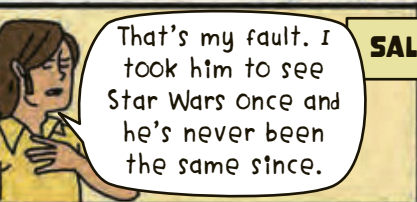
Fair is fair. Here's the Martín family guide to

PETER AND/OR PEDRO

LEON & NOE



LILA



NOT TRUE. MOVING ON.

Our house was built to comfortably fit a family of five. But we were a family of eleven! And we were about to get **EVEN BIGGER.**

THE YEAR WAS 1977, DINNERTIME.

"Dinnertime" was just a concept, really. With that many people in our house, you ate when you could, where you could.

We almost never ate at the dinner table at the same time.

Not because there was no room, but because we did not enjoy eating together.

Dame tu plato.

NO. NO quiero más arroz, Amá.

If you're finished, **GO!**

Are you still talking? Why are you still talking?

Because I have **INTELLIGENT** things to say.

I have two more bites, **DUMMY!**

Oooh, he called you "dummy." That's a slapping offense!

Shh. Slap him during the commercial!

Personally, I would rather focus on TV than my big brother **NOE** while I eat.

NOE had the most to say about...well, everything.

Especially about my **WEIGHT.**

Now what?

I was the "**ROUNDEST MARTIN,**" and my older brothers would never let me forget it.

Do you live to **EAT?**
Or **EAT** to live?

Arnold Schwarzenegger's movie *Pumping Iron* had just come out, and NOE was all about muscles and fitness sayings.

Milk is for babies.

Are you a man or are you a babies?

Are you **STUPID NATURALLY** or **NATURALLY STUPID?**

They weren't all amazing zingers, but if you were quick enough, they could sting.

Leave. **NOW.**

Making dumb comments about what each other looked/smelled/acted like was **SO** common in our house that it didn't really bother me.

Being **DEFINED** by what I looked/smelled/acted like was a different matter.

I am a richly layered cake of a human being once you get to know me. My **SMELL** does not define me!

FINE! I like sitting over here anyway!

The bar seat was really the best seat for watching TV. Unfortunately, it was also the greeter position. If anyone came through the front door, you and your dinner had to say "Hello!"

If it was a family member coming through the door, the greeting was typical big-brother stuff.

FWIP!

BLOOP!

Dude!

BUT if it was a guest or "compañía" that came through the door, you had to stand up, swallow fast, and make them feel welcome...

¡HOLA, HOLA!
¡Arrímese a comer!*

...even if you weren't sure who they were.

<Have a seat! Take my plate. I haven't touched it except to fish the car keys out!>

With compañía in the house, the next best place to sit was on the living room floor.

It rendered you invisible to adults and closer to God.

I mean closer to the TV.

Hablé con el señor que cuida el cementerio y me dijo que está empeorando...

One of my favorite shows was **HAPPY DAYS**. It was the perfect show to have on when adults were talking about **SEEMINGLY SERIOUS** matters.



All the clapping and catchphrases nicely drowned out almost all the bad news you might overhear.



Hey, grades aren't cool.
Learning is cool!

That's why you're
the Fonz, Fonz.



But that night, two words did get through.
"MEXICO" and **"ABUELITO."**

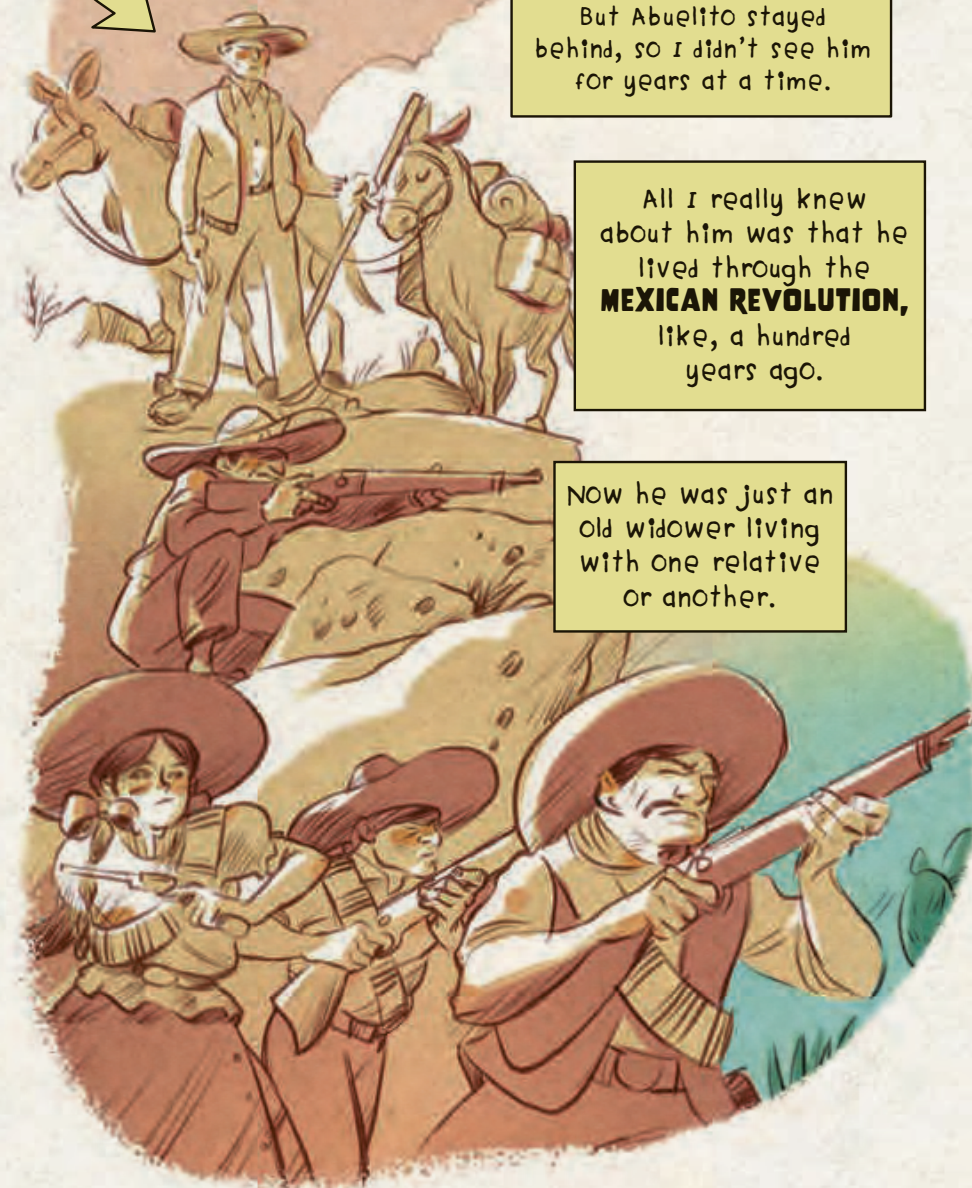
My **ABUELITO** lived thousands of miles away in **JALISCO, MEXICO**.

We'd been living in California, USA, since before I was even born. Our family moved up here to pick strawberries and start new lives.

But Abuelito stayed behind, so I didn't see him for years at a time.

All I really knew about him was that he lived through the **MEXICAN REVOLUTION**, like, a hundred years ago.

Now he was just an old widower living with one relative or another.



Suddenly, the old guy was the topic of some really **INTENSE CONVERSATIONS.**

¡ÓRALE! NOS VAMOS EN SEIS DÍAS!★

*Agreed! We leave in six days!

WAIT! What's happening?

I think Apá said something about **GOING TO MEXICO?!**

¡Abuelito nos necesita!
¡ARRÉGLENSE!★

WHAH?!

*Abuelito needs us! Everyone get ready!

From what I could tell, we were going to **MEXICO** in six days to bring our Revolutionary War-era abuelito **HERE!** To California! **TO THIS HOUSE! TO LIVE WITH US!**

THIS IS CRAZY! Why does he need to come here? There's **NO** room here!

He can have the **TOP BUNK!**

I hope he brings his mules.

He's bringing his **MULES?**

Where are they supposed to sleep?

The **TOP BUNK** is free.

Yeah, Adam's bunk already smells like **"MULE."**

They'll feel right at home!

This always happened around here. **BIG DECISIONS** were made, and suddenly we all had to adjust our **ENTIRE LIVES!**

You'd think my vote would count for something here in the **USA!**

I'm kidding, we didn't vote in this house. This house was a Mexican-family-style **DICTATORSHIP.**

Ya dije, vamos a hacer espacio. Verás.*

But why now? Why not wait until Sal moves out or Alex runs away or something?

You know, to the circus or the zoo.

Probably the zoo.

Peter, stop asking so many questions. He's our abuelito and he needs us, OK?

Get with it.

Aw, man.

*I already said, We'll make room. You'll see.

As I walked back to my over-shared, mule-scented room, I noticed a picture of Abuelito on the fridge.

What's so important that you need us to come **ALL THE WAY TO MEXICO** to bring you back **HERE?**

My amá had covered the fridge with all kinds of photos and souvenirs from throughout the years.

THE BOTTOM DOOR had pictures of all of us doing sports and wearing uniforms.

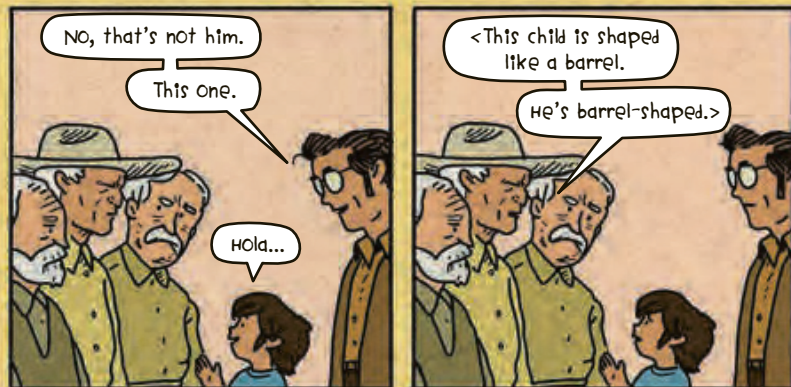
There were also pictures of aunts, uncles, and cousins from all over the place. Most of them I hadn't seen in forever.

There were a couple of Abuelito too. All looking the same. Old and stern.

That was his thing. **OLD AND STERN.**

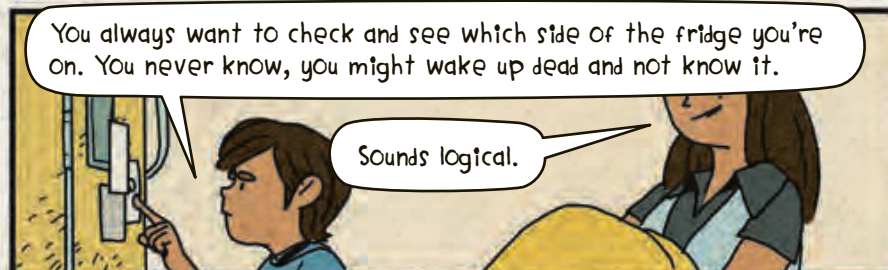
I'd see my **ABUELITO** every few years or so, but I remembered the very **FIRST TIME** I met him. I was really little and he was **SUPER OLD**, even back then.

FAMOUS FIRST MEETINGS!



(In our family, You can either kiss an elder's hand or get pinched by an elder's hand. The choice is yours!)

The top of the fridge had pictures too. These were mostly funeral cards and newspaper clippings. The **FREEZER DOOR** is where we displayed those of us who had **DIED**.



Lila was the sibling I was closest to. She totally got me and was never mean.

You're worried about Abuelito coming to live with us, huh?

Kinda, yeah.

It'll be fine. It'll just take some time for him to get used to living here.

Well, what if he doesn't like us?

You mean **"YOU"**? What if he doesn't like **"YOU"**?

We won't have anything in **COMMON!**

Does he even like **STAR WARS?** Has he even seen it?

How do I even **START** to explain Chewbacca to this man?

My Spanish isn't that great, **AND HE SPEAKS NO ENGLISH!**

It'll be an awkward staring contest that will last **FOREVER!**

Dude! Star Wars has nothing on the life Abuelito has led. You should take advantage of the situation and learn about him.

I mean, if you like stories so much, there's a lot of good stuff here. Adventure, war, love...

...tragedy.

Is that Abuelita?

How'd she die, again?

It was so sad.

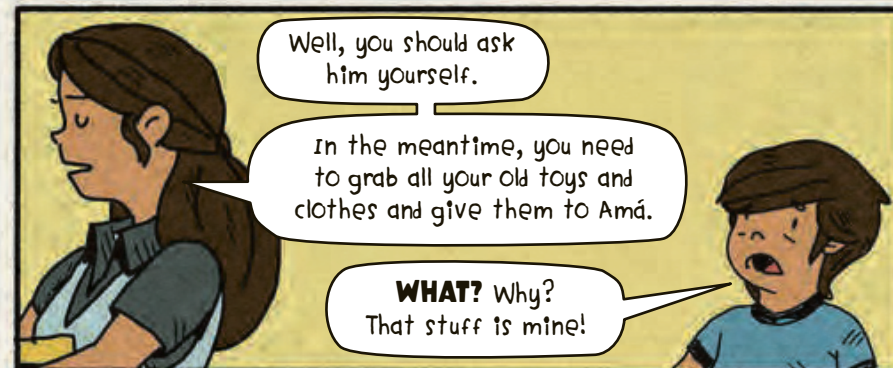
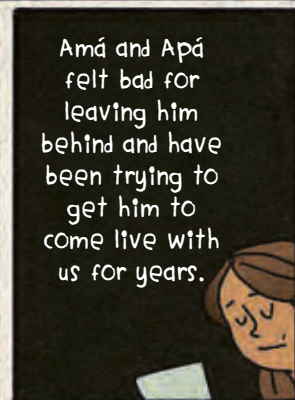
She ate an ice cream bar too fast and died of a brain freeze.

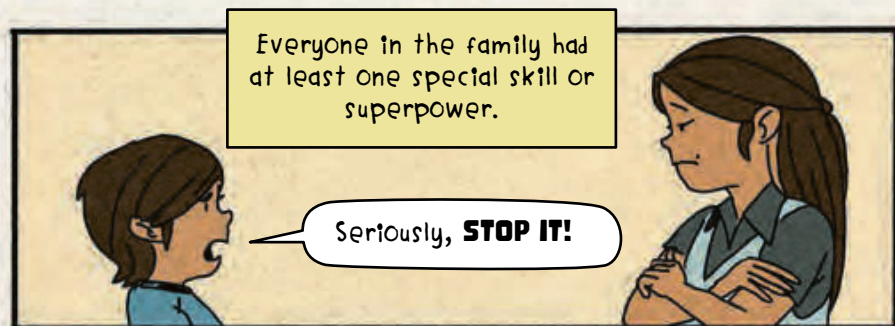
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REALLY?!

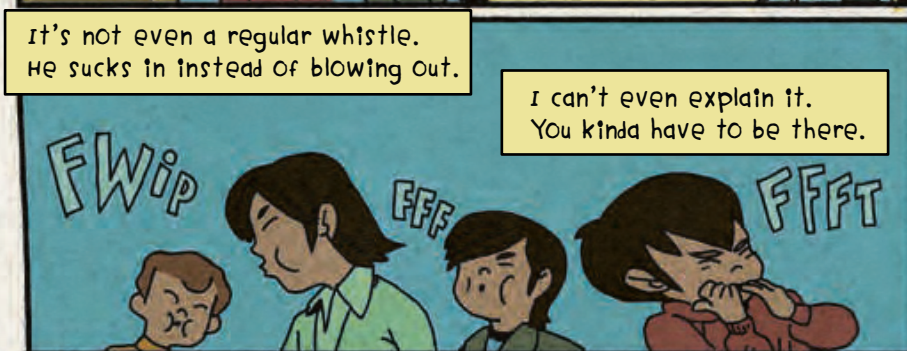
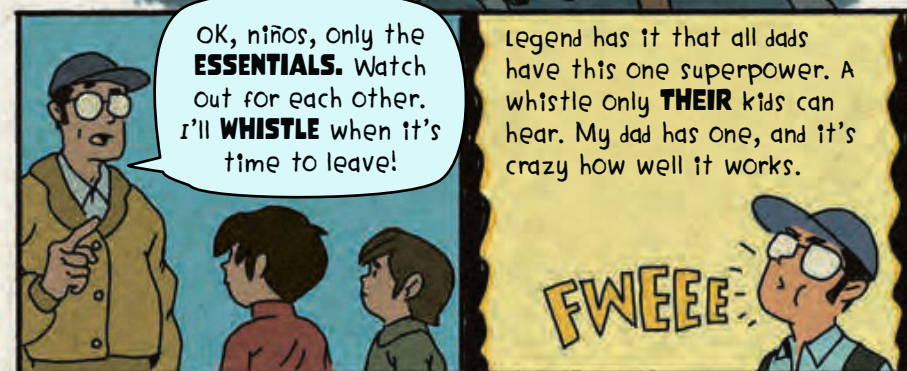
Well, yes and no. It was probably an **EMBOLISM** or an **ANEURISM** that she got while eating the ice cream...

OH, WOW!





CHAPTER 2 SOLO LO ESENCIAL



When Apá told us to get **"JUST THE ESSENTIALS,"** we listened. Everyone knew exactly what was essential (to them) and scattered to the far reaches of the store to find it.



ROD!

SAL AND LEON

"You gotta listen to the latest!"



Need.

AMĀ AND ALEX

"We need fresh chones* for the youngest."



Espeed!

APĀ

"Keep the family safest."



Rad!

HUGO

"You gotta run the fastest!"



Read!

LILA

"I should take in the greatest."



Yes, indeed!

PETER AND ADAM

This trip might as well be the funnest!"



Oh yeah! It's polyester!

NOE

"You gotta look your coolest!"



Oh yeah... it's polyester!

RUTH

"Yuck. This stuff is the fakest."

Personally, **MY ESSENTIALS** were always superhero/Star Wars based. For the most part, everybody in our house reluctantly accepted that fact about me.

They'd even **ALMOST** gotten tired of making fun of my love of action figures. Almost.

But with Abuelito coming to stay in the same house with me, possibly even share a room with me...

...would he think I was a big weirdo?

Did the boys my age in Mexico have this sort of thing, or was it all knives and lassos over there?



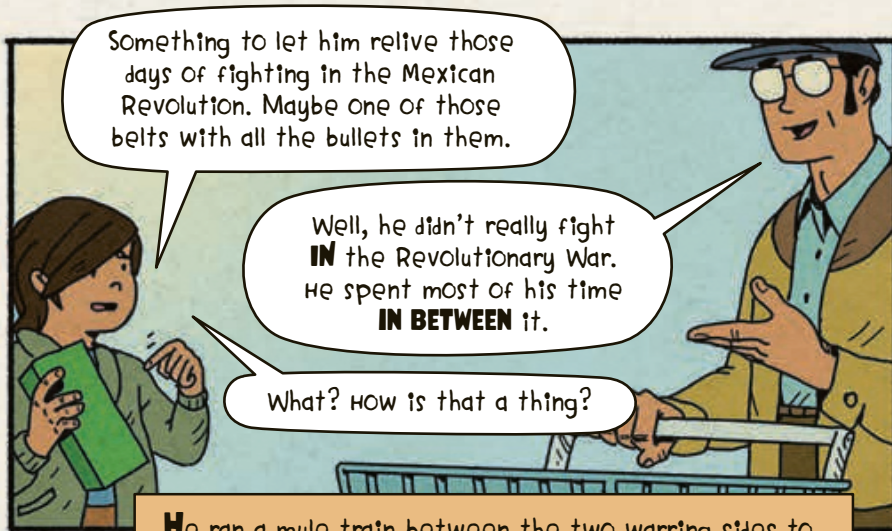
Pedro, did you get everything you **NEEDED** or just everything you **WANTED**?

I'm still shopping.

SAY, maybe we should get something for Abuelito to make him feel more at home.

A knife or a lasso?

*Spanish slang for "underwear."



He ran a mule train between the two warring sides to make sure all the people had food to eat. It was more important and often as dangerous as shooting at people.

So he didn't fight?

NO, but he made many decisions that changed the outcomes of several battles.



Whenever your abuelito would appear, both sides would respect a **CEASE-FIRE** in order to greet him!



Your abuelito made sure both sides got what they deserved.



Sometimes his choices in snacks would change the outcome of many important battles!



