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DESERT LONGING
OR
LAS AVENTURERAS

by Anne García-Romero

Cast of Characters

ELENA, 30s, California governor's niece

LUISA, 20s, her sister

ARCADIA, 40s, a married socialite

MARIANA, 30s, a married free-spirit

JUAN, 30s, a neighbor, likes Elena

OSCAR, 40s, a bureaucrat, likes Luisa

FELIPE, 40s, a horse trader, likes Arcadia

TIBURCIO VÁSQUEZ, 30s, a bandit

Setting

1850s. Los Angeles. A desert clearing with sandstone rock floor and four small cactus trees. Night.

Author's Note

This play is inspired by the following historical figures: Two nieces of Pio Pico (the last governor of Mexican California), Arcadia Bandini (a wealthy Los Angeles socialite and landowner), Mariana Coronel (the wife of Los Angeles mayor, Antonio Coronel) and Tiburcio Vásquez (the last Mexican bandit to roam California).

The tone of this play exists somewhere between comedic and farcical. Design and acting choices can reflect this while always remaining grounded in the sincere desires of the characters.

For the song, "Mi Bandido," see enclosed music. The song can be sung a capella. If you prefer accompaniment, classical guitar or harp work well.

All italicized words are to be spoken in Spanish.

Acknowledgments

Desert Longing or Las Aventureras was first given a workshop production on June 22, 2001 as part of the Pacific Playwrights Festival at South Coast Repertory, (David Emmes, Producing Artistic Director, Martin Benson, Artistic Director) with the following cast and crew:

ELENA . . . . . Maricela Ochoa
LUISA . . . . . Ana Ortiz
ARCADIA. . . . . Karmin Murcelo
MARIANA . . . . . .Monica Sanchez
JUAN . . . . . .Jonathan Del Arco
OSCAR . . . . . .Javi Mulero
FELIPE . . . . . Winston J. Rocha
TIBURCIO VÁSQUEZ. . . . . .Geoffrey Rivas

Director . . . . . Juliette Carrillo
Set and Costume Designer . . . . . Christopher Acebo
Lighting Designer . . . . . .Christopher Akerlind
Composer /
Harp Accompaniment . . . . . Alfredo Rolando Ortiz

Desert Longing or Las Aventureras received its world premiere on July 25, 2002 as part of the Hispanic Playwrights Project at South Coast Repertory, (David Emmes, Producing Artistic Director, Martin Benson, Artistic Director) with the following cast and crew:

ELENA . . . . . Maricela Ochoa
LUISA . . . . . Elisa Bocanegra
ARCADIA. . . . . Karmin Murcelo
MARIANA . . . . . .Monica Sanchez
JUAN . . . . . .Jonathan Del Arco
OSCAR . . . . . .Javi Mulero
FELIPE . . . . . Winston J. Rocha
TIBURCIO VÁSQUEZ. . . . . .Geoffrey Rivas

Director . . . . . Juliette Carrillo
Set and Costume Designer . . . . . Christopher Acebo
Lighting Designer . . . . . .Christopher Akerlind
Composer / Harp Accompaniment . . . . . .Javier Godinez

Special thanks to: Susan Gurman, Juliette Carrillo, Jennifer Kiger, David Emmes and Martin Benson, Jerry Patch, Cristopher Gross, Eric Becker and Barbara, Alicia and Toño García-Romero.

DESERT LONGING
OR
LAS AVENTURERAS

by Anne García-Romero

(Lights rise on a desert mound. Night. ELENA *and* LUISA *enter carrying lanterns and hide behind small cactus trees, one unaware of the other.)*

ELENA and LUISA. *Tiburcio.*

ELENA. I am awaiting your arrival.

LUISA. I am awaiting his arrival.

(Neither woman moves.)

ELENA. *Luisa?*

LUISA. *Elena?*

ELENA. If *Tio Pio* knows you are out this late, he will never let you leave the house alone for three months.

LUISA. If *Tia Nachita* discovers you are not asleep in your bedroom, she will never allow you to even look at another *hombre* again.

ELENA. I am awaiting *Tiburcio Vásquez,* and together we will flee *Los Angeles* and ride his horse across the entire *estado de California.*

LUISA. *Tiburcio Vásquez* told me to hide myself here and wait for him. He promised me that he will arrive tonight and together we will travel by stage coach to *Méjico* where we will live on his land and he will constantly return bringing treasures for me.

ELENA. I desire *el bandido.*

LUISA. I desire *el bandido.*

ELENA. His eyes are as black as pure onyx.

LUISA. His *bigote* as soft as cotton dyed in ebony ink.

ELENA. He will not leave with both of us.

LUISA. He will leave with me because I am younger and *guapísima.*

ELENA. He prefers women who are more mature, beauty that has improved with age.

LUISA. I tire of this society life, niece of the governor, smile, handshake, museum existence. I want to roam free.

ELENA. My life is like this spike-covered, succulent, solitary tree. I exist in the desert of society, but inside me is a fertile existence waiting to bloom.

LUISA. You cannot have him.

ELENA. Yesterday, in his jail cell, when I brought him *Tia Nachita's tamales,* he promised to be mine.

LUISA. That must have been before he talked to me when I brought him *Tia Nachita's empanadas.*

ELENA. *Ay,* I want to tear the branch off this cactus and remove each needle one by one. And after the twenty fifth needle is removed, I want to shove each one into my heart. I rather die than watch you run off with him, *sobre caballo,* galloping across the *California* wilderness.

LUISA. You could come visit us.

ELENA. Do you not care, *hermana?*

LUISA. *Hermana,* he prefers younger *mujeres.* He told me.

ELENA. Am I really that much older than you? I think not.

LUISA. *Tio Pio* will probably die when he learns *Tiburcio Vásquez,* the infamous *bandido,* has escaped *Los Angeles* with his beloved niece.

ELENA. He promised me he would meet me here. How could he promise both of us?

(Sound of pebbles crunching slowly. Footsteps.)

ELENA. He is coming.

LUISA. It is he.

ELENA and LUISA. Tiburcio.

(Footsteps slowly approaching.)

ARCADIA. *(Off:) Tiburcio?*

*(*ARCADIA *enters over the hill.)*

Tiburcio, mi amor? Donde te has escondido? Tiburcio?

*(*ARCADIA *walks slowly down the hill and stands behind a cactus tree.)*

Tiburcio?

ELENA. *Doña Bandini,* you are not the only one waiting for him.

LUISA. We are both waiting for him.

ARCADIA. *Elena y Luisa Pico.* What are two respectable *señoritas* doing in the desert at night alone?

ELENA. And what is a society *señora* doing in the desert at night alone?

ARCADIA. This is disgraceful, *que no?*

LUISA. He steals *dinero.* He also steals affection.

ARCADIA. He promised me he would take me in a stage coach to *San Francisco* and build me a house by the bay.

ELENA. We believed him.

LUISA. Each of us.

ARCADIA. When I brought *mis rosas* to his jail cell, his eyes.

ELENA. Onyx jewels.

ARCADIA. And his *bigote*

LUISA. As soft as cotton dyed in ebony ink.

ARCADIA. I desired to put my white cotton gloves through his whiskers but how could I think such a thought?

ELENA. *Un bandido.* In a cell. But not for long.

LUISA. He has captured us.

ELENA. Each of us.

LUISA. And brought us here.

ARCADIA. Howling at the desert moon.

ELENA, LUISA, ARCADIA. *(Howling:) Tiburciooo.*

ELENA. He desires me.

LUISA. He desires me.

ARCADIA. He prefers older women.

(Sound of pebbles crunching slowly. Footsteps.)

ARCADIA. He is coming.

LUISA. It is he.

ELENA. *Mi bandido.*

ARCADIA, ELENA, LUISA. *(Howling:) Tiburcioooo.*

MARIANA. *(Off:) Tiburcio.*

*(*MARIANA *enters over the hill.)*

MARIANA. *Tiburcio?*

*(*MARIANA *walks slowly down the hill and stands behind a cactus tree.)*

MARIANA. *Tiburcio?*

ARCADIA. *Mariana Coronel,* does your respectable husband, the mayor of our fair city, know you are out in the middle of the desert calling after *un bandido?*

MARIANA. *Arcadia Bandini,* does your elderly *yanqui* husband, the biggest *ranchero* of our fair *Los Angeles,* know you are out in the middle of the desert at night…

ARCADIA. Waiting for *Tiburcio?*

ELENA. *Doña Coronel,* we are also awaiting the arrival of *Tiburcio Vásquez.*

LUISA. There are now four of us waiting here.

ELENA, LUISA, ARCADIA, MARIANA. Those eyes.

ARCADIA. Why are we all extinguishing our dignity in the desert?

MARIANA. I love my husband, *Antonio.* The way he plays *la guitarra* and sings to me, his white beard pointing toward the earth and his *sombrero* off to one side. He loves me. He does. But when I brought *mis panes dulces* to *Tiburcio* in jail, he said, "*Gracias señora,* I want to explore the wilderness of *California,* to roam across the prairies, to have una *aventura* with you" *y pues,* here I am. *(Beat.)* I want to travel through the wilderness of *Los Angeles.*

ELENA. I want to travel across *el estado de California.*

LUISA. I want to travel to *Méjico.*

ARCADIA. I want to travel to *San Francisco.*

MARIANA. I tire of being *una señora silenciosa.*

ELENA. I tire of being *una sobrina del gobernador.*

LUISA. I tire of being *una señorita* in society.

ARCADIA. I tire of being *una señora sensual y solita.*

ELENA, LUISA, MARIANA, ARCADIA. *(Howling:) Ay, Tiburcioooooo.*

(Song: Mi Bandido.)

LUISA.

QUIERO ESCAPAR.
QUIERO VIAJAR.
QUIERO RELAJARME.
PREFIERO ACOSTARME

LUISA, ELENA, MARIANA, ARCADIA. CON UN BANDIDO.

LUISA.
QUIERO VIVIR.
QUIERO SENTIR.
QUIERO MENTIR.
PREFIERO DORMIR

LUISA, ELENA, MARIANA, ARCADIA. CON EL BANDIDO.

LUISA.
EL SUSPIRO
DEL BANDIDO
ME HACE SOÑAR
Y QUIERO VOLAR.

EL SUSPIRO
DEL BANDIDO
ME ATRAE DEMASIADO
TENGO QUE TENER CUIDADO

VOY A TENER
VOY A COMPLACER
VOY A QUERER
TENGO QUE VENCER

LUISA, ELENA, MARIANA, ARCADIA. MI BANDIDO.

(Sound of pebbles crunching slowly. Footsteps.)

ELENA. He is coming.

LUISA. It is he.

ARCADIA. My *yanqui* husband, *Abel,* will understand.

MARIANA. *Lo siento, mi político Antonio.*

JUAN. *(Off:) Querida?*

*(*JUAN *enters over the hill.)*

ELENA. *Tiburcio.*

*(*JUAN *enters slowly.)*

JUAN. *Sí, Tiburcio. Elena, querida?*

ELENA. *Tiburcio.*

*(*ELENA *walks slowly toward* JUAN. *She gets very close to him. He holds his arms around her waist.)*

Oh your arms, *Tiburcio.*

JUAN. *Sí, querida.*

*(*ELENA *looks at him intently.)*

ELENA. *Juan Alfonso?*

JUAN. I am pretending to be *Tiburcio Vásquez* so I can get you to kiss me.

LUISA. Go home, *Juan Alfonso.*

ARCADIA. Back to our neighborhood, before we tell your *mamá.*

MARIANA. And your *papá.*

JUAN. *Señoras y señoritas.*

ARCADIA. *Ahora mismo.*

JUAN. *Lo siento, Elena.*

ELENA. I will never talk to you again, *Juan Alfonso.*

*(*JUAN *runs away quickly, in shame.)*

Juan Alfonso, the neighbor boy? My heart was kindled but now it grows cold. I want to bloom like the orange *florecitas* that perch atop this cactus not wither while green tough skin encases my heart.

(Sound of pebbles crunching slowly. Footsteps.)

OSCAR. *Querida?*

FELIPE. *Querida?*

LUISA. *Querida?*

MARIANA. It is he.

ARCADIA. *Escóndanses.*

*(*OSCAR *and* FELIPE *enter over the hill.)*

OSCAR. *Querida?*

FELIPE. *Querida?*

LUISA. *Tiburcio.*

ARCADIA. *Tiburcio.*

OSCAR. *Luisa?*

FELIPE. *Arcadia?*

LUISA and ARCADIA. *Tiburcio?*

OSCAR. *Tiburcio…*

FELIPE. And his cousin, *Roberto.*

LUISA. *Tiburcio* you have finally arrived. Can we leave soon?

ARCADIA. I did not realize *el bandido* had *un primo.*

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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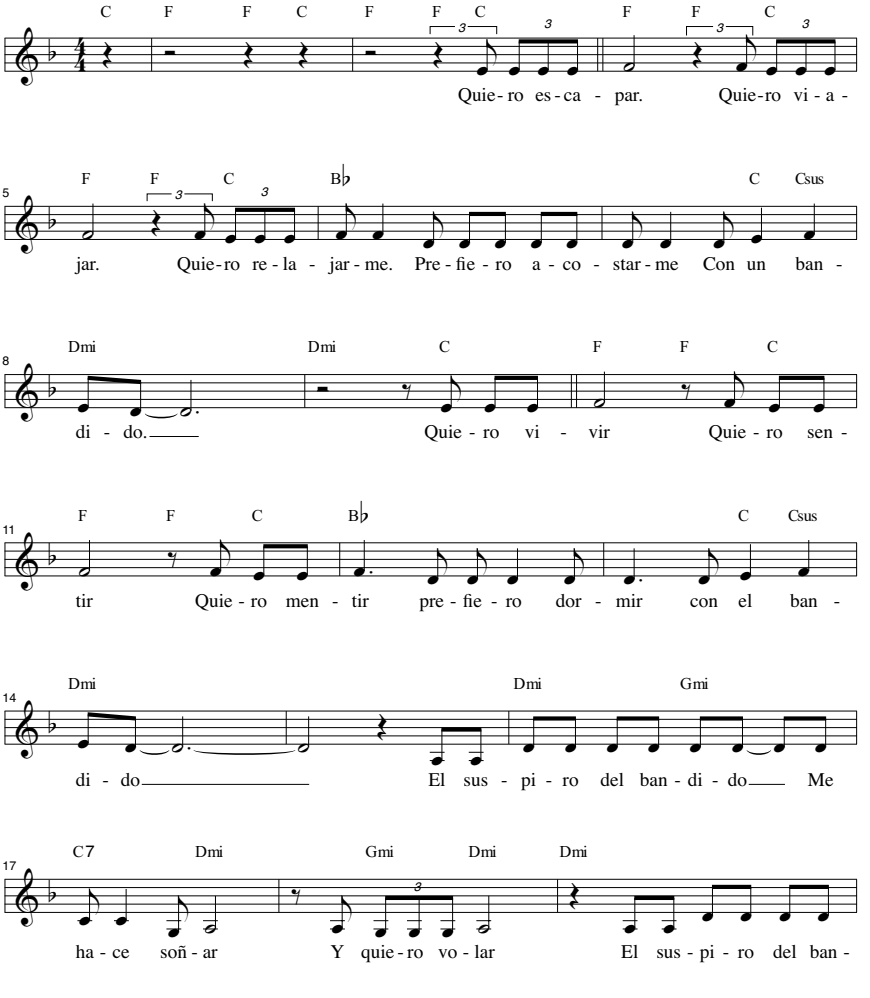
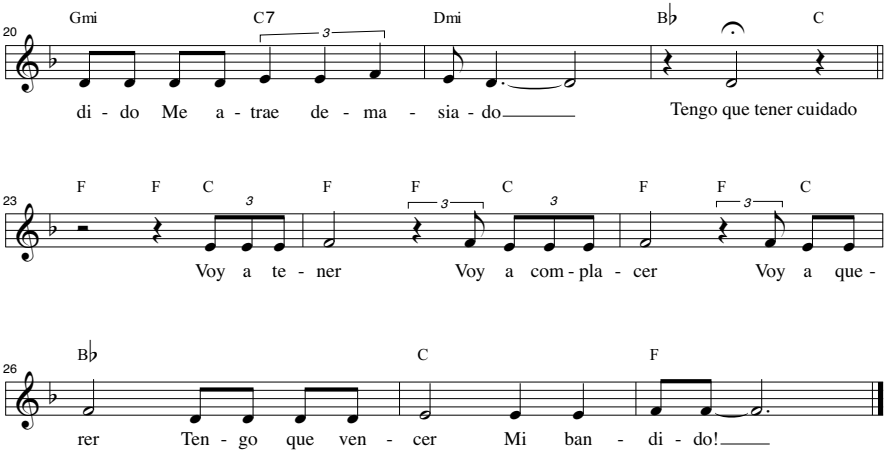
Mi Bandido

♩ = 84 - 92, **lively**

Anne García-Romero




20
Gmi C7 Dmi B♭ C
di - do Me a - trae de - ma - sia - do
Tengo que tener cuidado
23
F F C F F C F F C
Voy a te - ner Voy a com - pla - cer Voy a que -
26
B♭ C F
rer Ten - go que ven - cer Mi ban - di - do!

THE GARDENS OF AZTLAN
(AN ACTO HECHO A MANO)

Cast of Characters

Las Comadres

LA KARMINE es LA TORTILLERA

LA ANA es another TORTILLERA

LA MONICA es another TORTILLERA

LA MARICELA es another TORTILLERA

Los Compadres

EL GEOFF es, pues, EL GEOFF

EL JAVI es, pues, EL JAVI

EL JONATHON es, pues, EL JONATHON

EL WINSTON es, pues, EL WINSTON

Time

Now.

Place

Noguchi Gardens.

Order of Scenes

Scene 1: In the Jardin

Scene 2: Tortillera's Lament

Scene 3: Unas Mujeres

Acknowledgments

The Gardens of Aztlan was commissioned and first produced by South Coast Repertory.

THE GARDENS OF AZTLAN
(AN ACTO HECHO A MANO)

by Luis Alfaro

Scene 1

In The Jardin

(On a rock. In the jardin.)

EL GEOFF. Hijo de la…

EL JAVI. Hay caray…

EL JONATHON. Mira no mas…

EL WINSTON. Ai…

(Beat.)

EL GEOFF. Oye compadre?

EL JAVI. Si compadre.

EL JONATHON. Did you hear?

EL WINSTON. No, que?

EL GEOFF. Lo que paso.

EL JAVI. Something happened?

EL JONATHON. Happening?

EL WINSTON. Si, now.

EL GEOFF. Where?

EL JAVI. Aqui.

EL JONATHON. Aqui, aqui?

EL WINSTON. Alguien escaped.

EL GEOFF. Ai, dios mio.

EL JAVI. Que sad.

EL JONATHON. Si, sad.

EL WINSTON. Always escaping.

EL GEOFF. Pero, why?

EL JAVI. Not an alguien, a she.

EL JONATHON. It's sadder when it's a she.

EL WINSTON. Yeah, a sadder she.

EL GEOFF. She won't go far.

EL JAVI. Santa Ana, maybe.

EL JONATHON. Blend in with the locals.

EL WINSTON. She'll get lost.

EL GEOFF. They always do.

EL JAVI. A circle.

EL JONATHON. Nothing straight over there.

EL WINSTON. Dime about it.

(Beat.)

EL GEOFF. Hijo de la…

EL JAVI. Hay caray…

EL JONATHON. Mira no mas…

EL WINSTON. Ai…

(Beat.)

EL GEOFF. Alguien escaped, que triste.

EL JAVI. No, que happy.

EL JONATHON. Yes, que happy, hombre.

EL WINSTON. They're always escapando.

EL GEOFF. From where?

EL JAVI. Si, where did she escape from?

EL JONATHON. Orange County.

EL WINSTON. Alguen escaped from Orange County?

EL GEOFF. That's a big escape.

EL JAVI. Too big.

EL JONATHON. Too far to run.

EL WINSTON. That's like running away from el mundo.

EL GEOFF. Si, away from el mundo.

EL JAVI. Se fue.

EL JONATHON. To what?

EL WINSTON. Si, to what?

EL GEOFF. Not 'to what.'

EL JAVI. But, 'what for.'

EL JONATHON. Is she crazy?

EL WINSTON. Look at this.

EL GEOFF. Casas tan bonitas.

EL JAVI. Casas tan expensive.

EL JONATHON. The quiet.

EL WINSTON. The 405.

EL GEOFF. The air.

EL JAVI. Air over El Toro.

EL JONATHON. The mall.

EL WINSTON. Ooh, la mall.

EL GEOFF. No digan anything bad about the mall.

EL JAVI. I like the mall.

EL JONATHON. Yo tambien.

EL WINSTON. Nada malo with the mall.

EL GEOFF. The ocean.

EL JAVI. Ah, the ocean.

EL JONATHON. Si, el mar.

EL WINSTON. Tan grande.

EL GEOFF. What are we talking about?

EL JAVI. Yo no se.

EL JONATHON. Yo no se tampoco.

EL WINSTON. I wish we could remember what we talk about.

(Beat.)

EL GEOFF. Hijo de la…

EL JAVI. Hay caray…

EL JONATHON. Mira no mas…

EL WINSTON. Ai…

(Beat.)

EL GEOFF. She was a lifer.

EL JAVI. A lifer se escapo.

EL JONATHON. How?

EL WINSTON. Como que how?

EL GEOFF. Miralo, has to know the how.

EL JAVI. Who cares, she got out.

EL JONATHON. Out of what?

EL WINSTON. Yes, afuera de que?

EL GEOFF. From the big T.

EL JAVI. The big T?

EL JONATHON. They're looking for her.

EL WINSTON. Quien?

EL GEOFF. Management.

EL JAVI. Oh, management, si.

EL JONATHON. Always looking for somebody, management.

EL WINSTON. Si. Management looks.

EL GEOFF. Que sad.

EL JAVI. Que sad, my nalgas!

EL JONATHON. Se salio, cabrones.

EL WINSTON. Hijole, she's brave.

EL GEOFF. I hear she was moody.

EL JAVI. Don't doubt it.

EL JONATHON. You know our mujeres.

EL WINSTON. She was never feliz.

EL GEOFF. Muy-muy.

EL JAVI. Wanted too much.

EL JONATHON. Sin verguenza.

EL WINSTON. Malcontenta.

EL GEOFF. But why?

EL JAVI. Why would she leave?

EL JONATHON. It's a mystery.

EL WINSTON. Misterio.

EL GEOFF. A milagro.

EL JAVI. Yes, puede ser a miracle.

EL JONATHON. Religious.

EL WINSTON. Yeah, oh yeah, religio.

EL GEOFF. Oh, algo to do with dios.

EL JAVI. Then it's importante.

EL JONATHON. Yes, religion is serious stuff.

EL WINSTON. Ai, dios.

(They all cross themselves. Beat.)

EL GEOFF. Hijo de la…

EL JAVI. Hay caray…

EL JONATHON. Mira no mas…

EL WINSTON. Ai…

(Beat.)

EL GEOFF. The big T.

(They all turn and look at the El Torito. Beat.)

EL JAVI. Torito.

EL JONATHON. Big.

EL WINSTON. Mysterious.

EL GEOFF. Religious.

EL JAVI. Sanctuary.

EL JONATHON. Authentic.

EL WINSTON. No, not authentic.

EL GEOFF. Nutritious.

EL JAVI. Maybe nutritious.

EL JONATHON. Cervezas.

EL WINSTON. Yes, liquor.

EL GEOFF. Lots of liquor.

EL JAVI. Margaritas.

EL JONATHON. Oh si, margaritas.

EL WINSTON. On the rocks.

EL GEOFF. With salt.

EL JAVI. Open until ten.

EL JONATHON. Eleven on the weekends.

EL WINSTON. The Torito's not so bad.

EL GEOFF. No, it's not.

EL JAVI. There are worse.

EL JONATHON. TGIF's.

EL WINSTON. Ooh, no me digas.

EL GEOFF. Buffalo wings.

EL JAVI. They're not even buffalo.

EL JONATHON. Jerry's Deli.

EL WINSTON. Que tipo de gente eat pickles with their dinner, hombre?

EL GEOFF. Pero Denny's.

EL JAVI. Oh, Denny's.

EL JONATHON. Denny's, yes.

EL WINSTON. Si, Denny's.

(Beat.)

EL GEOFF. Hijo de la…

EL JAVI. Hay caray…

EL JONATHON. Mira no mas…

EL WINSTON. Ai…

(Beat.)

EL GEOFF. Mirala.

EL JAVI. Oh si, la veo.

EL JONATHON. Que fascinating.

EL WINSTON. Que strange ella.

(They turn towards the rock where LA TORTILLERA *has appeared and is sitting making her tortillas.)*

EL GEOFF. An apparition.

EL JAVI. A vision.

EL JONATHON. A sighting.

EL WINSTON. A saint.

EL GEOFF. She's a saint.

EL JAVI. Es una santita.

EL JONATHON. No, santita no.

EL WINSTON. No es saint?

EL GEOFF. Entonces what?

EL JAVI. A tortillera.

EL JONATHON. Hace tortillas.

EL WINSTON. Mostly flour.

EL GEOFF. A tortilla saint.

EL JAVI. I didn't know they had one.

EL JONATHON. There is a santo for everything.

EL WINSTON. Que good.

EL GEOFF. That's the one that escaped.

EL JAVI. Si, escaped from El Torito.

EL JONATHON. Todavia tiene her apron on her.

EL WINSTON. And her tortillas.

EL GEOFF. She makes tortillas at Torito.

EL JAVI. No, menso, she used to.

EL JONATHON. The tortilla maker ran away from El Torito.

EL WINSTON. Que sad.

EL GEOFF. What's the world coming to,

EL JAVI. when tortilla makers,

EL JONATHON. run away from El Torito.

EL WINSTON. Next thing you know,

EL GEOFF. No one to make the In-N-Out Burger.

EL JAVI. No one to KFC la chicken.

EL JONATHON. No one to French the Fry at McDonalds.

EL WINSTON. I can't even imagine.

(They look at her. Beat.)

EL GEOFF. Hijo de la…

EL JAVI. Hay caray…

EL JONATHON. Mira no mas…

EL WINSTON. Ai…

(Beat.)

EL GEOFF. Tortillera?

LA KARMINE. Si?

EL GEOFF. Estas okay?

LA KARMINE. Si.
Gracias for asking compadre.
No mas estoy working here.
Here on this rock.
I am thinking un poquito.

EL JAVI. Thinking about what, tortillera?

LA KARMINE. Pues, about our future.
We'll see, que mas.

EL JONATHON. She says she's thinking.

EL WINSTON. Pensado.

LA KARMINE. I hardly ever get to pensar when I am making the tortillas inside.
Tu sabes, there's always a tortilla to make, masa to mix, a grill to calentar.
But never enough time for a margarita.

EL GEOFF. A margarita.

EL JAVI. To be mixed.

EL JONATHON. Sipped slowly.

EL WINSTON. Double shot of tequila.

LA KARMINE. There is never enough time for a margarita.
You know that feeling?
You're counting your stacks of tortillas,
when all you should be doing is drinking a margarita.
Life is so unfair, que no creen?

EL GEOFF. Si.

EL JAVI. Si, tortillera.

EL JONATHON. I know.

EL WINSTON. Unfair.

LA KARMINE. Compadre?

EL GEOFF. Si, tortillera.

LA KARMINE. And where are las naranjas?

EL GEOFF. Que?

LA KARMINE. Las naranjas.

EL JAVI. What does she want to know?

EL JONATHON. Where are the oranges?

LA KARMINE. Si, where are the oranges?

EL WINSTON. The oranges?

EL GEOFF. Alguien sabe donde estan the oranges?

EL JAVI. Si, donde estan?

(They all look at each other. Beat.)

EL WINSTON. En Florida?

LA KARMINE. I thought they were here in the garden?

EL GEOFF. Como se ven, estas oranges?

LA KARMINE. Pues, I imagine they're round and small, like a bird.
I don't really know.
I've never seen a real one.

EL GEOFF. A real orange.

EL JAVI. She's never seen a real orange?

EL JONATHON. What kind of Mexican is she?

EL WINSTON. I knew it, she's from over there.

EL GEOFF. Uh huh, you're right.

EL JAVI. From the other side of the border.

EL JONATHON. El otro lado.

EL WINSTON. The other side.

EL GEOFF. Newport.

EL JAVI. Newport, yes.

EL JONATHON. No, Laguna.

(He laughs.)

EL WINSTON. Si, Laguna.

(They laugh as they come down from the rock and walk away.)

EL GEOFF. Or maybe, Lake Forest.

EL JAVI. Yeah, Lake Forest.

EL JONATHON. Irvine.

EL WINSTON. Irvine.

EL GEOFF. Orange.

(They continue laughing as they walk away.)

EL JAVI. Ooh Orange.

EL JONATHON. Leisure World.

EL WINSTON. Yes, Leisure World, good one.

EL GEOFF. Anaheim Hills.

EL JAVI. Si, Anaheim Hills.

EL JONATHON. Long Beach.

(They stop laughing.)

EL GEOFF. No, Long Beach.

EL JAVI. Long Beach, no.

EL WINSTON. Long Beach. That's not funny.

(Silence.)

Scene 2

Tortillera's Lament

(At La Roca. Making tortillas.)

LA KARMINE. I shouldn't have left.

(She looks back at the El Torito.)

It's not so bad in there.
At least I get an apron.
I couldn't do it anymore.
I love these tortillas too much.
I mean, no one appreciates my tortillas.
Especially at El Torito.
They grab my tortillas like they grab for the chips.
No feeling.
Something so warm and they lunge at it.
They spread the guacamole and the salsa so thick,
you don't even recognize the pobre tortilla.

What they do to a tortilla is just criminal.
Look at my tortillas.
Mira.

(She throws some, like frisbees, at the audience.)

Every single one has my body, my work, my amor attached to it.
I started to resent them.
Those tortilla abusers.
Not even abusers really.
Because they don't even get to know the tortilla.
Tortilla Ignorers.
At first, I used to feel sorry for them.
'They're hungry,' I would think to myself.
'They can't help it.'
But then, you get politicized to the plight of the tortilla.
And you build an anger.
Adentro de ti.
They dismiss us.
Our trabajo.
They don't even see us as a gente some times.
We have a history, que no?
I know that there isn't a Tortilla Hall of Fame, but that doesn't mean that we are not important.
We're necessary.
Try eating frijoles with your hands…
Yes, try.
Look at my hands.
They are flatter now.
The better to shape the circle of my tortillas.
No beginning and no end to the tortilla.
Just a circle.
A constant.
A world with no end.
A tortilla with no end.
I won't hate them, though.
Because that would be like hating my tortillas.
I love my tortillas.
I know that might seem like a cliché these days.
Tortillas hecho a mano.
Have you ever heard that?
It's a very special thing.
It's like a Walt Whitman poem, "Leaves of Tortillas."
There has to be a place para mi out there in el mundo.
A place where I can make my little half dozen and share them with gente que quiere appreciate them.

Where do we go when our corazones get so heavy with the world that we can't see our lugar in it anymore?
How do I find mi amor of the tortillera once again?
How do I find myself en el mundo, otra vez?
El Torito has been good to me.
I mean, they give dinero to teatros and all,
but there has to be a place, un lugar,
in the world where tortillas reign.
So, here I am.
I came to a place.
To something natural.
Something untouched.
Nature.
Me dicen que all of this was orange groves.
Si, rows and rows of oranges falling all over la tierra.
A sea of pulp and rind.
Pero, I can't find it.
This place.
This place of the naranja where we first were found.
'Found.'
As if we needed to be discovered.
We already had tortillas,
what more did we need?
It's here somewhere, que no?
Right under us.
From now on,
me voy a quedar aqui
and make my tortillas.
I am going to make my tortillas in nature.
Until I see a naranja.
Just one…

(She looks out at the jardin.)

Scene 3

Unas Mujeres

(Tres comadres on a rock. They are dressed like tortilleras. Each holds on to a stack of tortillas.)

LA ANA. Hola comadre.

LA KARMINE. Hola.

LA ANA. What are you doing?

LA KARMINE. Oh, making tortillas.

LA ANA. Si, pero why there?

LA KARMINE. I'm making tortillas in nature.

LA MONICA. Ai, comadre, you don't recognize us?

LA MARICELA. Has it been that long?

LA MONICA. That you would forget your own?

LA KARMINE. Y quien son?

LA ANA. Comadre, you don't recognize your gente?

LA MONICA. Que tristesa.

LA MARICELA. What have they done to you in there?

LA KARMINE. Son Tortilleras?

LA ANA. Comadre, look at the outfit.

LA MONICA. You think we wear this for fun?

LA MARICELA. This is too much color and ruffle for any one mujer.

LA KARMINE. Forgive me Tortilleras.
Es un pleasure.
It's just that it's been so long.
There is only one of me in there,
so I have trouble recognizing my own.
Y porque no estan trabajando?

LA MONICA. We escaped.

LA MARICELA. Ran off with our aprons.

LA ANA. And took my tortillas too.

LA KARMINE. No!

LA ANA. Si.

LA MONICA. Si.

LA MARICELA. Si.

LA KARMINE. Y what are you doing now?

LA ANA. Well, we're trying to find ourselves.

LA MONICA. Our inner tortilleras.

LA MARICELA. And a job, tambien.

LA KARMINE. Que brave tortilleras you are.

LA ANA. It was a dead end rolling pin life.

LA MONICA. They were exploiting us.

LA MARICELA. And my tortillas.

LA KARMINE. Y donde trabajaban?

LA ANA. It's a triste story, comadre.
I worked at La Salsa.
Not so bad. Very clean and I can vouch for the fresh.
But the volume, mujer! The volume, you can't imagine.
Then they started cutting esquinas and before you knew it, between the cut backs and the time management, I ended up—making tortillas next to the salsa stand!
It's not right, mujer. It's not right.
I smell a jalapeño now and I get sick to my stomach.
A jalapeño! My birthright.
They've ruined me, mujer. They've ruined me.

LA KARMINE. Oh, I'm so sorry comadre.
I read about this once in a book by Upton Sinclair,
'In The Jungle of Tortillas.'
What abuso.
Y ustedes tambien?
Was La Salsa a sweat-tayer for you too?

LA MONICA. You kidding me?
She had it good.
Don't look at me that way. You did.
La Salsa? Ha!
What I wouldn't pay for something not frozen.

LA MARICELA. Yes, es correcto.
We're not a frozen people.
We're comal ladies. Everything hot, hot, hot.
I keep telling her she doesn't know the heartache of tortilla abuse and exploitation, until she's had an order for the number six combination taco, tostada, and quesadilla at Del Taco.
It wouldn't be so bad, but a sixty second guarantee?
Mujer, even when I was selling churros at Knott's Berry Farm did I not cook so fast.

LA KARMINE. Que horror.

LA MARICELA. You can't imagine.
They would attach a little wire to my nalga and if I didn't make so many tortillas, they would give me a little shock.
At first, I have to admit, it felt pretty good.
I would slow down all the time.

But then, pues, too much of a good thing…you know, mujer,
becomes a bad thing.

LA KARMINE. A good thing becoming a bad thing. What a tragedy.

LA MONICA. Ai, that's nothing.
That's nothing, do you hear me?
Nothing, until you worked at…
Worked at…
At…

LA ANA. It's okay mujer, you can name it.

LA MARICELA. It will help the healing proceso.

LA ANA. She's got a lot of trauma.

LA MARICELA. The tortillera's had a hard life.

LA ANA. Tell your story, hermana.

LA MONICA. Taco Bell.

(She breaks down.)

LA MARICELA. La pobre.

LA KARMINE. I can't even imagine.

LA MONICA. Enchirito.
Enchirito.
Enchirito.
I don't even know what an Enchirito is.
But they used my tortillas to make them.
My tortillas made something called an…Enchirito.

LA ANA. It's all she'll say.

LA MARICELA. It's like she went to war.

LA KARMINE. Pobrecita.

LA ANA. Y tu, comadre. What are you out for?

LA KARMINE. I just needed a break.
Not too much trauma, I'm afraid.
I'm just questioning that's all.
Questioning.
My whole life has been these tortillas.
In service.

LA ANA. Si, servicio.

LA MONICA. Sirviendo.

LA MARICELA. 'Coming right up' was my mantra.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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THE HANGING OF JOSEFA
by Rick Coca

Cast of Characters

OLD WOMAN

JOSEFA

JOSÉ, HER LOVER

FREDERICK CANNON, A MINER

COLONEL JOHN B. WELLER

TOWNSPERSON / WITNESS

MOB

Setting

1850s. Downeyville, California.

> "The hanging of the woman was murder. No jury in the world, on any principle of self-defense or protection of life and property, would ever have convicted the woman."
>
> *—Eyewitness, following the July 5, 1851 kangaroo court hanging of a Mexican woman in Downieville, California.*

THE HANGING OF JOSEFA
by Rick Coca

(At Rise: The actors enter and huddle together at center stage. A sign emerges from the group that reads: "The Hanging of Josefa." An OLD WOMAN *steps out with a long bright red scarf draped around her head.)*

OLD WOMAN. *(To audience:)* Welcome, *Señores!* How lovely you are, and dressed so nice. You look as if you're going to a hanging.

(Pause.)

And you are.

*(*COLONEL JOHN B. WELLER *steps up to a platform.)*

WELLER. Glory, glory! What a wonderful and momentous day this is, gentlemen of Downeyville. My apologies, of course, to that most delicate gender for I do believe I see a few ladies out there today.

CANNON. Too few, Colonel Weller!

(Laughter from crowd.)

WELLER. Yes, but still you remain. And why is that my friend?

CANNON. Because I intend to get rich! And no woman—

WELLER. And rich you shall be! Welcome men to the new America. California!

(Applause.)

(A corrido begins as JOSEFA, *in a separate reality, appears in a long flowing dress. She has two braids in her hair. She discovers a rope lying on the stage, which she picks up and begins to gather. She discovers a noose at the end of the rope. For a moment she cradles it like a baby.)*

WELLER. Now I see a few others here today, from lands where beast and man are sometimes confused!

(As the crowd laughs, The OLD WOMAN *slips the noose over* JOSEFA's *head.* JOSEFA *gently pulls one of her braids through the noose.)*

WELLER. I say to those men, gauge these California winds well. Be modest in your aims, lest a strong and just breeze blows you off a cliff.

(Suddenly cheery:)

Who's got a pistol?

(The OLD WOMAN *hands him a pistol.)*

WELLER. Let me be the first to wish you all a proud and prosperous Independence Day on this California's first Independence Day, July 4, in the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and fifty-one!

*(*WELLER *shoots the pistol in the air. The crowd cheers. With the firing of the pistol the music abruptly stops, and* JOSEFA *removes the noose from around her neck.)*

WELLER. Now which establishment has the best rye whiskey, because truth be told…

WELLER / OLD WOMAN. *…I'm drier than a codfish!*

*(*WELLER *looks at the* OLD WOMAN *for a confused second before exiting.* JOSEFA *stoops over to do some task.)*

OLD WOMAN. *(To audience:)* Oh, *por allí está,* Josefa. Washing clothes …for the last time.

(To JOSEFA*:)*

Murder isn't it?

JOSEFA. Excuse me, *Señora?*

OLD WOMAN. The constant bending down and getting up again.

JOSEFA. Sí, *Señora.*

OLD WOMAN. You're new here, *verdad?*

JOSEFA. No, *Señora.*

OLD WOMAN. No? How come I've never seen you before?

JOSEFA. I'm not the kind of person who gets noticed.

*(*FREDERICK CANNON, *a miner, enters.)*

CANNON. *(To* JOSEFA*:) Buenas tardes.*

*(*CANNON *exits.)*

OLD WOMAN. Look at your lovely braids. You're beautiful. But still I've never seen you. You must be a ghost.

JOSEFA. *(Laughs.)* A ghost!

OLD WOMAN. *(Laughing also:) Sí,* am I standing here talking to myself?

JOSEFA. No, *Señora,* I am here.

OLD WOMAN. *Cuídate* tonight, *niña.* These Norte Americanos are going to get good and tight as they say. And you know how men are after the drink. Be a ghost tonight, Josefa.

JOSEFA. *Gracias, señ—* How do you know my name?

(The OLD WOMAN *has disappeared.* JOSEFA *exits as* JOSÉ *enters. He is dressed quite elegantly in the Californio style. He adjusts his tie.)*

OLD WOMAN. That's Josefa's lover, José. What a great word.

(Savoring it:)

Lover. Better than husband. Husbands are boring and predictable, but a lover…would die for you.

*(*JOSEFA *enters surreptitiously, sneaks up behind* JOSÉ *and puts her arms around him.)*

JOSÉ. How do you do that, *mujer?*

JOSEFA. Do what, *mi amor?*

JOSÉ. Suddenly appear unnoticed.

JOSEFA. I'm a ghost.

JOSÉ. *(Turning to her:) Entonces, que visión eres.*

(They kiss.)

JOSEFA. You look nice. Too nice.

JOSÉ. *(Irritated:)* Shall I put my miner dungarees on?

JOSEFA. Why not?

JOSÉ. Because I'm not a miner anymore.

JOSEFA. But those men think you're trying to be better than them.

JOSÉ. How I look is the only thing I have control of. I deal Monte because it's the only thing they allow me to do. Look at how we live?

JOSEFA. Things are hard for me *también,* José.

JOSÉ. *Pero tú eres una mujer.*

JOSEFA. *(Angry:)* Y?! Do you think my head is empty when I go to sleep at night because I'm a woman?

JOSÉ. No—

JOSEFA. I have dreams, José!

JOSÉ. *Bueno, cálmate—*

JOSEFA. Just like you!

JOSÉ. I'm sorry, Josefa! It's this place. All these possibilities but none for me.

(Catches himself.)

JOSEFA. *For us.*

JOSEFA. Let's go back to Sonora.

JOSÉ. Sonora?

(Studies her, she's serious.)

All right.

JOSEFA. *(Embraces him, playful:)* Tomorrow!

JOSÉ. Tomorrow?! No.

JOSEFA. When?

JOSÉ. Soon.

JOSEFA. I have something to tell you.

JOSÉ. What is it?

JOSEFA. *(Changes her mind:)* Don't take too much of their money tonight, *mi amor.* Don't give them a reason to hang you.

JOSÉ. Who would hang a man dressed so finely?

(He kisses her.)

Hasta luego.

(He exits. A cheer erupts as the actors dance, drink and gamble as we hear "Going To California.")

LA CANTANTE. *(Sings:)*

GOODBYE MY DEAR, SAY A PRAYER
I'M GOING TO CALIFORNIA,
WITH POCKETS FULL OF PRECIOUS GOLD
I'LL RETURN FOR YA',
RICHES AND LAND FOR ANY MAN
STRONG ENOUGH TO TRY,
WE'LL LIVE OUR DAYS IN LUXURY
UNTIL THE DAY WE DIE,
WITH GOD AND GRACE AND LIBERTY
UNTIL THE DAY WE DIE.

OLD WOMAN. *(Joining the group:)* Nearly five thousand miners had their fill as they celebrated well into the night! Among *los borrachos* was one Frederick Cannon.

*(*CANNON *swings around, whiskey bottle in hand.)*

OLD WOMAN. *(Takes his arm, flirtatious:) Era muy popular, este hombre.*

CANNON. *(Laughs.)* Do I know you? Hmm? *Te conozco, Señora?*

OLD WOMAN. You do now.

(She guides him in the direction of Josefa's home.)

OLD WOMAN. *(Whispers in his ear:)* That way.

*(*CANNON *stumbles away.)*

CANNON. *(Sees Josefa's home, laughs.)* Happy Fourth of July!

(A loud thud is heard as CANNON *falls to the ground in front of* JOSEFA. *She screams.)*

CANNON. Ah, hell!

(Sees JOSEFA.*)*

Hello, Josefa!

JOSEFA. Get out of my house!

CANNON. It is the loveliest shanty I have ever fixed my eyes on.

JOSEFA. *Lárgate!* José will be here soon!

CANNON. That Sonoran son of a bitch!

(Grabs her arm.)

Why don't you be my natural, Josefa.

(Takes her scarf, puts it around his neck.)

My claim will soon commence to being quite lucrative.

JOSEFA. *(Determined:) Lárgate de mi casa ahora mismo,* Cannon!

CANNON. Alright! Alright! *Hasta la próxima vez, mi amor!*

*(*CANNON *disappears.* JOSÉ *rushes in.)*

JOSÉ. Was that Frederick Cannon? *Qué pasó?!*

JOSEFA. I can't take this anymore, José. I won't!

JOSÉ. Did he hurt you? Did he…?

JOSEFA. They don't respect us!

JOSÉ. *(Grabs her.)* Josefa, what did he do?!

JOSEFA. He broke down our door!!!

(Pause.)

You said we could leave.

JOSÉ. Soon. I made a small fortune tonight. Just a few more—

JOSEFA. I can't stay any longer, José! How can you? They kicked you out of the mines. Called you a greaser.

JOSÉ. *Solamente son palabras.*

JOSEFA. Just words? What about the riots at Sutter's Mill? People were murdered.

JOSÉ. I know that, Josefa.

JOSEFA. Then what are you waiting for?! People will die here *también.* I know it, José. I can feel it. And I'm tired of pretending I'm a ghost. I want to feel like I actually exist!

(After a moment they embrace.)

OLD WOMAN. They held each other through the night. Made love. Cried. How was it possible Josefa thought? That the dirt in Sonora could feel the same as in California, while the air felt so different? As the morning sun painted the *sierras* a golden hue, Josefa fell asleep dreaming of a little girl in a tattered dress, running to her in tears.

*(*CANNON *and others enter, laughing.)*

CANNON. My head feels like it's been split open by an axe!

MINER. What a celebration!

JOSEFA. *(Breaks from the embrace.)* He's back! *El desgraciado!*

JOSÉ. I'll talk to him.

(He goes out to meet CANNON, *nervous.)*

Señor Cannon.

CANNON. *Buenos días,* José. I have a hazy recollection of giving you quite a fair share of my money last night.

JOSÉ. Yes, eh, do you also recall breaking down our door?

CANNON. Did I now?

JOSÉ. Yes, and you gave Josefa quite a fright and, and—

CANNON. And, what?

JOSÉ. Well, we would like you to repair the door. *Por favor.*

CANNON. Listen to me you greedy son of a bitch, that door is hardly a door. A good sized mountain gnat could blow that relic off its hinges!

JOSÉ. But it didn't. You did.

CANNON. You bite your tongue, greaser!

(The men move in on JOSÉ. JOSEFA *comes closer.)*

JOSEFA. Leave him be!

JOSÉ. *Vete adentro!*

CANNON. *(To* JOSEFA*:) Y tú, que quieres? Puta!!!*

(As the crowd reacts to the insult JOSÉ *lunges at* CANNON, *but is held back. All freeze.)*

OLD WOMAN. *Puta.* Whore. If ever in your life you have had a man call you one, you never forget what the sting of that insult feels like. And I won't tell you what the significance of being called a whore in public in 1851 was…

(She steps behind JOSEFA.*)*

Josefa will show you.

(All unfreeze.)

JOSEFA. If you want to speak to me like that, then *pásele…*

(She steps back.)

Come into my house and insult me, *Señor* Cannon.

CANNON. As you wish, woman!

*(*CANNON *steps up as* JOSEFA *reaches behind her and the* OLD WOMAN *hands her a shiny Bowie knife.* JOSEFA *brings the knife up and plunges it deep into* CANNON's *chest. The crowd gasps. The* OLD WOMAN *takes her long red scarf and puts it in the hands of* CANNON. *He clutches one end of it to his chest and as he falls down she extends the scarf, like a trail of blood, for several feet.)*

OLD WOMAN. *(As she performs her ritual:)* And Jim Bowie, that failed hero, had his victory at last!

For his knife found its mark in the center of the strong, stubborn heart of Frederick Cannon. And moments later he was dead. Alleluia, alleluia.

(Facing audience:)

For a second nobody moved. Frozen by the violence. Then suddenly a cry went down the long twisted river…MURDER!!!

MOB. Get her!

JOSE. Josefa!

MOB. Interlopers!

JOSEFA. José!

*(*JOSEFA *and* JOSÉ, *hands outstretched, try in vain to get a hold of each other. Their pleas barely heard over the* MOB's *rage.)*

MOB. Murderer! Grab her! Sonoran devil! Goddamned greasers!

*(*JOSÉ *is dragged off.)*

MOB. *(Piercing through:)* LYNCH HER!!!

(A rope is produced. The MOB *lifts* JOSEFA.*)*

TOWNSPERSON. Colonel Weller. What do you say, Sir?

MOB. Hang her!

WELLER \ OLD WOMAN. I think it best to let the people decide!

MOB. Lynch her!!

(The MOB *shouts, then freezes.)*

WELLER. *(To* OLD WOMAN*:)* Who are you!

OLD WOMAN. Who are *you,* John B. Weller, future governor of California? You could've saved this woman.

WELLER. Those men were going to hang her and no man could stop them!

OLD WOMAN. Maybe. Or maybe you didn't want to get squeezed in between thousands of voters and a few "others."

WELLER. She killed him! There's no doubt about that!

OLD WOMAN. Agreed, *Señor.* But this is 1851. He damaged her property and insulted her honor. Both serious offenses.

What would you have done if a man called any one of your four wives a whore?

WELLER. I would have shot him dead! And no court would have faulted me for doing so!

OLD WOMAN. Good for you!

*(*JOSEFA *stands.)*

OLD WOMAN. Was it common to hang a pregnant woman?

WELLER. Hold on now! Three doctors rebutted that first one's claim!

OLD WOMAN. But how could they really know? You're a lawyer. What would the courts in your native Ohio have done?

WELLER. They would have waited until the woman's condition made itself known for certain.

OLD WOMAN. But they didn't. And why is that, *Señor* Weller?

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ODYSSEUS CRUZ
by José Cruz González

Cast of Characters

ODYSSEUS CRUZ, a middle age Latino undocumented migrant.

ELPENOR MARTÍNEZ, a Latino male. He is a ghost. Recently arrived to the Land of the Dead.

ATECLIA CRUZ, Odysseus Cruz's mother. Latina. A mysterious figure. She is a ghost.

CURANDERO, an ancient blind seer who can see into the future. A one hundred year old revolutionary. A ghost.

LA CANCIONERA, a singer.

EL ARPISTA, the harpist. (Optional)

Acknowledgments

Odysseus Cruz premiered at South Coast Repertory's 17th annual Hispanic Playwrights Project in 2001 as "California Scenarios," July 25—28, 30, 31 and August 1—4 with the following cast and crew:

LA CANCIONERA . . . . . Elisa Bocanegra
ODYSSEUS CRUZ . . . . . Geoffrey Rivas
ELPENOR MARTÍNEZ . . . . . Winston J. Rocha
ATECLIA CRUZ . . . . . Elisa Bocanegra
CURANDERO . . . . . Javi Mulero

Director . . . . . Juliette Carrillo
Production Designer . . . . . Christopher Acebo
Lighting Designer . . . . . Christopher Akerlind
Composer / Harpist . . . . . Javier Godinez
Production Manager . . . . . Jeff Gifford
Dramaturg . . . . . Jennifer Kiger
Stage Manager . . . . . Richard Soto

ODYSSEUS CRUZ
by José Cruz González

(A large desert like space. LA CANCIONERA *sings while* EL ARPISTA *plays.)*

LA CANCIONERA. *(Singing:)*

DIOS TE PIDO
LAS PALABRAS
PARA ESTA CANCIÓN
DE ODYSSEUS CRUZ

DIOS TE PIDO
LAS PALABRAS
PARA ESTA CANCIÓN
DE ODYSSEUS CRUZ

SE FUE DE SU PAÍS
A BUSCAR AVENTURA
HALLÓ TRAGEDIA
Y TAMBIÉN HONOR

LORD GRANT ME
THE WORDS
TO THIS SONG
ABOUT ODYSSEUS CRUZ

A MAN WHO LEFT HIS COUNTRY
IN SEARCH OF ADVENTURE
HE SUFFERED MUCH
BUT FOUND HIMSELF

ODYSSEUS CRUZ
ODYSSEUS CRUZ
TODOS SOMOS
ODYSSEUS CRUZ

*(*LA CANCIONERA *blows into a conch shell summoning* ODYSSEUS CRUZ. ODYSSEUS CRUZ *rushes in. He is a middle age Latino male. He has a pouch slung across his shoulder and a machete. It is held by rope. He falls to the ground before us. He removes two dry ears of corn and begins rubbing them together. The kernels fall to the ground. He drinks from a bottle of tequila.* ODYSSEUS CRUZ *cuts his palm spilling his blood over the seeds of corn.)*

ODYSSEUS. *Ándale,* this is for you, *muertos.* An offering for the dead. Hear my words. I call forth *el hombre ciego.* Come to me old

blind man and tell me how I escape from this *pinche* country and return to my home.

¡Vénganse buey!

> *(An inhuman cry is heard. Three serpent eagles fly in circling* ODYSSEUS CRUZ. *Actors hold the serpent eagles. The winged creatures are* CURANDERO, ELPENOR, *and* ATECLIA. ODYSSEUS CRUZ *raises his machete to protect himself.)*

ODYSSEUS. *¡Qué chingao!* Come no further or I'll cut you down, *cabrones!*

> *(One of the serpent eagles transforms into a ghost. He is* CURANDERO, *a hundred-year-old revolutionary.)*

ODYSSEUS. *Viejo ciego.*

> *(*ODYSSEUS *offers the bottle of tequila to the old man.* CURANDERO *drinks from it.)*

CURANDERO. *Es muy sabroso joven. Gracias.*

ODYSSEUS. It is said you can see the future. You know why I've summoned you.

CURANDERO. *Odysseus Cruz,* you have spent too many years away from your homeland. Suffered much hardship. And now you try to return home but cannot. Fate conspires against you, *muchacho.*

ODYSSEUS. Tell me something I don't know.

CURANDERO. Your wife waits for you back home. Your son, *Telémaco,* searches for you. And your house is filled with strange men in their fine *botas de cuero, brillantina* slick hair, speaking poetic words who wish to take your *mujer* and your *rancho* for their very own.

ODYSSEUS. They think I'm dead? They're mistaken. There'll be hell to pay.

CURANDERO. Everyone must pay sometime even you.

ODYSSEUS. I have paid too much all ready. My accounts are clear. I owe no one. *Dime,* do I have a chance of getting across?

CURANDERO. Don't you recognize this place?

ODYSSEUS. It's a *pinche* desert. Nothing more.

CURANDERO. Its called *El Camino del Infierno.* The Road to Hell. A long time ago you crossed here at night with a handful of *compañeros.* You brought them to find work in this country.

ODYSSEUS. I did. So what?

CURANDERO. But *La Migra* found you.

ODYSSEUS. The *cabrones* came out of nowhere. They surprised us.

CURANDERO. Everyone panicked including you. People scattered everywhere *como cucarachas.*

ODYSSEUS. Some got away. Some got picked up. What's your point?

CURANDERO. And some stayed behind.

ODYSSEUS. What? Who did?

CURANDERO. *Elpenor Martínez* and his son *Eleazar.*

ODYSSEUS. My *compadre* and his boy?

CURANDERO. They found a wound in the earth's crust and hid themselves there. And when *La Migra* was gone and the sun was high above their heads they came out and they didn't know where they were.

ODYSSEUS. The *Migra* must have found them. *¿No ves?* They have eyes in the sky to see and ears in the earth to hear.

CURANDERO. *Elpenor* and his son lasted only three days and then died here *solitos. Eleazar* was only thirteen.

ODYSSEUS. Why are you telling me this?

CURANDERO. Because they trusted you.

ODYSSEUS. No, you can't blame me! Everyone knew the consequences!

CURANDERO. Before you're allowed to return to your homeland, the dead have something to say to you.

> *(One of the serpent eagles transforms into a ghost. It is* ELPENOR.*)*

ELPENOR. *¡Odysseus Cruz!*

ODYSSEUS. *Elpenor Martínez,* is it really you, *'Mano?* I'm sorry about you and your *muchacho.*

ELPENOR. Why didn't you come back for us, *buey?* You left us to die out here alone.

ODYSSEUS. You know there wasn't time, *'Mano.* We were being chased by the *pinche Migra.* It was every man for himself.

ELPENOR. Ah, the Great *Odysseus Cruz* and his empty words. This is the same man who boasted, "Any *hombre* who goes to work with me in *los Estados Unidos* will become *rico.* Enough to retire like a king."

ODYSSEUS. It's true. I said it, *¿Y qué?*

ELPENOR. *¡Puras papas!* How many men believed you?

ODYSSEUS. *Un chingo.*

ELPENOR. How many men came with you?

ODYSSEUS. Most of them did.

ELPENOR. And how many men return with you now? None! Our bones are scattered across this country like your empty words, *desgraciado!* We crossed a desert only to become outlaws. To be treated like dirt. To take jobs nobody wants. I see *Zapata* driving an old Nissan pickup, and *Frida Kahlo* working at a Burger King. *Juan Diego* sells roses off the freeway. *La Llorona* is in drug rehab. *La Virgen* turns beds as a hotel maid, and *Cortés* belongs to the Mexican *Eme.* Some of us are here by choice. And some of us are here because we have to be.

ODYSSEUS. Surviving here is about always being one-step ahead *porque te fregan.* You knew that.

ELPENOR. Our women are without their men, and our children are without their fathers. And you're the only one still standing! Your pride was our undoing.

*(*ODYSSEUS *holds out his machete.)*

ODYSSEUS. Don't come any closer!

ELPENOR. What are you going to do? I'm all ready dead, *pendejo!*

ODYSSEUS. What is it you want?

ELPENOR. Take this *saco* with you.

*(*ELPENOR *holds a sack out to* ODYSSEUS.*)*

ODYSSEUS. Why should I?

ELPENOR. *Ándale,* open it. It's a promise you made long ago. You swore in church before God and my wife that you would bring us back home.

*(*ODYSSEUS *opens the bag pouring out human skulls.)*

ODYSSEUS. *(Horrified:) ¡Chingao!*

ELPENOR. That's all that's left of your *compañeros.* Of me and my son, my brave *hombrecito* who called you *padrino.* My little boy who I held in my arms as he laid dying. What future does he have now?

ODYSSEUS. *Elpenor,* I didn't know.

ELPENOR. So many peopled believed in you. Believed your words that their lives would be better. So we risked everything to come to *El Norte* with you. You who had been to *el otro lado.*

ODYSSEUS. What do you want from me?

ELPENOR. Burn our *huesos* in *la tierra* where we were born. Scatter our ashes to the four directions and send offerings to the Sun God. Don't let us lie alone in this godforsaken place. *Por favor.* You owe us that.

ODYSSEUS. *Órale,* I'll do it.

ELPENOR. *Vamos a ver. Vamos a ver.*

> *(*ELPENOR *becomes a serpent eagle. He circles* ODYSSEUS *and flies off.* ODYSSEUS *begins to collect their bones.* ATECLIA, *Odysseus's mother transforms into a ghost. She crosses to him standing there momentarily. She wears a rebozo.)*

ODYSSEUS. Why do you hide your face, *señora?* Who are you? *Contésteme.*

> *(She does not respond.)*

ODYSSEUS. *(To* CURANDERO*:)* Tell me, *Viejo,* who is that old woman? And why won't she speak to me?

CURANDERO. Don't you recognize her?

> *(*ATECLIA *removes her rebozo revealing her face.)*

ATECLIA. *Odysseus, hijo—*

ODYSSEUS. *¿Mi madre, Ateclia?*

ATECLIA. *—por qué hablas con los muertos?*

ODYSSEUS. *'Amá,* tell me what happened? How did *La Muerte* come to you? Did some illness befall you?

ATECLIA. *Mi hijo…*

ODYSSEUS. And what news of my *'Apá,* my son, and good wife? Does she still love me?

ATECLIA. Her tears never stop for you. They flow constant *como un río triste.* She is still your *reina.* Your son struggles to hold on despite your long absence and your *'Apá* has taken to living on the streets.

ODYSSEUS. But why? I built him a good solid *casa* of stone and wood. I left him with an abundant field of corn and *frijole.*

ATECLIA. He lives *como un pobre* in misery, drinking away his sorrow and talking to himself. His heart is burdened with thoughts of you.

ODYSSEUS. *Mi perdido papá—*

ATECLIA. This weighed heavily upon me. My burden was twofold for my *Odysseus* was gone too. And this was my undoing, *hijo.*

ODYSSEUS. *'Amá,* I'm so sorry—

*(*ODYSSEUS *reaches out to her but she moves away.)*

ODYSSEUS. *¿'Amá, por qué no me abrazas?*

ATECLIA. *No puedo, hijo.* In this place the dead and living shall never embrace. Our souls flicker briefly and then slip away. And the only thing the living can keep are remnants of what we once were.

ODYSSEUS. Oh, forgive me, *'Amá.* Forgive me for the suffering I caused you. Forgive me for my selfish ambition. I once dreamed of conquering this land with my bare hands. My family would never want for anything. I clutched at every job. Pinched every penny. Dreaming of one day returning home to live like a king. And somehow along the way what I treasured most slipped through my hands.

ATECLIA. *Vete pa tu tierra, hijo. Busca a tu familia* and set things right.

ODYSSEUS. I will return and make things as they should be. I swear it, *'Amá.*

ATECLIA. *Me voy, hijo.*

ODYSSEUS. Don't go!

*(*ATECLIA *covers her head with her rebozo. She transforms into a serpent eagle. She circles once and flies off.)*

CURANDERO. *Los muertos te esperan.*

ODYSSEUS. *No más, Viejo.* I've seen and heard enough.

*(*CURANDERO *hands* ODYSSEUS *the bottle of tequila. He takes a drink.)*

CURANDERO. You'll have to cross the desert to return home.

ODYSSEUS. Yes.

CURANDERO. Under the cover of night.

ODYSSEUS. Yes.

CURANDERO. They'll be expecting you at the borderline. *La Migra* won't make it easy for you.

ODYSSEUS. Then I'll walk further into the desert so they won't track me.

CURANDERO. Beware of *coyotes* with guns, and *la Migra* men with *Broncos.*

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THE SEVEN VISIONS OF ENCARNACION
by Octavio Solis

Cast of Characters

CALACA FLACA

PADRE LUCERO, a Spanish friar

ENCARNACIÓN, a young boy raised in the mission

CAROLINA, a young girl from the local village

NEOFITOS

LA LLORONA

Setting

1800s. Northern California.

Note

This is a play for shadow puppets. The play was first developed during the 2001 workshop of *California Scenarios* at South Coast Repertory and was later produced by Shadowlight Theater in San Francisco. The following is an excerpt from the beginning of the piece which approximates the portion included in the SCR workshop.

THE SEVEN VISIONS OF ENCARNACION
by Octavio Solis

(Blackout. Music. On the screen a deck of Loteria Cards, Which sweep and swirl around and around to the music as if to weave a spell. The CALACA FLACA *appears amid them with a sharp cackle. Behind him looms the skyscraper outline of the city.)*

CALACA. Bienvenidos, camaradas, welcome to my mundo de sombras!
Do you know what today is?
El Dia de los Muertos,
When all the deceased walk the earth
Looking for leche and nookie!
And these are Lotería cards
Mesoamerican bingo,
Where the pictures promise fortune
But deliver mostly beans,
Pero this time, sabes,
These cards bear the dreams and visions of a certain
Historical homey who deals from the deck of his own soul.
So let's bury this city, let's lay it under the earth
So the bones of my cuento can live again.

(As the CALACA *sings, the city behind him slowly descends into the earth, exposing the hills of Northern California to view.)*

CALACA. *(Singing:)*

EN EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS
ON THE SECOND OF NOVEMBER
TWO HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE
ANY ONE OF YOU REMEMBER.

WHEN THE SPANISH SETTLED
IN GOLDEN CALIFORNIA
AND CLAIMED THE WHOLE FRONTERA
FOR THE RULERS OF ESPAÑA.

(The hills give way to the tilled fields of wheat, where ENCARNACIÓN *swings a sharp scythe.)*

THIS IS WHERE WE FIND
THE YOUNG ENCARNACIÓN
A BOY RAISED ALL HIS LIFE
INSIDE OF THE MISIÓN.

SEE HIM WORK HIS FIELDS
IF ONLY HE HAD KNOWN

HE'LL REAP SEVEN VISIÓNES
BY THE END OF MY CANCION.

*(*ENCARNACIÓN *labors hard in the fields, reaping the grain with a long scythe.* PADRE LUCERO *appears in the distance, also working in the setting sun.)*

LUCERO. Encarnación!

ENCARNACIÓN. Si, Padre.

LUCERO. A word with you, mijo!

*(*PADRE LUCERO *approaches.)*

ENCARNACIÓN. Is it time for vespers ya, Padre?

LUCERO. Soon. First there's something I've been meaning to tell you.

ENCARNACIÓN. Que, Padre?

LUCERO. Eh…this field…
Does it mean anything to you?

ENCARNACIÓN. Just a field, from which we draw bread. Why?

LUCERO. Mira, eighteen years ago, in this very field,
I was slashing at the wheat,
When I heard a cry.
A special cry.

ENCARNACIÓN. What was it, Frá Lucero?

LUCERO. You.
I found you in this furrow.
I picked your little body up and washed the mud off your face
With my own hands.

ENCARNACIÓN. You found me here?

LUCERO. I could tell by your eyes, that noble profile,
Such a child of Spain.

ENCARNACIÓN. Why do you tell me this, Padre?

LUCERO. Tonight at the mass I am announcing that
Finally
You will be ordained in our holy brotherhood
And sent to your true homeland España to pursue your studies.

ENCARNACIÓN. Oh, gracias, Fra Luceo, gracias!

LUCERO. I'll see you at the misa.

(He blesses ENCARNACIÓN.*)*

And I gently touch his brow

ENCARNACIÓN. As he has touched it for so long

LUCERO. If on my fingers heaven sings

ENCARNACIÓN. Then my brow is stamped with song.
Dios te bendiga, hijo.

*(*PADRE LUCERO *goes.)*

ENCARNACIÓN. *(Singing:)*
AT LAST.
MY PARENT'S HOMELAND
THAT I'VE DREAMED OF SINCE I COULD DREAM.
BUT THIS DITCH. I WAS MADE HERE.
EN ESTA TIERRA NACI.

(The CALACA *slips out of his body and speaks to him.)*

CALACA. And to this tierra terminas, vato!

ENCARNACIÓN. Dios santo!
Un demonio! NO! NO!
Spare me these devils!

CALACA. Chill, ese!
I ain't no devil, cuz!

ENCARNACIÓN. Then…then…then what are you?

CALACA. Think of me as
Encarnacion
Minus the carne!

ENCARNACIÓN. You're me?

CALACA. No, you're me.

ENCARNACIÓN. Why do you appear like this?
What do you want from me?

CALACA. Nada, ese. It's what you want from me.

ENCARNACIÓN. What do you mean?

CALACA. España. I can give you a preview.
Look into the glint of your reaper blade
And see reflected there your glories…
Allí…allí…allí…

*(*ENCARNACIÓN *stares into his scythe blade as the* CALACA *presents the first card: Los Gemelos.)*

Los Gemelos!

(The wheatfields evaporate as ENCARNACIÓN *is plunged into his first vision.*

A vision of Spain.

Dancing calacas and music.

A crowned ENCARNACIÓN *dances with regal calacas as La* CALACA *provides commentary.)*

CALACA. Señoritas, Dons, and soldiers, cada uno guero
Dancing for you, Jefe, el mero mero,
Encarnacion with a crown on your pelo
Swishy red cape just like a torero,
As you dance the latest bolero!
Valgame, you are the hippest thing in Ethpana!
But lookee here.

(When the song ends, ENCARNACIÓN *stands as explorers enter and present him with the riches of the Third World.)*

EXPLORER CALACAS. *(Spoken:)* Here, sire, we bring you these spices.
And tobacco and coffee, such splendid vices.
And, from the Mission, these tropical ices.
Y aqui, mi rey, I give you this brave new world savage.

(Dirty, naked, covered in his own filth, a young man cowers face down before the crowned ENCARNACIÓN.*)*

ENCARNACIÓN. Este animal, con aspecto terible, is a man?
Levanta su cara, bestia. ¡Levanta!

(The boy stands straight and reveals himself. To ENCARNACIÓN's *shock, he sees his Twin, face to face, eye to eye.)*

CALACA. There he saw his own self
only wilder y darker
Like looking in an angry mirror.

ENCARNACIÓN. Bestia

TWIN. Or brother.

(The faces of ENCARNACIÓN *and the* SAVAGE TWIN *come nose to nose. The* CALACA *steps into the picture.)*

CALACA. Two Encarnaciónes from two worlds apart
Two cuates sharing the same pumping heart!

(The bells toll. ENCARNACIÓN *wakes up abruptly and finds himself back in the fields. He runs across the lotes to the mission in the distance.* CALACA *sings us through the next transition:)*

SHAKIN' OFF HIS SUEÑO
LIKE A SMELLY CASE OF GAS

ENCARNACIÓN CORRIÓ
TO FRÁ LUCERO'S MASS

*(*ENCARNACIÓN *rushes through the portals of the mission to make the vespers in time.* CAROLINA *suddenly leaps out in front of him.)*

CAROLINA. There you are!

ENCARNACIÓN. Carolina!

CAROLINA. ¡SHH! ¡Toma!

(She gives him a curious looking talisman.)

ENCARNACIÓN. What's this supposed to be?

CAROLINA. I don't have time to explain. Just keep it.

ENCARNACIÓN. Wait! Where are you going?

CAROLINA. Let me go!

ENCARNACIÓN. I won't let you run away.
¡Ven, sigueme!

(He takes her into the chapel where the PADRE LUCERO *is completing his sermon.)*

LUCERO. Recuerdan:
Todos somos iguales en la presencia del Señor.
Esta es la Palabra de Dios.

NEOFITOS. Demos gracias al Señor.

LUCERO. Now an announcement I've waited years to make.
Our brother Encarnación has been accepted into our holy order.
We will soon be sending him to Spain for his final studies.
As his teacher, I can be no prouder.
As his guardian, I will miss him dearly.
¡Que viva Encarnación!

NEOFITOS. ¡QUE VIVA!

LUCERO. Hijo,
Please, lead the lesson now.

ENCARNACIÓN. Por supuesto, Frá Lucero.

*(*ENCARNACIÓN *rises and leads the group in a call and response.)*

ENCARNACIÓN. Te deum laudamus:

NEOFITOS. Te deum laudamus:

LUCERO. te dominum confitemur

NEOFITOS. te dominum confitemur

*(*CAROLINA *slinks through the crowd toward her getaway.* ENCARNACIÓN *spots her and tries to get the Padre's attention.)*

ENCARNACIÓN. te aeternum Patem!

NEOFITOS. te aeternum Patem!

ENCARNACIÓN. omnis terra veneratur!

NEOFITOS. omnis terra veneratur!

*(*CAROLINA *is gone.)*

ENCARNACIÓN. Tibi omnes Angeli!

NEOFITOS. Tibi omnes Angeli

ENCARNACIÓN. Amen!

NEOFITOS. Amen.

(Crossfade to: CAROLINA *skulking through the portals of the mission. She runs and soon the* PADRE LUCERO *and* ENCARNACIÓN *dash after her.*

Crossfade to: a thick copse of tall trees as she hears voices advancing. She disappears into them as ENCARNACIÓN *also rushes into the thicket. The* CALACA *appears.)*

CALACA. Carolina crept through the shadows into the woods
While Frá Lucero ran after her.
Pero este vato rushed into thicker darkness.

(Presenting the next card:)

¡La Llorona!

ENCARNACIÓN. Carolina! Carolina!

(He hears a distant lament. At first faint and hollow. He follows the wailing.)

LA LLORONA.

CAMINO DE NOCHE COMO UNA LLORONA
LLORANDO CON TANTO DOLOR
HECHO DE MENOS MI NIÑO
QUERIDO
QUE GANÉ YO PERDIENDO MI HONOR.
MI NIÑO LINDO,
INDITO QUERIDO
HOW DID YOU EVER LOSE ME?
ONE MOMENT YOU'RE MINE
THEN GONE PARA SIEMPRE

YO SIEMPRE LLORANDO
POR TI.

(He moves through the trees unaware of the veiled woman moving mysteriously behind him, her arms bundling up an infant in her veil.)

ENTRE LOS BOSQUES TE BUSCA LLORONA
PERO NO TENGAS MIEDO DE MI
THERE'S NOTHING TO FEAR
BUT A MOTHER WHO'S CRYING
FOR THE WAY THINGS TURNED OUT TO BE.
GIVING YOU LIFE TOOK THE LIFE OF LLORONA
JUST A BREATH AND THEN I WAS GONE
SO I WANDER THESE WOODS
LLORANDO LLORANDO
WITH MY LONELY CORAZON…

AYY AYY AYY…

*(*ENCARNACIÓN *at last sees an Indian woman crying pitifully.)*

¿Señora? ¿Señora, que le pasa? ¿Porque llora tanto?

(He touches her shoulder and with a screech she unfurls her lace veil revealing empty arms and her bare cackling skull to him. He sinks under her glare. Crossfade to The Mission chapel. PADRE LUCERO *drags* CAROLINA *on and thrusts her on the floor.)*

LUCERO. Carolina! ¡La gran imprudencia!
What do you think you're doing! No-one runs away from this mision!

(She tries to run again but he grabs her. ENCARNACIÓN *enters and watches.)*

CAROLINA. LET ME GO!

LUCERO. ¡Calma, nina, calma!
Stupid girl! You interrupted
Not only the service but my announcement of Encarnación's ordainment!
¡Que no tienes respeto!

CAROLINA. Not for you, not for him, not for your God even!

LUCERO. ¡Silencio! ¡Las manos en frente!

(She places her hands in front of her as PADRE LUCERO *finds his switch.)*

Respeto a Encarnación.

(He strikes her hard.)

Respeto a mi.

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TWO STEPS FORWARD, ONE STEP BACK
by Joann Farías

Cast of Characters

LALO, the hero, 42, badly hung over
EUSEBIO, fellow picker, the man who ate shit
JEFE, the overseer
RAMONA, the wife of Eusebio, the man who ate shit
LA CATRINA
ANGEL, the drowned man
MARTA, Lalo's wife in Mexico
MAMA, Lalo's mother

(A humming sound.)

LA CATRINA. Dos adelante, un atrás.

LALO. What's that sound?

EUSEBIO. What sound?

LALO. That sound. Don't you hear it?

EUSEBIO. I don't hear nothing but my hangover.

LALO. I hear that. I'm thirsty.

EUSEBIO. I hear that.

RAMONA. You just ate.

LALO. You don't hear it?

RAMONA. I've got a tortilla.

EUSEBIO. What sound?

LALO. That humming sound.

EUSEBIO. Give me the water bottle.

*(*EUSEBIO *takes it from* RAMONA, *drains it, and hands it back to her.)*

EUSEBIO. A tortilla makes you more thirsty.

RAMONA. I know.

(Humming sound.)

LA CATRINA. Dos adelante, un atrás. Two steps forward, one step back.

LALO. That sound.

EUSEBIO. He's hearing the strawberries go ay! when he picks them.

LA CATRINA. Where's your water bottle?

LALO. What?

LA CATRINA. Your water bottle?

RAMONA. Ay! Ay! Me pica! Me pica!

(Laughter.)

(Humming sound.)

LALO. That sound.

RAMONA. Me pica! Ay!

LALO. Could I have some water?

EUSEBIO. Terminado.

RAMONA. All gone. Didn't you bring some water?

LALO. No. I'm wishing I did.

EUSEBIO. Ramona.

RAMONA. What?

EUSEBIO. Come here.

RAMONA. What?

EUSEBIO. Put this strawberry between your legs and let me lick it.

RAMONA. Callate viejo.

EUSEBIO. Why not?

LALO. My wife.

EUSEBIO. Not your wife again.

LALO. I left her.

EUSEBIO. What for?

LALO. To come here and work. Ay, Marta!

MARTA. Adonde vas, mi amor?

LALO. Voy al norte a trabajar.

MARTA. You're gonna get married with a gringa and forget about me.

LALO. Ojala! I hope she's rich, so I don't have to work no more.

LALO. I left you big.

MARTA. Big.

LALO. Me intiendes. I left her big.

EUSEBIO. Big.

LALO. Ay, mi alma.

JEFE. If you can't do the work, I'll find somebody who can.

LALO. I can work, I can work. They need the money at home.

EUSEBIO. Spend it, hombre. That's what I do.

RAMONA. On yourself all night drinking beer with Lalo.

EUSEBIO. Who else?

LA CATRINA. Two steps forward, one step back.

LALO. *(Looking at his hands:)* Ah! I cut myself. I'm bleeding.

EUSEBIO. What did you cut yourself for?

RAMONA. He cut himself on the berries.

LALO. Berries?

RAMONA. Mira.

LALO. It's berries.

EUSEBIO. The berries are bleeding.

LALO. I thought it was blood, but it's berries.

LA CATRINA. The berries are your blood.

RAMONA. We shouldn't pick them.

LALO. Maybe they're bleeding to death.

EUSEBIO. I just ate one.

RAMONA. It had dirt on it.

EUSEBIO. Help me! I'm gonna die from eating dirt.

RAMONA. He's eating dirt.

EUSEBIO. I've eaten dirt.

JEFE. What did it taste like?

EUSEBIO. Better than shit.

JEFE. You ate shit?

EUSEBIO. It's a long story.

JEFE. What were you doing?

EUSEBIO. I was looking for my wife.

JEFE. I wouldn't eat shit for my wife.

RAMONA. *(To* EUSEBIO*:)* Callate!

LALO. Hey, are you the jefe?

JEFE. What do you want?

LALO. Why did you plant strawberries in the middle of a river?

JEFE. There ain't no river here. Stop wasting my time. And get up. We don't pay you to lay there.

LALO. I'm just gonna lay here for a minute and catch my breath.

JEFE. You get paid for what you pick.

LALO. I'm just catching my breath.

JEFE. If you can't work, I'll find somebody who can.

LALO. In a minute.

JEFE. If you can't, I'll find somebody who can.

MARTA. If you can't, I'll find somebody who can.

*(*LALO *lies by the river.)*

ANGEL. Oye, Lalo.

LALO. What?

ANGEL. Lalo. Down here. It's me.

LALO. Angel?

ANGEL. Yeah. I'll be your guide.

LALO. What?

ANGEL. I'll guide you. I'll show you how to cross.

LALO. You can't guide me, Angel.

ANGEL. Why not?

LALO. You drowned in an irrigation ditch.

ANGEL. So?

LALO. You couldn't keep yourself alive. How can you help me?

ANGEL. I'll help you with drowning.

LALO. Drowning?

ANGEL. I know about that.

LALO. I don't want to drown.

ANGEL. It's so nice. Nice and cool.

LALO. I'll stay hot.

ANGEL. All that coolness. After a while you don't care.

JEFE. If you can't work I'll find somebody who can.

LALO. All right, all right, I'm getting up.

EUSEBIO. Si no te gusta, go back to Méjico.

LALO. I can't.

EUSEBIO. Why not?

LALO. There's no work.

JEFE. I wouldn't eat shit for my wife.

LA CATRINA. Pagas lo que debes.

LALO. What?

LA CATRINA. You pay what you owe.

LALO. What?

LA CATRINA. You left the water bottle I gave you.

LALO. Hail Mary, full of grace.

LA CATRINA. I gave you.

LALO. Hail Mary.

LA CATRINA. I gave.

LALO. Hail.

JEFE. If you don't finish out the day, you're busted.

LALO. What?

JEFE. See this?

LALO. Yes.

JEFE. Do you know what this is?

LALO. It looks like a phone.

JEFE. It's not just a phone, tonto. This is an instrument of mass communication. I can get on this phone and call Magee's, and if you try to go work there, they'll hear about you quitting early, and they won't take you. By the time you get down that road on foot I will have called every farm in Orange County, and nobody will take you.

LALO. Oh.

JEFE. The berries need you now. Not tomorrow or the next day.

LALO. Oh.

JEFE. Does your family like to eat?

LALO. Yes.

JEFE. That's what I've got this phone for. This phone will make sure your children don't go hungry.

LALO. Have you got any water?

JEFE. There's a spigot over there. Do we have to give you people everything?

MAMA. When you were a little boy I used to rock you in my arms and sing to you. I wanted so much for you. I wanted you to be happy. Here I find you now a man, and you're not happy.

LALO. I'm happy, Mama.

MAMA. Look at you working, so far away from home.

LALO. I'll be home, Mama. I swear. I go back in the fall.

MAMA. Then the fall is your spring, and the spring is your fall. You're upside down for the seasons. That's why I'm afraid.

LALO. What are you afraid of?

MAMA. The way you live.

LALO. It's the only way I can live.

MAMA. I know.

LALO. I have to go. I can't pick no more today.

EUSEBIO. You going?

LALO. I have to.

RAMONA. Already?

LALO. I have to.

EUSEBIO. Why?

LALO. I'm sick.

RAMONA. What's wrong?

LALO. I don't know. I'm hearing noises.

RAMONA. What kind of noises?

LALO. A sonido.

RAMONA. Ah. A sonido.

LALO. Sonido extraño.

RAMONA. Sonido extraño.

LALO. And I'm feeling dizzy. Like I'm gonna fall down.

EUSEBIO. You're just hung over.

LALO. I have to go.

RAMONA. Check on my daughter when you go.

LALO. I will.

EUSEBIO. Bye.

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