



The Golden Cockerel & Other Writings

Juan Rulfo

Douglas J. Weatherford, Translator

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Hard luck, cockfighting, and desperation run through Juan Rulfo's *The Golden Cockerel and Other Writings*, revealing a gritty and completely engrossing side of Mexico. In this new translation, a novella is accompanied by short stories, narrative pieces, and character sketches that focus on death, murder, and neglected children.

At the center of the collection is the short novel *The Golden Cockerel*, which tells the story of Dionisio, a poverty-stricken man, and the golden cockerel he nurses back to health to become an unlikely champion of the local cockfighting scene.

Language is deceptively simple, a reminder that less can be more. The smells and sounds of the small-town cockfights are described with sincere, straightforward details which accentuate the down and dirty environments Dionisio experiences in his itinerant lifestyle. When La Caponera, a stunning singer who performs on the cockfighting circuit, and Lorenzo Benavides, her partner in love and business, are introduced, they bring a looming sense of danger and tension to every scene.

There are few cheerful moments in this collection; the power of Rulfo's prose and his strong, well-drawn characters instead service the broader idea of destiny.

Among the additional works, "A Piece of Night" and "He Was on the Run and Hurting" stand out. Fraught with anger, remorse, and sorrow, these stories display Rulfo's dynamic storytelling talent. Translator Douglas J. Weatherford skillfully draws out the tones and intent of the author, remaining loyal to Rulfo's understated prose and adding authenticity with maintained Spanish words.

Rulfo's stories and sketches are absorbing and believable, classically exploring the coarse underbelly of small-town Mexico and the costly pursuit of greed.

MONICA CARTER (May/June 2017)

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