

## An American Slob

Navacerrada was only an hour away from Madrid, a convenient ski getaway for wealthy Spaniards and American expats. Rumor had it that three people died on the slopes that day. It was so icy on top that when someone fell they wouldn't stop, continuing to pick up speed as they tumbled down the mountain, futilely clawing at the frozen snow until crumpling on the carretera far below.

The icy conditions forced the three of them to slowly pick their way down the mountain, avoiding the steepest parts, slowly traversing for the whole length of the run, the cold icy wind slicing through their clothing, freezing toes and fingers. By the time they reached the bottom it was dark.

Charley had been looking forward to the ride home, passing the bota bag around and sharing ski stories. But by the time they reached the road, the American Ski Club bus had already left. Luckily there was one more train heading back to Madrid before the whole mountain closed up for the night.

They'd never gone skiing with Erik before. All he ever talked about was going home, how he missed hamburgers and drive-in movies. He was crude and loud, the kind of American that Spaniards love to hate. Charley noticed him getting worse as the day progressed and by the time they were on the train and heading down the mountain it was obvious that the little flask he'd been sucking on all day had been full of cognac. He was standing with his head out the open window, letting in the cold air, singing at the top of his lungs.

"Hey, Erik, shut the window, man," Terry yelled at him.

When Erik turned around his eyes were out of focus.

"I'm not feeling too good," he slurred. Then he quickly turned back to the window, stuck his head out and began vomiting into the wind, the foul spray blowing back inside.

The other passengers began shouting at him, causing the conductor to come running into the car. He immediately grabbed Erik by the back of the neck and pulled him out into the aisle. Holding him by the shirtfront and yelling obscenities in his face, he proceeded to slap him on the side of the head several times, accompanied by enthusiastic "Olés!" from our appreciative fellow passengers.