

# A l se cann n

By

*Leticia Arbelo*

**WHY I LIKE IT: Drama Editor JOHN SULLIVAN writes...**

*This drama gives us a different take on universal problems with relationships, self-actualization and how attachments morph into obsessions that can dominate and limit the possibilities of life. The cultural lens is decidedly not North American and Julia's ruminations on how her relationship with Diego has damaged her ability to fully be an independent woman, and limited her horizons, are framed in fresh, very intriguing terms. Class differences, barriers and preconceptions are well drawn in the polar opposites of Diego and Cuervo, and Cuervo's sexually charged banter with Julia sets up a surprising turn of events in the later stage of the play. Julia's relationship with the most unusual Policewoman leaves much to imagine – especially in regard to what comes next – and Diego's family complications are both typical and unique elements in such an emotional stew. I'm still mulling over exactly who is the loose cannon in this piece. I really like the sense of freedom and shape-shifting ambiguity I took away from this piece. It's freeing not to have all the answers graphed and mapped in advance.*

*May I drive you out of me as fast as one expels  
the smoke of a cigarette (...) May you be  
oblivion, time consume you and the wind  
unravel you (...) May you can never find your  
reflection out of my eyes (...) May you forever  
abandon the terrain of my head”*

*Leti Fernandez*

**Characters:**

Julia

Diego

Policewoman

Cuervo

## Scene 1

*Public hospital located in the suburbs of Buenos Aires. The place is run down, peeling walls and damp everywhere. Poor and distressing lighting. Room with intravenous bottles, a pipe bed, a bedpan, a male urinal, bedside table with chipped paint. We see a suitcase leaning against a wall at one side. Sitting on a metal stool, Julia is taking care of her boyfriend, Diego, who is lying down, still asleep, just came out from surgery. Diego is a blond guy with blue eyes, very white and rosy skin, perfectly combed. Every so often Julia stands up, walks and returns to Diego. It's night and all the time it seems like it's going to rain.*

**Julia:** *(Smelling Diego.)* Is that perfume the one I brought you from London in March? *(Pause)* No, the one I brought you smells better. This one makes my head ache. *(Pause)* You look handsome. I was going to bring you another one on this trip but you didn't even give me time to go through the free shop. *(She caresses him. Lovingly adjusts the IV bottle. Kisses him on the cheek)* Why are you still so beautiful, I have to think that the eternal anesthesia has fallen in love with you and keeps you here to be its lover? *(She stands up, looks for something in the suitcase and goes to the window)* Romeo and Juliet. Have you read it? I can't see you like this. *(Lights a cigarette)* You have to get a job so you would have medical insurance, love. *(Pause)* How long has it been since they brought you from the operating room? Two hours or three? You look somewhat fragile. There motionless. *(Pause)* You have a very complicated moon in Pisces, too much water, too much emotion. Very little earth in your chart, babe. That's why you're still; you don't have any planet on fire. Too bad. Anyway, I told you that you have to do your part too. I told you that astrology is available energy and that it's up to you what to do with it. Obviously you don't want to. *(She blows the smoke outside and puts out the cigarette on the window ledge. She goes to him, whispers in his ear)* I want to make love, to have you unbutton my bra with one hand like you used to. *(She takes out a small mirror and lipstick from his bag, sits on the edge of the bed and puts on lipstick)* Get out of bed. Come on, damn it. Kiss Me. You don't want to wake up so you don't have to face reality around you. That's it, isn't it? *(Pause)* Make up your mind: stay with me or leave. Although broken like this you won't get too far. Well, yes, it's okay, sorry, I'm intense today and you will have to put up with me like this. This is Mars conjunct retrograde Saturn. Shit all. *(Stands up. She walks to the*

*foot of the bed*) You're so quiet there. And so cute. In the end it seems that you have the heart of stone and the soul of a cop, a pig, a po-po. You, fucking asshole. *(She turns her head towards the corridor. From the opposite room, we can see just a foot chained to a bed and a vigilant policewoman standing there)*

**Policewoman:** *(From the hallway looking into the room where Julia is)* Anything wrong?

**Julia:** *(Julia comes out of the room. To the policewoman)* No, I wasn't talking to you. Oh, sorry.

**Policewoman:** Everything okay?

**Julia:** Yes, yes. *(Pause)* It seems that the rain is coming. *(The policewoman looks at her in silence)*. My head aches, so bad. Oh! A prisoner. What happened? Poor guy. I mean, he is in prison and now he is here too. Doubly imprisoned. *(Laughs slightly)* What did he do? *The policewoman looks at her seriously. Julia plays with her cell phone. She cries a little. A booger hangs from her nose.*

**Policewoman:** Sorry but I can't give details.

**Julia:** Understand. Well, no, I don't understand. I don't understand shit. Pure bureaucracy. Why can't you talk to me? What's wrong with it? One asks a question and the other answers. A dialog. There is nothing wrong with that. I am not going to say a word. I won't go and tell everyone in this hospital the reason why this guy is here. That's up to him, anyway. As long as he doesn't bother me, it's fine with me. What did he do? Did he kill someone? Awful.

**Policewoman:** You have a hanging booger.

**Julia:** What? *(Policewoman hands her a pack of tissues)* Thank you.

**Policewoman:** It's freezing cold here, anyone can catch a cold.

**Julia:** *(Takes a tissue from the pack)* I'm out of tissues and there's no toilet paper in the bathroom *(Returns tissue pack to policewoman)*

**Policewoman:** Keep it.

**Julia:** No, no. I'm going to buy some, right now.

**Policewoman:** No, no, keep it. It's about to start raining. Don't go out now.

**Julia:** Well, thank you very much. *(Pause)* The weather was exactly like this when this moron broke his leg. I told him: Are you going to play all the same, even with a wet field?

**Policewoman:** What? Oh. He broke. Oh, yeah. They do whatever it takes just for the sake of playing with a ball.

**Julia:** No matter what. Just to kick that fucking ball and hang out with friends. Now, there he is, with his shank broken into a thousand pieces, twenty thousand screws and a plaster up to the ass.

**Policewoman:** And with no medical insurance he ends up here.

**Julia:** What?

**Policewoman:** I mean, if he ended here it is because he does not have health insurance.

**Julia:** He doesn't have, no. And he could have. Because bread is not lacking. This guy screwed up my life so much!

**Policewoman:** He made you come back.

**Julia:** Yes, from a business trip. He screwed up two presentations of my book, two talks and two workshops. *(Pause)* I'm a writer. How do you know he made me come back?

**Policewoman:** I can see a suitcase from here.

**Julia:** Oh yeah. Barcelona to Loma Hermosa non-stop. I didn't even go home.

**Policewoman:** No shower, nothing?

**Julia:** Nothing, the typical airport wash and nothing else.

**Policewoman:** What I would give for a shower.

**Julia:** Long shift today?

**Policewoman:** My relief should have arrived a long time ago.

**Julia:** Uh! When I worked as a waitress, I always overstayed because my night shift would always arrive half an hour late. It pissed me off. **Policewoman:** Jobs are like that sometimes.

*(A radio with a particular AM sound is heard from Cuervo's room)*

**Julia:** The game started, it seems

**Policewoman:** What game?

*Julia points at Cuervo's bedroom.*

**Policewoman:** *(Looking into Cuervo's bedroom)* Lower the volume a little. There's another patient next to you. *(To Julia)* We'll talk later *(Coming into Cuervo's room)*.

**Julia:** Go ahead.

*Julia enters Diego's room*

## Scene 2

*Cuervo's room. The Policewoman reads the newspaper next to Cuervo's bed. On one side we see a curtain that separates the adjoining bed. Cuervo listens to a football match on the portable radio pressed to his left ear. He has his right leg in a cast and his left foot chained to the bed.*

**Cuervo:** Come on, dumbass, pass the ball to the bald guy. No, no. This is an important asshole. This idiot will make us lose the game. *(Looking at the Policewoman)* We're losing. Did you hear that? The idiot missed it.

**Policewoman:** Yes. Yes. I heard it. Turn down the radio a little. I already told you once. I'm not going to tell you twice.

**Cuervo:** Right now? Do not be like that. Come on.

**Policewoman:** There are other patients. I ask for respect.

**Cuervo:** And I disrespected you officer?

**Policewoman:** No, but if you yell you're disrespecting the other patients.

**Cuervo:** The guy next bed doesn't even speak.

**Policewoman:** Shush anyway. *(Policewoman peeks towards the next bed. She clutches her head.)*

**Cuervo:** I bet they are all from Almagro here for sure. *(To the radio)* Fuck it. Man, we have Bald Figueroa on our team and still we lose. I can't believe it. He was all by himself in front of the goal, he doesn't dare to kick.

*Julia appears poking her head.*

**Julia:** *(To policewoman)* Excuse me, but the nurse just came and with the screaming I can't hear her well.

**Policewoman:** *(To Cuervo)* I told you, lower your voice and turn off that radio.

**Cuervo:** *(To Julia)* My mistake, girl. I don't scream anymore

**Julia:** Alright, no problem. Just keep it down. Sorry.

*Julia goes away.*

**Cuervo:** *(Shouting in a lower voice)* Garay, your sister's pussy. Come on, asshole Dumb ass. Did they cut off your legs? Asshole, the cast is on me. Good for nothing. *(Tries to get up)* Kick with your left foot, because you are a lefty. Donkey. **Policewoman:** What are you doing? Stay lying down

**Cuervo:** *(Sings and whirls the pillow)* Show the guts, Pincha, show the guts. Damn you, guys! Such a bunch of cunts, be gutsy, you have no rival at all! **Policewoman:** Would you please calm down?

**Cuervo:** Dumb ass, you corpse. Have guts, you guys! Everybody get the hell out! Kick out all of the managers! They are all bounding up with the fucking cops!

**Policewoman:** Are you going to shut up or what? *(Takes the radio away from him and turns it off)* Now you calm down right away or I'll get you transferred.

**Cuervo:** *(He sits up in bed and raises his hands)* That's it, that's it. I'm done. I'm cool.

**Policewoman:** Enough football.

*Cuervo leans back, turns to one side and closes his eyes, policewoman resumes reading the newspaper.*

### Scene 3

*Early morning. Stone bench in hospital gardens. Julia is sitting looking at her cell phone and wearing headphones, she smokes and from time to time cries a little. She seems to speak alone every now and then. She is holding a pack of cigarettes. Thunder is heard in the distance. Every now and then the sky lights up. The policewoman approaches.*

**Julia:** The point is that you think you are in control, you know? And you control nothing. Nothing. Anyway, it's hard to live with my moon in Scorpio. And besides tomorrow Capricorn joins Pluto forming a trine of fire and so we're screwed.

**Policewoman:** What?

**Julia:** Nothing. Never mind. *(She grabs her head)* I should be working. And I'm here taking care of this asshole.

**Policewoman:** Your brother.

**Julia:** My boyfriend. Although he may not seem so he's my boyfriend. We still look like brothers. You're not the first person to tell me so.

**Policewoman:** I was kidding, I knew he was your boyfriend. *(Pointing to the pack of cigarettes)* Can I have one?

**Julia:** *(Takes out the headphones and disconnects them from the phone. We hear a song by Janis Joplin coming from the phone.)* Has your relief come already?

**Policewoman:** No, he's always late. He leaves me stuck for hours.

**Julia:** *(Looks at cell phone)* You can go all around the world tryin' to find something to do with your life, baby. Cry baby.

**Policewoman:** What?

**Julia:** That's what the Janis Joplin song says. I got Wi-Fi here. I'm watching the video with subtitles.

**Policewoman:** What are you listening? I can't follow you, I don't know.

**Julia:** *(Hands over the cell phone)* Have you heard her? Listen. *(Sings)* Cry baby, cry baby. Then it goes: Don't you know, honey, ain't nobody ever gonna love you the way I try to do... Listen. I'm gonna make Diego listen, maybe he thinks about it and wakes up.

**Policewoman:** He won't understand. Forget it.

**Julia:** *(Stands up and puts the phone in her face)* Listen.

**Policewoman:** Yes, I'm listening.

**Julia:** No, but listen. Listen. (*Looks at her cell phone*) Motherfucker, my Wi-Fi went out.

**Policewoman:** (*Pulling her away*) May I have a fag?

**Julia:** (*Takes a cigarette out of her bag*) Yeah, sorry, I was distracted by this (*Puts the cell phone aside*)

*Pause*

**Policewoman:** Poor guy.

**Julia:** Who? My boyfriend? Not at all, poor guy my ass. He is an asshole.

**Policewoman:** No

**Julia:** Why not? I say yes, if I tell you that he is an asshole, he is an asshole, period. I know him better than his mother.

**Policewoman:** I wasn't talking about your boyfriend. Poor kid, the chained guy.

**Julia:** Ah, yeah. What did he do? Why is he in jail?

**Policewoman:** (*Lights cigarette*) They caught him with drugs.

**Julia:** No.

**Policewoman:** Yes.

**Julia:** Does he grow marijuana?

**Policewoman:** No. No. It's not just any drug. He's accused for heroin drug dealing. He's complicated.

**Julia:** Heroin? Hard stuff. And what is he doing here? Overdose? I can't believe you.

**Policewoman:** No. No. He broke playing ball when kicking a penalty, but he's fine now.

**Julia:** They play?

**Policewoman:** Yes, the prisoners play ball. (*Laughs*) The kid was broken and walked nevertheless.

**Julia:** He went into surgery? When was he operated on?

**Policewoman:** Yes. Today. He woke up right away and already wanted to play ball again.

**Julia:** Cute. Super active. What's his zodiac sign?

**Policewoman:** The guy doesn't stop even for a minute. No. No idea. I don't know his star sign.

*We hear thunders and a pack of dogs barking. The policewoman pulls out her gun and fires once into the air.*

**Julia:** (*Scared*) What do you do?

**Policewoman:** The only way to shut them up. (*Blows the gun like a gangster and put it away*)

**Julia:** Is it really a gun?

**Policewoman:** Yes, yes. We shoot here.

**Julia:** But they are rubber bullets, I guess.

**Policewoman:** No. This is a nine millimeter. Superduper. Wanna shoot?

**Julia:** Oh, no. Thank you, thank you.

**Policewoman:** It's no big deal. It's a bit heavy and cold but you get used to it. *(She pulls out the weapon and offers it to Julia)* Give it a go, shoot a little.

**Julia:** No. Not even mad.

**Policewoman:** Easy, I'm not going to force you. *(Puts the gun away)* Another thing: listen to me, try not to smoke in the room. I can turn a blind eye once, twice is too much.

**Julia:** Yes, I know, the thing is that when I get nervous I smoke and smoke.

**Policewoman:** Well, when you feel like smoking, let me know, come here to the yard and I'll watch over your boyfriend.

**Julia:** Really?

**Policewoman:** Yes. We are here to serve the community.

**Julia:** Thank you. Your name? Did you tell me already? Nothing stays in my mind.

**Policewoman:** Call me officer.

**Julia:** *(Comes closer to kiss her on the cheek, Policewoman extends her hand)* I am Julia.

Sorry, it's my custom. Nice to meet you and thank you, officer.

**Policewoman:** My pleasure.

#### Scene 4

*Diego's room. The suitcase is open, clothes are on the floor as an improvised bed.*

*Julia talks on the phone and arranges the scattered clothes.*

**Julia:** Under anesthesia. He is not dead. He is anesthetized. Elena, your son does not even have medical insurance. (...) Because he has no money. (...) Well, yes, I know, but I don't know what he spends it on. (...) What? No, he's not on drugs! He doesn't even smoke a joint. Are you coming? I cannot do it alone. (...) Why not? Your son is in a bed in hospital. (...) Yes, public. Public hospital. Elena, do you hear me? (...) Hello. Hello. I got cut off? (...) Ah, I thought communication was interrupted. (...) Well, okay, put him on. *(She sits next to Diego, puts the phone down, to Diego)* Your mom hates you. She should have better had an abortion. *(Speaks again)* Hello Quique, how are you? How is it going? (...) Yes, playing ball. The field was wet. (...) Yes, a jerk. I told him a thousand times. He went all the same. Because if he didn't go, his friends would mock him. (...) He already went through surgery. (...) It was an emergency. (...) Ah. You are not in Buenos Aires? (...) Uh-huh. How long will it take? (...) And you can't leave the workers? (...) The workers? No, Quique, they are good people. They're not going to do anything wrong. Your son is in hospital. *(Diego barely opens his eyes)* In a bed. He doesn't wake up. *(Julia looks at Diego)* He is waking up a little. The point is that he falls asleep and wakes up. Intermittently. It seems that they gave him a very strong anesthesia (...) I really don't know (...) Aha. I already explained to Elena that he doesn't even spend in health insurance. He is thirty years old, Quique. I'm not his mom. *(Stands up)* Please, I beg you. At least one night. One night and a medical report. The doctor comes at seven in the morning. I will stay after that. (...) No, it is not in the capital city. It's in Loma Hermosa (...) No, before the roundabout. (...) No, no shantytowns. It is a humble neighborhood but not shantytowns (...) Yes, Quique, please. *(Hangs up. Cries a little. To Diego)* Are you so in love with your mom that you wake up only when I talk to her? *(Pause)* She already hung up. *(She closes his eyes like a dead man)* You doze.

*A very loud thunder is heard. Julia goes to the suitcase and grabs a bag, from which she takes out a flask of whiskey. She grabs a cigarette from her bag and sits on the window ledge looking out, her feet hanging. She sips from her whiskey flask. She lights the cigarette. Policewoman enters.*

**Policewoman:** Come on, Julia. I told you that you can't smoke in the room. Are you kidding me?

**Julia:** And what am I to do?

**Policewoman:** *(Grabs his cigarette and puts it out on the floor)* Go outside, to the yard.

**Julia:** To my house, I should go. I need to take a shower, change my clothes. *(She grabs her hair)* Look at my hair!

**Policewoman:** Don't you have clothes there in the suitcase?

**Julia:** It's all dirty. Dirty, like me, like this shitty room.

**Policewoman:** Lower your voice.

**Julia:** I need to go feed my cat, change the kitty litter. Leave this fucking suitcase at home.

**Policewoman:** Well, go.

**Julia:** And this kid?

**Policewoman:** Go and come back quickly. I look after him for you.

**Julia:** Sure?

**Policewoman:** Yes, I know what it is to have a cat.

**Julia:** Do you have a kitty?

**Policewoman:** I had. Until last year I had one.

**Julia:** Oh, what a pity.

**Policewoman:** A shot in the air. Stray bullet

**Julia:** Oh no.

**Policewoman:** Shit happens. *(Pause. Laughs)* It's a lie.

**Julia:** I believed it. *(She puts her right hand on her chest)* How horrible.

**Policewoman:** No. Poor little thing, died of cancer.

**Julia:** Oh no.

**Policewoman:** Oh yes, these things happen.

**Julia:** So sad.

**Policewoman:** Go, baby. Go see your cat, take a shower, smoke a whole pack, change your clothes. I take care of your blondie.

**Julia:** Thank you. You're doing a great favor to me. Take down my phone number, just in case.

**Policewoman:** *(Takes out her cell phone from her pocket)* Tell me.

**Julia:** Fifteen...

**Policewoman:** No, tell me straight with eleven.

**Julia:** Eleven six five six two eight three two one.

**Policewoman:** Ready. (*Shows her the cell phone*) Is this you? The cat in the profile picture?

**Julia:** (*Gathers the clothes and puts them in the suitcase*) Yes Rufi. How I miss it. Thanks a lot. I'm also going to get all these clothes washed. **Policewoman:** Don't be too late either.

**Julia:** No, no. I go right away. I'm doing it fast. I live in Saint Martin. Very close. (*She closes the suitcase and grabs her purse*) You don't know what a favor you're doing to me. **Policewoman:** I serve the community, I told you already. That's my role.

*Julia leaves.*

## Scene 5

*Diego's room. Policewoman is sitting next to Diego, taking care of him, absorbed in her cell phone. Diego sleeps and every now and then moves his head and arms.*

**Policewoman:** *(Sends voice message)* Hello Claudio. I need to know if you're coming to work, to relieve me. I'm at the Castex, the Eva Perón. I'm talking to you because they told me you're licensed. Is it true? Let me know please *(Stops and sends message)*

**Diego:** Water.

**Policewoman:** *(She hands him a glass of water with his left hand without leaving the cell phone)* Mother fucker.

**Diego:** Hey?

**Policewoman:** No, I'm not talking to you. If you already had a drink, pass me the glass.

**Diego:** What happened? *(He sits down abruptly)* I'm locked up. No. No. No. Not in chains.

**Policewoman:** Pass me the glass. *(She takes the glass from his hands)* You're not in chains. Your girlfriend will be back in a minute. **Diego:** What girlfriend?

**Policewoman:** Are you kidding me what girlfriend? Julia. Your girlfriend.

**Diego:** I have no girlfriend.

**Policewoman:** *(Shows her cell phone)* Do you know this cat?

**Diego:** No.

**Policewoman:** Come on, boy, don't make it difficult. What's your name?

**Diego:** *(Doubting)* Diego.

**Policewoman:** Well, we're not so bad then. *(She hands him a tray)* Here, they brought you something to eat.

**Diego:** What's this?

**Policewoman:** Food. It must be cold by now. But eat it to gain strength.

**Diego:** Boiled chicken again?

**Policewoman:** You are at the Eva Perón, buddy, Loma Hermosa. Public hospital, suburban Buenos Aires. What do you expect? Champignon tenderloin steak with fine herbs over fresh green salad? *(Laughs)*

**Diego:** I do not want to eat.

**Policewoman:** As you wish.

**Diego:** Tasteless.

**Policewoman:** Up to you. (*Grabs her cell phone*) Hi Julia (...) I'm the officer (...) But you registered me a while ago (...) Listen to me, baby, your boyfriend says he doesn't know you. I showed him the picture of your cat. Nothing. (...) No. I don't think he's acting stupid. (...) Send me your picture, let's see if he recognizes you. (...) How was the accident? Maybe he lost his memory. (...) Ah well, then I don't know. Oh, another thing. He doesn't want to eat (...) Okay, I'll let him have it his way (...) Here he is. (*Taking the cell phone off his ear*) She wants to talk to you.

**Diego:** Mom?

**Policewoman:** Yeah, yeah, your mom.

**Diego:** Give me. (*Policewoman hands him the cell phone*) Ma, hello. I broke mommy, when are you coming? (...) Julia? (...) I just woke up, what's wrong? (...) Well don't yell at me, I've just had surgery. My leg hurts. Who is this policewoman? (...) Ah good. I thought they locked me up. (...) Well, tone it down; I'm still half drugged by the anesthesia, love. (...) Huh? What did you find? (...) I don't understand. Let me explain. Don't make a fuss about something you read in my intimate diary (...) Well, I didn't have time to explain (...) Screw you for going through my stuff (...) I can't talk much, the anesthesia still affects me. My leg hurts. I'll put you to the officer. (*Hands cell phone to Policewoman*) Uh, I see big trouble coming with this girl.

**Policewoman:** (*Talk by cell phone*) Calm down Julia. First of all calm down. Calm down (...) Try to come quickly because I'll have to leave at some point. (...) I'll wait for you here. (*Hangs up. To Diego*) How do you get along with Julia? **Diego:** Well, fine. Whatever. Who knows?

**Policewoman:** Do you treat the girl right?

**Diego:** She's my girlfriend.

**Policewoman:** That has nothing to do with it. Do you treat her right?

**Diego:** I don't hit her or anything.

**Policewoman:** Oh, lord.

**Diego:** I'm not a feminist, don't come to me with that.

**Policewoman:** No one says you have to be a feminist, just to treat her right.

**Diego:** How am I going to be a feminist if I have a dick?

**Policewoman:** Never mind. Forget it. Give that chicken to me if you're not eating, I'm hungry.

**Diego:** Here (*Hands her the tray with food*) I'm sure they eat better in prison.

**Policewoman:** Thank you. (*Grabs the tray, the fork and goes out to the hall. To herself*)

Cocky asshole.

## Scene 6

*Hospital corridor, Cuervo and Diego talk from door to door. Both in casts and with crutches. Policewoman places handcuffs on Cuervo's hands.*

**Diego:** Anesthesia was not making effect and they gave me a little more. I almost crossed to the other side.

**Cuervo:** I went out at once. Barely two seconds. Nurse started talking to me and I can't remember anything else. I zonked out.

**Diego:** Lucky.

**Cuervo:** Does it hurt?

**Diego:** Well yes, it hurts, too many screws.

**Cuervo:** And that tattoo?

**Diego:** It's from a book.

**Policewoman:** Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows.

**Diego:** Yeah, well, I have it made long time ago.

**Cuervo:** Sure, kid stuff.

**Diego:** Yeah, stupid stuff.

**Cuervo:** Have a tribal made on top to cover it up, so you don't look like a jerk.

**Cuervo:** I skipped screws because it came in here (*Points to the ankle of his right leg*). The only shit is that the stitches scar screwed up the Pincha tattoo. How did you broke, man?

**Diego:** Playing soccer, wet court.

**Cuervo:** Uh brother, me too.

*Pause*

**Policewoman:** (*To Diego*) Yes, prisoners play soccer too.

**Diego:** Yes. I guess so. Difficult, otherwise.

**Cuervo:** The Pincha is my life, bro.

**Diego:** Nothing without soccer.

**Policewoman:** Aha. Everything with football. Men.

**Cuervo:** It's just that the courts here are shit, bro, no grass.

**Diego:** No, I don't play around here.

**Cuervo:** Oh, you are not from here?

**Diego:** No, I live near Tronador subway station, line B

**Cuervo:** Capital City.

**Diego:** Yes, right here, crossing General Paz Avenue.

**Cuervo:** Oh Villurka.

**Diego:** Ortuzar actually, pal.

**Cuervo:** I'm not your pal.

*Julia is seen arriving through the garden gate with Diego's private diary in one hand and her bag in the other.*

**Julia:** *(To Diego)* Do you recognize me now?

**Diego:** Please calm down, honey.

**Julia:** I don't calm down at all.

**Cuervo:** uh.

**Julia:** What are you doing out of bed?

**Diego:** I wanted to go to the bathroom.

**Policewoman:** I helped him, relax.

**Julia:** And the urinal?

**Diego:** Kind of affects me...

**Julia:** *(To policewoman)* Here, I bought you this. *(Hands her a sweet snack)* Thank you. Thanks a lot.

**Policewoman:** You're welcome.

**Julia:** *(To Diego)* Listen to me very carefully.

**Policewoman:** Sit down a little, take a breath.

**Julia:** No, I'm fine like this. *(To Diego)* I went on a work trip for only a week, you didn't even sweep the floor. Unwashed dishes. The play station wires lying all around.

**Diego:** Stop, stop, I'm hurt.

**Julia:** *(Shows him the diary)* What the fuck is this?

**Diego:** Where did you find that?

**Julia:** On your bedside table, asshole.

**Diego:** Give it to me.

**Julia:** No way *(Opens the diary, cries a little, looks at Police Woman and Cuervo, reads it)* "I can't stand Julia anymore nor Rufino with that smell of uncastrated cat pee and hair all over the house, I think I'm moving the hell out as soon as I can, I don't know if I'll go back to my old lady or I'll go with Martín to live in La Plata or with Leo in Bariloche. I always wanted to live in Santa Clara del Mar, quietly there. There I could play with my

*PlayStation with no one screwing me around. I still like the idea of going to live in Ushuaia. They pay well there. Even though I'd be shitty cold. Anywhere would be better than this house next to Julia and this shitty cat. C'mon Diego, you can. You have the name of the greatest"* (Closes the diary) Explain this shit to me right away, Diego.

**Cuervo:** (To Diego) Bad move. You screwed up. You don't do that to women. Neither the girlfriend nor the mother.

**Diego:** Stay out of this.

**Policewoman:** You lied to her (To Julia) How long did he lie to you?

**Julia:** (Cries) I don't know

**Diego:** I didn't lie to you, Julia.

**Policewoman:** You concealed that you weren't well. It's the same.

**Cuervo:** Why couldn't you go straight to the girl? Be sincere?

**Julia:** I asked you a million times what was wrong with you. (To Policewoman) I noticed he was acting weird before I left.

**Diego:** Well, being alone wasn't easy.

**Julia:** I was absent one week, business trip.

**Cuervo:** Brother... One week alone and you're already shitting?

**Policewoman:** Can't you be alone for a week? Better check the date when he wrote that in the diary. I think he has been writing this since way before.

**Julia:** (To Diego) Since when are you writing that private diary, Diego?

**Cuervo:** An intimate diary, dude? Let's see. Is it pink, does it have a lock, does it have perfume? What an idiot.

**Diego:** (To policewoman) Get this slum guy out of here.

**Cuervo:** Slum guy but I'm frontal, slum guy much proudly.

**Policewoman:** (To Cuervo) Come inside. To the room. Enough hall for today.

**Cuervo:** And I tell you a last thing. The biggest one is Pelado Figueroa. Cheeky arrogant. I thought you were smarter, pal.

**Diego:** I'm not your pal.

**Julia:** Let's go inside, please, and you're going to explain to me what this shit is and since when you have an intimate diary.

*Julia and Diego enter Diego's room. Police Woman and Cuervo enter Cuervo's room.*

**Julia:** What the hell is this diary?

**Diego:** My business.

**Policewoman:** Poor Julia.

**Julia:** Your business my balls.

**Cuervo:** A fool.

**Diego:** Well yes. What are you checking my things for?

**Policewoman:** And she taking care of him

**Julia:** And me here taking care of you like an idiot. I'm getting the shit out of here, seriously.

**Diego:** No, love, please.

**Julia:** Love, my ass. I called you every day from out there, I left you love letters all over the house before leaving so you wouldn't miss me. I left you food in the freezer. I'm a super idiot. How can I be so stupid? I'm leaving, get your old lady come and take care of you.

**Diego:** Mom is in the countryside.

**Julia:** Yes, I know. Your mother will have to grab the truck and come because now you're going to be alone.

*Julia grabs the male urinal, the bedpan and leaves the room.*

**Diego:** Not the bedpan, dear. Take the urinal, but not the bedpan.

**Julia:** You're lucky I didn't take the crutches.

*Diego stays standing looking towards the door.*

## Scene 7

*Hospital gallery. Night time. It is raining heavily. Julia is lying on the floor with a blank stare, holding a flask of whiskey barely between her fingers with her right hand. The policewoman nervously walks with her cell phone in one hand and an umbrella in the other.*

**Policewoman:** Easy on the whiskey. Come on. You are all out. You can sure talk about it and work it out. At least give him the bedpan and the urinal back. **Julia:** No way. Let him shit on himself.

**Policewoman:** May be he wrote all that in a moment of anger. *(She takes the whiskey)*

**Julia:** *(Pounces on policewoman with great difficulty):* What are you doing? Are you crazy? Give me that and bring me heroin. I'm sure you know where he hides it.

**Policewoman:** Heroin? Hold on. It's not that bad. Go get some rest. **Julia:** I do not want to. *(Laughs)* Are you going to arrest me?

**Policewoman:** Why don't you go and lie down on the bed?

**Julia:** What bed? I don't have a bed. I've already taken the clothes to wash, I don't have anything to use as a mattress. Besides, I don't sleep next to Diego anymore. I don't care if he dies.

**Policewoman:** You split?

**Julia:** I don't know.

**Policewoman:** Well, you can't stay here. With this rain. Go inside, to the corridors. There are seats. Not out here. Especially like this, Julia.

*Julia walks unsteadily under the storm slowly to the hospital gardens; she stops under the window of Diego's room. The policewoman follows her with an umbrella.*

**Policewoman:** Where are you going? It's raining.

*Julia takes out a piece of paper, reads it out loud.*

**Julia:** "Sitting down by my window, oh looking at the rain... Something grabbed a hold of me, honey, felt to me honey like, Lord, a ball and chain" *(Looks away from the paper that has gotten wet, turns to look at policewoman)* That's what the Janis Joplin song says.

**Policewoman:** *(Covers her with the umbrella):* Aha, and what else does it say? Let off all the steam quickly, it rains a lot.

**Julia:** *(Reads) "Honey, now tell me why? Why every little thing that I hold on to goes wrong? Everything goes wrong. Love has power over me darling. It feels like a ball and chain"*

**Policewoman:** Go to sleep, you're pretty drunk.

**Julia:** Let me be. *(Looks at the policewoman's gun)* I do now.

**Policewoman:** You do now what?

**Julia:** I do want to shoot now.

*Policewoman pulls out her gun and hands it to Julia. Julia takes it carefully, closely looks at it.*

**Policewoman:** In the air. Don't even think about shooting at the window.

**Julia:** Into the air and just once.

**Policewoman:** Go ahead. Hold it tight.

*Julia fires a shot into the air. Policewoman quickly recovers the gun. They both return to the gallery under the umbrella, Julia staggers, the policewoman grabs her tight.*

**Julia:** *(Babbles)* Like a ball and chain. Like a ball and chain.

**Policewoman:** Hold on, there is a lot of mud. You're going to lie down next to Cuervo. The bed beside him is empty.

**Julia:** Hey? Next to a prisoner, me?

**Policewoman:** Yes, next to a prisoner, you.

**Julia:** It feels like a ball and chain. *(She rubs the mud off her shoes against the edge of the step. She staggers)*

**Policewoman:** Yeah, yeah I heard about the ball and chain. Go ahead.

**Julia:** Sure? What if he kills me?

**Policewoman:** He is not a murderer. Go before I regret it. Go upstairs, lie down and close the door.

*Julia puts the paper in her pocket. She walks away and enters the hospital; she walks slowly, almost crawling. Policewoman lights a cigarette. She smokes. She takes out her cell phone and sends a voice message.*

**Policewoman:** Are you going to come to work Claudio? You should have been here a long time ago. I have a family, I can't wait for you all night. Please, let me know where you are. *Puts her cell phone away. Smokes. Mumbles several insults.*

## Scene 8

*Cuervo's Room. He is chained to his bed. Julia stumbles in with the light off, with one hand she grabs onto the bed and with the other she holds the whiskey. Groping around, she discovers the chain that ties Cuervo's leg to the bed.*

**Julia:** Oh, what is this? Chain?

*The dim light of a nightstand turns on.*

**Cuervo:** *(Sitting on the bed quickly)* Who are you? The girl next door?

**Julia:** Do not panic. I was sent here to take care of you. Yes, yes, Julia.

**Cuervo:** Huh? Who sent you?

**Julia:** Don't worry, I'm not going to do anything to you, I just need to sleep.

**Cuervo:** *(Warning the whiskey)* What's that?

**Julia:** Is the bed next to you occupied?

**Cuervo:** Yes, but he's been quiet for a long time.

**Julia:** Would you like some? It's whiskey. It's good. I brought it from outside. Make me a little place here next to you, c'mon *(She fits very close to Cuervo)*

**Cuervo:** Who sent you?

**Julia:** Nobody, I came by myself. *(She grabs his face)* My dream is to die of heroin overdose like Janis Joplin.

**Cuervo:** Oh yeah? Go figure. *(He snatches the whiskey out of Julia's hand and sips a little)*

**Julia:** Have you listened to Janis Joplin?

**Cuervo:** No

**Julia:** *(puts the headphones on Cuervo)* Listen.

**Cuervo:** I don't like this music.

*(Julia turns off the night light)*

**Julia:** And do you know how to unbutton bras with one hand?

**Cuervo:** *(Turns on the lamp light)* I'm recently operated on and chained, baby, but I'm not stupid. My hands are free.

**Julia:** You are not motionless.

**Cuervo:** No.

**Julia:** Chained and everything you are not immobile.

**Cuervo:** Not at all.

**Julia:** Well, so what do we do?

**Cuervo:** I do not know, you tell me.

**Julia:** Let's make love.

**Cuervo:** (*Laughs*) I don't make love, baby, I fuck.

**Julia:** Fuck me.

**Cuervo:** I'll fuck you, but that little preppy guy of your boyfriend...

**Julia:** My ex. I broke up a while ago.

**Cuervo:** That liar doesn't deserve you, baby.

**Julia:** Take my clothes off. I don't know, do something.

**Cuervo:** I would have been straight with you. I would have let you know. If he didn't want to be with you anymore, he should have told you: Look Baby, I don't feel it anymore, like I don't want to be with you no more. But writing an intimate diary is for pussies and dumbs, childish. He also has a Harry Potter tattoo. Super nerd. **Julia:** Yes, yes. The Deathly Hallows. He is a huge fan.

**Cuervo:** A prick. And not only because of the tattoo and the private diary.

**Julia:** I know. Give me a kiss at least.

**Cuervo:** You are quite drunk. You better sleep. Don't do something you might regret.

(*Turns off the night light*) I know why I'm telling you this.

## Scene 9

*Cuervo's room. Julia is next to him. Daytime. It has stopped raining.*

**Cuervo:** *(Suddenly waking up)* Wait. Who are you?

*We hear dogs barking.*

**Julia:** *(Startled)* What? I came last night. Don't you remember?

**Cuervo:** What happened? What did I do to you?

**Julia:** Nothing, nothing.

**Cuervo:** Sure?

**Julia:** Yes. Positive.

**Cuervo:** There, the shot.

**Julia:** What shot?

**Cuervo:** The shot in the air. *(A shot is heard)* She's coming up, go away.

**Julia:** Who?

**Cuervo:** Go away. The officer is coming.

*Policewoman abruptly enters.*

**Policewoman:** Julia, my substitute just came. Luckily, he deigned to come *(She hands her a candy bar)* Here. Bought you this for breakfast. **Julia:** Thank you. You didn't have to.

**Policewoman:** *(Pointing to Cuervo)* How did he behave?

**Julia:** *(Somewhat sleepy)* Very good. *(Policewoman winks at Julia)* No. No. Don't misunderstand it. I lay down here because he wasn't alone, there's a guy here behind this curtain.

**Policewoman:** There was.

**Julia:** Huh?

**Policewoman:** Yes, yes. They took him to the morgue.

**Cuervo:** Who?

**Policewoman:** The guy next to you.

**Cuervo:** Now I get it. The old man was oddly quiet, a while ago.

**Julia:** Yuck, it's disgusting. Was he dead while we were here?

**Policewoman:** No, just kidding. They took him to intensive care.

**Julia and Cuervo:** Oh. Poor guy.

**Policewoman:** And your boyfriend's parents came, I mean your ex, I don't know. Fancy people.

**Julia:** Did my in-laws come? What did they say?

**Policewoman:** It is done. He stopped suffering.

**Julia:** What?

**Policewoman:** They took him to a private clinic.

**Julia:** Which one? Do you know where to? Did he ask about me?

**Policewoman:** Negative answer to every question, Julia. *(To Cuervo)* You're being discharged tomorrow. Doctor is coming right away. **Julia:** So your replacement is coming. And what do I do?

**Policewoman:** Yes, he is coming up. You have my number. Anything you need just send a message. I live around the corner. If you hear some shooting, it's me. **Julia:** It could also be thieves.

**Policewoman:** Not while I'm here, I live in the area, milady. Take care, beauty.

**Julia:** Wait. I do not understand. Aren't we going to see each other again? *(Opening the candy bar)* Did you have breakfast? Do you want some? **Policewoman:** I had breakfast in the cafeteria.

**Julia:** Delicious. So you leave.

**Policewoman:** Claudio is coming up. I got him to come. And you go too; you don't have to be here anymore. Go home to your cat, Julia. Have a good rest.

**Julia:** *(Looks at Cuervo)* Yeah, sure. *(To Policewoman)* I'm gonna miss you.

**Policewoman:** *(Pats her on the back)* Super nice to meet you, Julia. Take care. And don't fuck it up.

*Police woman walks away, Julia looks at her while she eats her candy bar. A few crumbs fall to the ground.*

The End

### THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS:

*I am Argentinean. I was born and raised in this country that always has problems of all kinds. I think that's why I developed a creativity that most Argentines have. I love my country and I like to share my texts with the whole world. Proud to make our culture known, that's why I approached FOTD. As a playwright I am interested in exploring certain themes such as the differences between social classes, daily life in Argentina, mother-daughter relationships, discrimination and poverty. I feel influenced by Argentinean authors such as Roberto Arlt, Ricardo Monti, Mauricio Kartun and Griseldá Gambaro authors that I have studied during all these years.*

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