The Seven African Gods (Los siete dioses africanos)

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Crazy Willie waited near the entrance of Humboldt Park, motioned for me to hurry. He ignored my outstretched hand and fell into step beside me.

“It all started with the Seven African Gods. You see, bro, we stopped worshipping the Seven African Gods.”

I was perplexed. “You’re not making any sense,” I said.

Crazy Willie winked, hummed música de Machito, but I noticed as we walked deeper into the park—reality shifted: oaks lengthened into palm trees; elms—strangler figs; the gray sky of winter—turquoise.

“Tú sabes,” Crazy Willie said, “cuando we stopped worshipping the Seven African Dioses, they turned on us.”

Numbened, it dawned on me. “They got even.”

“Pues claro, damn right, Puerto Ricans were banished to Chicago.”