

Lorenzo and the Turncoat



Lila and
Rick Guyman

LORENZO
and the TURNCOAT

Also by Lila and Rick Guzmán

Lorenzo's Secret Mission

Lorenzo's Revolutionary Quest

LORENZO and the TURNCOAT

Lila Guzmán

and

Rick Guzmán



**PIÑATA BOOKS
ARTE PÚBLICO PRESS
HOUSTON, TEXAS**

This volume is funded in part by grants from the City of Houston through The Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County and by the Exemplar Program, a program of Americans for the Arts in Collaboration with the LarsonAllen Public Services Group, funded by the Ford Foundation.

Piñata Books are full of surprises!

Piñata Books

An imprint of
Arte Público Press
University of Houston
452 Cullen Performance Hall
Houston, Texas 77204-2004

Cover design by Giovanni Mora.

Guzmán, Lila, 1952—

Lorenzo and the Turncoat / by Lila and Rick Guzmán.

p. cm.

Summary: In the summer of 1779, having served as an officer in the Continental Army, eighteen-year-old Lorenzo Bannister enjoys a quieter life practicing medicine in Spanish-controlled New Orleans, until his fiancee is kidnapped and the governor of the Louisiana territory, Bernardo De Gálvez, decides to lead Spanish troops in a surprise attack against the British.

ISBN-10: 1-55885-471-1

ISBN-13: 978-1-55885-471-0

1. United States—History—Revolution, 1775-1783—Participation, Spanish—Juvenile fiction. [1. United States—History—Revolution, 1775-1783—Participation, Spanish—Fiction. 2. Louisiana—History—Revolution, 1775-1783—Fiction. 3. New Orleans (La.)—History—18th century—Fiction.] I. Guzmán, Rick. II. Title.

PZ7.G9885 Lj 2006

[Fic]—dc22

2005057417

CIP

∞ The paper used in this publication meets the requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

© 2006 by Lila and Rick Guzmán
Printed in the United States of America

6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Historical Information

Don Bernardo De Gálvez, Felicité De Saint Maxent De Gálvez, Gilbert Antoine De Saint Maxent, Oliver Pollock, Lieutenant Colonel Esteban Miró, and Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Dickson are historical figures.

All other characters are fictional.

St. Louis Cathedral as we know it today did not exist in 1779. In 1788, a fire destroyed the original structure known as St. Louis Church.

Acknowledgments

Many, many thanks to the following people at the Louisiana State Museum in New Orleans for their help:

Nathanael Heller, Assistant Registrar

Dr. Alecia P. Long, Historian/Writer

Dr. Charles Chamberlain, Museum Historian

Jeff Rubin, Information Services

Kathryn Page, Curator of Maps and Manuscripts

A special note of gratitude goes to Charles E. Nolan, Archivist, Archdiocese of New Orleans, for providing information on María Matilde Felicia De Gálvez, Don Bernardo's first child.

*Dedicated to the people of Louisiana and everyone who
helped them after Hurricane Katrina, August 29, 2005.*

Chapter One

Christmas Eve 1778
New York City

Servants scurried from guest to guest in Robert Hawthorne's dining room. They took away the first remove, a creamy potato soup, and left.

While waiting for the main course, Hawthorne leaned toward the visiting general seated to his right. "Sir, I have a riddle for you. How many rebels does it take to win a battle?"

"How many?"

"No one knows, because they haven't won a single one!"

The general guffawed and banged his hand on the table.

Hawthorne smiled. It was a good joke, but not necessarily the truth. George Washington's poorly trained soldiers were keeping the British army at bay. The rebellion should have been smashed long ago.

The kitchen door opened. An army of servants streamed through carrying platters, bowls, and casseroles heaped with steaming food.

Guests gasped in delight to see salmon with shrimp sauce, buttered lobster, rabbit stew, haunch of venison, sweetbreads, macaroni, peas, potatoes, and custards.

Hawthorne relished their reaction. Entertaining guests was his favorite pastime and tonight was espe-

cially auspicious because he was celebrating his promotion to colonel. Two generals in the British army, three colonels, the vicar of the local church, the mayor, a judge, a merchant, and their wives graced his table. He wished the war was over. Perhaps next Christmas would find him back home in England. If he could not spend the holiday with family, he would at least spend it with his dearest friends.

"Colonel Hawthorne," the general's wife said, leaning toward him, "we will miss you so!"

"Me or my parties?"

"Silly goose. You, of course. Must you leave?"

"Alas, dear lady, I must."

"Without you, this wretched country will be unbearable."

Hawthorne patted her hand. "I'm sure you will bear it."

The woman pouted and turned to her husband. "'Tisn't fair! We finally have someone who can throw a decent party and good King George rips him from us!"

Tomorrow Hawthorne would leave New York and head to Philadelphia. After the Battle of Brandywine, the American Congress had fled into the countryside like a fox before the hounds. Hawthorne had received secret orders to capture a ringleader at all costs. It mattered little which traitor he served up—Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, or George Washington. His Majesty wished to make an example of someone important to the rebel cause and thereby break their spirit.

The front door burst open. Cold air blasted through.

The room fell silent at the sight of a pox-scarred man in a tattered greatcoat. "Might there be a Hawthorne here?"

"I'm rather busy at the moment," Hawthorne said, frowning. Why had the soldier on guard let this rag of a man inside?

"Sir, it's about your cousin."

Hawthorne straightened. "What news have you?"

The man worked a much-worn hat through his hands. "He's been hanged, he has."

Hawthorne felt the blood drain from his face. He sat in stunned silence while his guests murmured among themselves. Dunstan could not be dead. He had sent him to New Orleans to find proof that the Spanish were secretly helping the American rebels.

"You must be mistaken," Hawthorne managed to say.

"No, sir. The news comes direct from the horse's mouth, it does. Someone who seen it with his own eyes. Them Spanish dons hanged Sergeant Andrews for a spy."

"A spy!" the general's wife gasped, looking in horror at her husband.

Most people considered espionage a less-than-noble profession. Men of honor shunned it.

Hawthorne rose, wobbling slightly. "If you will excuse me," he said to his guests. Bowing low, he left. He signaled for the messenger to follow him. He strode into the study and closed the door behind them.

Squeezing the bridge of his nose, he said, "What happened to my cousin?"

"That Spaniard, Gálvez, hanged him."

"Colonel Gálvez?"

"One and the same."

It took a moment to absorb the news. Bernardo De Gálvez, Governor-General of the Louisiana province, was a colonel in the Spanish army and an aristocrat. His uncle José was one of the most powerful men in Spain.

"But Sergeant Andrews had diplomatic privilege."

The messenger shrugged.

The scornful gesture angered Hawthorne. He felt like picking up a paperweight and hefting it at the man but restrained himself.

Had Gálvez shrugged too? Had he thumbed his nose at the law? Dunstan shouldn't have been hanged. To be sure, he had sent his cousin to New Orleans to spy on the Spanish and bring him information on American rebels in Louisiana, but he had given him diplomatic papers to protect him. Why hadn't Gálvez honored them?

Hawthorne fell into a chair and brooded, only vaguely aware of the messenger inching toward the door and leaving.

Sounds soaked through the walls, the whinny of horses and the jingle of carriages pulling up to the front door. Doors opened and closed. Apparently, the messenger's announcement had dampened spirits and guests were leaving. Hawthorne's big moment, the celebration of his promotion to colonel, had been ruined.

Disbelief dissolved into slow anger. Hawthorne paced around the room. He opened the armoire door and took out an officer's sash, bright red silk with tassels on both ends. He had promised to make Dunstan an officer upon his return. And what a glorious one he would have been! In his mind's eye, Hawthorne saw his cousin leading a cavalry charge with sword drawn. Of all his relatives, including his younger brother, Dunstan most resembled him: tall, athletic, with dark brown hair and dark blue eyes. They were both twenty-eight years old and both had been born on the family estate. In their youth, people sometimes mistook them for twins. That ended when Dunstan engaged in a sword fight and acquired a jagged scar on his cheek.

Hawthorne wrapped the ends of the sash around his hands and snapped it tight. Dunstan would have worn it with honor.

The family's reputation had been stained. The rule of law demanded that Colonel Gálvez answer for his illegal actions. Filing charges against him would do no good. Gálvez was the law in New Orleans.

No, this situation demanded drastic action. A plan slowly formed. There were details to work out. It would take months to put it into action, for a soldier simply did not walk away from his duties and responsibilities so he could take care of personal affairs. No matter how long it took, he would restore honor to his cousin's memory by bringing Gálvez to justice.