

SANTIAGO

1973

by
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AN ABSTRACT INTRODUCTION

keywords: history, theater, journalism, political theory, creative writing, Chile, American Empire

September 11th, 1973 was a pivotal day in world history. In the slender, Pacific-facing, South American nation of Chile a war was being waged. Although, to the untrained eye, it was fought in the streets of Santiago and the halls of the La Moderna presidential palace; in reality the battle for control of the Chilean government had already been won in the backrooms of Washington and the secluded offices of Langley, Virginia.

This event, a single instance in the story of the USA's covert empire, is far from unique. If you pointed at a random country on the world map, there is a greater chance than not that you'd hit a country whose destiny was altered by the interference of the CIA or MI6 than not. Even those nations whose governments were not toppled or whose leaders were not assassinated still faced varying degrees of economic and political coercion to submit to this new axis of world power. From Cuba to Greece, from Iran to Indonesia, the United States and its allies waged this undeclared war, not just on Communism but on any country that did not willingly consign itself to the global designs drawn up by Western elites and their post-WWII Bretton-Woods system.

With this project, I've tasked myself with building a piece of art born primarily from research. A fiction born from my aching need to communicate my dismay with the current world order and my obsession to understand why things are the way that they are. To explain this historical phenomenon, I'm writing in the medium I understand best, the historical narrative. Though history, as a field, is itself a divided and ever-evolving practice, I find that there is a groundedness to it. Events have already unfolded. They have made an indelible impact on every part of our lives, whether or not we are willing and able to see that. Our jobs as historians hinge

upon being able to reveal, abbreviate, and explain the past to the public by weaving disparate documents, cultural facts, and artifacts into a cohesive narrative. With the entirety of past time to choose from, the question is always a matter of what to focus on and what to leave out.

Given these fundamental constraints, I've decided to start at the root of my fascination with the 1973 Chilean coup; the event that spawned my 2018-present fixation on US Empire. Although, the US has been the target of questioning and ridicule since its inception (and growing internal and external opposition in recent decades), its role as the sole globe-bestrident superpower—able to act with relative executive impunity and well beyond its rights as a sovereign nation—is perhaps the greatest implicit assumption of our time. The perception of the United States as a beacon of liberty and justice, the “city on the hill,” protector of democracy and human rights has guided the valences of Western news media, Hollywood, and international politics for almost a century. However, in spite of Francis Fukuyama's End of History “theory,” this dominance has an expiration date. No matter how one sees it, the breaking of the aforementioned implicit assumptions about the USA as a benevolent global protector and sovereign is undeniably underway. I'd argue this degradation is due in part to the horrific destruction caused by the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and the endless “War on Terror.”

Chile is an interesting case in the saga of US foreign intervention. Rather than being made into a colonial subject state, whose elite classes were co-opted and paid off in order to facilitate a system of resource and labor extraction (re: Philippines, Cuba), Chile was used as an experiment. A petri dish for an economic and governmental system now known as Neoliberalism.

Another unique thing about Chile is that, following the coup, it began to succeed by many measures—though notably, not humanitarian ones. In the final three decades of the 20th century, Chile's economy rocketed ahead of its South American neighbors. Despite having a GDP per capita slightly below the Latin American average in 1973, by 1993 it was outpacing the rest of the region. The strength of the Chilean peso was at its all-time high under the Neoliberal economic regime. Even after the Pinochet dictatorship and the creation of a new left-of-center government, these reforms remained in place due to their perceived and possibly unavoidable effectiveness. I take this as a reminder that history does not consist of many straightforward progressions or regressions, but some combination of the two with a great degree of lateral movement stuffed in the middle.

When it comes to Pinochet's CIA-backed coup in Chile, it must be acknowledged that the conditions that facilitated the violent insurrection and overthrow of Allende's democratically elected government were, to a large extent, homegrown. Much like the United States, Chile is a settler colonialist state. In its earliest form, it was the southern march of the Spanish Empire in South America. Chile began its existence as a collection of forts to defend the remnants of the annexed Incan Empire from the Indigenous peoples of the southern Andes and Tierra del Fuego, such as the Mapuche. Inevitably, the 'defensive' strategy of this highly militarized colony became a preemptive offensive, which pushed steadily towards the Straits of Magellan year after year, eventually creating the slender, north-south country we know today. Though the percentage of the Chilean population that identifies as indigenous is significantly higher than that of the US—about twelve to thirteen percent—the degree of displacement, genocide, and forced labor that occurred to create Chile as we know it today cannot be overstated.

When it came time to gain its independence from the Spanish Crown after Napoleon's conquest of the Iberian peninsula, little was done to redress any of the inequities inherent to the previous colonial rule. Besides the few elites who remained loyal to the empire, those who were in power before retained their power in the aftermath of the "revolution." Coupling the above history, so similar to the US's own, with the fact that those in seats of power on both sides of the Chilean political spectrum were also what we in the United States would consider "White," complicates current academic notions of Western White supremacy. These demographic and historical connections may also explain Chile's relatively gentle (yet still objectively brutal) treatment by the United States. All of this complicates everything I thought I knew about the relationship between the US and Latin America.

As I write this, September 2023, the 50th anniversary of this imposition of US authority and colonial revanchism looms close. It is not lost on me that we, the American electorate, have not learned our lesson. I can only place so much blame on individuals and private citizens for the actions taken by our collection of state-perpetuating departments. Departments that exist largely outside the purview of electoral control. Only recently, due to the rise of the internet, have we in this country been given a plain glass view of the results of our regime's actions. There are numerous benefits to this, but not necessarily free of issues. Unfortunately, and counter-productively, this "understanding" has sparked numerous "theories" of a grand conspiracy, a cabal that runs the world from the shadows.

This fantastical super-state is little more than a diversion from the true nature of institutional power. A simplification. A shorthand that makes the unknowable weight of this complex world a little more bearable. Despite the incredible influence of the security state, it's

important to remember that their actions do not constitute the whole story. Despite their best efforts, the institutions of US empire: (corporate, carceral, legislative, military, and the media) do not have the capacity to fully govern and control the breadth of individual and collective human behavior—the axis on which history so often spins from one age into the next.

I see the piece below as a tribute to the collection of literature that seeks to critique the excesses and abuses of US imperialism. But more than that, I want to give life and voice to the people who suffer under its boot, adding a personal dimension to the strife.

Fiction allows this personal dimension to express itself fully. The usefulness of fiction comes from its ability to foster connection and understanding between people across time and space. Its constructed nature allows the meaningful specificities of human existence to shine through. Counterintuitively, it is these specificities that allow for connection. They cut deeper than abstractions and generalities.

No one remembers a generic story full of platitudes and tropes, even if those tropes bear resemblance to real life. We imbibe stories, good stories anyway, in order to better understand the world around us. To be challenged by the ideas of others in their fully furnished state. Complete understanding comes from witnessing the gap between us and another individual and willingly crossing it. This process allows us to engage with 'the other' and/or the extreme and hopefully emerge with newfound wisdom. Our own mini hero's journey. The author's job is to make this process possible and palatable. The draw is the specificity, the intimacy. That's why romance novels are best-sellers and dense monographs are archived in libraries.

History suffers often in the fact that it must, to some degree, be abstract. Until very recently, an extremely slim portion of human life was recorded in any form. And, more than

likely, a majority of those recordings have been lost to time in one way or another. This results in us not knowing much about how everyday people lived. The gap becomes too wide, and without a good deal of imagination or a good deal more reading, it can be difficult to place one's feet in the shoes of a peasant farmer, or a merchant or a slave or a nameless revolutionary. Fiction does not have this issue. Fiction is all about how people live: their thoughts and feelings, their beliefs and misperceptions, their reactions to the world around them.

Thus, despite my initiation of this project being born of my political persuasions, the intention of this work is not to support some ideological end. My primary goal with this work is simply to encourage empathy. To help us acknowledge the truth and remember, or perhaps relearn, a bit about our history so as not to perpetuate its less desirable iterations.

Thank you for bearing with me through that. I tried to capture the sequence of thoughts that led me to where I am now, updating as I went. Much like the contents of my mind, it's not well sorted. But enough of that. Now, without further ado, let me introduce...

THE PLAYERS

PRIMARY

Catalina Zapata-Leal: Second oldest, outspoken, direct, salacious tongue, a little too smart for her own good, politically active. (Aquarius)

Elena Zapata-Leal: Third sibling, modest, temperate, mediator who makes everyone mad, aide to minister of foreign affairs. (Libra)

Mateo Zapata-Leal: Youngest Sibling, rebel without a cause, catapults between this and that and the other thing; notoriously unconscientious. (Gemini)

SECONDARY

Luis Zapata-Leal: Eldest sibling, responsible, educated, erudite, history professor, member of socialist party (Capricorn)

Fernando Zapata-Moreno: Right-wing uncle, former military officer. (Cancer)

Cristobal Fernandez: Catalina's financially literate fiancé. Cautious, courteous, calm, possesses a bit of a wandering eye. (Scorpio)

Maria Leal-Diaz: Matriarch, stern, stubborn, laconic. deceptively strong. (Aries)

Diana Speltzer: All-American girl on educational holiday. Pronounces her name: *dai-nuh* (Pisces) *Same actress as Maria.*

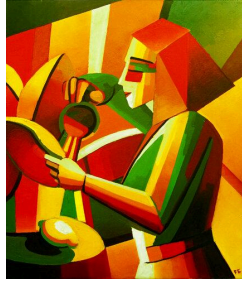
TERTIARY

Victor & Juan Vargas-Bussi: Neighbor Twins, university students, wannabe comedy duo. (Leo)

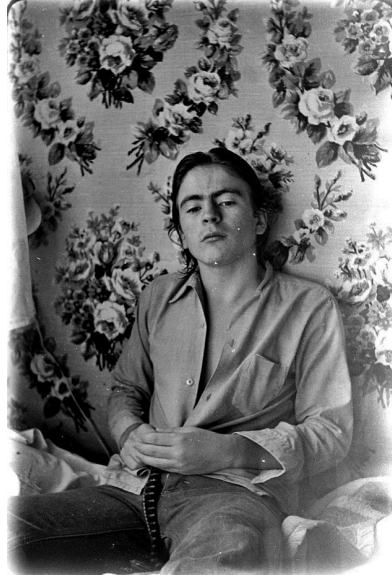
Andres & Ignacio: Union workers. (Taurus) *Same actors as twins.*

Radio: Incessantly on in the background, no matter how many times Elena turns it off. (Sagittarius)

VISUAL INSPIRATIONS



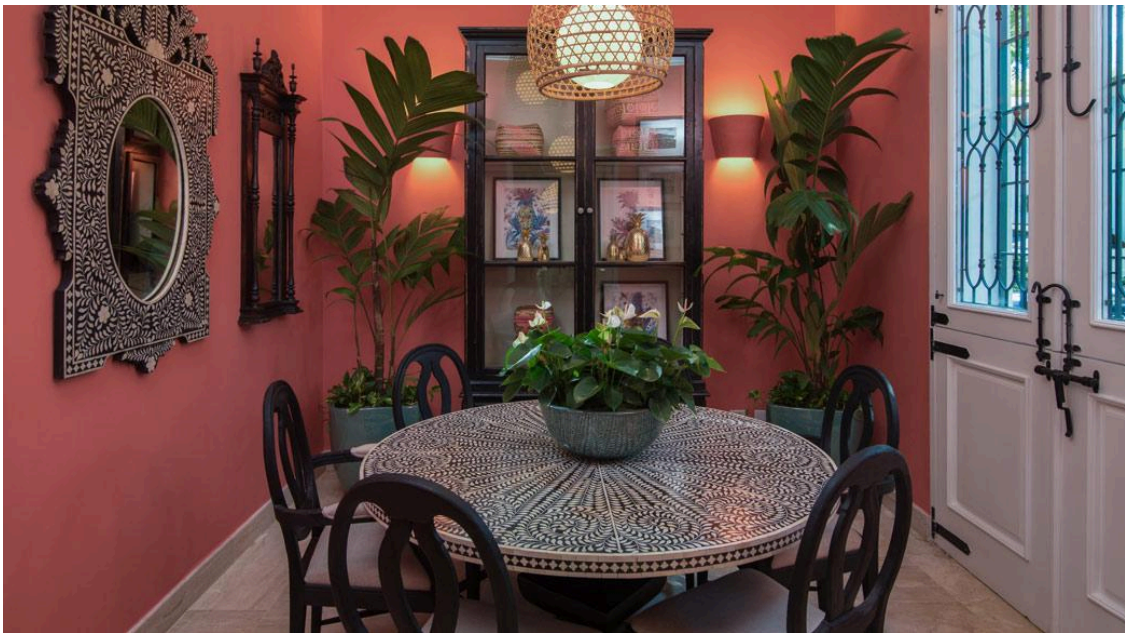
CATALINA



MATEO



ELENA



MAMA'S APARTMENT

SETTING NOTES

Mama's Apartment -

(Living room, kitchen, two bedrooms)

Must include: table with four chairs, couch, upholstered chair, standing mirror, bed

Cristobal & Catalina's Apartment -

(Living room, one bedroom)

Must include: paintings, kitchenette, assorted furniture

The Park -

Must Include: two benches, tree, patch of grass.

The Street -

Must include: alley, street lamp. barricade

KEY

(example dialogue): line said softly or under the breath, the next character's line should start and cover it when applicable.

...: character trails off, likely taking their time with the prior statement.

—: character is cut off, or cuts themselves off

OTHER NOTES

Whenever the Radio speaks, the characters on stage pantomime whatever is being said.

ACT 1

PROLOGUE

Spotlights open on each of the characters as they address the audience directly.

CATALINA

I'll tell you...

ELENA

...what's really...

MATEO

...important.

CATALINA

Democracy. A civil society. A just world, where all can live free from tyranny...

ELENA

A quiet, peaceful life. A happy home. An end to all this chaos.

MATEO

A little recognition, a family that looks up to you, creating waves, being remembered, being someone worth remembering...

MATEO pauses. He is the only thing lit on stage.

Assiduously, he glances left then right.

Is he looking for his sisters. Is he embarrassed. Confused? Making sure he's alone? Hoping he's not?

MATEO

(pathetic) Remember me?

The spotlight shuts abruptly.

SCENE 1

Church. Everyone is wearing black clothes. An open casket facing away from the audience sits center-stage.

CATALINA, ELENA, and CRISTOBAL sit together.

LUIS sits alone, praying.

MAMA and MATEO sit together.

Each group speaks while the other's pay their respects.

MAMA places a hand on MATEO's.

MAMA

He never paid enough attention to you. And now he's gone. He's gone

MATEO

Mom... come on. I'm doing okay. Why are you—?

MAMA

You are pale. Like a snow capped peak. Drawn, your features are melting off you. I never see you anymore, now like this. So old, but so young. And money leaks out of your pockets like a broken storm drain.

MATEO

I think you mean leaking in. In which case you are more correct than you could possibly imagine.

MAMA

You, are making money?

MATEO

Loads, mama. That's why you haven't seen me. It's a really simple but... uh... lucrative gig.

MAMA

Gig?

MATEO

Yeah so, you know how they've been cracking down on cocaine exports to the States right? It's much more difficult, dangerous, tricky, whatever, to get it to the big wigs and fat cats in New York. But they still need to powder their noses, eh? That means the price of it has skyrocketed, BAM(!) right through the roof. That's where I come in.

MAMA

Oh child...

MATEO

Most of the coca comes from Columbia, but there are refining plants all over. That's funny, plants to refine a plant... Anyway, the shipping of the leaves to the plants is the easy part, because they're legal in leaf form, but after they leave is when they need the help of people like me.

MAMA

Don't tell me this... I will cry.

MATEO

Well actually, they usually give it to a distributor first and the distributor will give some portion to me. That's mine to transport now. I have to pay some upfront costs, but for what I can get in the right place, it's nothing. Then all you have to do is find some transport, a fake passport, and get in. I've done it a few different ways, once by boat, once by car, once by airplane. Once across the border... oh wait, I forgot to tell you how I sneak them across. I just seal everything in a real *airtight* plastic baggie, hork it all down and then deny any urge to shit for the next 24-48 hours.

MAMA

My ears bleed.

MATEO

Usually, it's super safe, goes swimmingly down and out. One of the bags did break though, the second time I did it. I was high for maybe eight or nine days. I couldn't tell after a while. Everything started getting faster and faster, until it was all reeeally slow and then I passed out for about a week. Think that's when I lost Juan Diaz's passport. I still made thousands from the other bag though, which helped me cover the costs to get back—

MAMA

Why do you torture me like this? Why?

MATEO

I never needed him, mom. You don't have to worry. I'll find my own way, I alwa—

MAMA

More worried than ever. More worried than ever. More worried than ever. Get my jacket child, I'm freezing.

MATEO

What? Mom, it's August. The pavement's sweating outside.

MAMA

I'm freezing. Do this for me, if nothing else. If nothing else.

MATEO

Fine.

MATEO gets up in a huff and exits the church.

MAMA

(to MATEO's empty seat) Good boy. He's a good boy. Sisters never do anything for me these days. He's a good boy. Good son. Good egg. Must be.

CATALINA, CRISTOBAL, and ELENA, file back into their pew.

CRISTOBAL

Sorry, if I missed it. I'm just confused. Why did they invite you—?

ELENA

Hired her. She was paid for this.

CRISTOBAL

Why did they hire you if they hate you and everything you stand for?

CATALINA

I'm not sure if they *hate* me...

(Pause)

I'll start with this, the psyches of rich men are at once complex and also painfully simple. Are you familiar with the disinhibition hypothesis?

CRISTOBAL

No, ummm. No, can't say I'm particularly familiar.

CATALINA

Essentially, people with more power over society and who have faced fewer setbacks enacting their will on the world tend to have lower inhibitions towards violating said society's ethics and morays. One of the ways this manifests is wealthy capitalists ruining entire countries and destroying countless lives for some extra profit, really just because they can, no one is stopping them, no one has stopped them in the past, and—they assume—no one will stop them in the future either. Another way

(Pause)

CATALINA

Let me put it another way... have you heard about how a lot of rich powerful men like being tied up, whipped, beaten, and they pay professionals, dominatrixes they call them—'cause they're mostly women—egregious sums of money to do it and do it well.

ELENA

Cat, please... father is—

CATALINA

(mocking) El, please. I'm answering the question that was asked. Anyway, future husband, I am basically that.

CRISTOBAL

Basically what? I'm not—

CATALINA

An intellectual dominatrix.

CRISTOBAL

Ah.

CATALINA

Yeah I don't know what it is. I guess rich americans and Chicago School alumni seem to get a real kick out of being kicked around and told they're bad by some Latina peasant from a peripheral country that theirs could obliterate with the push of a button. Weird power dynamic thing. Definitely partially sexual. Isn't human psychology fascinating?

CRISTOBAL

Yeah... I suppose it is.

ELENA

I know this is stupid to ask, but don't you have any moral qualms about this... you know...

CATALINA

Dominatrix thing? Eh, it feels dirty, but I'm happy to take their money and reinvest it in organizations that actively fight their ability to pay me. In more eloquent verbiage, sometimes you gotta whore yourself out for the cause, you know?

CRISTOBAL

Umm... I wouldn't be at liberty to know. Haven't been in that position before.

ELENA

Don't pay attention to her, she's trying to freak you out. She does this because she's afraid of intimacy.

CATALINA

What? You're not scared are you, *Balo*?

CRISTOBAL

I ummm, no. It's all just rather fascinating. I'm taking it in. Your brother over there, is he going to be alright?

CRISTOBAL looks askance at LUIS.

CATALINA

I certainly hope not.

ELENA

Which one?

*

FERNANDO plops down next to LUIS, interrupting his prayers.

FERNANDO

Why the horse— long face, nephew? It's just your father's funeral for christ sakes, lighten up, give us one of his old smiles. You two always had the nicest smiles,

LUIS

You'll excuse me if I'm not overly joyful that my father has passed, uncle. But thanks.

FERNANDO

Oh no need to thank me! I should be thanking *you*. Your latest efforts landed me in an early retirement! Having such a *wondrous* time, playing chess with my mutton-headed son while he fails to find employment in this u-to-pi-a you've created.

LUIS

I wasn't aware that I was the minister of war.

FERNANDO

Hmh. *You* may not be directly responsible, but I could feel the residue of your greasy work on my release documents, even if you never touched them. I know how your people operate.

LUIS

How many square meters, no, kilometers do I take up in your head, uncle? I know we're family but you didn't have to lease me all of it for free. You've got precious few unspoiled acres up there as it is.

FERNANDO

Charming as ever. When you were a child I would've beaten you for that and your parents would've thanked me.

LUIS

And now I'm an adult, and you, a frail old man clinging onto the past with rotting fingernails.

FERNANDO

I could still beat you. Got a belt right here.

LUIS

I'd prefer to not shower my father's coffin with your blood, uncle. Let's keep the sparring relegated to the arena of nouns and verbs.

FERNANDO

(Arenas. Arenas. I could use some sand right now.)

LUIS

—I'd hate to embarrass the family war hero in front of everyone.

FERNANDO spits

FERNANDO

(whispered fury) You couldn't take me. Your whole half of the family abandoned the field which made this family, no, this nation great. Put down the sword, so you could twiddle your thumbs behind a desk with a pen up your ass. Oh but don't be ashamed, it's not your fault, it was in your father's seed; if your siblings are any indication...

LUIS

(talking over FERNANDO) Are you sure you want for that to be the cause, considering your son?

...Me and him used to scrap almost everyday and he never beat me, once. The strongest person here, besides me, is the woman shivering in the pew at the sparsely attended celebration of her husband's death. Pathetic—

LUIS

Regardless, you're about two and a half decades past your prime. Testosterone production has slowed in your body. Soon enough you'll have bones as brittle as a bird's. Even your Tomas could take you in this state.

FERNANDO

My boy has twice your size.

LUIS

And an eighth my wits.

*FERNANDO burst out in laughter,
clutching his stomach.*

FERNANDO

(Chuckling) Now... now you've got me there. The boy's so pathetic, he couldn't kill a mosquito. Ah, good to know there's one upside to your insufferable "wit."

LUIS

Good to know we can still enjoy each other's company, and find agreement on a couple things. Isn't it uncle?

FERNANDO

Familia es familia.

LUIS

(whispered) Even if they're assholes and imbeciles.

*

*CATALINA and ELENA stand.
CRISTOBAL wanders around,
pretending not to listen.*

CATALINA

Why is it taking so long?

ELENA

Things like this do. What do you want me to say? I'm doing the best I can. I'm barely more than an intern.

CATALINA

You're an aide to the president's chief economic adviser.

ELENA

Exactly. Aide to an aide.

CATALINA

Be that as it may, you're still in the halls of power. And knowing you, you won't be in the position for long. Soon you'll have your own aides.

ELENA

What am I supposed to do, just ask Señor Vega for classified security documents?

CATALINA

So you already have the name of who you need to talk to, that's a promising start—

ELENA

Listen. I want to do this for you. I do. But I need you to be patient. It's hard enough to get the gears of the government to grind the way you want even when you can grease them. I have no grease, Cat.

CATALINA

Only the grease between your legs.

ELENA

You're disgusting.

CATALINA

If you really cared you'd figure out how to use it. I have.

ELENA

You. Are. Disgusting. Filthy. Depraved.

CATALINA

It's a part of the game. If you don't give play, you lose.

ELENA

What game? This isn't a game, Cat. This is life and death. This is the future...

CATALINA

Precisely. Then we'd better use every tool we have to make it a good one. Right, *El*?

ELENA

Incorrigible. Insufferable. You are insufferable. I am not a *whore*.

CATALINA

Not even for me?

ELENA

Ew.

CATALINA

That came out wrong. But the truth is that we cannot progress until we have those documents. Foreign influence will be the death of this revolution if we are not wary of it. My people need to know what's going on, or at least know what the president knows. We're trying to help, Elena. The next attack against us will not be carried out by a bunch of unorganized junior officers stuffed into a tank.

ELENA

It was six tanks, actually.

CATALINA

Whatever. One or six. How does that help your argument?

ELENA

My argument against shelling my body out for your little cause?

CATALINA

It's not "little" and you're not "shelling out" you are aiding the revolution. Isn't that your job title?

ELENA

I don't know how you manage to be more crass than Mateo sometimes...

MATEO enters, holding a cardboard cutout of an American 1960s female sex symbol. She is not in proper dress for a funeral, to say the least. Everyone looks over at him.

MATEO

Couldn't find your jacket, mom. But I did find this in the closet. Completely forgot I stashed her away in there. Did you never find her? Or do you like the look of her as much as I—

MAMA

No. No. NOT YOU. OUT! OUT WITH HER!

MATEO

Ma, come on. It's not—

MAMA

OOUUUTTT!

MATEO

Okay.

MATEO raises his arms in surrender dropping the standee as he backs towards the door.

ELENA

Oh Teo.

SCENE 2

MAMA's apartment.

CATALINA and LUIS sit at the table, reading a thick theoretical text and multitudinous legal documents, respectively.

PAPA's coffin lies open and elevated at a prominent place within the room.

MATEO stands above his dead father staring down at him, considering.

MAMA sits in an upholstered chair, looking drawn. She is knitting or doing something similarly domestic with little focus or fervor.

ELENA walks in with a tray of hot tea cups for each of them. She lays one next to MAMA before continuing to the table.

The four siblings all maintain a frenetic, nosebleed pace throughout the scene.

MATEO

He died as he lived. Tied up in knots and anally retentive.

ELENA spills the tea on herself.

ELENA

(whispered) TEO! (You need to stop saying that.)

CATALINA

Hate to admit it, but he's kinda got a point.

LUIS

(sharp) Quiet. Both of you. We have an audience.

*LUIS gestures at MAMA who's
ceased to do whatever she was doing
previously.*

CATALINA

Hmm, who?

MATEO

(Both? Who's both?)

ELENA

(whispered) Mama.

LUIS

Your mother, the one right there?

MATEO

(Wait but seriously who's both?)

CATALINA

Oh, she's tuckered herself out.

ELENA

She can still hear you.

MATEO

Who's both?

LUIS

What?

MATEO

You said *(imitates LUIS's voice)* "quiet, both of you" but three of us spoke, four including you, so who's both?

LUIS

Were you aware that you're the maestro of wasting time Mateo? We should give you an award, perhaps in the form of a gag.

MATEO

You'd like that wouldn't you. Sick fuck.

ELENA shakes her head, mournfully.

CATALINA

(to ELENA) Annnywayyy, she's fiine! Look at her!

CATALINA points over at the occupied upholstered chair. MAMA takes this moment to slump over.

CATALINA

(sarcastic) She handled herself sooo well at the funeral. (Guess that's one advantage of sparse attendance.)

Beat.

CATALINA

You too, Teo.

MATEO

Too what?

CATALINA

Nevermind.

CATALINA

Is it really necessary to have the coffin, open, in the living room?

ELENA

That's how Mama wanted it.

CATALINA

I know, but is it necessary?

LUIS begins to assemble his documents into a coherent pile.

MATEO

I, for one, think it's an excellent reminder of our own mortality. A symbolic representation of the little time we have left and how we should spend it with friends and family—

LUIS

If you don't mind, I'd like to get this over with. I do have somewhere to be within the hour.

ELENA

Get what over with. The will?

LUIS

The division of our inheritance, yes.

CATALINA

(sarcastic) Finally, Luis gets his chance to gloat. They only come about once a decade you know, and only when they're absolutely necessary. (Like a coffin in the kitchen, apparently.)

LUIS

What are you talking about?

MATEO

Yeah, what are you talking about?

CATALINA

(to LUIS) The passing of a patriarch. Our father. Your predecessor, forebear, progenitor. How will you get along with all his wealth? How dear brother will you be able to bear it.

LUIS

(A miracle I made it through adolescence without sustaining and permanent brain damage.)

ELENA

What are you implying?

CATALINA

Little Luis will be responsible for the estate no doubt. He's the heir.

LUIS

As usual dear sister, you are possessed with supreme confidence despite your dearth of knowledge on the subject.

CATALINA

The pre-tension of your prose could hang someone, probably a whole cell block.

LUIS

To clear up any falsehoods you may have generated within your own minds, I received only a parcel, mostly in the form of some rundown properties in Valparaiso. The rest goes to you three. Father told me on his deathbed.

MATEO

Really?

LUIS

Indeed.

MATEO

Strange.

ELENA

Weird.

CATALINA

You're sure?

LUIS

Quite.

MATEO

So we each get a third?

ELENA

It would be a fourth, no?

MATEO

There are three of us.

ELENA

There are four. It's split four ways.

MATEO

Yeah, but Luis already got his portion, so it's thirds now.

ELENA

Luis's portions still exists though and it was all taken out of the same fund, so—

MATEO

I know, all I'm saying is—

CATALINA

(annoyed) Could we quit with the grade school mathematics? I'd like an answer, this century.

LUIS

El silencio, gracias a Dios.

LUIS searches for a specific sheet among his stack of documents.

CATALINA

So, what's the damage?

LUIS

Well, in simple terms. The three of you have been collectively given three fourths of the entire estate—and all the liquid cash I might add. Alas—

MATEO

(giddy) So we each get a third?

ELENA

(exasperated) (He just said three-fourths.)

LUIS

Incorrect.

CATALINA

(gritting teeth) Go on.

LUIS

As I was saying... Alas no, you do not each get a third. At least, not yet. The arbitrator of father's account has been instructed not to distribute this wealth to you until after you have submitted to the bank a signed agreement with one another on the status of how this liquid capital will and shall be allocated and for what purposes.

CATALINA

(The noose draws nearer each day.)

MATEO

Wha...?

ELENA

(to MATEO) Basically, our money is not ours until we all agree on how to spend it, and sign a contract to enforce it.

MATEO

(Why did he make it sound so complicated?)

ELENA

My primary question is, why don't we just divide it equal—?

CATALINA

(hackles rising) My primary question is: Why? What the fuck could possibly be the purpose of this Byzantine... puzzle? Is he trying to create another family power struggle in his, now, infinite absence?

LUIS

Well, Gavelkind inheritance has been known to create divided power bases. (The Carolingian Empire—)

ELENA

Jesus, you have a problem.

MATEO

Come again?

CATALINA

You're unreal.

MATEO

(Oh! Is that the medieval thing?)

CATALINA

(to LUIS) Real explanation, pronto. Luis... you know, why. I see it in your face.

LUIS

Fine. His idea behind it, as explained to me anyway. He thought, you'd help... restrict each other's impulses.

ELENA

(incredulous) Impulses?

LUIS

His words, not mine.

CATALINA

And we know this is true, how? Cause you said so.

LUIS

Still yourself. Here.

LUIS passes a sheet to CATALINA.

CATALINA

He informed me via contract.

RADIO

Catalina reads the will aloud. It is long, boring and dull. Mateo interjects with questions about language but they are not answered. Luis corrects Catalina repeatedly. It seems she is not especially skilled at reading from a prompt. Elena nurses her tea and listens. The will is long and boring and dull, and yet by the time the eldest sister reads the final line the room is dialed up with emotion.

ELENA

(I thought I turned that thing off.)

MATEO

This smells like *bullshit* to me. I don't trust it, this legal, uh, *jargon*—seems right up your alley.

CATALINA

We agree again, Teo. (Look at us.)

LUIS

Oh really? That paternal stench isn't familiar to you? (Also, I am not an attorney.)

ELENA

It does seem like something he would do.

ELENA takes the sheet and rereads it to herself.

CATALINA

(to LUIS) If that's so, then why are you excluded?

LUIS

Not sure. Though I have concocted a collection of both competing and complementary theories on the subject.

CATALINA

(The hangman's bell tolls. Eagerly, I await its rope.)

LUIS

(ignoring) For one, I'm the oldest. I have a stable career where I've proven myself as an published academic. I have my own home. A wife. A child—

MATEO

Hey well, I might too, somewhere.

LUIS

A child?

MATEO

Y-yeah. I've—

CATALINA bursts out laughing.

CATALINA

(still laughing) Right. Yeah. Tootally, a very real possibility.

ELENA

Teo...

LUIS

Even if that were to be the case, your absenteeism would be worth twice as many demerits, brother.

Dejected, MATEO slumps back in his seat, mimicking MAMA's posture.

CATALINA

Such confident assertions about the inner workings of our "father's" mind. Suspicious...

LUIS

People do consistently insist that I bear his resemblance: physically, mentally, inter—

CATALINA

Yeah. I know. They say that about all of us. We're his children. (*We were.*)

ELENA looks up from the will in her hands.

ELENA

Umm... yeah, I don't see anything here about "impulses."

LUIS prepares to leave.

LUIS

Perhaps I took some liberties with the language. The result is the same. I must be going. Good luck.

The younger siblings' questions follow instant succession.

CATALINA

You cannot be serious.

MATEO

You're not going to help us figure out a way around this?

ELENA

You feel no responsibility to us?

LUIS feigns consideration of the question for a moment.

LUIS

No. Not particularly.

LUIS exits.

MATEO

Prick.

CATALINA

Truly, there is no other word that describes him so succinctly.

Beat.

ELENA

So the obvious solution is that we just sign the contract and say that we are each given a third, right?

CATALINA

Well apparently we also need (*mocking LUIS*) “the status of how this liquid capital will and shall be allocated and for what purposes.”

MATEO

You *do* have abuela’s memory.

CATALINA

Was that in question? You were the only one it deigned to skip.

ELENA

(*cutting in*) Whatever we want? We can just say “whatever the individual decides is appropriate.” Right? We can be done with this today. I can draft it up right now.

ELENA looks around to her siblings for enthusiastic agreement or relieved gratitude for her brilliant solution. She receives neither.

ELENA

Right?

MATEO

Hmm... I, don’t, know.

CATALINA

Yeah I’m not sure either. (A third of the cash in Teo’s hands?)

ELENA

Seriously? Both of you!?

MATEO

Hey! (Why me?)

ELENA

I just—(*takes calming breath*) most people wouldn't even be considering gambling away their money away like this.

CATALINA

Most people are stupid.

MATEO

Most people are boring!

*CATALINA and MATEO
exchange a glance, mutual
approval tied with confusion*

CATALINA

Come on, El! This *does* pose an interesting opportunity for sibling cooperation, dare I say, **bonding**.

ELENA

I-I guess. But... it's just fairer my way.

CATALINA

Why don't we handle this democratically. That's fair, no? We all present our idea and then vote.

MATEO

(I don't know that I like this idea either.)

ELENA

Fine. I'm gonna need a second to think.

CATALINA

Really? Sure.

MATEO

We're doing this for real?

CATALINA

Yes.

ELENA

S'pose.

MATEO

Fine.

The three sit in silence as they craft their plans. MATEO gets up and paces, fingers stroking his chin.

The lights on stage dim.

CATALINA

Time's up! I'm going first.

A spotlight opens on CATALINA

CATALINA

Here's the plan. We give away our properties to the dispossessed. We use our home for party meetings. Give away liquidated cash to committees that could be a lot more effective with just a little more cash. Leading by example, show people how life could be without all this selfishness.

The spotlight shifts to ELENA

ELENA

We move into the house by the Pacific. All of us. If we can't find a place big enough, we'll pay to make it a big place for the whole family. Maybe employ some destitute *mapuche* people while we're at it, set them right? We don't need these other places—

The spotlight chases MATEO as he moves around the room and gesticulates with zeal.

MATEO

We sell everything!

ELENA

Hey, I wasn't finished!

MATEO

Fly out a film crew from the states or Europe or something and have them film everything. I'd be the lead, obviously, but we show everyone's real lives in the fallout of dad dying. That would be a hit film. Or maybe TVN would run it as a series of episodes. Oh what genre would you call it? Something like... reality TV? We'd be millionaires overnight. Overnight! Plus, big PLUS. We'd be *famous*! Right? Right?

CATALINA nods slowly as the lights come back up.

CATALINA

I think we can all agree: this is the worst idea.

MATEO

What?

ELENA

I hate to say it, but, yeah.

MATEO frowns and sits down hard. Dejected once again.

MATEO

(Que se jodan todos...)

CATALINA rubs her hands in anticipation.

CATALINA

Okay let's vote. All those in favor of mine?

CATALINA raises her hand.

CATALINA

Elena's...?

ELENA's hand creeps up and out from under the table.

CATALINA

(exasperated) Mateo's...

MATEO's hand shoots up.

ELENA

Probably should've seen that coming from a mile away.

SCENE 3

*MATEO's bedroom, he lays in bed
staring at the ceiling.
ELENA enters.*

ELENA
Why are you sulking in here?

MATEO
I don't want to talk to you.

ELENA
You love to say that, but it's rarely true.

Pause.

MATEO
Fine.

MATEO struggles to find words.

MATEO
How do girls...

ELENA
Was that a question?

MATEO
How... do you do girls?

ELENA
Wanna try me one more time?

MATEO
HOW DO GIRLS WORK? I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW TO TALK TO THEM.

ELENA
And here I thought we were going to talk about—

MATEO

I already know what you're going to say and I definitely don't want to talk about that.

ELENA

Not even to commiserate?

MATEO

What? About how Catalina's a tool and Luis is a prick yet neither of them are half the asshole dad was?

ELENA

Exactly!

MATEO

No. Thank you.

ELENA

They were really just completely on one yesterday like—

MATEO

Elena. Please.

ELENA

It's just that—

MATEO

Girls.

ELENA

Ugh, fine!

Didn't you have a girlfriend like two years ago? And I have heard you sneaking in through the window more than a couple times. Also, you're talking to me right now, no?

*MATEO flips over onto his stomach
and buries his face in a pillow.*

MATEO

(muffled) That's completely different. You're my sister. Plus you're basically a boy.

ELENA

One, ouch. Two, you didn't answer my question. Three, have you considered, perhaps, maybe *that* mindset is the problem?

MATEO

What do you mean?

ELENA

Treating girls and boys differently when you talk to them. I think your assumptions might be holding you back, friend.

MATEO

Not another feminist rant please. You're just like Cat.

MATEO puts his face back in the pillow.

ELENA

It was *not* going to be a rant, (*whispered*) *though you'd benefit from one*. AND I AM NOT LIKE CAT. Don't you ever say that to me, she never listens to anything anyone says, let alone remember it. I am listening to you right now, even though you're being an ass.

MATEO turns his face to the side so he is looking at ELENA.

MATEO

Hmm...

ELENA

Care to get any more specific than "I don't understand girls" now? Maybe I could actually help if you gave me something tangible to work with.

MATEO

Fine. There's this one girl, *Luisa*. She goes to UCHILE. She's beautiful...

ELENA

Of course, only the best for my sweet brother.

MATEO

...And she's really smart. *Really smart*. Whip Smart. Like when she talks it's like she's lashing you with her intelligence. Which is probably why I don't know how to talk to her. She's different from other girls.

ELENA

I take umbrage with that last statement.

MATEO

Of course you do, but you're a girl so you don't under—

ELENA

Thought I was “basically a boy.”

MATEO

—stand what it's normally like. These girls, even the university sort, they're just not all there.

ELENA

Maybe that's just the sort you attract.

MATEO

Are you going to let me explain this to you or are you going to keep interrup—

ELENA

Ugh. Fair fair. I admit that was a little Catalina-esque.

MATEO

Glad I'm not the only one who sees the family resemblance. Here's my problem, I know I'm smart. Maybe not compared to you or Cat or Luis, but I'm smart enough to realize when someone is on another intellectual level.

ELENA

And Luisa is on this other level I take it?

MATEO

Yeah pretty much...

ELENA

How do you know?

MATEO

Well, she reads constantly.

ELENA

How do you know that? (*sarcastically*) Are you stalking people again?

MATEO

Everytime I see her she's got her perfect little nose stuck up a book's crack.

ELENA

Eww...

MATEO

It's obvious from the way she talks... *muy erudita*.

ELENA

Okay can we take the libido levels down a couple notches here? It's evident you like the girl, you don't have to make it weird and... sexual.

MATEO

Your brain's way deeper in the gutter than mine right now.

ELENA gives MATEO a look of utter disdain. MATEO ignores her and continues.

MATEO

Luisa was just telling me about how in the United States they've adopted Free Love wholesale and now men and women fuck whoever they want, men with men, women with women sometimes. She says that now once people realize that marriage is "outmoded" and society can exist without, what did she call it? Sexual siloing! Then they'll start questioning all sorts of other institutions: the Church, capitalism, nationalism, governments, private property. Everything useless out the window, all the baggage of Old Europe. Your fucking Utopia right there, boom.

MATEO mimes an explosion, making the adjoining sound with his mouth.

ELENA

So you *have* talked to her. Besides, that's been going on for over a decade and she should do some more research, that way of living is going out of style since the Nixon administration took power.

MATEO

Going out of style or simply pushed underground? Luisa says that every revolution has counter-revolution, but the ideas of the revolution won't die, they just get suppressed for a while but they'll always come back, stronger than ever. You can't kill ideas, they're like cockroaches.

ELENA

Wow. You really *do* like this girl. Did she come up with that *unfathomably* deep metaphor? What's your point in all this?

MATEO

Oh nothing, you're just real uptight for an anarcho-communist.

ELENA

Weren't you asking *me* for advice? You know I don't just exist to lend support and suffer your jokes!

MATEO

Sorry I—

ELENA

No. When was the last time you ever asked me anything about me? For my own sake? When. EVER! Do you even know that I'm getting engaged next month?

MATEO

(I know that you've never met the guy in person.)

ELENA

Do you even know that I have to exchange messages between Cat and Luis because they won't talk to each other, because of their petty and microscopic "ideological disagreements?" Did you know that? That I have to be the middleman? For that! That I have to comfort mom, in her distress and listen to her anxieties? Do you have any interest in anyone in this family outside of yourself?

MATEO

Yes, of course! I knew all of that! Just, what is there to talk about? Our older siblings act like babies. We have to be better, what else is new?

ELENA

We have to be better? (*scoffs*) We.

MATEO

Yes! We. *I* will be better. Okay? I swear. I'll ask more questions and I'll be there more. For all of you, I'll even stop going out at night and doing stupid shit, okay!

ELENA

We both know that last one isn't true.

MATEO

I mean... I'll try...

ELENA

I won't hold you to it. Just be better to mom.

MATEO

I will. *I will*.

ELENA

Mhm.

MATEO

I'm sorry, okay? Please could you just help me? Tell me how to talk to this girl.

ELENA

Fine. But if you're still this level of selfish ingrate a week from now, imma tell her about the time mom caught you... touching yourself... to that jar...

MATEO

Which... which one?

ELENA

The dismembered fish eyes.

MATEO

I was twelve!

ELENA

And I'm dead serious. I will go down to the college, myself. Plus, it doesn't bode well for you that you were that screwed up as a preteen.

MATEO

Fine, yes, sure, whatever. Anyways, how do I show her I'm smart?

ELENA

(Sigh) I'm not sure you need to. Look. Luisa is clearly a "new woman."

MATEO

I guess... I mean I've known her, what, one and a half months? That's pretty new.

ELENA

No. What... No. Mateo. Sometimes I just... I don't want to say you're stupid, but you make it hard sometimes.

MATEO

(genuinely bewildered) What the fuck are you a talking about?

ELENA

She's a "new woman," not in your individual life, to society! She wants more than marriage and child rearing. She has her own ambitions. Her own job. Her own views and beliefs she holds regardless of the man in her life.

MATEO

So... how does one *acquire* a new woman?

ELENA

Stop using language like THAT for one, *dios mio*. What is wrong— (with you).

MATEO

(grinning) —That one was intentional! In-ten-tio-nal. Oh I gotcha so bad, your face. Oh the sweetness of your dismay my sister.

ELENA

If you'll allow me to continue, you can *impress* a "new woman" by becoming the "new man."

MATEO

Meaning...?

ELENA

Listen to her. Respond to what she says. Show that you're interested in what she has to say. Talk a good amount, but not too much. Show her that you care more about personality than looks.

That you're not obsessed with material wealth, but that you can take care of yourself. Make her feel pretty, but not objectified.

MATEO

This seems awfully complicated.

ELENA

Seriously? Maybe you should give up if that's stump—

MATEO

Not complicated! Just a lot of information to take in at once.

ELENA

(Sigh) Just be genuine and honest, you can't go wrong with that.

MATEO

Could've gotten that info from a dating advice column in a magazine. You sure that's gonna be enough for the "new woman."

ELENA

As one, I am quite sure that's the main thing "she" wants.

Pause.

ELENA

You're only trying this hard because she's really hot, right?

MATEO's attention has turned to something else in his room.

MATEO

Yeah, pretty much.

ELENA

Looks like the honesty part shouldn't be too hard for you.

ELENA rises from MATEO's bed and begins to cross to the bedroom door.

ELENA

Well, at least she seems to be more than a pretty face. Seems she's got her head in the right place.

MATEO

Poetry.

ELENA

Just remember everything I told you and you've got a date for sure.

MATEO

Mhm.

ELENA

And Teo...

MATEO

Yuh?

ELENA

Buena suerte. I believe in you.

*ELENA exits, closing the door behind her.
MATEO lets out a deep breath as he leans
back on the pillows.*

SCENE 4

*MAMA's apartment.
CATALINA enters the living room,
before going around and knocking
on all the visible doors inside.*

CATALINA

Mama. Maama. Mom you in here? Maria?? Hellooo? Mariiiia!

*CATALINA falls on the couch
dejected when her mother does not
appear.*

CATALINA

(She's hiding.)

FERNANDO enters.

CATALINA

(pleasantly surprised) Uncle! Didn't expect to see you here.

CATALINA jumps to her feet.

FERNANDO

Hello darling.

The two embrace.

CATALINA

What a pleasant surprise. Come sit.

FERNANDO

Not to skip the pleasantries, but is your mama home?

They both sit on the couch.

CATALINA

No, sadly, I came here looking for her myself.

FERNANDO

I thought she never left. My mistake, I suppose, for assuming.

CATALINA

No, no. She hardly ever leaves. I really wonder what she could be doing. She hardly talks to any of her and father's mutual friends since he passed and she hates all the neighbors.

FERNANDO

If those cantankerous Bussi boys are anything to go by I don't blame her.

CATALINA

Oh they're not so bad. Mateo is a bad influence on them, more than the other way around. It's the gossiping hens she can't stand.

FERNANDO

Nor do I blame her.

FERNANDO & CATALINA

Women.

They both laugh as if this is a hilarious inside joke. After the laughter dies they're quiet for a while.

CATALINA

I hope I never end up like that. When I'm an old woman I'll have better things to worry about than the state of the adjoining foyers.

FERNANDO nods. There's another pause, they share a look. The two appreciate each other in silence.

FERNANDO

What do you need to chat with Maria about, *muñeca*? You're so tense.

FERNANDO pats CATALINA's shoulder.

CATALINA

Oh we have a great deal we need to talk about. Especially her behavior recently.

FERNANDO

How the tables have turned.

CATALINA

More like chairs. Thrown.

FERNANDO

Pardon?

CATALINA

Oh it's a long story...

FERNANDO

I've got time.

*CATALINA shifts on the couch to lay
down, laying her legs on
FERNANDO's lap.*

CATALINA

This family is crazy. You know that?

FERNANDO

I'm reminded every time I hear your brother's poor excuses for common sense.

CATALINA

Exactly! I know where they get it from too.

FERNANDO

My brother?

CATALINA

Luis, yes, but Mateo, no. He's mama's boy all the way down.

FERNANDO

You don't say. Never considered it.

CATALINA

It's hard to explain. It's not obvious, but they both crack the same way. And have certain, violent, tendencies.

FERNANDO

Maria's temper is something to behold.

CATALINA

I think it's rubbing off on little Salvador, he spends too much time with her.

FERNANDO

Shouldn't his mother be looking after him?

CATALINA

One would think, but she seems, indisposed as of late. And mother insists she get plenty of time with the red-faced brat besides. Mama doesn't approve of her country bumpkin daughter-in-law parenting techniques, regardless of what they are.

FERNANDO

I wasn't aware she had an occupation, since the marriage. What's Luis have her doing now?

CATALINA

Managing the family finances it would seem. That's my guess, he's so cagey about everything. Leaving us with this mess now.

FERNANDO

So he won't let her have her own career, but will entrust her with overseeing all your father's estate. Part of that was supposed to be mine I might add.

CATALINA

Not of all of father's estate, only the best fourth of it. Perhaps you can buy some of the land off them. They're selling *everything* it seems.

FERNANDO

Everything? *Que loco*.

CATALINA

That's Luis, all or nothing.

Pause.

CATALINA

Do you have any marital prospects, uncle?

FERNANDO

Shouldn't I be asking you?

CATALINA

Cristobal.

FERNANDO

Which is why I didn't ask.

CATALINA

(mock offense) What's meant by that?

FERNANDO

(coughing) Nothing, oh nothing.

CATALINA

I understand that you disapprove, he's not the kind of man you are... typically drawn to, but he's sweet and—

FERNANDO

He's weak.

CATALINA

You'd be surprised, when we're... together he's quite active. He can pick me up / quite easily.

FERNANDO

That's not what I meant. His flesh. His flesh is weak.

CATALINA

Flesh? Oh, I see. I don't think... why do you say that?

FERNANDO

When you get to be my age you can see these kinds of things

CATALINA

That's your excuse for everything.

FERNANDO

Because it's true.

CATALINA

He's obsessed with me, uncle.

FERNANDO

That may be the problem.

CATALINA

How could that be—?

FERNANDO

Obsession fades, love does not. Does he love you?

CATALINA

Yes... yes. *Of course*, he does.

FERNANDO

Hmh...

CATALINA

He's allowed me to see that not everyone's family is a sorry excuse for melodramatic television. Things can be stable. People can love each other without restraint. People can be appreciated without providing anything tangible. Just for their efforts. When Toba failed his entrance exams his family went out to celebrate anyway, and look at him now!

FERNANDO

A financial tsar in a nation that's economically collapsing?

CATALINA

We both know that's not his fault. My point is that, there's another way. *His* grandmother's funeral didn't have any screaming at it.

Beat.

CATALINA

You're not convinced.

FERNANDO

No.

CATALINA rolls her eyes.

CATALINA

Just another thing we will have to agree to disagree upon.

Long awkward pause.

CATALINA

Oh, get this: another way that Mateo's a mama's boy.

FERNANDO

Oh?

CATALINA

He's been back for almost three weeks now and still doesn't have a job, doesn't pay for his own groceries and I doubt he's taken up cleaning. And she just lets him! The only difference is that he's been barred from siphoning off money to fuel his drug addiction, or "business" as he calls it.

FERNANDO

Someone needs to beat some sense into that boy.

CATALINA

No one can. He's incorrigible.

FERNANDO

Someone needed to beat some sense into that boy.

CATALINA

On that we can agree. Oh, but he's too big now. (It doesn't gel...)

FERNANDO

That's one thing I will give him. He's no shrimp like your older brother. Even if he is shorter.

Pause.

FERNANDO

There is this one woman, who I see at the market sometimes.

CATALINA

Do tell...

FERNANDO

Oh, there isn't much to say

CATALINA

Is she young, beautiful, nubile?

FERNANDO

(blushing) Oh, I don't know about all that but she is kind. She always gives me a smile when we're settling up next to each other. Her smile is very pretty.

CATALINA

UNCLE'S IN LOOOVE! Does that mean your warrior's heart does have room in it for more than just me?

FERNANDO

I don't know about all that, there's not much space. You take up enough as it is.

CATALINA

How touching. Sooo, does this mystery woman have a name?

FERNANDO

She does.... And told me once... but I've forgotten it.

CATALINA

You can't be serious.

FERNANDO

It was many weeks ago! Trust me, one day you will understand. When you get to be this old, your brain becomes like a sieve, it seems. *(Sigh)*

CATALINA

(poking FERNANDO's chest) Guess it will be just me in here for a while longer, after all.

FERNANDO

I have a little love to spread between your siblings, but you have the rest of the jar.

*CATALINA sits back up and kisses
FERNANDO on the cheek. He
blushes profusely.*

FERNANDO

I should probably get going. Tomas will be missing me.

CATALINA

Oh okay. Tomas, right. I know how anxious he gets when he hasn't been brutally demolished in chess for more than a couple hours.

FERNANDO

Sorry, I'm not trying to run. I just—

CATALINA

Why *did* you come here today?

FERNANDO

Well, I...

CATALINA

Uncle?

FERNANDO

To be honest, I was hoping I'd run into you. This was not the first I've heard of... the will.

CATALINA

Okay... and?

FERNANDO

It seems like it would be...

*FERNANDO pauses, clearly
choosing his words carefully.
CATALINA stares at him, becoming
more intrigued and anxious by the
second.*

FERNANDO

It would be a waste of the family fortune... none of your siblings know what they're doing.

CATALINA laughs.

CATALINA

Oh, is that all?

FERNANDO

(continues unabated) They have no real ambition. No vision. Not backbone. I don't know that I would agree with everything you did with the money—

CATALINA

(I'm quite sure you wouldn't.)

FERNANDO

—but I know that it would have an impact. A thought out drive towards something. You wouldn't abuse it, you wouldn't covet it.

CATALINA

I mean yes, money is a tool—

FERNANDO

And I'm loathe to see my forefather's work be squandered away on Elena's creature comforts or whatever new hairbrained scheme Mateo is cooking up. Especially, after this financial suicide from your older brother. *(shakes head)* Selling land while the economy is in freefall.

CATALINA

(cautious) What are you suggesting?

FERNANDO

You know what I'm suggesting.

CATALINA

What? Fratricide?

FERNANDO

I wasn't thinking of something so extreme, but the current situation is untenable. I—

CATALINA

I can't/ uncle I can't.

FERNANDO

Why? It's your birthright—

CATALINA

How do I have any more right than the rest of my siblings? Hmh? What, I steal the money. You think no questions will be asked? By Elena and Mateo. By the bank! No, what is done, will be done, democratically.

FERNANDO

Democratically... democracy tends to work best when no urgent decisions need be made. Democracy is best when the classes are high on the hog, when even the laborers can kick up their feet at the end of the day in peace. In a crisis, in war, a strong leader, a smart, capable head needs to take control. If José Miguel Carrera had left his tactical decisions up to popular election we would still be under the rule of the Spanish.

CATALINA

That's almost certainly an ahistorical claim, uncle. The actions of individual men do not decide the course of nations.

FERNANDO

Tell that to Napoleon. Would he have had the success he had if France had remained a "democracy?"

CATALINA

You give me two men who overextended and were subsequently defeated and imprisoned as what, role models?

FERNANDO

I only mean to say, that you are more capable... more deserving. The power is yours if you want it. If you just take it... despite your red heart you'd be a better president than our current travesty. Hyper-inflation, that's where democracy gets you.

Beat.

CATALINA

Suppose we'll have to agree to disagree.

FERNANDO

I suppose.

Beat.

FERNANDO

I should get going. I'll, I'll see you soon.

FERNANDO gets up awkwardly and begins to walk to the door. After a moment CATALINA jumps up.

CATALINA

Wait. Uncle, I... I do appreciate it. What you said. It's just...

FERNANDO

It's all true.

CATALINA

(Maybe one day.)

They embrace again.

FERNANDO

Te amo, muñeca.

CATALINA

Te quiero. tío.

SCENE 5

CRISTOBAL's apartment.

CRISTOBAL is stirring a pot of something while combing through a stack of fiscal documents written in a miniscule font.

ELENA knocks on the door

CRISTOBAL

Hello? Come in! It's unlocked.

ELENA peeks her head in.

ELENA

Hey, it's me! Elena. Cat home?

CRISTOBAL

Oh hey, El.

ELENA enters cautiously, closing and locking the door behind her.

ELENA

You know you should keep your doors locked. It's not safe.

CRISTOBAL

Oh yes, yes. Your sister's been chastising me. Seems so alienating though, to shut the world out like that.

ELENA

(ponderous) Hmm, yeah, I suppose... (I suppose it is.)

CRISTOBAL

(waxing nostalgic) Where I grew up, in the out-outskirts of Valparaiso we'd all leave our doors open. Coming and going from home to home like the wind, me and all my friends: Bernardo, Matais, Santiago, it's funny that I'm here now and not him. All their mom's loved me. Everyone knew everyone, so it was different in fairness. Very different. Just my country bumpkin ways, I

suppose. still not used to the ‘big city life.’ It’s hard to remember too cause Cat. Is. Always. On. It.

ELENA

Right. Is she here?

CRISTOBAL checks his watch.

CRISTOBAL

No... she left about... half hour ago? To go see your mom.

ELENA

Of course. Figures. Excellent. Bet she won’t be there by the time I get back either.

ELENA turns to head for the door.

ELENA

See you soon, I guess. It was nice chatting.

CRISTOBAL

Wait. Wait. El. Before you go... I just wanted to check in, ask. How are you? With your father and—

ELENA

Oh! I’m fine. It’s nice of you to worry. don’t have to worry.

CRISTOBAL

You’re sure?

ELENA

I was... kind of waiting for it to happen, not—not that I wanted it to. But, with his health... it just wasn’t that surprising.

CRISTOBAL

Oh, cause I though he died from—

ELENA

No. That’s— just no. That’s a horrid lie that Mateo has been spreading. He and papa, they never really saw eye to eye. Admittedly, our father was not the kindest to him... I think he saw himself in Teo, and not in... well *cual el cuervo, tal el huevo*, as they say. They only ever saw the dark feathers of each other, not the intelligence beneath.

CRISTOBAL

I see. So he died... peacefully?

ELENA

It was fitful. A fitting end, he was always a fighter.

CRISTOBAL

So I've heard, (*chuckling*) mostly from your mother.

ELENA

Oh yeah? (*conspiratorial*) What else did she tell you...?

RADIO

Elena and Cristobal talk small until the sun is dipping low in the sky and the soup on the stove is ready to eat. As Cristobal dishes out the broth, Elena realizes how late it is, but she doesn't want to leave. She doesn't want to stop talking.

ELENA

Hey. Can I turn off your radio?

CRISTOBAL

Oh, yeah sure. If you want.

RADIO

Elena reaches out and switches off the (robotic voice) raaaay-di-oerrr...

CRISTOBAL

I heard about your little debate from the other night?

ELENA

What a delight that was.

CRISTOBAL

Cat talked a lot about what she proposed, said that you guys were being belligerent in response.

ELENA

Oh come on—I mean, I thought it was civil.

CRISTOBAL

She also waxed on for quite a bit on the idiocy and depravity of Mateo's idea. Some kind of weird TV show that was not a show? I didn't really understand it.

ELENA

Makes perfect sense. Your reaction, not the show.

CRISTOBAL

She didn't really mention yours though.

ELENA

(She wouldn't...)

CRISTOBAL

What was it?

ELENA yawns.

ELENA

Oh I don't know. Something practical. Something too sensible. A house by the sea, or maybe a collection of houses. A commune if you will. Maybe that's what I need to call it. Maybe then Catalina will understand how obviously preferable—I'm going to get too angry and turn into a terribly disrespectful guest...

CRISTOBAL

No worries. You're still well within your rights as—

ELENA

You can see it though, right! Can't you?

CRISTOBAL

(Yeah. I think so...)

ELENA

Why can't they?

Beat.

CRISTOBAL

Sometimes when people can see all possibilities, all the options, all the eventualities, all the roads. They're blinded to the ones that they can actually walk. And the ones that will actually bring them heaven.

ELENA

I didn't know you were so, religious.

CRISTOBAL

I'm not. That's why it's so important to get it right. Make all the shots count.

ELENA

All one?

CRISTOBAL

(smiling) Precisely.

ELENA

The problem is, Cat and Teo want to live forever. They won't be satisfied until they're immortalized.

CRISTOBAL

It's rare that someone is sure of their immortalization before their, well, mortality catches up with them.

ELENA

Precisely. They'll never be satisfied. Never.

CRISTOBAL pauses then smirks.

CRISTOBAL

I've never seen you so bitter.

ELENA

Bitter?

CRISTOBAL

(jovial) Yeah, maybe astringent is a better word. Or sour. I'm still trying to figure out if I like the taste of it on you.

ELENA

(blushing) I'm not sure you should... you shouldn't be saying things like that to me. It's...

CRISTOBAL

Uncouth? Vulgar? I'm just playing with you. Can't I mess with my future little sister?

Beat.

ELENA

I don't think I've ever seen you so bold before.

CRISTOBAL

That's because you don't know me well, yet.

ELENA

Yet? You're convinced of that happening one day?

CRISTOBAL

Well, we'll have the rest of our lives to get better acquainted, presumably?

ELENA

Ha. Presumably. Yeah, I guess.

CRISTOBAL

Is that so presumptuous of me?

ELENA

That's the issue...

CRISTOBAL cocks an eyebrow.

ELENA

No, not in that way. You just... you do know that she's been engaged three times before, right?

Pause.

CRISTOBAL

Three... times?

ELENA nods.

ELENA

Yup.

CRISTOBAL

I was under the impression it was just one. You're not talking about how she and Vicente Vicuña were engaged and then disengaged and then reengaged...

ELENA

No.

CRISTOBAL

...are you?

ELENA

No he was just the... latest iteration. Or model. Though, I guess you're the newest model now.

CRISTOBAL

(in disbelief) Three times. You're sure?

ELENA

Pretty positive, yeah. She's my sister. And I lived with her until like a year ago.

CRISTOBAL falls

CRISTOBAL

I don't know. I just thought... she moved in so fast.

ELENA

(Yeah, she does that.)

CRISTOBAL

I mean...

CRISTOBAL points around the room at different pieces of furniture.

CRISTOBAL

That's hers and that. Oh and that one. It already feels like it's been there forever.

ELENA

All her stuff in here? Could mean you're safe.

CRISTOBAL

Actually?

ELENA

(embarrassed) No. No I'm sorry...

CRISTOBAL nervous laughs.

ELENA

I was just fucking with you. Trying any way. Not very good She always does this *(gestures around)* too. The stuff storm. Stuff swarm. She swarms. (What am I saying?)

CRISTOBAL

Well now that you've thoroughly shaken my confidence in this engagement, you owe me a favor.

ELENA

Umm, okay. Fair enough. Name your price.

CRISTOBAL

Some information. Tell me about yourself.

ELENA

Well, sure. But I don't think there's that much to te—

CRISTOBAL

Bullshit.

ELENA

I-I mean what do you want to kn—?

CRISTOBAL

What's most important to you?

ELENA tenses up.

ELENA

What's...? I— uhhh...

CRISTOBAL

You act as if no one's ever asked you that before.

ELENA

(blushing) No, it's not that... uh. No. Nevermind. What's important...? What's really important...?

Voices begin to fade with the lights.

ELENA

Well there's the short answer and there's then there's the really long one...

CRISTOBAL

I'll take 'long.'

SCENE 6

CRISTOBAL and CATALINA talk conspiratorially by the living room window.

FERNANDO stands in the kitchen, having cornered ELENA there. She looks visibly uncomfortable.

MATEO sulks by the bedroom door, angrily nursing a can of beer.

MAMA sits on the couch in the middle of the room. She looks slightly sick.

Other attendees float around.

CRISTOBAL

I'm sorry, I just can't get over the fact that you never told me.

CATALINA

Toba, the fact that you're still on this is genuinely concerning. Statistically the normal fluctuation of your mind should be enough that you would've let this go by now.

CRISTOBAL

Well maybe that's because this is important? And unresolved? So it sticks around?

CATALINA

What do you want me to say?

CRISTOBAL

'Sorry' would be a good place to start.

CATALINA

Sorry? For what? For things I did before I even met you? (What are these standards?)

CRISTOBAL

No. No. It's the fact that you never told me. I just said that. All I want is for you to be honest with me. How do I know you're not hiding anything else from me? If not for Elena—

CATALINA

(mocking) El-e-na.

CRISTOBAL

Very mature.

CATALINA

Thank you.

*

ELENA

(smiling politely) You're welcome.

FERNANDO stuffs his face with cake while he talks.

FERNANDO

No seriously, *chica*. This cake is delicious.

ELENA

It's mama's recipe. I just followed it.

FERNANDO

You know your abuela used to make something just like this. Not a cake, but a party pleaser nonetheless.

ELENA

Oh yeah?

FERNANDO

She used to whip it up in a split second. This big concoction in a bowl. Pineapple, rum, aperol, some delicious syrup I forget the name of. Oh, I wish you could've been old enough to try it before she kicked it.

ELENA

Mhm.

ELENA sips her drink.

*

The TWINS walk up to MATEO.

VICTOR

Well don't you look just pleased as punch to be here.

JUAN

Always such a chipper fellow, our Teo.

MATEO

It's just like, what's the point?

VICTOR

Oh we're getting right into it today.

MATEO

You get up in the morning, brush your teeth, gel your hair, mussing it up just enough to look dashing, cover yourself in cologne, just to get kicked in the balls.

JUAN

("whispering" to VICTOR) I think he's talking about himself.

MATEO

There she is. Sitting on a bridge. Dangling her feet over the Mapocho. Immersed in a book like none of the rest of the world exists. Very politely, you approach, smile and wave and sit next to her. She only glances up, but that's normal. Because you're a man, you don't let it bother you and start talking. Eventually she puts down her book to look at you. Seeing your chance, you put your hand on hers, look her in the eyes, and hold out the stupid Hegel book that your stupid sister told you to buy and ask if she wants to be your woman... and she just grimaces. Grimaces! Like you're the scum of the earth. Like you're some troll, made of river slime, that's come out into the sun to demand his due. What are you supposed to do with that? I don't understand women. What do they want? It's like she doesn't even remember any of the mutually stimulating conversations you had about Vivaldi, or how you remembered her sister's name, or *all* the coffees you've brought her. FUCK!

VICTOR

How many is “all”?

JUAN

I was wondering that as well.

MATEO

(ignoring) For once in my fucking life it would be a delight to get anything I want. ANYTHING. I'd take one, fucking, thing. Swear to god, it would be the first time, and it'd probably be the last. Would be a fucking miracle to be happy for a single day. A miracle.

JUAN

The struggles of the downwardly mobile middle-class gentleman.

MATEO

She thinks everyone should be entitled to food and shelter by the government, why not love? What is more important than fucking love? She could actually do that for someone who needs it. She could actually change that for me!

VICTOR

Like a lone Mapuche warrior, he battles through each day and night. Brawling with society itself to save what little hope is left. No songs are sung for him, and only pain awaits. Yet, he persists. I think there are tears in my eye. Oh wait, nope that's just sweat. Why is it so ungodly hot in here?

MATEO

(mid knocking back his beer) It's August.

VICTOR

I hate when you make sense. Luckily that's not a common enough occurrence for me to reconsider our friendship. Continue...

MATEO

Seriously, I don't understand what I did wrong. What could I be doing better. In our parents' day she would be my goddamn wife by now and I'd be tossing her around in bed right now. Instead of hanging around my mom's house for some baby's *fiesta de cumpleaños*.

JUAN

We're talking about your mom. You mean your mom right? (Is there another party?)

MATEO

Things used to be so simple. This generation is fucking rotten.

VICTOR

Listen.... Do you want my advice—?

MATEO

No.

*MATEO chugs the rest of his beer,
his throat working as liquid spills
from the sides of his mouth.*

JUAN

(placing a hand on VICTOR's shoulder) You've done all you can brother.

MATEO

Like who the fuck does she think she is?

VICTOR

Umm... probably, Luisa Alvarado-Flores?

JUAN

That'd be my guess as well.

MATEO

(ignoring) Should've known better than to go after someone with the same name as my brother. He's unbearable enough as it is. Fucking socialists.

*

*Having escaped her uncle, ELENA is
not sitting next to LUIS who is
reading a newspaper and making
noises of gurgling disapproval.
ELENA is clearly getting more and
more agitated.*

ELENA

You're kidding. Either tell me what's going on or stop moaning and groaning. You *have* to choose one. (Only the worst habits of dad, I swear...)

LUIS flips the page calmly.

LUIS

Maybe if you ask nicely.

ELENA

Are you serious right now? You can't be. Plus, aren't you supposed to read these things in the morning?

LUIS

I'm not hearing that magic word.

ELENA

Alright, please tell me what text is eliciting this many groans from a grown man.

LUIS

If you must know, Augusto Pinochet was appointed to commander-in-chief of the army last night. In August, the irony does not please me.

ELENA

What's... who?

LUIS

Augusto Pinochet. Elena seriously, you must know. Really? He's been rising up the ranks of the military since the election, and before. The administration keeps using him as a salve to the right-wing's rage. I don't think it's working, but who asked me?

ELENA

I se—

LUIS

Did you know that he "wrote" this book, *Geopolitica*, that just fully plagiarized his mentor, almost sentence for sentence, and the thesis of it is still pure nonsense! That's the kind of *original* thought you can expect from this one.

ELENA

No. Why would I know that if I didn't... What was it?

LUIS

What?

ELENA

The thesis. The nonsense unoriginal one?

LUIS

You think I have time to read that drivel? No. But no one would even peer review it, that's all I need to know.

ELENA

Uhuh. (Right...)

LUIS

Commander-in-chief! *Commander-in-chief!* You think they'd want someone with some brains in the highest heights of our military. Who let this happen, we need to start a petition or a letter writing campaign—

*

CRISTOBAL

It's about the principle of the thing.

CATALINA

Right. The principle. Sure.

CRISTOBAL

Don't fucking 'sure' me, Cat. How the fuck am I supposed to trust you?

CATALINA

I don't know. Do it or don't. It seems like it's out of my hands at this point.

CRISTOBAL

No. I don't except that, I can't—

CATALINA

Look. I'm gonna go talk to my uncle and give you some time to cool down alright?

CRISTOBAL

Cool down! Cool down! That's— that's—

*

MATEO

Bullshit! All this bullshit about the “new man” the “new woman.” Apparently, the rules aren’t so fucking different! Who the fuck knew that girls still want you to pay for the first date? The fuck is new about that? The fuck is equal about that?

VICTOR

Wait, wait, wait. First date? I thought you didn’t even get past the ‘asking her out’ stage.

MATEO

What do you mean? Of course I did.

JUAN

What happened to the brutal rejection on the bridge?

MATEO

That was after, idiot. Are you fuh-king (burp) listening to me? Keep up.

VICTOR

Keep up? Maybe try the story chronologically?

JUAN

Anyway, you took her on a date.

MATEO

Fucking obviously, but I... Elena’s advice fucking blew it for me! Blew it right outta the water!

VICTOR

Sunk it...

MATEO

I was *very* honest, apparently a quality of the “new man,” and told her that I was fucking broke.

VICTOR

(whispered to JUAN) How many is that now?

JUAN

Fifteen, sixteen?

MATEO

How many what now?

VICTOR

Fucks you give. Please, continue...

*

FERNANDO

I know my niece isn't the easiest to get along with.

CRISTOBAL

You know? I didn't think that until last week, but since.... I—I don't know what to make of us anymore.

FERNANDO

Rough patch?

CRISTOBAL

Evidently.

*CRISTOBAL drinks deeply, copying
MATEO's beer consumption antics.*

FERNANDO

You know I had this with my second wife. It's actually good that you're getting all the fights out of the way now. It makes things a lot easier down the road, believe me. Just ask my first wife.

CRISTOBAL

So what, this is just, fine? It's fine that we're hair trigger with each other and we're not even married yet?

FERNANDO

Let me put it this way. Cat's gonna do whatever she's gonna do, and you can't control it. All you can control is your own reaction. So right now, you need to figure out how you're going to react. If you can handle it. If you can keep up.

CRISTOBAL

Like a trial. An exam?

FERNANDO

No, no. Exam? No there's no right answers. It's more like an—

*

LUIS

—adjustment period for us and the whole country, but—

MATEO

“Adjustment period?” This sounds like a slow slide into poverty. I’m fucking done with the pretty words, Lui. Uncle Fernando is right, all of you. Look what’s happening to our country, look what’s happening to us?

CATALINA

Shut your mouth, Teo. You don’t know what you’re talking about.

LUIS

On that we can agree.

MATEO

No. No! You’re the ones who aren’t seeing what’s in front of your eyes! I walk the streets I know? People are struggling.

*Everyone is drawn to the argument
like moths to a flame.*

CATALINA

“Walk the streets.” (*scoffs*)

LUIS

You’ve never worked a day in your life Teo.

ELENA

That’s technically not true, he did have the one job before college, as a waiter.

MATEO

Thank y—

CATALINA

The one he got fired from when they found him snorting coke with the dishwashers? Right...

ELENA

What, you're on the side of capital owners now?

CATALINA

I'm on the side of logic and reason, we all know he's a basket case, do we have to pretend otherwise because he's our brother?

ELENA

You could at least try!

MATEO

Yeah! Wait...

CATALINA

He thought "underwater properties" meant aquatic fucking housing, okay? Can we just ignore him please? This is a serious discussion.

MATEO

And I'm having it! You're the one's in fantasy land with your hero worship, thinking just because the government is socialist it can't fuck up! (Majorly fuck up too, not just little things.)

CATALINA

I don't worship anyone. Luis...

LUIS

Look, I'm not saying there haven't been... hiccups in our government policy for the last few years, but the path towards socialist, a better future, is never going to be easy. Besides, you have to consider the international aspect, the World Bank, the IMF, the United States—

MATEO

More excuses. Excuses, excuses, more fucking excuses! I don't care what the US is doing! They're reacting to us! Our government put us in this hole! I know because it wasn't this bad before!

CATALINA

You don't care that the North Americans cut off trade with us just because we had the gall to nationalize industries, so *they* couldn't control our resources. It doesn't enrage you that they're rigging the international marketplace against us? That copper prices have plummeted. They're the reason we have miners work day-in-and-day-out and not have enough money to make a single end meet. That doesn't drive you insane?

MATEO

No! It doesn't! I mean it does, but who cares? It doesn't matter, because I can't do anything about it, and neither can you! None of us can. That's why we have to be *stra-te-gic*, work within the situation we have. Isn't that what *you* always say, Cat?

CATALINA

I have plenty of disputes with Allende's policies, he's trying to change things too fast and people aren't ready for it. But the truth is, at the end of the day, nothing we do matters if we're getting screwed by a foreign empire and their allies. This is imperialism, feel it. We are getting conquered without them having to put a single soldier in harm's way. Doesn't that bother you? Where's your sense of national pride?

MATEO

What so you're a nationalist now? Really? And you think I don't care? Are you *even* lis—?

ELENA quiets MATEO by placing a hand on his shoulder.

ELENA

I think we're all bothered by it, but that doesn't make a difference. We can't control what foreign entities are going to do, especially when they're more powerful than us.

CATALINA

You're not allowed to say that, you could actually do something, but refuse. Little miss secretary.

ELENA

I'm an *aide* and less than a quarter century old. People see me as a little girl! If you think—

CATALINA

(Ignoring ELENA) And if y'all aren't aware, there's another global superpower that you've been neglecting. That you're all too proud to consider working with!

ELENA

OK. So what am I supposed to do? Unilaterally create an alliance with the Soviet Union? Beg them for aid? Ask them to station nuclear missiles around Santiago like they did in Havana? (Create an international crisis?)

CATALINA

Yeah something like that, and you could push for it. Lobby your higher-ups. Use the *means* at your disposal. You're old enough.

ELENA

In case you've forgot, I'm *your* little sister! You, y-you—

GABRIELA

Guys—

LUIS

This has really gone too far.

MATEO & CATALINA & ELENA

Oh shut up!

There's a loud thud.

*Everyone looks over to see MAMA's
corpse lying face first on the carpet.*

ELENA runs over and shakes her.

ELENA

Are you okay, mama? *Mama?* Cat, Teo, Luis!

*The siblings all walk over tentatively.
Everyone stares in shock.*

CATALINA

She's already gone. Are you surprised, she was dying before dad... how long could her lifeforce survive?

LUIS

The woman was long past her prime. This seems a mercy.

ELENA

Do you hear yourselves? Can you get your heads out of the clouds for one second and feel something?

MATEO

Elena, I'm sad. I'll probably cry later.

ACT 2

SCENE 7

MATEO lays on a park bench, reading some literary classic, legs drawn to his butt. As he finishes a page and flips to the next he looks at the text, perplexed for a second before flipping back to the previous page.

DIANA walks up and parks herself on the bench next to Mateo's feet. She has an aura of shy confidence to her.

MATEO

Uh, hello?

DIANA

H-hi. Mateo?

MATEO sits up straighter.

MATEO

Do I know you? You look... Oh wait, you were that exchange student. *(slowly)* We had that one class together. Your name... your name, your name... oh! Di-an-na, right?

DIANA

Heh heh. It's pronounced more like, Dai-nuh, actually.

MATEO

Right. So, what's up Dai-nuh?

DIANA

I just saw... or, well I've been meaning to tell you... I just adore your jacket. You're so cute in it. Ahem, it fits you so well. Strong.

DIANA brushes her hair back behind her ear, coyly.

MATEO

Aww thanks. You think? I got it imported from America. Both my sisters made fun of me for it. Was an expensive purchase, but when you have money, you get to decide how to spend it and damn everyone else.

DIANA

The jacket does suit you... You remind me of people back home... free-spirited.

MATEO

I didn't know you knew me that well. I've always thought I'd fit better in the states—

DIANA

They would *love* you there! We love Cubans, afterall.

MATEO

And...?

DIANA

Oh, just you... speak Spanish... you have that gorgeous black hair. You have pale sk—*complexion*. A complexion that wouldn't put you out of place anywhere. Coming, defecting from a Communist country doesn't hurt either.

MATEO

Chile's not Communist.

DIANA

Could've fooled me.

Pause.

DIANA

So uhh, what, what do you do, anyways?

MATEO

Good question. Good question. All sorts of things. Right now? I'm tryna start a business, a new business actually. My last one, went bust, inside of me. It's a long story.

DIANA

I love a long story.

MATEO

I love to tell one, but my focus is more on the future these days.

DIANA

Well, what's the future?

MATEO

I... it's a lot to get into. Long—

DIANA

Story? You're not doing a very good job of convincing me that you like telling them.

MATEO

True. True. It just might be kinda stupid.

DIANA scoots closer to MATEO.

DIANA

Come on. Tell me.

MATEO

(pleasantly surprised) Alright.

MATEO closes his book, changes his sitting position and begins to speak.

RADIO

Over the next several minutes Mateo explains his reality TV dream. He does not leave out any details.

MATEO

So that's basically it. My sisters think it's ludicrous. But they always say that... my brother, and my uncle too.

DIANA

They sound like the ludicrous ones. Your idea sounds... delectable. Investors would eat it right up, I'm sure. Or I think they would with a more refined recipe, a bit more time in the oven.

MATEO

Thank you! No one's said that to me. They just can't see the vision, I guess.

DIANA

Some people are just blind to possibilities, to innovation, to new forms of art. Great artists get maligned until they're *everything*—Picasso, Bach, Melville, Dickinson. Hell, even the Beatles!

DIANA ponders for a beat.

DIANA

I do think your ideas might play better in the States than here though.

MATEO

Really you? Think so?

DIANA

Yeah, we eat up mindless entertainment there. Mindless, in a good way.

MATEO

Huh, right. I guess we'll never know.

DIANA

Why not?

MATEO

It's not like I'm going to be in Anglo America anytime soon. For so many reasons: no passport, no connections, basically no money, my English is pretty bad...

DIANA

(Well, we could start working on that right away.)

MATEO

...all the money I *do* have is trapped in this stupid inheritance thing. It's not like anyone's gonna loan me shit either.

DIANA preformatively ponders for another beat.

DIANA

(flirtatious) Why don't you come back with me? I'm leaving in a month. Plus, I can be your connections.

MATEO

Haha. Right...

DIANA

I'm serious! Sort of.

MATEO

You're serious. Really?

DIANA

Maybe, it's just that... Well, you seem miserable here. Plus...

MATEO

Plus...?

DIANA

It's not like I came up to you randomly, just now. I've been meaning to talk to you for a while now. Ever since that class we had... well, I was so impressed with what you had to say and—

MATEO

You were? I got laughed out of that class. That's why I quit university. (No one wants to be real about the problem of indigenous people in the Amazon.)

DIANA

You think in a different way. You see things others can't. Your imagination isn't caged. People might not appreciate it here, but they will in the State. Believe me, people will eat you up there. The way your mind works...

DIANA brushes her hair back behind her ear again.

DIANA

Plus, I find it, your mind... pretty, well... hot.

MATEO

(flustered) I'm flattered. Truly. I-I'd love to go with you, but—

DIANA

Even with the logistics covered?

I can't.

MATEO

Why not?

DIANA

Pause.

Well... family. I stay for them I guess.

MATEO

The family that makes fun of your clothing?

DIANA

I mean...

MATEO

The family that shoots down all of your business ideas?

DIANA

You have to understand—

MATEO

The family that's called you an idiot and a loser and a failure all your life?

DIANA

Pause.

I don't know about alllll my life.

MATEO

It's MATEO's turn to ponder.

Actually...

MATEO

Hm?

DIANA

MATEO

You have a point.

DIANA

I *know*. So you wanna come?

MATEO

(jokingly) Yeah, sure. Let's buy tickets now.

DIANA

Amazing. There's just one catch—

MATEO

I have a catch for you first actually. It's a tricky one, the fallout of my last business.

DIANA

Do tell. I might have just the solution for you.

SCENE 8

MAMA's apartment.

CATALINA and FERNANDO sit in the living room, lazy and comfortable. The radio is on.

CATALINA

Mateo's moved back in here.

FERNANDO

Who could've seen that coming?

CATALINA

Apparently it was a while ago. Before mama's funeral. Didn't even know.

FERNANDO

Well you don't live with your mother anymore.

CATALINA

(not really listening) I don't know. I thought he might be finally done with us. He hasn't been around much, guess he's found something to occupy his time.

FERNANDO

Or someone.

CATALINA

(scoff) Who would be stupid enough to date that idiot?

FERNANDO

You'd be surprised.

CATALINA

I pity the fool.

FERNANDO

I don't.

CATALINA

You don't have your normal chipperness to you, uncle. You not happy to see me?

FERNANDO

It's not that it's...

CATALINA

Something go wrong with your lady friend?

FERNANDO

Well, that... it's complicated.

The radio cuts as the lights switch over.

*

CRISTOBAL's apartment.

ELENA and CRISTOBAL are in the bedroom. ELENA paces. CRISTOBAL sits.

CRISTOBAL

Is she being any more... congenial with you? Since the funeral? Your mom's...

ELENA

(sarcastic) Oh yes. Just good old "Congenial Catalina." She hasn't started a single fight over something meaningless with me in over two hours. She's doing so well!

CRISTOBAL

Sorry, stupid question. I've been trying to—

ELENA

What do you see in her anyway?

CRISTOBAL

In Cat, well... a lot of things—

ELENA

Could you list some of them?

CRISTOBAL

Are you alright?

ELENA

Yes. I'm fine. When am I not fine?

CRISTOBAL

El.

ELENA

What?

CRISTOBAL

Sit. Talk to me.

CRISTOBAL pats the space next to him on the sheets.

ELENA

Fine.

ELENA sits.

Pause.

ELENA

Sorry I'm being a—.

CRISTOBAL

No. No more sorrys either.

ELENA

Could you... could you list the things you like about my sister?

CRISTOBAL

What? Uh. Why?

ELENA

Cause... I genuinely don't understand the appeal sometimes. She just sucks... not like that like she sucks everything into her orbit and I can't get away, or out. It's suffocating.

CRISTOBAL

I... okay... I guess I understand.

ELENA

Okay yeah, so, I'd like an outside perspective to balance me out right about now. (Before I kill her.) You can give that to me, can't you?

CRISTOBAL

I'd rather not.

ELENA

Why not?

CRISTOBAL

It's sensitive. I don't know, personal?

ELENA

Hm. Okay, okay, sorry.

CRISTOBAL

It's alright. No harm in asking.

Beat.

ELENA

Well then. It is long at least?

CRISTOBAL pauses to think.

CRISTOBAL

I'll say this much: your list is a lot longer.

The radio returns as the lights switch over.

*

CATALINA

Brutal.

FERNANDO

Brutal, indeed. Brutality is the spirit of the season.

CATALINA

Rejecting you over political differences? Grow up.

FERNANDO

You. The political operative. The left-wing hack? You say this?

CATALINA

I mean, yeah. Why let it get in the way? If there's a connection there, there's a connection. It seems, ridiculous to waste it. To throw it away over which candidate you voted for in the last election. Not that it doesn't count at all, not that it doesn't change things, but... It just—I suppose when it comes to one's personal life, to love, to family... does it really matter? There are enough arenas to battle over already. (Enough stakes to claim.)

FERNANDO

You fight about politics with your siblings constantly. That's all you do.

CATALINA

That doesn't mean I don't love them. Me and Cristobal have identical politics and we bicker nonstop. And then here you are, practically a fascist, and look at us.

FERNANDO

I'm a fascist?

CATALINA

Practically. (Practically.)

FERNANDO

You really believe that?

CATALINA

Absolutely.

FERNANDO

I've known you since before you were a fetus and I still don't understand you sometimes.

CATALINA

Eh. That's just part of my charm.

*The radio cuts.as the lights switch
over.*

*

ELENA

(playfully confused) Sorry, what? My charm? I'm charming to you?

CRISTOBAL

Is that so hard to believe?

ELENA

Yes. I mean, no. I suppose not. Sorry. Everyone has their preferences but... based on the evidence, on my sister, I shouldn't be your type.

*ELENA and CRISTOBAL maintain
intense eye-contact.*

ELENA

I shouldn't... should I...

Beat.

CRISTOBAL

Maybe not.

Beat.

ELENA

Then what?

CRISTOBAL

It's just—oh fuck it all.

CRISTOBAL takes a deep breath.

CRISTOBAL

I love you, Elena.

ELENA's face goes white.

(shocked) I... I—

CRISTOBAL captures ELENA's lips in a kiss. They kiss for a while

ELENA

Stop. Stop. Sorry, it's just... we should stop. We *need* to stop. This is...

CRISTOBAL gazes at ELENA with puppy dog eyes, romantic and pathetic.

ELENA

Oh fuck it all.

ELENA initiates another kiss. The two continue to make out, as the lights switch over.

The radio returns.

*

FERNANDO

Without exception.

CATALINA

With a few exceptions.

FERNANDO

With few expectations, humans suck. Suck, and stink, and slime worse than slugs.

CATALINA

(Do slugs stink? Is slime a logical verb in that sentence?)

FERNANDO

They want things, and they'll figure out how to get them, or die trying.

CATALINA

Or they'll die living in obscurity, with no money to their name. No social credit or assistance. No support from this society. even though they're the ones upholding it.

FERNANDO

You just have to try to outlast the other guys. When one wolf breaks its leg the pack feasts.

CATALINA

Uncle, this again. We've been over this. Your misanthropy is inextricably tied to your personal experience with bullheaded assholes in the military. You were around killers non-stop, of course you think everyone in the world is the same untrustworthy maggot who used to rat on your... trusts. Your brain has calcified, uncle.

FERNANDO

/Trust is a luxury I can't afford. Never could. You can't afford it either, *señorita*.

CATALINA

Trust? A luxury? Uncle, trust is the foundation. If you don't have trust you can't get anywhere, you can't progress?

I'll put it in terms you'll understand, if the mercenary can't trust that he'll get his paycheck then why would he ever put his life on the line for a country he doesn't even live in?

FERNANDO

The best mercenaries never do.

CATALINA

(confused) What?

FERNANDO

(loudly redirecting) People are bad, people are stupid, people are selfish assholes. If you never look behind, you'll get stabbed.

FERNANDO

It's very important you remember that.

CATALINA

Uncle.

FERNANDO

I'm just telling you so that you're not surprised when it happens. Surprise dulls the senses in a moment of crisis, it's a waste of time. If you need to act, and act swiftly, surprise can be the gap between taking the other guy's head or losing your own. So don't lose it, kid.
(Gotta stay calm for a clean shot.)

CATALINA

Thank you for your concern, but I think I've got my head on enough of a swivel already.

FERNANDO

It can never swivel fast enough.

CATALINA

Can't you even trust me? I'm understanding what you're trying to say, but your extremity is incorrect. It's incorrect! It is what it is, I know why it is, but you really have to move past it.

FERNANDO

Cat, I—

CATALINA

Can we talk about something else now, please?

FERNANDO

Okay! Alright. Alright I'll let it go. But I sense things, you know. Ill winds coming your way, child.

CATALINA

Right...

The radio cuts.as the lights switch over.

*

The lights catch CRISTOBAL and ELENA in the process of re-robing themselves.

ELENA

Sorry, I'm just— sorry.

CRISTOBAL

What are you apologizing for, I told you to stop that.

ELENA

I'm sorry.

CRISTOBAL

If you apologize one more time, you *will* have something to apologize for.

ELENA

I—

CRISTOBAL

Detente! Before you say that filthy word again.

Pause.

ELENA

We shouldn't have done that.

CRISTOBAL

I know.

Pause.

ELENA

It's—

CRISTOBAL

I'm the one who should be apologizing. I started it. I'm her fiance—

ELENA

(angry at no one in particular) Yeah, well I'm her fucking sister, so...

Pause.

CRISTOBAL

We shouldn't have done that.

ELENA

Yeah. But we did.

CRISTOBAL sits next to ELENA on the bed.

CRISTOBAL

We did.

ELENA

The damage's been done.

Pause. The two exchange glances, look away and then back. There's that eye contact again.

CRISTOBAL

So... realistically—

ELENA

What's to stop us from, doing it again? Besides...

CRISTOBAL

Basic morality?

ELENA

Mo-ra-li-ty?

ELENA rolls the word around in her mouth like a hard candy she's trying to determine if she enjoys the taste of. Elena looks down.

Beat.

ELENA flies up and captures CRISTOBAL mouth in another kiss. They pet at each other.

CRISTOBAL

Is that your rebuke to the concept of living ethically?

ELENA smirks

ELENA

Yeah. I should've given up on that a long time ago.

Beat.

The two lunge at each other as the lights fade and the radio returns.

SCENE 9

MAMA's apartment.

MATEO lazes on the couch, flipping through a magazine without reading a word.

ELENA paces back and forth, occasionally sipping from her cup of tea. She's obviously nervous.

MATEO

Could you sit? You're stressing me out.

ELENA

That girl you're seeing, are you... are you sure about her?

MATEO

Which one?

ELENA

(in disbelief) Which one? Teo...

MATEO

What? I can't have a complex love life cause yours is so boring.

ELENA

Who said mine was boring?

MATEO

You're right, I should've said 'non-existent.'

ELENA

It is not *non-existent*. And I can assure you that it's at least as "complex" as your... aimless affairs.

MATEO

I'd characterize them more as futile flings, but that's not important! You're seeing someone? A person? A flesh and blood *human* male? Congratulations sister! Your standards have finally fallen from their angelic heights.

ELENA

(My angelic standards? What the hell is that supposed to mean?)

MATEO

(*ignoring*) So are you together? Are you *in looove*? You are, aren't you?

ELENA

I... well, sort of...

MATEO

Can I meet him? Have I allllready met him? Oooo, he would be someone local, parochial Elena. Can I guess?

ELENA

No, you can't. And stop trying to distract me; I asked you a question.

MATEO

You did?

ELENA

Yes. About the American girl. *Diana*?

MATEO

Dai-nuh. It is spelled that way though.

ELENA

Weird.

MATEO

Yeah.

beat.

ELENA

So... are you *sure* about her?

MATEO

I don't even know what that means.

ELENA

Does she seem trustworthy?

MATEO

Wow. Really Elena? Honestly I'm surprised.

ELENA

What? What!?

MATEO

You should really open your mind up a little, broaden your perspective, xenophobia's bad look on you.

ELENA

Dios mio.... Nevermind! Why did I even ask?

MATEO

I was questioning that as well.

pause.

MATEO

She asks about you, you know?

ELENA

What? Really, why?

MATEO

Hmm, I dunno. But yeah, ever since I told her about you she won't stop asking. Not like crazy or anything, but yeah. Maybe you inspire her or something.

ELENA

(confused) Why did you tell her about me?

MATEO

What? I can't gush about my amazing, charitable, beautiful sister. The wing-girl who gives the best advice?

ELENA

I hope that's not how you frame my role in your life.

MATEO

No, of course not. That'd be insanely embarrassing for both of us.

ELENA

But you talk about me, to your little love interests. And, she thinks I'm interesting? Inspiring?

MATEO

I dunno. Maybe. Don't get too big a head about it. She asks about Catalina too. More than you actually.

ELENA

Is she taking lessons in being a bitch?

MATEO

Hey! Don't talk about her that way.

ELENA

So you really do like her, then. Hmmm.

MATEO

No it's just... she isn't.

ELENA

Isn't what?

MATEO

A bitch. She's very sweet. She listens to me. All the ideas I have that everyone else says are crazy, she respects me.

ELENA

That's my concern.

MATEO

(ignoring) She's like cool summer rain.

ELENA

I'll let it go as long as you save me the gagging.

Pause.

MATEO

I'm seeing her tomorrow actually.

ELENA

Can you ask her a question for me?

MATEO

Sure?

ELENA

What does she want from you?

SCENE 10

The park.

The Radio plays bird songs that are at once beautiful and haunting. The track skips at appropriate times.

DIANA and MATEO walk through the park, hand in hand.

DIANA

This place is so pretty, Teo. I didn't realize I haven't heard a songbird in like a week until right now. Look at them, nesting. They're so cuuute. Do you think the little babies have hatched yet? Is that why you brought me here, to watch them?

MATEO

Eh, prob— uh sure, yeah. I mean, Almagro's a staple. Ancient place, pretty much as old as Santiago itself. Or maybe a little after, I think some admiral founded it, the park.

DIANA

He did a good job. And it's stayed intact that long. Wow.

MATEO

Yeah. Anyway that's the *Iglesia de los Sacramentinos*. I'm not usually super into churches but that one's a beauty. The city's intellectuals have been coming here to sit in its shadow for centuries I think, since like 1830 or something.

DIANA

Your math might be... uh, what's that, over there?

MATEO

That's the *Palacio Cousiño*. It's kinda like Chile's Taj Mahal.

DIANA

Really... and why's that?

MATEO

It was built for the widow of Luis Cousiño, he was like a big deal back in the 1800s so was his dad. The whole family really, coal barons or something. Anyway, he had a whole empire and when he died his wife, widow I guess, I built, or got this big house built to remember him by? Or maybe she just wanted a bigger, nicer house now that she was running the whole business by herself.

beat.

MATEO

That's similar to the Taj Mahal thing, right? Some family resemblance?

DIANA

Something like that. Really, really beautiful story either way. Love exceeding the bounds of death, through the bonds of marriage.

beat.

DIANA

Wow. It's sooo nice to have such a capable tour guide, and handsome too.

MATEO

Eh it's nothing. Just who I am I guess. It helps to have company *linda*.

DIANA

Awww. (*wistful*) We could spend everyday like this... if only you accepted my offer.

MATEO

You mean Colonel Devine's? You're what, manager—?

DIANA

No, no. First of all, that's not his title and second, no. I meant *my* offer.

MATEO

That one's... different? Remind me.

DIANA

You, me, a quiet beach in Florida. All we need is—

MATEO

The entirety of my family's fortune. Right.

DIANA

Well, maybe not the entirety, but the part that is yours by rights.

MATEO

It's not mine to take. "You'll fuck it up, Teo." "You'll squander it." "This is for your own good, little brother." That message has been drilled into my skull enough for a couple lifetimes.

DIANA

You're smart enough to figure it out. Just remember, the money is legally yours. If you could just bring your case to the right place, extricating it, won't be much of an issue.

MATEO

Not sure I am, smart enough. Law school was not for me, and I actually tried on that one, not like bio. (That was a trainwreck from the start.)

DIANA

You just need... some incentive. Something to put your mind to, something to focus on.

MATEO

I remember this offer being pitched as an all expenses paid vacation. "Logistic taken care of?"

DIANA

(ignoring) Just think about it. Imagine it for me. White sand, clear skies, no sisters to stop you from doing, well, whatever you want to do.

MATEO

There's more to life than lazing around on a beach.

DIANA

We can do it on the grass too. We have parks in Florida.

MATEO

You know that's not what I meant, *cariña*. I want more than a life bumming around living off my family's hard won fortune. I'll take it, yeah, but I'm going to do something with it. Invest it in myself. Mark my words, I'll be famous. Once I learn English, imma be a movie star.

DIANA

They'll cry when they think about how they used to know you when they see the cardboard cutouts of your radiant smile on the side of the road.

MATEO

That would be nice. But they'd probably just turn it into another way to make fun of me. "Oh look, Teo's finally learned how to whore his stupidity out to the media!" You haven't met them.

DIANA

Your sisters don't know what they're talking about. You have things that they wish they had—

MATEO

I don't think I do. Them, jealous of me, it's... it's not like that.

DIANA

You have... a way with people. You have your way with me.

MATEO

So do they, in their own ways.

DIANA

You're strong, resilient, you get back up when you've gotten knocked down. They're coddled—

MATEO

(Unfortunately, you're wrong.)

DIANA

You have loyalty, loyalty to your country. Patriotism. You don't want to give it away to some other authoritarian superpower.

MATEO

I...

DIANA

You have... drive... courage... and—

MATEO

What's your hand doing there?

DIANA

Hmm? Whatever do you mean?

MATEO

Your hand. My thigh. I know what you're doing. You can't just fuck me into doing whatever you want.

DIANA

I quite literally have no idea what you're talking about. I'm not trying to get you do anything, let alone 'fuck you' into it. You've made your decision and I respect it. I just want to make you feel good. I'm not seeking anything more than that.

MATEO

Yes, you are. I'm not an idiot.

DIANA

Was that ever in question?

MATEO

It has been for others, not for me. I'm worldly wise and see what you're doing: clearly, you're trying to pin me down and marry me. Otherwise you wouldn't be so forward. Otherwise you wouldn't be trying to set me up with his job. But you know what? I'm stronger. Gonna need to know you a bit better before I even consider putting a ring on your finger.

DIANA

Well, if that's the case. I have proposal or how we might become, better acquainted—

MATEO

Once again, you can't just keep fucking me into agreeing with you, it won't work.

DIANA

Wanna bet?

MATEO

Don't touch, oh lord. Why does it feel? Shit! Fuck...
No, no. Stop! Are you insane? There are people around.

DIANA

I don't care if you don't.

MATEO

Well, I do care! I care very much. Please stop touching me there. I have a reputation to uphold.

DIANA

You don't want me?

MATEO

Yes! I mean, no. I mean, Jesus, yes I want you, but the last thing I need is for some priest to walk through here and see us getting busy. It'd be a nail in the coffin of my career before it even had a chance to live, and walk around.

DIANA

Then, take me home.

MATEO

I can't just— My family. My sisters...

DIANA

You don't want me here, you don't want me there. What am I supposed to make of this?

MATEO

Nothing! Just I need a minute, give me a minute to think.

DIANA

Oh kay.

MATEO

Fine. Fine. You can come to the apartment. Just be on your best behavior, please? No more, you know. And don't be surprised if Catalina calls you some nasty name. Don't rise to the bait, that's what she wants. She feeds on misery.

DIANA

Okie. Lead the way, *hermoso*.

MATEO

No, 'h' sound, that's just an American thing. Besides, *guapo* would be more accurate.

SCENE 11

MAMA's apartment.

CATALINA raps on Elena's bedroom door. When there is no response she pounds.

ELENA! EL-E-NA!

CATALINA

ELENA tosses back the blankets emerging from the sheets.

WHAT!

ELENA

EMERGENCY MEETING!

CATALINA

For the love of God...

ELENA

ELENA rises from her bed.

(smiling) Hey.

CATALINA

What do you want from me?

ELENA

Oh nothing.

CATALINA

You seem unusually... chipper.

ELENA

Oh please. Well, maybe I am?

CATALINA

ELENA

You and Cristobal finally communicating effectively?

CATALINA

No. No. Something muuuch better. I came to congratulate you actually.

ELENA

Oh-kay.

CATALINA

Elena. Come on. Why yah playing coy?

ELENA

What do you mean?

CATALINA

You got us the fucking access that's what I mean! Your good old *buddy* Señor Vega came through!

*CATALINA waves around a folder
marked 'clasificado.'*

CATALINA

I knew you had it in you.

ELENA

No—

CATALINA

There's no need to be modest! Goodness knows *that's* already out the window. What did you use. Which tactic? Which h—

ELENA

I didn't *do* anything!

CATALINA

Then how did—?

ELENA

I did the fucking paperwork! Just the paperwork and waited. I didn't fuck anyone. I'm not, I'm not y— Sometimes the process works, okay?

CATALINA

Alright. Geez. Thank you, still. I guess.

CATALINA opens the folder and begins to pick through the papers therein.

Pause.

ELENA

Sorry, I'm just on edge.

CATALINA

It's fine. It's just that time of... well it's just that time.

ELENA

Still, I'm sorry I shouldn't blow up at you like that.

CATALINA

(semi-engaged) It's nothing new. Here. Help me look through some of these, will you?

CATALINA hands a stack of the documents over.

ELENA combs through them.

ELENA

Y-You and Toba make up yet?

CATALINA

No. Not yet. Been too busy. Part meeting's everyday. And don't call him that please, that's my thing.

ELENA

Noted.

CATALINA pauses her search.

CATALINA

Wait. How did you know that me and Cristobal were having a fight?

ELENA

Uh... I don't know you. You told me probably?

CATALINA

No, I definitely didn't.

ELENA

Well you must've.

CATALINA

Abuela's memory.

ELENA

Yeah the one I have too? *I* remember you telling me, okay? Or saying something at least.

CATALINA

Perhaps...

Pause.

CATALINA

No, like seriously how do you. I've barely even seen you since it happened.

ELENA

Well you haven't really been living there, at To—at Cristobal's.

CATALINA

Yeah, but I also haven't been here. Last two nights I slept in the steel workers union office.

Beat.

CATALINA

As a matter of fact, how did you know I wasn't at Toba's if I wasn't here?

ELENA

I DON'T KNOW! I. Don't. Know. I don't know how I know! I pay attention? Can't I pay attention to what's going on with my own goddamn sister? Is that such a fucking crime?

CATALINA opens her palms in capitulation.

CATALINA

Sure. Whatever.

beat.

ELENA

What are these anyway?

CATALINA

Reports on the movements of the various identified CIA agents, some local, some foreign.

ELENA

And you're just tracking them?

CATALINA

Trying to get intel on their movements, yes.

ELENA

Shouldn't they be in jail? With this much evidence?

CATALINA

Well, the thing is, if they don't know they're being tracked then they're actually a lot more useful to us free than incarcerated.

ELENA

As?

CATALINA

Bait for the big fish.

The two settle into their reading again. They sit in silence for a while.

ELENA squints at a picture on one of the papers.

ELENA

Cat?

CATALINA

(not looking up) Hm?

ELENA points at the picture.

ELENA

Is that... is that Teo?

*CATALINA begins to look over.
At that exact second, MATEO bursts
through the door.*

MATEO

It's gone!

ELENA

What's gone?

CATALINA

Heh?

MATEO

(breathless) Bank... it's... the money, it's gone!

SCENE 12

The park.

ELENA walks up to DIANA who is sitting on a bench.

DIANA leap to her feet and embraces ELENA.

ELENA begrudgingly returns the hug. They sit.

DIANA

Oh. I'm so excited I get to talk to you! Just one-on-one!

ELENA

Yeah, yeah. I've just had a few questions I wanted to ask you since that night Teo introduced us.

DIANA

Oh, really? It's so sweet of you to think of me!

ELENA

Right... Yeah of course. You're like family already.

DIANA

(playfully) I haven't violated any immigration rules have I? I know you work for the government.

ELENA

No. Or, I don't know. That's not my area of expertise. Also I wouldn't care anyway.

*

the kitchen of CRISTOBAL's apartment.

CATALINA stands with the landline phone pressed to her ear. It's ringing. She waits until the line goes dead

She slams the handset into its holder, rips it back out, and punches numbers to the keypad with righteous fury.

The phone rings. CATALINA shifts impatiently.

CRISTOBAL enters as the line goes dead again.

CRISTOBAL

Cat. Hey. What's going on? Why are you—

CATALINA slams the phone and repeats the process, dialing up for the third time.

CRISTOBAL

Hey, what the actual fuck?

CATALINA

(bored) Luis isn't answering my calls.

CRISTOBAL

"Luis isn't answering my calls." That's all you have to say to me?

CATALINA

Well, he's not.

CRISTOBAL

I haven't seen you in days!

CATALINA

(ignoring) Did you tell Elena we were having a fight?

CRISTOBAL

(blustering) Wha— N-no? Why would I do that? When would I have?

CATALINA

(icy) I don't know. Those are great questions though. Was hoping you'd be the one to answer them.

*The line goes dead once again.
CATALINA slams the handset back
into the holder.*

*

MAMA's apartment.

*FERNANDO raps on the door.
There's no answer.*

FERNANDO

Boy? Boy! Open up! I know you're in there!

*FERNANDO searches his pockets
for a key. He tries a few eventually
finding one.*

*He enters the room to see no one. He
looks around, finding the folder
ELENA and CATALINA were looking
through earlier.*

*He looks at the document that
ELENA had found. The one with
MATEO on it.*

FERNANDO

No puede ser.

*

DIANA

Any further questions?

ELENA

Nope. I think that's all I need.

DIANA

Wow, cool. That felt like an interview. I think? I've never been interviewed before

ELENA

I was a journalist in a past life.

DIANA

Really?

ELENA

No. That's just a... joke. Just cause I listen to everyone, but no one listens to me. I shouldn't've expected you to get it.

DIANA

Aww. That's really... that's really sad. Maybe you could tell me more about it?

ELENA

Oh, I would love to but I have to jet to work right now.

ELENA stands.

DIANA

Awww that's too bad. No worries.

ELENA

Maybe track down my brother if you can.

DIANA

Alright. I'll try.

ELENA

Thanks.

DIANA

Good luuuck. Have fuuun!

DIANA stands and hugs ELENA.

ELENA

Right? I will.

ELENA begins to walk away.

DIANA

It might be a bit tricky today, though. The fun part.

ELENA

What's that supposed to mean?

DIANA

Oh nothing. Just that it's a Tuesday? You know? Ugh, what a drag. Tuesday's! Amirite?

ELENA

Sure yeah. I'll see you around.

ELENA exits.

DIANA waves her out.

DIANA

(Doubt it.)

*

CATALINA

You're questioning my sanity now?

CRISTOBAL

No. Yes. Maybe, I don't know? I-I guess I just don't know. I'm not sure I know who you are anymore.

CATALINA

(incredulous) Cause I'm calling my missing brother, what, one too many times?

CRISTOBAL

No. No. Not that. Well, it's part of it, but my concerns are way broader. All this stuff with the money. You and your siblings all at each other's throats!

CATALINA

We're not—

The phone rings.

CATALINA grabs it immediately and puts the handset to her ear.

In the other apartment:

MATEO enters MAMA's apartment to find FERNANDO looking through the documents. The scene plays out silently as CATALINA talks on the phone.

CATALINA

Lui? What the fuck did you do? Why is the account empty. I know it was you, don't you dare fucking deny it.

“LUIS”

...

Brandishing the file, FERNANDO interrogates MATEO, tearing him to filth. MATEO returns the favor.

CATALINA

You're not my brother.

“LUIS”

...

CATALINA

“Your brother's safe with us.” Safe from what?

FERNANDO puts his hands on MATEO when the nephew says something truly horrible.

“LUIS”

...

CATALINA

I-I see. And his wife? Their child?

MATEO pushes FERNANDO to the ground and kicks him repeatedly until old man is unconscious.

“LUIS”

...
...

CATALINA

Okay... yes. I hear you. No, I know. Understood.

MATEO stuffs FERNANDO's body in a closet, closes it, and takes a moment to consider what he's done.

“LUIS”

...
...
...

CATALINA

I'll be there with the money in thirty.

CATALINA slams the phone one last time before wiping her hands over her mouth, breathing a deep, shaky breath.

Obviously freaking out, MATEO goes to call someone. While he waits for them to pick up he grabs the document and torches it with a lighter from his pocket.

CRISTOBAL

Cat? Cat! What the fuck is going on?

CATALINA

(whispered to herself) Teo... what have you done?

CATALINA grabs her coat and sprints out the door.

CRISTOBAL

Cat? CAT!?! (Bloody hell.)

SCENE 13

Light's come up to reveal ELENA is as she walks up center stage, entering the palace door for another day of work. She disappears inside.

There is silence for about a minute before, the lights fade, the stage flashes with light, shadowy figures run across the stage. Loud explosions can be heard coming from backstage. Lights fade completely.

Salvador Allende's final address to his people begins to play through the radio. His words are read in English by the RADIO.

RADIO

Surely this will be the last opportunity for me to address you. The Air Force has bombed the towers of Radio Portales and Radio Corporation. My words do not carry bitterness, but disappointment. May they be a moral punishment for those who have betrayed their oath. Soldiers of Chile, titular commanders in chief, Admiral Merino who has designated himself Commander of the Navy. And Mr. Mendoza, the despicable general, who only yesterday pledged his fidelity and loyalty to the government, and who also has appointed himself as Chief of the National Police.

The lights come back up to show CATALINA and MATEO. They act out the following in simultaneous silence while the radio plays.

CATALINA is in transit, biking, pedaling at top speed, stops to listen to the radio broadcast on the street, talks to some people, and reverses the direction of the bike.

MATEO pants. He starts packing. While he does he breaks into tears

and curls up into a ball. He comes to. Checks a map containing routes out of the country. He screams, but no one hears.

RADIO

Given these facts, the only thing left for me is to say to the workers: I am not going to resign. Placed in a historic transition, I will pay the people's loyalty with my life. And I say to you that I am certain that the seed we have sown in the dignified conscience of thousands and thousands of Chileans will not be shriveled forever. Not for long. They have the strength, they may overcome us, but social processes cannot be stopped, neither by crime nor by force. History is ours, and it's made by the people.

Workers of my country: I want to thank you for the loyalty that you always had. The confidence that was deposited in a man who was only an interpreter of a great yearning for justice. Who gave his word that he would respect the Constitution and the law and did just that. At this definitive moment, the last moment I can address you.

I wish you to take advantage of this lesson: foreign capital, imperialism, together with the reaction created the climate in which the Armed Forces broke their tradition, the tradition taught by General Schneider and reaffirmed by Commander Araya. Victims of the same social sector who will today be in their homes hoping, with foreign assistance, to retake power to continue defending their profits and privileges.

I address, above all, the modest woman of our land. The peasant farmer who believed in us. The worker who worked harder. The mother who knew our concern for her children. I address professionals of this country, patriotic professionals. Those who a few days ago continued working against the sedition sponsored by professional associations, class-based associations that also defended the advantages of which a capitalist society grants only a few.

I address the youth, those who sang and gave us their joy and their spirit of struggle. I address the man of Chile, the worker, the farmer, the intellectual, those who will be persecuted, because in our country fascism has been already present for many hours: in terrorist attacks, blowing up the bridges, cutting the railroad tracks, destroying the oil and gas pipelines, in the face of the silence of those who had the obligation to protect them. They were committed. History will judge them.

Surely this Radio will be silenced, and the calm metal of my voice will no longer reach you. It does not matter. You will continue hearing it. I will always be next to you. At least my memory will be that of a man of dignity whose loyalty was to the worker unto the bitter end. The people

must defend themselves, but they must not sacrifice themselves. The people must not let themselves be destroyed or riddled with bullets, but they cannot be humiliated either. Workers of my country, I have faith in Chile and its destiny. Other men will overcome this gray and bitter moment when treason seeks to prevail.

Go forward knowing that, sooner rather than later, the great avenues will open again, where free men will walk to build a better society. Long live Chile! Long live the people! Long live the workers!

CATALINA's face becomes panicked as she realizes her sister is in trouble. She bikes hard as the lights begin to fade with Allende's final words.

MATEO falls to the ground weeping, rises and then begins packing some more as the lights begin to fade with Allende's final words.

RADIO

These have been my last words, and I am certain that my sacrifice will not be in vain. I am certain that, at the very least, it will be a moral lesson that will punish felony, cowardice, and treason.

(And treason.)

((And treason.))

((((And treason.)))

(((((And treason.))))

((((((And treason.))))))

SCENE 14

The street.

CATALINA runs up the Modena. The street is choked with ash and rushing figures.

In the distance wings of the presidential palace are engulfed in flame and smoke. Artillery shells continue to fall as the scene continues.

CATALINA cuts through the crowd, her body a blade against the oncoming mass of flesh. CATALINA looks around frantically, hand cupped around her mouth, yelling...

CATALINA

Elena! ELENA! EL-E-NA! (Sister.) FUCK!

CATALINA crouches, hunched over in the middle of the street, she weeps openly.

CATALINA

(whispered) Where are you, Elena?

The crowd continues to rush past, parting around CATALINA like she's Moses and they the Red Sea. CRISTOBAL comes up through the gap left in her wake and places a hand on her shoulder.

CRISTOBAL

What are you doing out here, are you insane?

CATALINA

(startled) Toba? Why am I—? *(skeptical)* Why are you here?

CRISTOBAL

To find... to find you? Why else? I'm not one to sprint towards burning buildings in my free time.

CATALINA

You were worried about Elena? You came to *(to herself)* *Claro que si*, why else would you be here?

CRISTOBAL

What!? What are you talking about? Sure, I'm worried about Elena, but I'm here for you. I swear.

CATALINA

There's an easy answer...

CRISTOBAL

To what? Why I'm here? Yeah, I love—

CATALINA

How did you know I was here?

CRISTOBAL

Because, I—

CATALINA

There's an easy answer, *Cristobal*.

CRISTOBAL

Yes... I know—

CATALINA

Do you?

CRISTOBAL

(bewildered) I, you, Elena... I mean I—

CATALINA

Love my sister.

CRISTOBAL

Cat...

CATALINA

I love her too, more than you ever could. Look, *Toba*, I don't care if you're *fucking* her, I've never cared about anything less in my whole life. Just help me fucking *find* her! (Help me save my little sister.)

CRISTOBAL

You must've inhaled too much smoke; your brain's shutting down. Here, take my arm. Let me get you home.

CATALINA

I don't need an arm... I don't need you, to save me. I just... I need a gun.

CRISTOBAL

A-a gun? Catalina, we need to get out of here. The last thing you need is another excuse for them to shoot you.

CATALINA

Do you love me, Cristobal Fernandez?

CRISTOBAL

(sputtering) I— you know. Cat, we gotta—

CATALINA

DO YOU LOVE ME, CRISTOBAL FERNANDEZ?

CRISTOBAL

Yes, yes of course I do! I'm trying to save your life. (I came—)

CATALINA

Then, if you love me, get me a FUCKING GUN!

CRISTOBAL

Oh-okay.

CATALINA rises, she composes herself while CRISTOBAL looks around frantically for a firearm.

He finds one, an old rifle, amidst a pile of bodies. CATALINA finishes tying back her hair and reaches out expectantly. CRISTOBAL begrudgingly hands her the gun.

CATALINA

Gracias, chico.

By now, only the dregs of the crowd remain around them and CATALINA runs after them, away from the palace, toward the center of the mass of people.

CRISTOBAL

Cat, wait! What?

CATALINA climbs atop a flipped over truck and waves around the rifle. When she can't get anyone to stop running she fires three shots into the air and screams.

CATALINA

Hey! HEY! SANTIAGO!

CRISTOBAL

You don't have to do this...

People's legs slow to a stop and they turn to listen. CATALINA takes a deep breath.

CATALINA

My fellow Santiagans. Citizens of this great democratic nation, steel yourselves, I beseech you.

RANDOMS

ALLENDE HAS BETRAYED US!
ALL IS LOST!
KEEP RUNNING!
SHE'LL GET US KILLED!

CATALINA

I know you're scared, terrified. I am just the same. But I also know you and you know me. Even if you don't know it. Delegate Andrés, is that you?

ANDRÉS

It is! Who—?

CATALINA

You know me, yes?

ANDRÉS

Zapata-Leal... Catalina, yes. How could I forget? You wrote such beautiful letters in support of my union. You and your brother are the reason I wear these clothes. The reason I can feed my family as a book stacker. I knew your father too, I was sad to hear of his passing, a good man.

CATALINA

And you nearly died in that campaign didn't you? The unionization.

ANDRÉS

Yes. I have the scars to prove it.

ANDRÉS pulls down his shirt to reveal a calcified skin, the result of large burn on his upper chest.

ANDRÉS

Cousiño's boys...

CATALINA points at ANDRÉS, demonstratively.

CATALINA

Is *this* a man worth fighting for? One who was willing to sacrifice himself so that you might have higher wages, a brighter future! Oh, and you, Ignacio! Blessings, It's good to see you alive. You work with my sister, yes? You know her?

The crowd parts slightly to reveal an older man in a cheaply made suit. It's torn and covered in ash.

IGNACIO

I do.

CATALINA

Then you must know that she would give anything to stop this violence, this madness, to restore peace? Even her own life.

IGNACIO

Yes, I believe she would.

CATALINA

I believe she is still inside. She would not leave while others remained behind. Is that a person worthy of your loyalty? Is that a person worth fighting for? (My sister?) Look around you, see these faces: family, friends, colleagues, comrades. Are they worth fighting for? Their lives, their freedom. See your reflection in their eyes, is *that* person worth fighting for? *Are you?*

The crowd devolves into murmurs of confusion and apprehension.

CATALINA

I SAY YES! So, don't fight for Allende, don't fight for this government, don't fight for any political party! You may think they've failed you and that might be true. But does that mean we stop fighting? NO! This coup is not the will of our people, no organic movement. It is the will of those abroad who would see us destroyed, plundered, in captivity! When Peru and Bolivia invaded us, did we lay down our arms in the face of greater numbers? NO! We fought, defended our borders and saved thousands from the cruel rule of those governments. This is the same, in some ways more *dire*! This is everything, just like the people around you!

The crowd devolves into murmurs of nationalistic assent and fervor.

CATALINA

SO FIGHT! FIGHT SANTIAGO! Fight for your brothers and sisters! Fight for your future!
Fight for this city! Save it! And in so doing, save this country! SAVE THIS WORLD!

CATALINA raises her gun above her head and cries out. She leaps from the toppled vehicle and waves for the crowd to follow her. Tears roll down her face as she runs towards the smoldering palace, rifle held aloft as if it were a battle flag. The crowd follows screaming a bone-chilling warcry.

CRISTOBAL

Cat! CATALINA! WAIT! STOP, WAIT!

CRISTOBAL's words are drowned out by the roar of the crowd. CATALINA continues to lead the charge, never looking behind her.

CRISTOBAL

CAT! WAIT? No. CAAAT!

The crowd begins to thin as its members disappear. Their bodies becoming smoke, one by one—snuffed out like candle flames.

CRISTOBAL tackles her to the ground. Gunshots ring out, bullets pierce his body, blood splatters.

CATALINA wakes from her trance, stares out into her fiance's fading eyes.

CATALINA

(worried disbelief) To-ba.

CRISTOBAL

(coughing blood) Run... you... idiot.

His body slumps, shielding CATALINA from view, the gunshots cease. CRISTOBAL dies.

CATALINA lays there for a while, breathing slow, deep breaths. Cautiously she begins to extricate herself from CRISTOBAL's body, crawling along the ground, her head on a slow but consistent swivel.

Her eyes flash when she spots a moment to break for it, and she does, ducking into a nearby alley. She runs like she's never run before.

SCENE 15

MAMA's apartment.

*CATALINA comes into the apartment
with murder in her eyes.*

*She walks into MATEO's room to
find him packing the last of his
things.*

CATALINA

Stop what you're doing. Right. Fucking. Now.

MATEO

(distraught) Get away from me.

CATALINA

You realize you killed her right? You fucking realize that right? Fucking freak idiot.

MATEO

(verge of tears) Get away from me!

CATALINA

So was this your plan the whole time? Get your sister killed to get at her money. Our father's money. I can't believe he even let you in on a share of it, blind old fool. Do you have a plan to off Luis as well? Let me guess—

MATEO

I swear to christ(!) if you don't stop talking I will—

CATALINA

What? What. huh? You want me dead, whatever. You think I give a fuck anymore. Elena's dead and Cristo—

ELENA chokes on the name.

CATALINA

It's no matter. We both know you're not *man* enough to do it yourself, pull the trigger, drive the knife. No. Never. You spineless coward. Sniveling fuck! Yeah, keep crying. What? You gonna report me too? Too bad for you—

MATEO

I never reported anyone in this family!

CATALINA

—I'm probably already on every list, cause I have this thing called *principles*. Not sure if you've ever heard that word? Would you like me to define it for you?

MATEO

Get out of my way. I'm leaving. I'm leaving. I'll be out of your fucking life forever. That's what you want isn't it?

CATALINA

Only if you didn't want to escape so desperately. You're not getting away with this. You should rot in a cell.

MATEO

Where are your principles now? Ms. revolutionary, anti-police state, prison abolitionist—

CATALINA

You're a *fucking* exception. You're a fucking *void*. I've witnessed your whole life, your *entire* existence, and there's not even one redeeming quality trapped in that husk of yours. You've never even done a good thing by accident. You're a textbook fuckup. No, you're something beyond that. You're a fictional character. A fairytale villain. A spoiled prince.

MATEO tries to walk through the door. CATALINA blocks him. MATEO pushes harder. CATALINA tries to punch him. MATEO grabs her arm and bends it backwards. She cries out and sinks to her knees.

MATEO

I'm not a child anymore.

CATALINA

Chupa pico.

MATEO

I should've given them your name. That's my only regret.

CATALINA

Wait. Wait! Please... Where's uncle? Where's Fernando?

Pause.

MATEO looks to the side, but does not turn around.

MATEO

Check the closet.

SCENE 16

The street.

It's dark and empty, though the sounds of far away explosions can still be heard.

Teo!

DIANA

MATEO flinches.

Fuck.

MATEO

Thank God you're okay.

DIANA

What are you doing here?

MATEO

To look for you. What's wrong?

DIANA

WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT'S WRONG? ELENA'S DEAD. MY SISTER IS FUCKING DEAD AND IT'S MY GODDAMN FAULT!

MATEO

I know it might feel that—

DIANA

It doesn't *feel* that way! It *is* that way!

MATEO

*MATEO collapses in on himself.
DIANA stands, unsure of what to do.*

MATEO
(whispered) You're to blame too. All of this. It's you. You're toxic. You're a cancer.

DIANA

Teo...

DIANA reaches out to

MATEO

Don't touch me! (You're poison.)

MATEO violently knocks her hand away.

DIANA

I'm trying to help. Don't you see that? What do you want from me, *what?*

Beat.

MATEO

I want you to bring my sister back from the dead.

DIANA

That's not within my power. I'm not God, Mateo.

MATEO

Bitch.

DIANA

Oh grow up. Just cause I fucked you doesn't mean I can fix you or your whole fucked up life.

MATEO

Then kill yourself. That would work too. That's within your power. You're useless to me alive.

DIANA

Who... who are you? (Teo?)

MATEO

That's what I should be asking you. YOU! WHO ARE YOU?

DIANA

Teo. It's me.

MATEO

No. WHO. ARE. YOU. REALLY?

DIANA

(playing at grief) I'm Diana. Your Diana. The girl who pined from afar. The girl who came up to you in the park. I'm one of four. I grew up in Fort Lauderdale. I like strawberries, and ice skating, and making love to you in the grass.

MATEO stands.

MATEO

I just... I don't believe you.

DIANA

I— I *can't* believe you! It's not, it's not fair! Ending like this—

MATEO

Well, get used to it. Life's unfair. Maybe you Americans don't get that education in your marble halls.

DIANA

No. NO! You're being unfair. You, right now. Unfair to me. You're just gonna leave me, here? Now? After everything I've done for you? After everything I've sacrificed. You're gonna leave me alone—

MATEO

At least your family's still alive.

DIANA

I could've been your family. I could've given you one. One that actually respected you, one that actually *loved* you.

DIANA grabs MATEO by the shoulders. He pushes her away, openly crying.

MATEO

Get away from me. Before I kill you too. (And I can't... I can't.)

MATEO begins to limp offstage.

DIANA

You'll be alone forever, you know! Just a sickly drug addict tramp, vagrant, *fuck*, who can never be happy, can never take anything positively. Can never keep anything good for longer than two seconds! You'll just die in a gutter somewhere and no one will ever give a single, *fuck*, about you!

MATEO stops in his tracks. He looks towards the audience, pondering.

MATEO

Perhaps... and I'm starting to think that's for the best.

MATEO exits.

DIANA leans against the wall, smirking. As the lights begin to fade a figure comes over and rests a hand on her shoulder.

EPILOGUE

ELENA

In the days following my death. a new state was born. As activists were imprisoned and political dissidents thrown from helicopters into the Pacific, a new leader floated to the top. As the border was shut down and the roads collapsed to checkpoints. a new order was forged. On the Modena, the air tasted of iron, the bakeries' loaves tasted of ash, and all the street signs were penned in red. The blood... it worked its way around, blotting out all little sins. Drowning them in the deluge. It spelled a word. Read but unspoken. Stained. Staining. Ever staining... the wash, the bath, the flood, the rivers of red. Tenderly they ran, in rivulets to the sea. To the beaches where their comrades should've washed ashore. Should've... the fishes feasted well no doubt. My sister... my brother... They should've listened to me, ended up in the Pacific anyway. And my other brother... who knows... did he ever make it to Florida? California? New York? Who cares? Who cares...? Was there enough blood to liquidate his sins? One can hope...

Spotlights like before.

ELENA

So, with the benefit of hindsight, I'll tell you...

MATEO

...what's really...

CATALINA

...important.

CATALINA clears her throat.

CATALINA

(sputtering) Or I would—

ELENA

But it's caught—

ELENA coughs.

MATEO

...in my throat.

Hey, Cat—

MATEO drops to the ground.

The lights come up to reveal the park. The three occupy as much of the space as possible.

They all bear childlike demeanors.

CATALINA sits on the bench reading. ELENA is drawing something in a sketchbook. MATEO picks at the grass, trying to get his eldest sister's attention. CATALINA never parts her gaze from the page.

MATEO

Caaat, what's the word? What's that word again?

CATALINA

What word? Circumstantial? Circuitous? Irreverent? Multitudinous? Inept? There are a lot of words.

MATEO

The one you taught me earlier.

ELENA

(Tried too.)

CATALINA

Pedagogical?

MATEO

Yeah! Yeah! That's the one!

CATALINA

And?

MATEO

What does it mean?

CATALINA

Uh. I don't know. I forgot.

ELENA

(Abuela's memory.)

MATEO

LIAR!

ELENA

You know you really shouldn't lie, Cat.

CATALINA

Why not?

ELENA

Well, it's bad.

CATALINA

Yeah? Why?

ELENA stops drawing to think.

MATEO

Oh! I know! I know!

MATEO waves his hand wildly.

CATALINA

I'm not super interested in what sir (*mocking*) "Catalina wet my bed, mom. I swear!" has to say on the matter. Hypocrisy excludes you.

MATEO

Hypo-cra-sy... does that have something to do with hippopotamuses? Is that like a disease—

CATALINA

For sure. Yeah. Rare Nile fever.

MATEO

You're lying again, aren't you?

CATALINA

You got an answer there, El? This century?

ELENA

Well, dad was telling me, ranting about this Kant guy. He's like German or something and dad was trying to read it to me to understand it better...

CATALINA

Waiting for the argument.

ELENA

Well dad said that Kant's like the greatest thinker ever and dad said that Kant says that there's... there are these, umm... im-imper—

CATALINA

Imperatives?

ELENA

Yeah! And I don't remember what they were, but they were definitely in categories. Things that you should and should not do, no matter what. Good and bad.

CATALINA

Okay...

ELENA

And lying was one of them. One of the bad ones, of course. Dad said that Kant said that if you lie enough or something that everyone will be *sad*, and everyone will *hate* you, and that it *always* catches up with you in the end!

CATALINA shrugs.

CATALINA

Eh. Hasn't caught up with me yet. (Though Teo's a different story .)

ELENA

But, b-but Kant!

CATALINA

Yeah, sure. I'll stop lying I guess. You just tell me where Kant is the next time mom notices all the sweets have mysteriously defected from their jar.

ELENA

Hmf.

MATEO

Wait... so who's Kant?

CATALINA

I don't know. I forgot.

THE END