



HOTEL HAPPY

By

Camilo Almonacid

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

In Hotel Happy playwright, Camilo Almonacid, uses his own unique perspective, straddling both Colombian and U.S. to cultures, to explore many aspects of the lingering social damage from a decades long war – el conflicto armado, as it's often called- in Colombia; but he takes us through what could have been a mostly harrowing theatrical experience with well modulated moments of harsh reality that often erupt into the most physicalized / uproarious stage business I've encountered in quite a while. At times, I can almost see Harpo Marx crawling all over Chico, Groucho and Zeppo like a leering / demented spider (please do check out their classic stowaways movie, Monkey Business), or peeking out from behind Margaret Dumont's skirts, grinning for the camera like that proverbial / perennial Cheshire Cat.

But this “comedy troupe” is made up of three sex workers, displaced from their more rural homes by the conflict. They’re forced, now, to remake their lives in metropolitan Bogota in a new life they would never have chosen. And as counterpoint, we see three American defense contractors, uprooted from their own homes, suffering various degrees of PTSD brought on by things they’ve seen and things they’ve done because of their damaged moral compasses. And the no-nonsense / somewhat authoritarian Madame Carlota who tries to run her “hotel” smoothly and dispassionately - like any true capitalist would. But Hotel Happy doesn’t indulge in endless sight-gags and verbal banter for the sake of cheap laughs. This playwright uses a series of zany / Gordian knot-like situations – some of them charged with palpable menace - to accomplish what well-crafted, socially conscious comedies do so well: opening the eyes of their audiences so all may see the realities lurking inside their laughter.

Oh yeah, I almost forgot: one of the main characters in Hotel Happy is a life-sized Donkey stage puppet named “Chocoramo” – named after a much-loved national chocolate treat. A donkey endowed with compassion and empathy, and the some of the stubbornness we normally associate with their breed. With a few extra, almost supernatural, enhancements thrown in.



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CHARACTERS

SOFI, Light-skinned- mid to late 20's, a charismatic beauty queen from a wealthy rural family, displaced due to war, now works full-time at Hotel Happy in Bogotá, has a deep connection and authentic respect for nature.

LULU, Mestiza, a 20-something single mom from a working-class background in Cali, Colombia. She wants a better life for her son and has been displaced by war and violence. Strong personality, loyal to her friends and family, she works full-time at Hotel Happy.

CANDELA- Afro-Colombian, 20s, hailing from Buenaventura, from a family of displaced military officers. Has a nursing background, is practical, confident, fashion-savvy, and a self-preservationist. She is now living in Bogotá and working at Hotel Happy.

MADAME CARLOTA- Mestiza, 50's, a force to be reckoned with. She exudes confidence and charm, always the life of the party. Her hotel is the go-to spot for a good time. Despite her glamorous exterior, she is not one to be underestimated. She grew up tough in the outskirts of the city and learned how to defend herself at a young age. She holds her own in a world that often tries to exclude her, using her wit and charm to navigate through any situation. Madame Carlota is a true survivor, and her resilience shines through in everything she does.

JOHN-50's, fluent in Spanish. White American, divorcee from Pembroke Pines, Florida, a former Sergeant in the

military with an obsessive spirit with a charming personality. Works for a private contractor in Colombia. Current Occupation: Senior Advisor of International Security.

BOB- 40's, White American from Poulsbo, Washington, single, never married, an amputee veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Brave, a gentleman and a genuine soul in search of a soul mate. Current occupation: Security Specialist.

RON- 40's, Tenacious White American from Galveston, Texas also works for a private contractor, faithful husband and father of 1 daughter. Does things by the book and follows the rules. Current Occupation: Security Specialist.

CHOCORRAMO- A life size middle-aged donkey with mystical qualities. Sad eyes, but full of grace. Represented by a puppet maneuvered by various ensemble members.

SETTING

A high-end brothel in Bogotá, Colombia

TIME

Present

Scene one

Sofi prepares for work in a room filled with lockers, mirrors, clothing, and beauty supplies, including a record player, books, and a random rubber duck. She paints her nails with her leg propped on a pillow.

SOFI

I have a friend who is a donkey. I would never say those words in public because I know that that would be super dumb. There could be an immediate persecution from some people who don't understand that donkeys make the best companions.

One; they're great listeners, Two, they're super soft, super reliable, Three; they're humble, and four, they have an impeccable memory. Some people don't understand that and people fear what they don't know.

Donkeys are not stupid. But that's how they're shown in all the movies, no, no, no, that's all fake. Actually, donkeys adapt to more terrains than horses. They're super loving, Super affectionate. They don't care if you're rich, or poor, they don't care if you're beautiful, or ugly, or deformed; they treat everybody the same.

I named my friend; Chocorramo like the little chocolate cakes, his favorite snacks.

...

We met in the mountains. I was walking on one of my days off and I got lost, then at some point, I looked in front of me and there he was; his eyes, sparkly, like black amber, his hair, tangled in a knot, and his ears, ay pobrecito, folding over like this.

...

If you stand directly behind a donkey, they'll kick you. I knew I had to approach him slow and from the side. I said, "Hello Friend, I am lost." He pulled me up on his back, he went super fast, it felt like we were flying at the speed of light, sliding on mud down the hill until we finally got closer to the main road, where I could get a bus back to the city.

I thanked him for saving me, then I found a Chocorramo in my pocket, I was hungry, and so was he, so we shared the Chocorramo, and then I kissed him goodbye but he kept following me around, sniffing to see if I had more Chocorramo, it was so cute, pobrecito.

Finally, we had to make a deal. I said, "Ok, look, instead of me wasting my life watching Netflix, I'm going to come out to visit you and bring you more Chocorramos twice a week, in the mornings before work." I kept my promise too, and soon after that, two days turned into three and three days turned to four,

until we got to where we are today.

...

One day, I couldn't find him. I kept walking. I ended up near a cave, and there was a place where an airplane landed. Super mysterious.

Some men came out of the cave, then other men began to help load the plane with big boxes. I don't know. It was strange.

I jumped and hid behind a rock so they couldn't see me. One man struck Chocorramo with a long stick. My blood boiled! I wanted to do something, but what?

...

I knew I couldn't leave him there one more day, so I made a plan with the girls at work. I forced them to help me rescue him, and we brought him back here.

...

It was like Mission Impossible, we dressed in all black, and came back super late at night. The wild dogs must have smelt us, they were barking super loud woof woof, waking up the people of the house nearby. We knew we had to work fast, cutting the chains with a saw. Then we heard shots fired, and voices yelling.

We used ropes, blankets, four skateboards, and tied Chocorramo onto wooden crates, and followed the night sky.

...

But I am super worried. He is bloated, he's not eating anything. Not even Chocorramos. he usually smells them

before I even open the package and goes crazy, but now he wont even respond when I open the package under his nose and put the cake near his lips. Nothing! He doesn't do anything. I know something is wrong with him. What do I do? Guide me!

I checked his temperature to see if he had a fever and it was above normal so I put wet towels on his head and that helped lower the fever a few degrees but he still will not eat! My friend Candela, she studied nursing. She thinks he is probably just constipated. She went out to get a purgative. We're praying on our knees that this will be the solution.

Lights up on Lulu, who has her right leg elevated on a chair, and appears to be in pain.

LULU
Sofi, Sofi!

SOFI
WHAT!

LULU
I need some ice, bitch!

Sofi
(Turns, yells at top of lungs)
The ice melted!!!

LULU
What do you mean melted, *perra?* (*dog*)

SOFI
I don't know, somebody unplugged the machine, and it's all puddles now. I'm waiting for it to make more.

LULU
But my ankle hurts.

SOFI
Well, you have to wait, I'm sorry.

LULU
I'm gonna tell Madame that I can't dance tonight. Fuck this shit.-

Sofi

Are you crazy! You can't get her involved, please, she'll find out that we snuck out.

LuLU

Oh, now you're worried about consequences? Too late.

SOFI

It's all going to work out, just trust me please.

LULU

This is all your fault.

SOFI

How is it my fault you don't know how to walk without falling, clumsy.

LULU

Walking!? Walking is going to the store to get fucking milk!!

SOFI

Ok ok I'm sorry...

LULU

Look at my ankle! It's ugly.

Sofi gets up carefully making sure to mess up her new coat of nail polish, and walks to Lulu

Sofi

You can put Bibaporu on it.

After digging into a drawer, pulls out a small green bottle of Vick's Vapor Rub.

LULU

But I don't have a cold, stupid. I have a debilitating injury.-

SOFI

Ok, ok, ok I'm gonna rub some Bibaporu on your foot, and believe me that will calm everything down and we can talk about what we're going to do next.

LULU

No, Sofi, I'm done, I'm not doing anything else from this point.

SOFI

Lulu, I need your help.

LULU
I'm not helping with anything else.

SOFI
Chocorramo could die.

LULU
I'm sorry, that's not my problem.

SOFI
How can you turn your back on an innocent creature?

LULU
Easy. You want to know what my problems are? My problems are this morning, when Melky had to get to school, and I was limping home at 7 in the morning, and he was waiting for me wondering why I wasn't there when he lost his first tooth.

Sofi
Aww, seriously?!

LULU
Yes, seriously.

SOFI
That's so cute, his first tooth!

LULU
No, it's not cute. I was tired, and distracted, well what would you expect after being chased all night and almost massacred. Then while I was washing the blood from his tooth, it slipped out of my fingers, into the sink-

SoFI
Oh, no!

LULU
So when you ask me to ride into the night on the fucking expedition that can leave Melky an official orphan, it's like you're not thinking about me.

Sofi
You are absolutely right, I was selfish, and I promise I promise I promise, if you support me, I will help babysit as many hours as you want.

LULU

Basically, I'm the worst mother.

SOFI

Awww, poor baby, no you're not-

LULU

He said he's going to write a letter to Raton Pérez explaining the situation, and that he wishes his dad were here. I suck.

SOFI

You are being too hard on yourself.

LULU

I cried for 45 minutes, then I took him to school. I cried again all the way back here, I haven't taken a shower, I look crazy today...And on top of everything, my fucking ankle.

Sofi goes to a desk and opens a drawer, goes into her purse and pulls out a bundle of money.

Sofi

Here. Put this under his pillow.

Lulu hugs Sofi

LULU

I will tell him it came from his madrina, the crazy girl who rescues donkeys.

Sofi

No, tell him it was Ratón Perez.

Enters Candela dressed fabulous and with her arms full of shopping bags

Candela

Hey, Losers.-

LULU

Parce, where the fuck did you go, *La Guajira*?

CANDELA

I stopped by *El Andino*.

SOFI

You went to *El Andino*, really?

CANDELA
Yeah!

LuLU
Don't you get bored of the same thing?

CANDELA
No, you're boring. I'll never get bored of this city! Bogotá has everything! You think they have malls like this in Buenaventura?

LULU
This is not the only place with shopping malls.

CaNDELA
Be serious. All you can get out there are fake brand *chanclas* (flip flops), and shirts with the alligator sewn on crooked.

SOFI
More clothes? Candela, your locker is already full.

CANDELA
They had a sale! I had to relieve my stress-

SOFI
We were waiting!-

CANDELA
I couldn't help it. It's like a magnetic force.

LuLU
More like an compulsive disorder.-

CaNDELA
Leave me alone!

SOFI
You left at 11am...It's 6 pm. He is in critical condition, do I need to remind you?

Candela puts a few heavy bags down

CANDELA
Ok, I'm sorry but the mall was packed, and guess what? They opened a new Louie Vuitton store!

SOFI
Wait, wait-

CaNDELA
Ay, girls, I couldn't believe it, I felt like I was in Rodeo Drive. And do you know who was there shopping for a new bag?

SOFI
Are you for real right now??

CANDELA
Pretty Woman.

LULU
Who?

CANDELA
(super stoked)
Pretty Woman! La Julie Roberts.

LULU
(Correcting her)
Perra, you mean Julia ???-

SOFI
(nobody really acknowledging what she is saying)
He was sleeping, I didn't want to disturb him but I think it is time to wake him up-

CANDELA
Yes, yes, Julie Roberts, she is filming a movie in Bogotá with *el loco* del Tarantino.

LULU
What movie what movie?-

SOFI
We should go check on him.-

CANDELA
I asked her, and she said it is a secret but she was willing to violate her contract and tell me the details-

LULU
No way-

CANDELA

Yeah, I promised her I would not tell a living soul.
But I will give you a clue. It has to do with a famous
narco with a mustache.

LULU

Another movie about that motherfucker???

CANDELA

Now, about the burro.-

SOFI

Yes! I've tried everything, I'm really worried, what's
gonna happen?-

LULU

(suspicious)

So, Julia Roberts risked her entire career to tell
you?-

CANDELA

Yeah, she did.-

Sofi

I blended molasses with apples and carrots, I thought
that would help with his digestion but he didn't eat -

LULU

(even more suspicious)

And tell us Candela, what is Julia Roberts like as a
person?-

SOFI

Maybe I should have added turnips, what do you think?-

CANDELA

Oh, she was so nice, obviously, she is a classy woman,
very courteous, very graceful, what can I say;
absolutely no ego, a pure queen---even without make-
up.

SOFI

Or maybe some carne asada.-

CANDELA

And look look she signed my receipt. I didn't have any
other paper at the moment. I was embarrassed. (Beat) I
will cherish this receipt for the rest of my life.

Lulu looks at the receipt

SOFI

Or some sugar. Oh, maybe he can lick a lollipop.-

LULU

That looks like your hand writing.-

SOFI

Or a salt rock-

CANDELA

No, it isn't.-

SOFI

He's not even drinking water, that's what really worries me-

LULU

It says "Julie"-

SOFI

Did you forget??-

CANDELA

Yeah, Julie Roberts.

LULU

JU-LI-A...JULIA...WITH AN A...there is an A...Why the fuck would she sign her name wrong?

Candela takes the receipt.

CANDELA

That is an A.

Lulu throws her arms in the air, giving up on Candela.

SOFI

CANDELA!

CANDELA

What??

Sofi

Did you bring the medicine?!

She holds up a pharmacy bag.

CANDELA

Duh.

SOFI

Well, what are we waiting for???

CANDELA

It's okay Sofi, he's not going to die, he is just constipated. We're the ones that are gonna die if somebody catches us with this thing.

SOFI

How do you know it's not something else?

CANDELA

Believe me, when I did my internship at the clinic, I saw people constipated for weeks and, they never blew up or anything.

SOFI

Oh my god, he's going to blow up! If he dies, it's my fault.

LULU

Yes, it is.

CANDELA

He's not gonna die. All he needs is two doses of the serum and lots of water and salt. (Pause) And, you know, maybe it wasn't a good idea to bring that thing here in the first place, how long before somebody finds out?

LULU

Exactly, Sofi.

SOFI

I have to make sure he's better before anything else. Donkeys can die from trauma. They're super sensitive, they stop eating, and decompose.

CANDELA

Okay, okay, stop talking like that! Let's go, I have the syringe, we're going to open his mouth and I will shoot the medicine down his throat. Understand?

Sofi

Yes.

CANDELA

Now, who will hold his tongue down? Lulu?

LuLU

Um, no.

CANDELA

Oh come on, ingrate, we always help you with Melky and now when we most need you, you're not willing to return the favor?

LULU

Okay, okay, fine, but after this, I'm done, I want nothing to do with this spectacle.

SOFI

But what if this doesn't work Cande? What's next?

Candela

We will know in an hour. And then... *Mi reina (my queen)*, we call a Veterinarian.

End of scene

Scene two

Lights up. Chocorramo is lying on the ground covered with blankets. Near the opening of the closet is Sofi, Candela and Lulu tenderly caring for him while sitting beside him on top of large buckets. They wear masks and rubber gloves.

Sofi

How long has it been? Why is nothing happening?

CANDELA

I don't know.

Sofi

Do something.

CANDELA

Shut up!

SOFI

You said an hour!

CANDELA

YES. An hour, it's been 55 minutes for the love of God.

SOFI

I don't see any response, maybe he needs more.

CANDELA

He was given the recommended dose. It's just a matter of time and patience.

SOFI

As soon as it comes out, make sure you get it all in the bag ok? And tie it up and throw it here.

Sofi opens a secret entrance to the floor, and closes it.

LULU

If anybody smells it, we're in trouble.

SOFI

I will take the trash out later.

CANDELA

Madame's number one rule is "No Animals".

LULU

Exactly-

CANDELA

We are playing with fire. She's thrown girls out for lesser offenses.-

SOFI

She's not going to find out.

LULU

She finds out about everything.

SOFI

Not this time.

CANDELA

Ok, Sofi, exactly where are you planning on keeping this thing?

SOFI

Here, in my closet.

CANDELA

That's your plan? Ha!-

LULU

We're doomed.

CANDELA

That's all you came up with? Your closet.

SOFI

For now, yes, it will give me time to think!

LuLU

We have to get it out of here. It smells.

SOFI

What do you want me to do, throw him out on the street in his current condition?

CANDELA

One time, before you both were here, a girl rescued a

poor cat and brought it to work. As soon as Madame found it, she had it euthanized. You want that to happen to this thing?

Sofi

Ay, no, can you imagine?

LULU

Yes.

CANDELA

Sofi, you better figure out what to do, you can't keep him in the closet forever.

LULU

It's true Sofi, and Madame believes in guilty by association, I could lose Melky's day care, this burro has to go.

SoFI

I know I know, but don't give me anxiety, I'm getting overwhelmed, one thing at a time.

CANDELA

Fine. But you need to hear this loud and clear. As soon as this creature is well enough to walk, I will personally drop him off at the doorstep and back into the wild; until then, we're all in danger.

LULU

That's what I told her but she thinks this is a game.

SoFI

I don't think it's a game. As soon as he can walk and also eat and drink water on his own with no assistance then I will gladly let him return to his natural environment.

Candela and Lulu give her a murderous look.

CANDELA

Rub his stomach.

Sofi does.

Chocorramo lets out gas

SOFI

Something is coming!

Candela
Everybody in their positions.

They prepare, all grabbing one part of a large size
garbage bag.

LULU
Ready.

Sofi
Ready.

CANDELA
I see it coming. Keep his tail lifted.

Chocorramo's stomach rumbles

LULU
Dios. (Tr:God)

SOFI
Push, Push!

CANDELA
Put the bag closer!

It starts to pour out. An array of lights and sounds

Chocorramo makes a sound of relief

SOFI
Pobrecito! Let it out.

Cosmic Rays.

CANDELA
Okay, now, we should examine some of it to be sure he
has no worms. Lulu.

LULU
No no no not me, I touch my baby's shit, but that's
the furthest I go. Why don't you do it, Candela?

CANDELA
I just had my nails done, unfortunately, and I'm not
going to ruin them with these cheap gloves. Sofi, it's

your donkey after all...so...you have the honors-

SOFI

Fine. That's the problem with you girls, you're too delicate.

(To Chocorramo)

Good boy, do you feel relief? I'm going to check your *popó* okay...

Chocorramo moves head and gives Sofi donkey kisses.

She lifts her arms and begins to dig into the bag

CANDELA

Do you see anything that is long white or red? If you do, that's a worm.

SOFI

I can't see anything, shine the light.

Lulu shines a flash light.

SOFI

Madre mía, I feel something.

CANDELA

What?

SOFI

A ball?

CANDELA

A ball?

SOFI

Oh, Poor Baby! Maybe it was choking him.

CANDELA

No, no we're looking for intestinal worms.

LULU

Did he swallow a toy?

Sofi pulls out a bag that's covered in excrement. She washes it off with water.

Candela

That's not a toy, that's a surgical glove. Somebody

placed it there.

SOFI

How do you know he didn't eat this?

CANDELA

Trust me, *huevo*n, my brother saw this all the time in the military police.

SOFI

Is it drugs?

CANDELA

Maybe.

LULU

It looks like an *aguacate*. (*avocado*)

CANDELA

Take the scissors. Cut it open.

Sofi takes the steak knife and cuts open the bag. There are well wrapped pieces of something.

SOFI

This could have killed him.

LULU

Motherfuckers.

CANDELA

This beast needs water.

As Sofi wields her blade, the room is filled with anticipation. With each slice and cut, the air crackles with electric energy until suddenly, a burst of vibrant light erupts from the object. Behold! A radiant gem, pulsating with brilliant green hues, casts an enchanting spell over the entire space, leaving all who witness it spellbound by its beauty.

CANDELA

A ya yai...

LULU

Ay, hijueputa. (Son of a Bitch)

Sofi lifts a green glowing ember.

CANDELA

Oh my God! We're rich!
(throwing herself on her knees)

SOFI

No, we're not rich, this is not ours-

CANDELA

I'm buying a Mercedes! Thank you Jehovah, Thank you!-

SOFI

Nobody is buying anything.

CANDELA

You didn't know about this? Come on, Sofi, you knew about this, you're a smart girl, my sister!!

SOFI

I didn't know about anything.

CaNDELA

I love you and God bless your burro!

Lulu

No, Candela, obviously they're doing something wrong here if they put this inside the burro, remember, they were shooting at us, a bullet flew over your big head. Sofia, this only means trouble, you should flush those down the toilet now.

CANDELA

This donkey is a blessing from heaven. And if god sends you gifts you must receive them. Can I keep a piece please?

SOFI

No, these are not yours, Candela. And Yes, Lulu, I get it, but flushing these down the toilet will not stop the evil people who did all this.

CANDELA

Not even a small piece, for earrings?? A ring??? WHAT IS THIS?

LULU

Seriously, Candela? We have to get rid of these things or give them back, immediately.

CANDELA

Give it back to the people who were shooting at us?
Oh, that's smart, Lulu.

LuLU
I don't want anything to do with this.

CANDELA
Perfect, that's more emeralds for me then.

SOFI
Cande, Lulu is right, this is not a joke.

LuLU
She thinks everything is a joke.

CANDELA
I risked a lot helping you get this beast away, they could have killed us, I mean, you know the people from the countryside are crazy, they will decapitate you for what we did.

SoFI
That's not gonna happen, nobody is decapitating anybody-

CANDELA
But anything could have happened to us out there. We could have activated a mine and been blown into pieces.

SOFI
We all knew about the risks going out to rescue him.

CANDELA
Exactly, I should get a bonus for my level of risk.

SOFI
You want a stone stained with blood and intestines, then you have to live with yourself, not me. You know where they get these from, right?

CANDELA
Yes, I know, I'm not stupid.

LULU
I'm worried about the guys who will come looking for what we found.

LULU

Look at those jewels, they have to be worth a lot of money, more than your stupid clothes, somebody is looking for this...

CANDELA

You don't know anything about anything.

LULU

I know right from wrong. That's all I need to know.

CANDELA

Right and Wrong are relative. Go to school.

LuLU

Shut up.

CANDELA

Here is my proposal, let's go down to El Centro where the esmeralderos trade, we negotiate with them and we might only get half of what they're worth. All in favor say I. I.

Candela reaches out to touch the gem.

LuLU

I can't let you do that.

Lulu snatches them and makes a run.

CANDELA

Put those down!

SOFI

Lulu No!

They chase after her in circles

LULU

This is irresponsible! I'm taking these to Madame right away-

CANDELA

No! No, You ignorant girl!

SOFI

Lu please, stop let's think about this-

LULU

You are ignorant, not me, you think you can show up to El Centro with this stone and somebody will have money to throw at you. That's naive. Madame will know what's the best way to manage this situation.

CANDELA

What a snitch!

LULU

Madame! Madame!!-

SOFI

Lulu, sh, sh, no, she will find out that he's here...

LULU

I will tell her we found them here and that's it.

Candela catches Lulu, puts her hand on her mouth. Lulu bites her.

CANDELA

Ow, she bit me!

LULU

Madame help!

CANDELA

Hit her in the face with something!

They struggle, Sofi tries to intervene, the jewels fall on the ground, they are grappling each other, reaching for the jewel. Lulu kicks it, Candela dives for it, Sofi beats them both to it.

SOFI

Wait wait! He's moving.

With deft movements, Chocorramo, rises and begins to bray at the top of his lungs.

Chocorramo

HEE HAW HEE HAW HEE HAW-

CANDELA

Put some electrical tape on its mouth.

SOFI

No, leave him alone.

CANDELA

How else is it going to stay quiet?

SOFI

He's trying to communicate with us.

CANDELA

Yes, it's saying "hew haw" over and over. I got the point. I wish I had a gun.

SOFI

I can see it in his eyes, he's telling us something.

Maybe he wants a Chocorrano.

(He keeps braying)

LULU

I'm starting to feel sympathy for the burro having to deal with the two of you, Candela is supposed to have *disque* (supposed) nurse training and I can't believe I trusted either of you with Melky to begin with, it's obvious the donkey is thirsty and starving, he needs water, not a Chocorrano!

SOFI

Lulu, Yes, yes you're right. But what do I do?

LULU

I can't. You put the water by his mouth.

Lulu takes the water-

CANDELA

Careful it doesn't kick you.

LuLU

Here you go. Drink.

Lulu puts the bowl of water near Chocorrano's mouth. Chocorrano, still braying, puts his face close, is still for a moment, and then sticks his tongue out to drink.

SOFI

Oh my god, a miracle.

CANDELA

He's drinking water, he didn't walk on top of it.

An elaborate doorbell is heard, they all look at each other knowing that it means somebody is at the door.

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF SCENE

Scene three

The grand matriarch stands before us peering into our souls.

MADAME CARLOTA

Welcome to Hotel Happy, I am Madame Carlota, here to serve you.

Behind her, are three guys; one steps forward. He is an anglo man in his 40's, military build, currently very sun tanned, wearing military fatigue shorts, a linen shirt, and Old Navy flip flops. He looks like he has lived in plenty of adverse situations, his manners however are lordly and nothing less than that of an American gentleman. He carries a medium sized black suit case.

JOHN

Soy John, este es Smitty.

John steps back, as another man comes forward. This man is tall, and thin, wearing cargo shorts.

BOB

Bob. How are ya?

JOHN

Y...

(gestures with hand toward his other companion)

Say hello.

RON

Howdy.

JOHN

Tell her your name or it comes off as rude, Whiting, what the fuck.

RON

Oh. Ron Whiting. *Mucho Gusto.*

Madame Carlota

Hello, Ron, how are you this evening?

Ron

I'm perfect, and improving rapidly.

MADAME CARLOTA

Yes you are *chulo* (handsome)

(Winks at Ron)

The three amigos, Ron, Bob y John. Come in, come in, I will show you.

(She signals with her arms and a world of neon lights and a colorful interior appears before us. Madame Carlota sulks gloriously in the array of colors. As they walk more neon lights turn on, outlining the space)

We are an all-inclusive five-star rated establishment. We have three floors of nirvana at your disposal. The space is divided into three sections.

(Pointing as she speaks)

Over there...That is Laetus. The section for massages, the Turkish sauna, the jacuzzi and the sleeping rooms. That section over there, that is the Beatitudo section with the bar, the dining area, and private rooms. And you see that section there?

JOHN

Si.

MADAME CARLOTA

That is the Sublime Beatitudo section where you find a state-of-the-art stage, and the confections. Now, behold---The Area of Transformation.

(She looks at Bob who has a prosthetic leg)

Madame Carlota

Now, I am required by law to tell you this. We have special accommodations---well, for you papacito...

(Looking to Bob specifically)

MaDAME CARLOTA

We have elevators, ramps on every entrance and exit, and emergency escapes in every room. By law, Hotel Happy is accessible to people with discapacitations---

BoB

Thank You.

JOHN

This guy doesn't need any elevators or ramps, he's a former marine, and survived two deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

MADAME CARLOTA
Ah, a soldier?

BOB
Not a soldier, ma'am. A marine.

Madame Carlota
Ai, ya yai! Mr. Marine.

JOHN
He's got a purple heart.

Madame Carlota
Oh, I'm sorry, my sympathies for your conditions.

The guys laugh

JOHN
No ma'am, a purple heart is given to you by the President for serving your country and getting wounded in the line of fire. And, by the way, they don't just give those out to anyone.

BOB
(abashed)
Aw, shucks, come on, stop.

MADAME CARLOTA
Vea pues (Will you look at that) a genuine Rambo.

BOB
It was a purple heart, it wasn't a medal of honor.

JOHN
He's just being humble, a purple heart is....very Very---Tu Sabes---Importante Cosa.

MADAME CARLOTA
We have had many other purple things, but this is the first time--we have a purple heart. It is an honor, señor.

BoB
The honor is mine.

MaDAME CARLOTA
Now, we drink.

She smiles, turns around and walks away fast exiting
off stage.

Ron
I don't think there is anything here. I say we get the
hell out of here while we can.

BOB
Yea, maybe Ron's right John.

JOHN
She's hiding something.

RON
I don't think she is.

BOB
I don't know. She seemed ok.

JOHN
Then why was she so jumpy huh?

BOB
We could be in the wrong place-

Ron
Yeah-

BOB
I mean it might not even be in this building. GPS's
can be inaccurate, you know?

JOHN
No no, they traced it here. It's here.

BOB
What if the lady went back to get an assault rifle or
something and comes back and just blasts us?-

Ron
It could happen-

JOHN
Can you cool it please?

BOB

Why is she taking so long?

JohN
Relax.

Ron
We can get some coffee and doughnuts and stake out in the front for the night, I'm game with that.

BOB
Let's do it.

JOHN
No wait wait wait, there's only one way to find out for sure if this is the place.

BOB
How's that?

JoHN
We have to do some real investigating.

RON
I can't do that, Sarge.

Ron holds up his wedding ring

JOHN
Look, we'll make a pact with you right now. I solemnly swear to never tell a living soul about whatever happens here tonight.

BOB
I solemnly swear.

RON
20 years I've been faithful to Sharon.

JoHN
It would be required for the operation to stay and conduct an investigation.

RON
Screw the operation.

JOHN
This puts food on the table back home doesn't it? Bob, wire me.

BoB
Copy, John.

Bob begins to wire John, getting him entangled as he does so.

RON
You know what's happening right?? This is Psychological Warfare.-

JOHN
You gonna start with a conspiracy theory now, Ronny?

BoB
You can't move too much-

RON
The Colombians are using us like pawns in their own chess game, don't you all see it?

JOHN
Here we go-

BOB
This is a multi-dimensional microphone, it picks up sound from all angles-

RON
This is absurd, we're supposed to be providing logistics, but they're sending us out on bullshit missions just to waste our time and energy until we get tired and quit.

JohN
What are you talking about, this is a security-related mission.

RON
They want us to go home depleted, and frustrated, because I don't know if you've realized it yet, they don't like us here.-

Bob
(To John) You want to test it out, try to speak into your armpit. Just be mindful of your movements.-

JohN
Of course they are using us, that's no fucking

mystery. Right Bob?

BoB
You're right.

RON
They want to diminish our credibility, make us the butt of the joke, that's the type of games these people play in this country.

JoHN
Ok ok ok, stop stop stop, I'm glad that you're happily married.

BoB
Sharon's a great lady.

RON
Thank you.

JoHN
And I'm happy that she has your dick tied in a pretzel, good for you, but Bob and I could use a piece of ass. End of discussion.

BOB
Agreed. I'm not married and the women in this country are driving me insane.

JoHN
Have a heart, Ron. We're tired, we've been in the god-damned Colombian jungle for who knows how long.

BoB
Too long.

JOHN
Everything sucks right now, our morale is low, Bob is losing his mind.

BoB
We could all really use a boost, Ron.

JoHN
Finally, we get stationed in civilization for a couple of days-

BoB
Finally-

JohN

We wanna enjoy ourselves too. What's so immoral about that?

BOB

Nothing, really.

JohN

We're not doing anything wrong, this is legal here.

Bob

That's wonderful. There's nothing to worry about!

RON

Well, you guys do what you wanna do, and I'll wait in the car.

JOHN

Whiting, look, you already came inside with us so it's gonna look very suspicious now if suddenly you just aren't here-

BoB

Very suspicious-

JOHN

Our lives might be in danger, and then what if they send an ambush, you're just gonna leave us here??

BOB

You wouldn't do that to us, right, Ronny? Abandon us?

RON

Fine, fine, but for the record, I am a conscientious objector.

JOHN

Ok, cool.

BOB

Thank you, brother. May God repay you.

JOHN

All right, now huddle in-
(Huddling in secrecy)

When she comes back, let me do the talking, I'll negotiate a deal, that way we don't end up paying the gringo prices. Keep quiet, and keep alert.

BoB
Copy.

JoHN
Don't let your guard down at any moment, in one second they will slip something into your drink, rob you and leave you naked in the street at 4 in the morning, so think with your head not with your-

Madame Carlota returns with some shots.

Madame Carlota
Racata, Racata! (like gunfire sounds)

The three guys all duck.

MADAME CARLOTA
The shots

JoHN
Oh, um, yes...*Gracias*.
(signaling to the guys to keep it cool)

MADAME CARLOTA
We first do a toast for you. The Purple Heart. This is *Aguardiente*; firewater. It burns, but then it feels very good.

Bob takes shot and is about to drink but Madame Carlota stops him

MADAME CARLOTA
Wait, wait, you must first look everybody in the face and say:

(Holding her cup up)

MADAME CARLOTA
Amor.

Everybody
Amor

MADAME CARLOTA
Felicidad.

EVERYBODY
Fe-li-ci-dad

MADAME CARLOTA

And Death.

(dramatic pause)

To Sadness.

(They all clink cups and drink.)

MADAME CARLOTA

Now you dance.

(she claps three times)

Girls!

JOHN

Un momento. Un momento. Un momento.

MADAME CARLOTA

Is there a problem, *chulo*?

JOHN

Buscar chicas por precios muy económicos. (Looking for girls for good prices)

MADAME CARLOTA

Gentleman, gentleman, Hotel Happy is not some filthy hole that you would find on the side of the road. We are internationally renowned, our reputation precedes us.

JOHN

Querer saber cuanto costar? (How much does it cost?)

MADAME CARLOTA

First, you see the girls then we talk business, okay papi?

JOHN

Querer saber ahora para luego no haber decepciones.
(We want to know now so that afterward there are no deceptions)

MADAME CARLOTA

(*Offended*)

Our girls have the highest qualifications, very clean, if that is what you are trying to implicate.

JOHN

That's not what I meant-

MADAME CARLOTA

Ok, you want to go to another place. Go!-

BoB

We're sorry-

Madame Carlota

There are many other hotels, such as Hotel Lava, Hotel Venecia. You choose, this area is called The Bermuda Triangle. There are so many hotels, the men, like you, disappear forever and get syphilis and leprosy. Is that what you want?

BOB

Leprosy? I didn't know people get that anymore.-

JOHN

They don't, she's exaggerating, it's a Colombian thing.-

MADAME CARLOTA

You will find lower prices around here, yes, but I tell you because Madame Carlota is an honest person and I know this city, this is my home----the other establishments can not show you the gynecological test results.

JOHN

We are willing to pay \$30 dollars each.

MADAME CARLOTA

Okay darling, I know I am talking to men of certain intelligence, and I can tell you this information directly: For \$30, you can maybe get an inflatable woman with candidiasis over there in the red district, or a corpse from the medical examiners.

John

Look, this isn't my first rodeo. I know the scene.

MADAME CARLOTA

But it is your first time here at Hotel Happy, *verdad?*

JOHN

Verdad, but solo dispuestos a pagar \$30. Oferta final. (*True, but only able to pay 30. That's our final offer*)

MADAME CARLOTA

Papito, our prices begin at \$300, my girls are the most refined company this revolting city has to offer you.

JOHN

\$30. Do we have a deal or not?

MADAME CARLOTA

No.

JOHN

No Purple Heart discount?

MADAME CARLOTA

Pardon me one moment.

Madame swiftly walks away.

RON

She's gonna shoot us in the head.

JOHN

Will you shut up, please?

BOB

Can you stop with the negotiating?? Lets just pay whatever it is.

JOHN

Relax, Bob. You want to get ripped off? I know what I'm doing.

Madame walks away, and the lights shift.

Ron

Here she comes again.

JOHN

Entonces?? Cual es la ultima palabra, Doña? (So, what's the final word?)

Madame Carlota strikes a histrionic pose

MADAME CARLOTA

(walking to center stage)

---tantara---raaaaaa

The girls come out and are jaw dropping. First Sofi, then Lulu slightly limping, and lastly, Candela

MADAME CARLOTA

The most beautiful women in Colombia.

They do a choreographed pole dance that is spectacular. They get a roaring applause.

Sofi does an amazing pirouette

MADAME CARLOTA

Very good girls, very good!

Lights focus on girls as they continue dance choreography, punctuating with a freeze

Madame Carlota

Now, Gentlemen, you tell me, is that worth 30 dollars to you??

All three are hypnotized, nodding "No" in agreement.

BOB

My goodness gracious.

MADAME CARLOTA

Has your decision been made?

JOHN

(To Ron) Which one you thinking fellas?

Ron

Mm-I dunno.

JOHN

(To Madame)

What's her name over there? The goddess.

MADAME CARLOTA

Ah, yes, Candela. 60 minutes with her and you will be cured of all your pains and misfortunes.

Spotlight on Candela, she comes down and signals with her index finger to John

JOHN

Excuse me boys. I'm being summoned. Remember to keep

your eyes open. And FYI I'm taking the G2 X.

John, grabbing the black suit case, grinds up on Candela. It's nasty.

MADAME CARLOTA

(To Bob)

Mr. Marine, would you like to spend some time in "Beautitudo" with Lulu?

BOB

It would be my honor, ma'am.

MADAME CARLOTA

Lulu. *Venga, que la está solicitando el heroe nacional. (Come, the national hero is soliciting you)*

She gestures with her hand to come and pick up Bob. She comes dancing erotically in his direction.

MADAME CARLOTA

(To Ron) And for you... Flaquito (Little skinny guy)--
- This must be your lucky day. Sofi is the most extraordinary girl that I have; The former Señorita Caquetá, men from all around the 5 continents travel here to spend a night with her.

RON

Oh my...

Madame Carlota

Are you ready to enter the room of Exuberance?

RON

I think I'm drunk.

MADAME CARLOTA

Then drink more, *carajo!*

Madame pours Aguardiente from the bottle into Ron's mouth.

Sofi does a solo dance for Ron.

He dances with her awkwardly, they walk off to her room

End of scene

SCENE FOUR

Inside Sofi's room. The music is heard in the background.

SoFI
How would you like to begin?

RON
Your name is Sofia, right?

SOFI
Yes.

RoN
Like Sofia Vergara. She's great. I watch her show all the time. Do you watch it? She plays Gloria. Um. Um. Can I use the bathroom?

SOFI
Over there.

RON
Excuse me.

She lets him by. He shoots pass her and gets into the bathroom.

SOFI
You may take your clothes off and hang them on the hook behind the door. Sofi will give you a robe.

Chocorramo
(from inside closet)
Hee Haw. Hee Haw.

RON
(from inside of bathroom)
Thank you for your hospitality, but I will keep my clothes on for now.

Sofi now runs to the closet, opens it.

The toilet flushes.

SOFI

Not right now, please.

Chocorramo looks perplexed.

As Ron opens the door, Sofi closes the closet door swiftly, Ron proceeds to walk around the room. While it looks cleaner than before, there are still random objects spread about the space. He comes very close to the closet. Sofi is wobbling at the knees but tries to keep herself composed by smiling and posing in flirtatious ways for Ron as he walks around.

RON

Nice room.

At this same moment, Sofi notices a carrot on the floor and gives it a kick and the carrot glides across the floor very dramatically and lands under the bed. Ron did not notice.

SoFI

Thank you.

(Pointing toward bed)

Sooo, shall we begin??

Ron

You in a rush?

Sofi

No, no, I'm worried for you. One hour will go fast.

He passes by Sofi and sits on her couch.

Ron takes a whiff of the air.

RON

What's that smell?

Sofi

Ah, yes, my candle.

RON

No, no that can't be a candle.

Sofi

Oh, food, food. I was eating before. Are you hungry? We have a wonderful menu at the bar, if you would like

to try our gourmet *bandeja paisa*. Americans love *bandeja paisa*.

Ron

No, no, I'm not hungry, thank you, I think the smell is something else.

Sofi

We can change rooms, if you like.

Ron

No, no, we don't have to.

He keeps smelling the air and trying to pinpoint what is the smell and where it might be coming from

Sofi

I have an idea, let's go to the room of vapors, it smells better there, like eucalyptus.

RON

I don't mind this smell actually. Something cozy and familiar to it.

SOFI

No, no but you are right, I say we go.

RON

I am fine here, everything ok?

SOFI

Oh...no, yes, yes, everything is okay...Shall I remove my clothing.

RON

No, it's ok. Can we just talk a little?

SOFI

Really?

Awkward pause

RON

Yeah, so, how long have you been working here?

Sofi takes a deep breathe and gets close to him, touching his face delicately Ron is flinching, practically doing the Matrix.

SOFI

Why are you in Colombia, Ron?

RON

Oh...um...Business.

SOFI

"Business"?? Oh, Ron is a bad boy. I see.

Pointing her index finger to her nose and tapping her nostrils

RON

No, no, not that kinda business, a legitimate business. For a private contractor. I am a pilot, we conduct security assessments, you know, reconnaissance stuff.

SOFI

Aw, like a real G.I Joe.

Ron starts to pace around the room. Sofi follows him closely, she can't tell if she is safe or in danger. Ron is behaving strangely.

RON

There's a lot of bad guys in this country.

Sofi

Oh yes, I know.

Sofi clutches her fist and is ready to defend herself.

RON

Corruption is everywhere you look around, including your own military!

SOFI

Yes, yes, that is true, but what can we do?

As Ron continues speaking, he walks around the room. From the corner of her eye, Sofi can see Chocorramo sticking his nose out of the closet door, and an eye, or a hoof appears at various levels. Ron does not notice.

RON

I mean, it's maddening, I don't know what your

government is doing. They don't actually care about the drug problem, or about the violence, cause if they did, they'd get their shit together.

Sofi

Well, I don't like to get involved in politics. Maybe we start, eh? The clock is ticking.

RON

I mean, there are so many parts of this country that are authentically beautiful, The Orinoco, The Amazons, The Andes, the Magdalena river, all of them gorgeous. But some of the people here absolutely ruin it for everybody else; I'm aware of that. Unfortunately, I don't see anything changing in the near future unless an asteroid hits.

SOFI

Ok ok ok enough. You are making me depressed.

RON

Sorry, sorry-

SOFI

How about I get you more *Aguardiente*?

RON

Um ok---yeah---yeah--that stuff is good.

She gets up, goes to a small fridge near bed and pours a drink for him.

SOFI

This will relax you.

RON

You want to get me drunk, don't you?

SOFI

Me, no.

She hands him the drink and notices the door to the closet is now wide open and Chocorrano is smiling. Ron doesn't see.

RON

My friend's really insisted I come inside, but I shouldn't be here. I'm sorry I wasted your time. I'll

still pay you.

Sofi moves her body to cover Ron's sightline.

SOFI

We can relax and have a good time at the jacuzzi, we will get out of this room before we get claustrophobia.

Keeping her attention on Ron but one eye hawking the closet.

RON

I'm thinking about my wife, she's a good woman...I can't do this.

SOFI

You're not the only husband that comes here. Every husband would like to come here. Have another drink.

Pours more Aguardiente

RON

Yeah, but this is not my thing. I am more of a go play pool type of guy. A Romantic.

Chocorramo hits a shoe and it glides across the floor and lands underneath the bed. He waves his tail in victory. Sofi sees it but Ron doesn't. Sofi immediately hugs Ron forcefully.

SOFI

Come to Sofi. Lay Lay. I will scratch your back.

RON

Ok.

SoFI

I'm here to listen to your problems.

RON

It gets really lonely. No body to talk to.

Chocorramo walks out and is sniffing the floor.

She embraces him like a bear.

Chocorramo finds a Chocorramo under some object

SOFI

(to cover the sound)

What about your friends that you came with?

Chocorramo eats the Chocorramo in one gulp.

RON

They have a whole different agenda, they are not married.

Chocorramo sniffs for more.

SOFI

Aww--why don't you just quit your job?

Sofi waves to Chocorramo to go back inside. But he only keeps sniffing around. As Ron speaks he tends to turn his head from one side of the room to the other, each time almost catching sight of Chocorramo. Sofi tries to cover Ron's sightline with any gesture available to the human body.

RoN

I love my job but it means I have to be away- then when I get to see my wife and daughter, it's like being with strangers. And it's not that I don't want to be with them, I do, but there's no excitement...

SoFI

(sweating bullets)

You like adventures?

Ron does a sudden movement and turns toward the closet. Sofi closes her eyes, when she opens them again. Chocorramo is not there and the closet is closed Close call.

RON

Yea, I guess I do, but is it really worth it, if my family is falling apart? You understand?

SOFI

Yes...

Chocorramo

(from inside closet)

Hee Haw.

Sofi embraces Ron and he tries to get his head up but she holds it hard.

RON
Did you hear that?

SOFI
What?

CHOCORRAMO
Hee Haw.

RON
That sound.

SOFI
I didn't hear anything.

RON
It came from your closet.

SOFI
Oh, it must be the business next to us, they have a gym and the barbarians drop the weights.

RON
But it's coming from inside of the closet.

Ron walks over to the closet. Sofi tries to block him

SOFI
You can't go in there!

RON
What's inside, huh?

He tries to maneuver around her, but she struggles with him. Then after a few beats, the closet door bursts open with one big swooshing "Hee Haw". Chocorramo sticks his head out, showing his teeth and stomping his hooves

RON
What the hell?!

Chocorramo
(feisty)
Hee Haw. Hee Haw. Hee Haw

RON
You got a donkey in your closet!!!

Sofi
Oh, yes, I am sorry, but let me just close the door he
will be okay.

Chocorramo brays and licks Sofi's face.

RON
He's kinda cute. He got a name?

Sofi
Chocorramo.

RON
Aw, yeah, like the chocolate cakes, I love those
things.

She stands before him in a protective way, exuding
strength, her eyes locked on Ron, he looks at both of
them with unwavering intensity.

RON
Well, I guess we found you---Chocorramo.

SOFI
Found?

RON
Surprise. The landowners where you got him from hired
private security to find him and bring him back.

SOFI
You mean the monsters that were abusing him? I
actually helped him!

RoN
Yeah, but, for trying to "help" now you're gonna get
in a load of trouble yourself, and for a donkey.

SOFI
I accept the consequences.

RON

What you did is wrong, but if you give him back maybe there is something we can work out.

Sofi

No, I can't, they will kill him.

CHOCORRAMO

(Sadly)

Hee Haw.-

RON

Why would they kill him, they just want the little fella back.

SOFI

He doesn't belong to them.

RON

Well, I think they would say other wise.

SOFI

They were only using him to...

RON

Using him to what?

Sofi crouches and reaches underneath the bed, she slowly opens up the cloth the emeralds are wrapped in, and shows Ron. They glow in a way that shifts the energy in the space, creating a moment of piercing sound and light. Ron is momentarily entranced.

Ron

Woooo.

SoFI

This was inside of him.

RON

Hold on, hold on, what?

SOFI

They were using him to smuggle them. They forced him to swallow them, and that caused him to not eat or drink, my friend got him a serum and he went to the bathroom finally.

RON

I'm sorry, I know this is a cruel thing what they did

to this animal, unimaginable, but I'm gonna have to report this.

She wraps the gems up quickly and tucks them away. The space goes back normal.

If you don't mind I would appreciate it if you made this really easy on the both of us. I'm not gonna ask you to put your hands behind your back or anything humiliating. Just help me tie him up first and then we can deal with those.

SOFI
No.

RON
Okay, look, if you want, I'll just say I found the donkey somewhere else, and I don't know who did it.

SOFI
Please, don't take him. He's special.

RON
Maybe he is, but I'm out of options here, you leave me no other choice.

Ron approaches the closet door and opens it. ChocorrAMO is staring into Ron's soul with sagacious eyes. Ron puts his hand out slowly and in a non intimidating way.

SOFI
Leave him alone!

RON
Come here boy. We gotta get you back okay?

CHOCORRAMO
(defiantly)
Hee-Haw.

Ron takes a step forward, his expression pleading.

RON
Come on don't be stubborn.

ChocorrAMO turns around, his back now turned to Ron. Ron surges forward, closing in on ChocorrAMO with

astonishing speed. But Chocorramo is quicker. With a burst of energy, he lashes out with his hind legs in a powerful kick. The audience can hear the force of his blow as Ron cries out in pain.

Chocorramo
(Scared)
Hee-Haw!

RON
Ow!

Ron is thrown back several feet

SOFI
Mr. Ron! Mr. Ron? Are you okay??

He's out cold.

END OF scene

Scene five

Bob has finished and is in bed with Lulu. He has a huge smile on his face.

LULU
Then, I dropped the tooth so far down the drain, who knows where it ended up, not even Ratón Perez knows. The End. Oh my God, I'm thirsty.

She takes a long sip of a beer.

BOB
I think I love you...

LULU
You just met me ten minutes ago.

BOB
I mean it. There is something about you... My heart is...

LULU
Are you having a heart attack?

BOB

No...it's beating fast, for you, my darling.

LULU

Oh, God, don't be pathetic. We're not here for that.
We are here to have fun.

Bob

Since the other lady told you to come out on the dance
floor, I was struck by electricity.

LULU

Do you even remember my name?

BOB

Lulu Mendoza. You're a Pisces. You ardently dislike
eggplant, elevators, and boats. However, you love
chocolate ice cream.

LULU

Wow. Ok. You are a good listener.

BOB

We're both water signs, I am a Scorpio.

LuLU

Oh, you're Scorpio?

BOB

We're soul mates.

Lulu

I didn't know that.

BOB

Leave this place. Come with me.

Lulu looks at him very serious

The lights jump to another area of the stage where
John and Candela lay in a bed post coitus. As this
scene occurs, lighting changes show Sofi in the other
room dealing with Ron's limp body with; smacks, kicks,
nudges and budes.

JoHN

Question.

CanDELA

Yes?

JOHN

Have you seen anybody strange coming around here lately?

CANDELA

I have.

JohN

Who?

CanDELA

You.

John laughs and stands up

JohN

Where's the bathroom?

CANDELA

(Pointing)

Over there.

John walks to the bathroom where Candela has pointed and on the way he examines things. He see's a bucket. Picks it up.

JohN

A syringe?

Candela

Oh, that's not mine.

JOHN

Do you share the room with somebody else?

CANDELA

I don't share anything with anybody. This is my room.

JOHN

Then why do you have somebody else's syringe?

CANDELA

I use it to clean my...

(Thinking quickly she points to her crotch)

He wipes his face.

JOHN

Oh...Ok. I see, mucha información para John.

He gets to the bathroom. We hear a stream of urine splashing against the toilet. He farts, then clears some mucus from his nose, finishing with a big spit of the mucus into the toilet bowl.

JOHN

So tell me, how many people work here exactly???

Candela

6 girls.

As John interrogates her Candela does a sweep of her room to make sure nothing else is around. There are several items that could attract suspicion. 4 skateboards, rope, and the clothes she wore last night. She races to get it all put away.

John

(burps)

Seis chicas? Where's the other three?

Candela

Today is their day off... we do rotations. One day we work, one day we rest.

JOHN

What do you do on your days off? Dormir??

CANDELA

It depends.

John

(still peeing)

Ya veo, ya veo...So, it's the owner, six of you, that's it? What about Bouncers?? Maintenance people?

CANDELA

Oh yes.

John

Donde estan ahora?? Where are they?

Candela

They come later.

John walks back from bathroom. Eyeing everything.

JohN

What are their names?

CANDELA

Ha, ha... So many questions. But look at the time, the clock is ticking.

JOHN

I know, I'm sorry, but I'm looking for something.

CANDELA

Looking for what?

JOHN

Something.

Tense pause

CANDELA

Oh.

Shifts back to Lulu and Bob.

BOB

You can't be happy here.

LULU

Don't worry about what makes me happy.

BOB

I can take you back to the states, you can get a green card.

LULU

Stop.

BOB

You would love where I live in Washington State. It's breathtaking. Not as breathtaking as you, but breathtaking.

LULU

You have a way with words. But, no.-

BOB

Mount Rainier, the wonders of the Puget Sound, a world of phytoplankton. We got good salmon, too, some of the

best, really. I mean, have you ever had Salmon Belly?

LULU

No, never.

BOB

It's delicious, like eating a stick of butter melting in your mouth. I can make it for you.

LULU

Oh, you cook.

BOB

Look, I'm only working here 4 months out of the year. I don't even really need this job. I just do it to keep me busy. I could quit anytime I want.

LULU

Then why don't you.

BOB

For you, Lulu Mendoza, I would quit. For you I would buy an RV and visit all the national parks, live the nomadic life, watching shooting stars at night till the end of time.

LULU

Thank you for your offer, But this is only my job, you are getting confused.

BOB

I am not confused, I can see you are the most gorgeous woman my eyes have ever seen.

LULU

Nice compliment but whatever trickery you are playing in your small brain, I do not appreciate, you are starting to be annoying.

BOB

I know I'm coming on strong.

LULU

Yes. You have to understand, this is not a bridal service.

BOB

I know I'm sorry, I can't help myself, and oddly enough the more you reject me the further I fall in

love with you, I have a weakness for a strong woman.

LULU

I hate to crush your little heart, but this is my home. I have a son. And his father, well-

BOB

(devastated)

Oh, you're married?

LULU

No, not anymore.

BOB

Then come with me. We got wonderful schools. I'll help you raise him.

LULU

You like children?

BOB

I love the little rascals. Never had any of my own, and I wouldn't mind a big family either, 5, 6 however many you want.

LULU

I couldn't go with you even if I wanted to.

Scene shifts back to Candela and John

JOHN

You don't want to give me their names?

CANDELA

Who?

JOHN

The other people who work here? Maybe they know something about some missing property?

Short pause

CANDELA

You can ask them. Their names are Dulce, Beatrice, Bridgette, and Amparo, she is the cleaner, and Walter.

JOHN

Who's Walter?

CANDELA
Waltercito. The door man.

JOHN
Where's he tonight?

Candela
Vacations.

JOHN
That's convenient. What's his deal? What can you tell me about him?

CANDELA
Is Waltercito in trouble?

JOHN
Oh, don't worry hon, *trabajo con los buenos*, I am a good guy, I'm just making sure Walter's not involved in a very serious matter.

CANDELA
Oh my God, no, Walter is a Jehovah Witness.

JOHN
Is it you?? Are you working with Walter?

Tense pause

CANDELA
Me?

Another tense pause

JOHN
I'm just kidding. (Beat) Oye, but maybe you can help me to keep an eye out. If you hear anything, if you see anything unusual, you give me a little call, *What do you think? Te parece?*

CANDELA
Unusual, like what?

JOHN
I don't know... one of your co-workers suddenly talks about money.

CANDELA
We always talk about money.

JOHN

And what about jewelry?

CANDELA

Of course. We love jewelry. That's a dumb question.

John

Ok, ok, well, then maybe they have mentioned something being stolen.

(pause)

Do you know something?

CANDELA

No no, I never steal.

JOHN

Then why are you looking away?

CANDELA

I have an eye lash in my eye.

JOHN

Believe me, I am with the good guys. Te puedo conseguir protección. I can get you help.

CANDELA

Protection from what? I protect myself.

JOHN

Any customers say anything??

CANDELA

Well, men say all kinds of things to me.

Shifts back to Bob and Lulu

BOB

Is it my leg?

LULU

No, no, don't be an idiot.

BOB

What's stopping you then?

LULU

I can't pick up and leave, I have to be realistic.

BOB

I'll take care of you, and your son.

LULU

Thank you again for your offer but that is not possible. And I ask that you shut up.

BOB

Marry me.

LULU

You're a funny man.

BOB

I'm serious.

LULU

Do you know how many men ask us to marry them?

BOB

A lot?

LULU

At least one a day. Today, you're my first. So, thank you. Now, should we keep going or?

BOB

Wait wait...but I'm different.

LULU

Why?

BOB

Cause, I really feel it...and I know you feel the chemistry we have as well.

LULU

Those are only words you feel. Words are not real.

BOB

I will show you with my actions.

LULU

You only have 16 minutes left. The clock is ticking. Do you want to keep talking about fairytales or take advantage of your remaining time? You decide.

Shifts back to Candela and John

JohN

Look, we know that somebody is hiding something at this place. *Habla mujer*. Talk.

CANDELA

I just work here, sir.

JOHN

Ayudame, help me, por favor.

CANDELA

I arrive in the late afternoon after I go to the nail salon, and return from shopping, because, of course, it is a ritual to look this fabu. It requires absolute dedication physically, mentally, and spiritually. I actually have to spend half of my own money on being the most fabu girl in this establishment. Okay?

JOHN

Exactly, so if you work with me, I assure you that you will have more money to buy clothes *y lo que tu quieras*. Whatever you want-

CANDELA

People think I am frivolous for being this way but fashion is not just about clothes, it is a part of human history.

JOHN

Yeah, that's you, *muy sofisticada*, but what about the other girls, do they have any unusual spending habits?

CANDELA

Well, I don't know, I don't have time to pay attention to what the common people do.

JOHN

Not only what they do, what are they talking about?

CANDELA

I definitely do not have time to get involved with the commoners' *chismes* (*gossips*). Do I know about the *chismes*? Of course I know.

John

Like what?

CANDELA

Like what, what?

JOHN

Like what about the other girl with the light skin, is she a thief?

CANDELA

Who? They all have light skin to me.

JOHN

You know who I am referring to.

CANDELA

Well, technically, yes, she is a thief.

JOHN

Technically, how?

CANDELA

The only reason she was Señorita Caquetá was because her father bribed the judges to give her the crown. She's not that fabu, I'm sorry.

JOHN

So, she's all about the money?

CANDELA

Oh, I wish. You know maybe we talk about something else, she's my friend.

JOHN

And what about the other one? She into weird stuff?

CANDELA

No, she is a mom.

JOHN

Oh, she has a kid?

CANDELA

Yea, he's kind of hyper, but he's the cutest little thing.

JOHN

How about the Madame lady? She do any smuggling? She fits the vibe, right?

CANDELA

No way, she doesn't tolerate any form of contraband.

JOHN

I don't know, I get the sense a lot more is happening around here.

Shifts to Lulu and Bob, lights low, under a blanket.

A knock at the door.

BOB
No body's home!

Knock gets more insistent.

They roll and stumble out of the bed.

LULU
Voy!! (*Coming*)

BOB
Expecting somebody?

LULU
Could be Madame with a time check.

Lulu opens. Sofi speaks very quietly but with urgency. We don't hear her but we get a sense that something is going on. Lulu shuts the door.

LULU
I have to go.

BOB
Everything okay?

LULU
Eh... I'll be right back.

BOB
Where ya going?

LULU
Very quick...excuse me one moment.

BOB
Should I come with you?

LULU
No, you stay here!

She rushes out the door

BOB

Wait wait!

Shifts to Candela and John

CaNDELA

I am getting dizzy, did you come here just to talk?

JOHN

Of course not. I just think we can help each other out.

CaNDELA

Help you how? I don't know about anything else, sir. I know about me, and my job I don't know about anybody stealing animals. If I did I would tell you.

Pause

JOHN

I never said anything about animals.

CANDELA

You didn't? Yes, you said something, no?

JohN

Nope.

CANDELA

Oh, ha.

JOHN

Come here, come really close.

Candela

Yes?

JOHN

(Whispering loud)

No more gossips, talk.

Knock at the door

Candela

Excuse me.

JOHN

Look, if you're involved, I can help you, tell me what you know, I'll make sure you get immunity and paid generously for your cooperation.

CANDELA

I don't know anything.

JOHN

Who are you protecting?

CANDELA

Nobody.

JOHN

You know those same people would throw you underneath the bus if they could.

The knock grows

CANDELA

Voy! (Coming) One moment, please.

Candela walks toward the door and opens. It is Lulu and Sofi, who explains to her the situation in a whisper.

CANDELA

So, what do you want me to do?

All we see is the gestures by Sofi and Lulu pleading her to come. Candela closes the door.

JOHN

Todo Bien??

CANDELA

(rushing)

Oh yes, yes, everything is ok, wonderful, I will be right back, permiso-

She dashes out. John, alone now, snoops around the room. He goes back to the syringe and smells it and makes a face.

Goes into his pants to get the microphone that Bob gave him.

JOHN
Ron? Over.
(silence)

JOHN
Bob, you there? Over. Ron? Over.
(silence)

End of scene

Scene sIX

Sofi + Lulu + Chocorramo are standing over Ron's body.

Candela is kneeling and has her hands on Ron's sternum doing compressions in an attempt to resuscitate him.

SOFI
(To Candela)
Anything?

CANDELA
The *flaquito* is in cardiac standstill.

SOFI
Candela, What do we do?? Quick!

CANDELA
I don't know.

Lulu
What the fuck Candela, didn't you learn anything in nursing school!?

CANDELA
I'm not Jesus Cristo.

Chocorramo nuzzles Candela

CHOCORRAMO
Hee Haw.

CANDELA
Eww, get away.

LULU
(To Candela)

Help the man!-

CANDELA

I'm trying but this thing won't let me.

Chocorramo continues to nuzzle her.

CANDELA

Shhh. Stupid Beast. Look what you did to him, shame on you!

SOFI

Don't talk to him like that! He's trying to give us support.

CANDELA

I don't need his support.

LULU

Sofi, do something, hurry! hurry!

Chocorramo comes close to Candela's face putting his nose near her nose and taking some breaths.

CANDELA

Get out of my face.

Sofi pets him and gets him away from Candela who is about to combust.

CANDELA

I can't believe that I am here trying to resuscitate this man that your donkey assaulted and I get nothing as a reward for my contributions.-

LULU

Can you both stop talking and do something.-

SOFI

I promise, Cande, when all this ends, I will owe you forever, I have nothing but gratitude, and I understand if you want to go your own way now, but I need you please.

Candela sighs then takes Ron's arms and puts them over his head, then stops.

CANDELA

Take his legs and rotate them.

LULU

How?

Candela

Back and forth, stupid.

Lulu tries to lift Ron's legs.

LULU

WHAT THE FUCK PERRA, They're heavy, I need help.

Sofi jumps in and grabs one leg.

CANDELA

Roll his lower body-
(They do it in double time)

Slow! Slow! You want to dislocate his hips?

They follow instructions.

SOFI

Nothing is happening.

LULU

Maybe we should throw some cold water on this motherfucker.

SOFI

Ok, good idea! I'll get it but remove his shirt.

Sofi drops his leg and runs to get water. Lulu rips open his shit with no regard for the buttons.

CANDELA

He needs a doctor, okay, it's over Sofi, these people know what's going on, I don't want any more trouble in my life, I came here to get away from drama, I already lost my brother.

LULU

We don't need any more drama in our lives.

CANDELA

The other man already told me they are conducting an investigation. They know that we're hiding this beast.

SOFI

(OS)

I know, I know, this guy told me they were hired to look for him!

CANDELA

Don't be naive, you think they would do all this for the donkey, you know what they are looking for. He was asking about jewels, and stolen property.

LULU

It all leads to one path Sofi, this is the end.

Sofi comes back with water.

SOFI

Ok, 1,2,3-

She splashes Ron, but he remains lifeless. Lulu gives him a few soft smacks on the cheeks, maybe "soft" is not the right word. Then she presses his chest quite hard.

SOFI

Please God.

Candela checks pulse.

CANDELA

This man is clinically dead.

LULU

Ay Dios! I'm going to prison!

SOFI

What do you mean dead?

CANDELA

That's it. His heart is not beating and it has been more than 5 minutes.

LULU

They are gonna take Melky and put him up for adoption to two blanquitos in Switzerland and I will never see him again!-

SOFI
Bipaporu! Bipaporu!-

CANDELA
He's not congested, he's dead.

SOFI
Let's put some on his face, It might be a miracle.

Sofi runs to her dresser and grabs a bottle of Vicks Vapor Rub.

LULU
It's worth a try. Come on come on rub it on him.

Sofi, swiftly, takes her finger and collects a large amount, applying it under his nose, and then spreading it all over.

SOFI
Wake up! Wake up!

LULU
Rub it harder.

Sofi
Nothing. Oh no. Oh no.

CANDELA
Look what your donkey did!

SOFI
It wasn't his fault, he was scared! *Pobrecito. Mi amor-*

CANDELA
Pobrecito this man, he didn't deserve this.

LULU
(To Sofi)
It's your fault for bringing him here.

SoFI
Oh, I didn't think something like this would ever happen.

CANDELA
No, you didn't and now you killed an American. Do you know what they are going to do to us? That's like

killing one million Colombians at the same time.
Worse.

LULU
They're going to execute us.

Chocorramo walks toward Ron's limp body and presses
his head into his chest.

CANDELA
Enough, beast, I think you've done enough damage.

SOFI
Stop blaming him, ok, he was protecting himself, it
was my fault...

She goes to Ron's lifeless body.

oh no, oh no...Wake up Mr. Ron, please...

Shaking him forcefully.

A hard knock at the door. Everybody freezes, you can
feel their veins pulsing.

SOFI
Who is it?

MADAME CARLOTA
Me.

SOFI
Hide Hide. *(To Carlota)* I am still with the guest.

They scramble inside the room hiding Chocorramo.

MADAME CARLOTA
60 minutes has passed.

SOFI
Ok, thank you... Just a second. *(To Chocorramo)* Get in
the hiding place fast!

MADAME CARLOTA
Is everything ok darling? I hear noises.

SOFI

Yes, yes---He is getting dressed.

CANDELA
(Imitating voice of Ron)
I'm getting ready!-

SOFI
(To Chocorramo)
Go, go-

LULU
What do we do with the man?

Candela
Let's put him in the bed. Ready 1, 2...

They try dragging his body.

LULU
Now lift---1, 2-

CANDELA
Wait idiot, let me catch my breath.

LULU
We don't have time to catch your breath, bitch. Lift!

MADAME CARLOTA
Hellooo, girls, are you in there too??? What are you
doing??

SOFI
Yes, Madame, they came to visit one moment. Move,
Chocorramo.

Chocorramo does not listen, he moves the girls out of
the way. He comes close to Ron.

CANDELA
He is going to eat him.-

Madame Carlota
(knocking)
Hellooo!!-

Chocorramo opens his mouth, showing his teeth in an
almost menacing way.

You'd think he is about to bite his head off but he begins to blow air into Ron's mouth giving him Donkey CPR. As he does so Ron's stomach inflates and deflates. Then, a miraculous moment, Ron opens his eyes.

RON
Mom?

LULU
He's alive! He's alive!

MADAME CARLOTA
GIRLS. THE CLOCK IS TICKING!-

RON
Where am I?

SOFI
With Sofi, remember?

RON
Is this Dallas?

SOFI
You had an accident today.

RON
Accident???
(feeling his wet clothes)
Did I go swimming in menthol?? Where am I?

CANDELA
Colombia.

RON
Columbia... What am I doing here?

MADAME CARLOTA
I'M GOING TO BRING A HAMMER-

RON
My face is cold.

CANDELA
Lay him down, so his blood gets back to his head, he is disoriented.

Candela pushes Ron flat on the bed, and covers him in

blankets. The knocking persists louder and louder

MADAME CARLOTA

(from outside of door)

Helllllooooo!!?? Open this door now!

Chocorramo stumbles into the closet, Sofi closes the door and locks the door with a key, she hides the key in a box and moves away but you can see part of Chocorramo's tail underneath the door.

SOFI

Chocorramo, your tail!

He quickly hides it.

Sofi goes to the door, opens it. The girls pose like all is good.

Madame is standing there with a grimace of steel.

Madame Carlota

Is this anyway to treat our guests?

LULU

Sorry, Madame, Sofi needed our assistance.

MADAME CARLOTA

You left the guests waiting alone in the rooms??? Did I teach you that?

CANDELA

No, ma'am.

MADAME CARLOTA

I am sorry to you gentlemen, but I will assure you that this is not our form of hospitality.

BOB

I understand-

JOHN

It was a bit abrupt.

MADAME CARLOTA

Apologize to them immediately. APOLOGIZE.

Candela/Lulu

Sorry-

BOB

Apology accepted.

MADAME CARLOTA

Gentlemen, let it be known that an apology has been formerly documented, as you know, this comportment is unacceptable, and you will receive a complimentary massage. Isn't that right girls?

Candela/LULU

Yes. Yes.

CANDELA

We can go now for your massage, we shouldn't waste anymore time. Come on, let's go back to my room.

She tries taking John's arm, and he start to go with her.

RON

(from the bed)

Hello?

JOHN

(pulling away from Candela)

Ron?

SOFI

He was sleeping.

JOHN

What's going on buddy? You ready for a beer?

RON

Who is that?

JOHN

It's me, man; John.

RON

John, who??? I don't know any John's.

John and Bob look at each other, they walk in past the girls to see Ron on the bed looking dazed and confused

BOB

What happened to him? He looks shiny.

RON
(to Bob from the bed)
Who are you??

BOB
It's Bob, buddy.

RON
Bob?

JOHN
What'd you put on him? He stinks. Did something happen
I should know about?

Tense pause

SOFI
It was the sex. He is still dizzy. I applied a special
ointment to help.

JOHN
Dizzy?

MADAME CARLOTA
(looking worried)
This happens from time to time, slightly losing touch
of reality post coitus, but it is only temporary.

SOFI
Yes, yes-

JOHN
(almost disbelief)
You had sex with him?

SOFI
Oh, yes, this man is an animal in bed. I could barely
take it anymore.

BOB
You are talking about Ron?? Right?

SOFI
He demanded I call Lulu and Candela to have a foursome
together.

MADAME CARLOTA/john/Bob
Really? Noooo.

RON
I did?

CANDELA/LULU
Oh yes---

BOB
(Looking crushed at Lulu)
He had sex with all of you??

JOHN
(to Sofi)
Get out of here.-

Sofi
No, no...only with me...several times in less than 45
minutes.

BOB
(to Lulu)
Oh, thank god, my princess, he did not contaminate
you.-

RON
I had sex?

BOB
Congrats Ron.

Sofi
Yes...with me.

JOHN
Well, I'll be damned.

SOFI
You're surprised?

John walks to Ron

JOHN
Hold on, hold on, let me see his head...
(Grabbing Ron's head and examining)

JOHN
That's a pretty big bump.

SOFI
I could not control him, he is very primal, and moved

so fast, he hit his head on the bed. It was an accident.

LuLU

The ointment should help.

MADAME CARLOTA

You should have called me immediately.

CANDELA

Fortunately, I was close by, I have nursing training.

SOFI

He was moving so fast.

RON

I feel great, I'm just tired-

MADAME CARLOTA

Those are the side effects of happiness.

(To the girls)

Despues hablamos de esto culicagadas (Talk about this later little shits)

(Beat) Ok. Ok...Sublime Beatitudo Time.

JOHN

You sure this was an accident? Using logic and physics, it looks more like somebody knocked him down.

BOB

Sure does.

SOFI

No no-

John angrily walks back toward the door and shuts it dramatically.

John

This man was clearly assaulted. If you think I believe for one second that he just accidentally hit his head, then you must think I'm an idiot.

SOFI

But he did.

JOHN

First, Ron wouldn't cheat on his wife even Salma Heyek

were begging him. Don't tell me he suddenly became Adonis.

SOFI

I am telling you the truth.

JOHN

Were you trying to rob him?? Has he been drugged? Is that closer to the truth?

Madame Carlota

Sir, I am sorry, but I can assure that my girls would never assault, drug, or steal from our customers.

JOHN

Then how else can you explain this? Look at him!

MADAME CARLOTA

Why don't we all relax, let's give Mr. Ron some time to reset his buttons, meanwhile, we put our bathing suits and have a glass of champagne in the jacuzzi.

JOHN

All right enough of this nonsense, I'm gonna need everybody to put their hands on the wall now!!!

Madame carlota

If you touch me or my girls, I will kill you with my bare hands!-

MaDAME CARLOTA

Come on, hijueputas, I've done it before, I will pull your heart out of your chest, malparidos!! Come on!!!

JOHN

We're not here to kill you.

BOB

It's ok, ma'am.

JOHN

We're conducting an investigation on your establishment.

MADAME CARLOTA

What investigation? Of who of what??

JOHN

Your game is up.

MADAME CARLOTA

I assure you my business is not playing games, sir.

JOHN

I have sufficient evidence to conclude that there are illegal activities taking place on these premises.

MADAME CARLOTA

I beg your pardon?

JOHN

Show her Bob.

Bob pulls out a tracking device

MADAME CARLOTA

A radio?

John

You can out smart the Colombian government, but you can't out smart American technology.

BOB

Actually, this is made in China, John.

JOHN

It doesn't matter, that's beside the point, what you're looking at here is a state of the art tracking device, and we know what you're hiding. Hold it up high, Bobby, let everybody see it.

The girls stare at each other with concern.

BOB

Well, we're actually not picking up any signals at the moment.

Bob tries to hold it a various angles.

MADAME CARLOTA

All of your calculations are mistaken. I do not allow any illegal substances on the premises-

JohN

Our calculations are precise-

MADAME CARLOTA

I am offended as a Colombian that you come as a visitor to my country with the assumption that we all do traffickations.

JOHN

I'm not talking about drugs, Madame.

MADAME CARLOTA

Then what are you talking about, sir?

JOHN

I think one of you here tonight knows EXACTLY what I'm talking about.

He looks at the girls intensely

MADAME CARLOTA

Girls?? Is this true?

They all give a bewildered look trying to conceal their fear.

JOHN

Which one is it?? You like pulling pranks? Entering private property that doesn't belong to you?

He gets really super close to Lulu, almost nose to nose.

BOB

Don't worry sweet cakes, he's not going to hurt you.
(To John) Hey tough guy, can you cool it down with the bravado??

John walks to Candela and looks at her intently,
Candela evades his stare.

JOHN

I have somebody who works for me on the inside, an informant.

BOB

You do?

JOHN

Yes, Bob, I do, and they told me, that what I'm looking for is indeed right here.

SOFI

Does the government of your country know that you came to have fun, to drink, and have sex, for your investigation?

MADAME CARLOTA

Girls, please cooperate with the gentlemen.

SOFI

I am cooperating.

JOHN

When I find what I'm looking for, all of you will be turned in to the local authorities and we'll let them deal with you, and you know they will not be as nice as I am being. How about that?

MADAME CARLOTA

Enough of your threats, what do you want?

JOHN

Bob, check the bathroom.

SOFI

But we haven't committed any crimes! This has to be a violation of our rights.

LULU

Please, have mercy sir, I have a son. I cannot go to prison.

BOB

(To Lulu)

Don't worry, honey, I will help to get you immunity.

JOHN

Bob, shut the fuck up and go check the bathroom, I'll check the closet.

Bob walks to the bathroom.

BOB

All clear.

John goes toward the closet.

JOHN

What ya got in here, huh?

MADAME CARLOTA

Sir, the girls are allowed to keep five different outfits for evening wear, three lingerie, 10 shoes, and must get all accessories pre approved by me. I do closet checks every Monday.

John tries to open the closet

JOHN

It's locked.

SOFI

Madame requires we keep our belongings secure at all times.

MADAME CARLOTA

That is true.

JOHN

Open it.

MADAME CARLOTA

Unlock the door, Sofi, now.

Sofi walks toward the door, and she stops. Beat.

SOFI

I'm sorry, Madame, I can't.

MADAME CARLOTA

Sofi-

JOHN

I'm gonna give you to the count of 10 to open that door, if not, I will have to kick it open. 9, 8, 7, 6-

SOFI

You want to see it. Ok. Ok. Here you go.

Sofi gets the key to the closet from the box. She gets to the doorknob. Inserts the key, rotates

JOHN

You see, was it really that hard to just cooperate.

She opens the door and stares for a moment in disbelief.

SOFI

I am embarrassed. It's not clean.

John walks in the closet that is only full of clothes, shoes, and accessories. Searches around.

SOFI

Please, forgive me for the mess. I need more hangers.

BOB

Anything Sarge?

JOHN

What the hell!

BOB

What, what???

John comes out looking destitute.

JOHN

It's clear.

LULU

Halleluyah!

CANDELA

Amen!

Madame Carlota

I knew my girls were innocent. Who sent you to discredit us, the competition??? Was it Deyanira The Hyena??? She is capable of doing such a thing. *Bruja Malparida*.

JohN

I don't get it.

BOB

It could be the signal, Sarge, I told you that thing isn't the most accurate, you know?

JOHN

FUCK ME.

Ron

(In the background)

Fuck? Fuck. Fuck....Fuck...

Bob

Maybe Ron was right, maybe they just sent us out here to make us stay out of their way, they knew where they were sending us...I mean the whole operation is probably bogus.

(turning to Lulu)

But not you, my love, you're not bogus.

JOHN

(Pointing to Candela)

But she knew what I was talking about.

CANDELA

No, I remember that you said it first.

JOHN

I could have... I guess... I'm fucked up, I've been drinking.

BOB

We got it wrong on this one. It happens.

JOHN

(Turns to others)

Look, I'm sorry, I made you do all this... We should probably go ahead and get dressed, and get going now. Settle our bill.

MADAME CARLOTA

No, no, no, by no means, I will not let you leave Hotel Happy with this impression. We have been under attack by the other Hotels in the area for many years now. They are jealous of us because they don't have our level of sophistication at their microbial motels. Friends, you see, we are used to the unbearable realities, the war games, and *sublevaciones* but we must endeavor forward, no?

JOHN

I suppose.

Madame carlota

I want everybody to get their bathing suits, and you will meet me in the jacuzzi immediately to toast with a bottle of Veuve Clicquot, accompanied by chocolate covered strawberries, compliments of the house.

She awaits an answer

BOB

I wouldn't mind staying a little longer, and you know it'll be good for Ron to give him some extra time to recover, we can get him some Aspirin.

SOFI

I believe he will be better very soon.

Madame Carlota

(To John)

Will you stay for Round Two?

JOHN

I really feel bad, I jumped to conclusions, that wasn't cool, very naive of me.

MADAME CARLOTA

Ya, Ya, darling, what's done is done.

JOHN

You're not mad anymore?

Madame carlota

Look how easy Madame forgets the past, Poof, I forget.
I am a Christian woman.

Madame Carlota struts off, everybody else follows suit except Ron who heads toward the closet.

RON

Where did everybody go??

Enters closet.

END OF SCENE

Scene seven

Inside of the multi-colored jacuzzi, steam is rising.

Madame Carlota

The most powerful men have bathed in this same jacuzzi. Patriots of great nations. Noble men. Licentious men. Men with big...Egos. For their own privacy, and to honor our policy of anonymity, I will not tell you their names, but I can say: Here, we have washed their feet. We have bathed presidents, brushed senators, whipped diplomats, hugged ministers and let them live out their fantasies, or listened to their problems. Sometimes they love my girls more than their own wives. Why is this? Well, we make them happy.

BOB

Amen to that, sister.

MADAME CARLOTA

More Champaign *caballeros*?

BOB

I believe so.

Pours more into Bob's glass and hers

MADAME CARLOTA

(To John)

More for you??

JOHN

Nah, I'll pass from the drinking, thanks.

BOB

John, you feeling okay?

Madame Carlota

What's wrong, baby? You're not satisfied with your investigation?? Do you still want to try to put handcuffs on me?

JOHN

Just thinking, that's all...

MADAME CARLOTA

You have speculations? You want to search my room too, *chulo*?? Maybe I am hiding something.

JOHN

I am sorry to you all.

MADAME CARLOTA

Things happen, we know the people you work for have only exploited your intrinsic nature.

BOB

This whole thing has been a set up John, all we got left is enjoying ourselves.

JOHN

I had a terrific time with this young woman tonight.

CANDELA

Thank you. Me too, kind of.

MADAME CARLOTA

Let us drink to that, Carajo!

They all sip

BOB

Ok, I can't wait any longer, my love.

LULU

No, please not here.

MADAME CARLOTA

(To Bob)

Is something wrong, nene?

BOB

No, I have an announcement to make.

MADAME CARLOTA

Speak.

BOB

This has been one of the strangest nights of my entire life.

MADAME CARLOTA
Salud.

BOB
But wait, don't toast yet, I'm not done.

LULU
Yes, he is.

MADAME CARLOTA
Don't be rude, girl, let him finish.

BOB
I fell in love tonight.

Madame Carlota
We love you too...Ah, *Pobrecito*. Drink to that.

BOB
I fell in love with---her.

Pointing at Lulu. Everybody gasps

MADAME CARLOTA
Her?

CANDELA
Really?

BOB
Yes.

Sofi
Oh, no.-

LULU
(at Bob)
Why would you do this?

JOHN
(at Bob)
Are you crazy??

LULU
I told him not to.

BOB
I never thought, since my accident, that somebody
could treat me the way Lulu has treated me tonight. I

think she would make a terrific wife and I would like to, respectfully, ask you for her hand, if I may, Madame.

JOHN

Bob, you're embarrassing us.-

MADAME CARLOTA

You are free to ask. And I am free to answer.

He gets on one knee.

LULU

Ay, gringuito-

BOB

Lulu Mendoza, I know we just met, and to a lot of you, it will sound crazy-

CANDELA

I saw it coming.

JohN

(To Bob)

Are you fucking delusional?

BOB

When I was in a hospital in Afghanistan and they told me I would lose my leg, I lost hope. When I came back home, I was completely displaced. I tried dating other vets, but that never worked. I hate to say it, I know this is unpatriotic, but I don't really like American women, they complain too much and they're allergic to everything. I'm sorry but that's the truth and when I saw your eyes, heard your voice, and saw you move tonight...I...I...-

JOHN

Come on man, you don't have all your senses right now.

BOB

I've never known anything more than this.

He reaches his arms in declaration.

JOHN

Don't.-

BOB

Will you be my wife?

JOHN

Are you fucking dumb??-

SOFI

Typical. No, she does not want to be your anything.

BOB

Is she able to answer for herself?

CANDELA

This is a joke, where's her ring?

BOB

I don't have one right now. But I will get one later.

CANDELA

Later? Ha! I don't know how I can take you seriously.

LULU

He's asking me, not you.

SOFI

No, no, hold on Lulu.

(Turning to John)

What do you think we are??? You can't just come to our work and assume we want to run away with you.

BOB

No, I don't assume that at all, I promise.

LULU

This has nothing to do with you and Candela.-

SOFI

You have no idea what our lives are like, this woman is a survivor.

CANDELA

She doesn't need a man to provide for her.

JOHN

She's looks like a gold digger to me.

SOFI

She is a mother, did you know that?

CANDELA

Did you know she has a son?

(To Sofi)

That will scare him, watch.

BOB

Actually, I am fully aware of Little Melky, and I hereby, accept my role as the head of house hold, and I plan on treating Melky like my own son.

JOHN

Bob, listen to yourself, what the fuck, now you want a kid? All you ever do is complain about how loud they are.-

CANDELA

Oh, then you well definitely love Melky, he kicks too.-

LULU

Yes.

CANDELA

And he wets the bed.-

SOFI

(To Lulu)

Yes, what?

Pause.

LULU

I will marry you señor Bob.

CANDELA

Don't play with his hopes, that's messed up.

LULU

I'm not. He said he will accept Melky as his own son.

BOB

And I meant it.

JOHN

Robert Bob Smith, I hate to shit on your parade, but this girl is way out of your league, brother.-

SOFI

Yes, she is-

BOB

I don't have a "league", John.

JOHN

I'm not saying this to be mean, I'm saying this cause you're my friend, but come on, put two and two together!

BOB

Why can't you just be happy for me, man? I found "The One".

JOHN

(To Bob)

Look at me in the eye.

BOB

I'm looking right at you.

JOHN

You're a pretty handsome guy-

BOB

Thank you.

JOHN

But you're not Brad Pitt, ok?

BOB

Neither are you, John.

JOHN

You're missing a leg. All you really got going for you is a guaranteed disability check.

LULU

Don't believe him señor Bob.

BOB

I don't, my love. I know my worth.

JOHN

Bob! She's looking at you like you're the golden ticket outta here.

BOB

I'm content with that.

JOHN

You're drunk! Wake up!

CANDELA

Don't worry one afternoon of babysitting Melky and he will put them on the first plane back.

SOFI

He's not that bad Candela, you just get impatient.

CANDELA

He is a terror on legs.

BOB

I know what you're doing and it's not working. My love is absolute and resolute.

LULU

You have a good heart. That is why I've chosen to marry you, Señor Bob.

SOFI

How do you know he has a good heart, you just met him?

LuLU

He is a Scorpio, and that means we have a deep emotional connection.

BoB

Yes, we do.

CANDELA

Clearly, she's desperate.

LuLU

Your face is desperate.

SOFI

Lulu, I think we should have a private conversation in the room of Exiles.

LULU

My decision has been made.

SoFI

It's not a good decision.

CANDELA

It's a terrible decision.

Lulu

This man wants to help me, I am a mother and he wants a family.

Sofi

This is not a telenovela, this is real life.

Lulu

Really Sofia? What about you and your terrible decisions. Why don't we talk about those in public?

Sofi

You think he's some innocent prince who came to save you from your "third world misery" do I need to remind you the reason of their visit?

MADAME CARLOTA

Not now, niñas.-

Candela

Sofi, don't even waste your time anymore with this girl, if she wants to marry this gringo, let her learn the hard way.

Lulu

Yes, I am now officially the fiancé of Bob...

(whispers to Bob)

Sorry, what is your last name again?

Bob

Smith, my sweet angel.

John

She doesn't even know your last name, man. And I just said it! This is pathetic.

Sofi

La Señora Lulu Smith---What an ugly name.

Candela

Yea, it is so tacky.

Lulu

You are so superficial, like I care about that. You don't have kids.

John

You hear that Bob, she's using you.

BoB

She's just being a good mom.

LULU

Why do you think I'm doing this? You think there's a future in this country for Melky? At least over there I can give him a good education.

BOB

I agree.

SOFI

Please niña, the schools there?!! Don't you watch the news?

CANDELA

In one year he'll be doing drugs and shooting people.

LULU

Maybe your kids, if you could have one, but not mine.

SOFI

Gringos are the most ignorant people in the planet, and he will have to be educated with the lowest trash who do not even know how to locate their own country on a map.

LULU

Listen to yourself, you just a rich spoiled girl who's biggest problem was the guerrilla took your mansion, with all your toys, and your animals, and your pretty dresses. And they burnt it down. So what.

SOFI

I lost my parents Lulu, how can you say that to me?!

Splashes water on Lulu, Lulu splashes back.

CANDELA

You wet my hair, I hate you!-

MADAME CARLOTA

Stop!-

LULU

Now that you know what it is like to lose everything, you should be supporting me and Melky.

SOFI

This man will take you to the great country of the United States, and yes, right now it is the honey moon, kissy kissy, I love you I love you, but then what will happen when Mr. Smith has to work for six months, ah? And you have to fend for yourself in the land of the crazy people??

CANDELA

Sofi has a point. Haven't you seen *Paraiso Travel*, stupid? It is dangerous over there, it's not Disney.

LuLU

I will make friends in no time. Watch.

SoFI

With who? Your neighbors? They will think you are his cleaning lady.

CANDELA

Especially with your sense of fashion.-

BOB

My neighbors are very open-minded and welcoming to foreigners.

Sofi

He will make you live in a town where the most exciting thing is eating hot dogs at a cultural center known as Costco. Is that where you want to live Lulu?

JOHN

(To Lulu)

Aside from the total generalization of my peoples' intelligence, You should listen to your friend here, she's giving you solid advice.

BOB

She doesn't have to be alone all the time. She can travel with me. I'm retiring soon.

JOHN

Why did I bring you here?-

BOB

And just to clarify, I am a very clean person.

JOHN

I've never seen you clean, man.-

BOB

Also, it's actually very exciting where I live. We have a Viking festival once a year.

JOHN

Riveting-

BoB

People come from all over the pacific northwest and I know she will love that, she told me she loves Vikings.

CaNDELA

No, she doesn't.

LULU

Candela, shut up.-

BoB

Now to your other point, about the U.S being dangerous, yes, we may have our fair share of situations, but overall I think you are watching too much television.

LULU

It's true, all she watches are the shows with violence, like we haven't seen enough here already.-

Bob

And now, regarding Costco; I know it is not the fanciest but I do love their hot dogs, and they're only 50 cents, what's better than that?

SOFI

In other words Lulu, prepare yourself for a life of luxury and on your anniversary you will get a 50 cent hot dog.

CaNDELA

A cheap man is not worth three dead chickens.

LULU

You are just trying to go against my fiancé!

SOFI

He's not your fiancé.

LULU

Yes, he is! I just said yes to his proposal and

nothing can stop me.

MADAME CARLOTA

Now, children, stop or I will kill you all! Madame will speak now.

(To Bob)

First, Mr. Marine, it is extremely arrogant of you to come in here making such requests before consulting with me.

BOB

I did ask you initially for permission, you said I was free to ask.

MADAME CARLOTA

I also said I am free to answer.

BOB

And, If I may Madame, what's your answer?

MADAME CARLOTA

My answer is No.

JOHN

Great, there you go, you got your response.-

LULU

But Madame!

MADAME CARLOTA

Madame nothing. We have a contract.

LULU

I have to stay here forever?

MADAME CARLOTA

Nothing is forever, mija. The contract is for five years, after which you are free to go about your private business, until then, you stay.

LULU

That's not fair.

MADAME CARLOTA

Cry. I don't care.

BOB

She can't make her own choices?

JOHN

Are you really this simple-minded? Do you think this is a dating game?

BOB

No, I don't. I know exactly what's happening here. A violation of International Labor Laws. Woman's Rights.

JOHN

Wake up Bob! They don't have choices, this woman owns them. IT'S A BROTHEL

MADAME CARLOTA

SIR SIR, we are not a brothel, WE ARE AN EROTIC RESORT, and I don't own anybody. We are a family. These girls are my daughters.

JOHN

Why don't we ask them how they feel about the situation.

Silence

MADAME CARLOTA

I have invested many resources, and years in their cultivation, helping them become sophisticated women. Because, let me tell you, when I first found them, they were like flowers with thorns. Some more than others. And now, you expect to come to my house and take her away? No, you can't take her.

BOB

That's not very democratic.

MADAME CARLOTA

Who said this was a democracy?

BOB

The feudal days are long gone, she is an individual with the right to leave when she wants to.

MADAME CARLOTA

You insult me, gringo. You think, Lulu woke up one day and chose to have her husband kidnapped, killed and be left a widow?

BOB

Oh darling, you didn't tell me that. Is that true???

LULU

I didn't want you to feel pity.

BOB

Awww, come here angel cake.

Bob holds her.

MADAME CARLOTA

Mr. Marine, you think she **chose** to come to this city, by herself, with no family, with no support or any other resources aside from her youth and beauty?

SOFI

None of us did.

MADAME CARLOTA

They were fleeing from violence, and I provided them with safety.

LULU

Madame, I will never forget what you have done for me, and Melky, but please, I ask you, for his sake, to let us go.

MADAME CARLOTA

Is this what I get? For being a responsible mother, a humanitarian soul?

LULU

I'm pleading.

MaDAME CARLOTA

Have I not been loyal to you?

LuLU

You have. But understand that this is not a place for Melky.

MADAME CARLOTA

You girls are my life, it would destroy me if you were to leave me. Madame would feel empty.

(Madame ponders a moment)

But maybe this would be the best thing for my Melky, a new world.

Bob

Yes, Madame, it will be the best choice, and I promise

you I will provide a healthy environment for both of them, and you will always be welcome to visit.

JOHN

I gotta throw up.-

MADAME CARLOTA

Do you really want to go with this man, Lulu?

LULU

Yes...He is nice.-

SOFI

(pleading to the heavens)

Ay, Ma, help her please, she's not thinking!-

LULU

I am thinking-

MADAME CARLOTA

Ok, so be it---but nothing in life is free.

BOB

There has to be something we can negotiate.

SOFI

No, there isn't-

MADAME CARLOTA

Make an offer.

BOB

20 thousand dollars.

JOHN

Bob!-

SOFI

So predictable, the gringo thinks he can get anything he wants with money.-

LULU

You're one to talk, daddy's girl, we all know how you got your crown.-

Sofi looks at Candela suspiciously.

CANDELA

I didn't say anything.-

MADAME CARLOTA

20 thousand!! Ha! As an employer, just providing day care, health insurance, and private school costs me double that each year!

BOB

Oh, come on, can we make a deal, PLEASE?

MADAME CARLOTA

A deal? What do you think this is, Costco with your cheap hot dogs? This is a human being you're talking about.

BOB

Okay, so how much do you want?

JOHN

Bob, you're going to regret this for the rest of your life.

BOB

No, I won't John.

MADAME CARLOTA

First, there is no monetary value that could replace this young woman in my organization, but I love Melky and I want to see him prosper in life, so I will nullify the contract for \$50,000.

BOB

Fine, fine, I can refinance my mortgage.

JOHN

Don't do this man, come on we gotta get out of here, time to go, no more drinking-

MADAME CARLOTA

I hereby nullify the 5 year contract, you are released from your duties and responsibilities.

SoFI

Madame, please reconsider this decision.

MaDAME CARLOTA

I have already spoken.

SoFI

You can't do this, your sending Lulu and Melky into the arms of a stranger, with no information except his

name, this is dangerous!-

JOHN

I concur, Bob, I can't let you do this.

BOB

It's a done deal, John.

LULU

I love you señor Bob. You are a kind man.

Enter Ron with Chocorramo.

SOFI

Oh no.-

RON

Look what I found hiding in a secret compartment.-

JOHN

Holy Shit, I was right.-

MADAME CARLOTA

Get out!!!!Chito!!Chito!-

John

Ron, you found what we were looking for, you've done good buddy, we got what we wanted now let's get it together come on. You feeling better?

RON

No, John, I'm not feeling better, my head hurts.-

MaDAME CARLOTA

What is this thing doing here?!-

CANDELA

I don't know.

MADAME CARLOTA

Lulu?

LuLU

I don't know. Sofi?

SOFI

Um.

JOHN

(To Madame)

Looks like you were wrong about your sweet innocent chicas, huh?-

MADAME CARLOTA

Who ever brought this donkey step forward at once or you will **all** be removed from the schedule for eternity!

Lulu and Candela step back.

SOFI

I brought the donkey, Madame.

JOHN

I knew it. I knew it. Satellites don't lie!

MADAME CARLOTA

Why would you bring that wild beast in here?-

LULU

That was what I said Madame.

CANDELA

I was against it.

SOFI

You both helped me.

RON

All my original suspicions have been confirmed, this is no conspiracy, this is a bona fide international criminal enterprise-

MaDAME CARLOTA

Excuse me?

JOHN

(To Sofi)

You got a lot of explaining-

SOFI

He was being tortured. He's a victim.

JOHN

What are you talking about?

SOFI

They were hitting him with sticks-

CaNDELA

And doing other things too-

RON

This is worse than anything we might have imagined-

MADAME CARLOTA

You have broken a cardinal rule: No Animals.
Especially a donkey. Do you recognize this?

SOFI

I do. But Madame if you only knew what they were doing
to him-

RON

If somebody would just listen to me.

Madame Carlota

Shhh. I don't care. Sofi, you will receive the
corresponding penalizations: a reduction of salary,
and laundry responsibilities for 3 months.

SOFI

That is fair.

MADAME CARLOTA

And your little helpers will get 1 month.

CANDELA

Why me?

LULU

Thankfully, I'm leaving-

MADAME CARlota

And this donkey has 15 minutes to get off of my
property or he will be euthanized. Now, take that
thing away from my sight.

SOFI

But he has no home.

MADAME CARLOTA

Don't be silly, he must have escaped from a farm, and
his owner is looking for him. Go!

SOFI

Every time I saw him, he was by himself, maybe he's an
orphan, poor baby.

MADAME CARLOTA

That's not my problem, take it somewhere.

JOHN

I think we'll be taking him actually, this donkey was stolen and there are people that want him back.

Sofi

You will not put one finger on him.

JOHN

I beg to differ little lady, I am going to have to ask you to step aside.

RON

I'd be very careful with what you are about to do.

John attempts to grab Chocorramo, a chase ensues but Chocorramo counters and bites him in the arm.

JOHN

Ow, my arm!!

RON

Told ya-

John takes the black suit case he brought, opens it, attaches a scope, creating a large automatic dart rifle. He holds it up.

JOHN

I tried doing it the nice way, but now you leave me no choice. Each dart is triple soaked in ketamine, enough to tranquilize an elephant.

LULU

(To Bob)

Señor Bob do something.

BOB

Is all this necessary, John?

MADAME CARLOTA

Okay, gentleman, the fun is over, now if you don't leave, I will have to call some friends of mine to come and shoot you with real guns.

JOHN

Oh, I'll leave, but I'm taking the burro. Ron grab a rope and be ready, it's gonna drop like a sack of potatoes.

RON
I'm not participating in this.

JOHN
Come on Bob, back me up.

BOB
Ok, Sarge.

LULU
Absolutely not, I will not allow my France to participate.

BOB
I can't Sarge.-

SOFI
You are alone Gringo. If you come close, or try anything, I will not be responsible for what Chocorramo will do to you.

JOHN
Move out of the way.

SoFI
I know why you are here, I know what you want, leave the burro alone.

He looks through the scope, squints his eye.

JOHN
I said move or I will shoot you.

Sofi stands in the way.

SOFI
You will have to shoot me before you take this animal out of this building.

BOB
John, come on.

RON
Don't do this, wait-

MADAME CARLOTA

Sofi! What are you doing? Give him the donkey, if that is what he wants!

John's finger is about to squeeze the trigger. Bob and Ron try to physically stop John, and they struggle. The dart gets shot.

BOB

Move!

They all move. The dart flies over Madame's head.

CANDELA

You almost shot her!

JOHN

All I want is to take the stupid donkey, but no body can cooperate with me! I GUARNTTEE YOU I WILL NOT MISS MY NEXT SHOT.

He shoots another dart and misses Chocorramo by a mile. Aims a third time.

SOFI

WAIT WAIT! I have the stones.

MADAME CARLOTA

What stones?

SOFI

Emeralds. That's what he wants.

BOB

What is she talking about, John?

SOFI

I will give them to you, but you have to leave him alone.

Lights shift

Scene eIGHT

We are now in Sofi's room. John is still pointing the

dart gun at everybody. We can see Sofi's legs as she squirms underneath her bed.

JOHN
Hurry up.

Sofi comes out.

SoFI
Here they are.

John
That looks like a dirty bag, I don't see anything.

Sofi opens the bag and glowing green light emanates.

MADAME CARLOTA
Where did these come from? I want to know, NOW!

JOHN
Slowly, put them on the floor by my feet-

RON
These gems have been looted, and plundered by mafias in your beloved homeland.

JOHN
Ron, your sharing classified information.-

RON
And with the help of your country's leaders, similar to all the other national treasures of this republic, they will be sold abroad.

MaDAME CARLOTA
Tell me something I don't know. We have been pillaged for centuries.

RON
We were hired to come here to recover stolen property-

JOHN
She knows that already, her girls were the ones that took the stolen property.

RON
Unbeknownst to myself and Bob, the mafiosos were using this creature in a scheme to smuggle the emeralds.

JOHN

Whose side are you on, Ron?

MADAME CARLOTA

You're saying all of this as if I am supposed to be in shock *flaquito*. I am not stupid, I know what happens in Colombia.

RON

Oh, ok.

SOFI

You see Madame that's why I had to rescue him.

CANDELA

She forced us to do it Madame.

LULU

I told them of the consequences.-

MADAME CARLOTA

Girls, quiet! I am doing the talking.

JOHN

All of you shut up!

Chocorramo stares into Madame's eyes.

MADAME CARLOTA

(To Chocorramo)

Ah Poor Baby, come here.

(Petting him)

Don't worry, I will not euthanize you.

(Hugs him)

(Looking at Ron, Bob and John)

What have you come to do in my country?

BOB

Not us ma'am.

RON

We're here to help, Madame, I would never sign up for something like this, I give you my word.

JOHN

Ron, you're fired-

MADAME CARLOTA

Ay please Gringo, you will sign up for anything to

make money, you and your friends are little whores.

RON

I beg your pardon.

JOHN

Put the jewels by my feet and then I want every body to get on their knees.-

Sofi obeys John's command, and puts the emeralds near his feet, then they all, except for Madame, get on their knees.

MaDAME CARLOTA

I refuse to kneel. I know what you are, I know how my country works. You private contractors operate in the shadows and do as you please playing GI JOE with no legal consequences. Meanwhile I have the health department breathing down my neck every week.

BOB

Madame, we work under strict supervision and oversight, I can't explain this conduct, it's simply a break from protocol.

MADAME CARLOTA

I should stuff these through your rectum and see if you like it.

RON

I'm on your side, trust me. I have only disdain for the guys who did this, it's the worst kind of scum.

BOB

This is insane John, you knew they were hiding emeralds, and you weren't gonna tell us??

LULU

(to John)

You are not a good friend for my Bob.-

JOHN

I was gonna tell you, once the mission was completed. Those were the orders that I received.

BOB

You could have trusted us, man.

LULU

(To Bob)

I don't trust him.-

JOHN

All right, look we can split it three ways.

CANDELA

Okay, okay, stop everybody!

JOHN

What?

Pulling out from her bra

CANDELA

I wouldn't just give this away, but I think we should put an end to this fiasco.

(unfolding paper)

I have Julie Roberts autograph on a receipt.

John looks at it and rips it up.

JOHN

That's what I think about that.

CANDELA

You are a man with no soul.

RON

John, you used us and you tried to force me to have sex against my will.-

BOB

Yeah, I can't believe it, you were attacking me for falling in love, and look at what you were up to.

LULU

(To Bob)

I don't trust any man who is not married, has no children, is over 50 years old but behaves like he is 10.

RON

Abetment.

JOHN

Ok, ok, ok, I'm busted...The captain of the southern

block told me about a gem worth millions. They were en route to be sold until these girls decided to play rescue rangers.

BOB

And you're telling us now.-

LULU

(To Bob)

He's a loser.-

JohN

The mission was to find the gem, this donkey is collateral damage.

RON

This is immoral, John.

JOHN

Honestly, I'm broke. You got a steady income for obvious reasons, I don't have that, Bob, I was discharged, I don't get benefits, I'm living pay check to pay check.

RON

So am I and I have a daughter, there's no excuse-

JohN

This job ain't gonna last forever, eventually it will run dry, we'll be replaced and have to go back home. And what do we get?? For putting our lives on the line? For cleaning up the filth? You see all the guys here, how they operate, well I'm not gonna sit back like a dumbass and watch them fill their pockets while I look the other way. Fuck no, man!

RON

I can't let you do this.

JOHN

Who's stopping me?

Madame makes a move for the emeralds.

MADAME CARLOTA

Give me those.

JOHN

Hey!

Madame examines the stone up close with one eye closed.

MADAME CARLOTA

Mmmm. Yes. I see, I see...huge nuggets.

JOHN

Come on, I'm not playing, pass it over.

MADAME CARLOTA

But it's not the size that matters...It's the intention.

JOHN

Huh?

MADAME CARLOTA

What you have in your possession is one of the most valuable emeralds in the world. Hundreds of Karats.

JOHN

Yeah, I know that.

MADAME CARLOTA

You think you know everything, but you don't. The Gods called these precious stones *Cristal Maestro*. But now they are used to finance war. Who ever takes them, their spirit will suffer a life of burdens and pains. Do you want your pipi to fall off?

JOHN

Whatever. Don't make me shoot you.

Madame holds up the gems. Everybody looks.

MADAME CARLOTA

Behold the Power.

The room is turning vibrant green. Glowing.

MADAME CARLOTA

The men who dig for this are blinded with lust, and all that is good with the stones has been lost. You're worried about mafiosos but this is worse than all the mafias of the universe.

John is reaching in a trance, getting closer to the emeralds

John alas grabs the gems. The glowing intensifies in his hands.

He stares into the glowing gems entranced.

John looks up.

John grabs his throat.

BOB
John??

CANDELA
He's going to explode.

MADAME CARLOTA
Open the windows.

John is being overtaken by an invisible force.

He staggers through out the room.

He stops.

The lights stop.

Sound stops.

CANDELA
What is happening?

LULU
He's eating himself.

Bob
He's imploding.

SOFI
God is speaking through him.

Everybody is still watching the metamorphosis in quiet terror

Bob
Poor guy.

MADAME CARLOTA

Remove the jewel from his hands carefully with this clean handkerchief.

Pulls one out from her bosom.

Sofi runs to John who is now on all four legs and has a ear protruding out from his head, she slowly grabs the emerald and precision wraps it, she almost drops it, and the groups gasps, however she has quick reflexes and catches it skillfully. She bows.

BOB

John?

JOHN

What's happening to me?

RON

You have an ear coming out.

John tries to speak but can't only grunts come out.

JOHN

Owwwghh-

BOB

His throat.

RON

Oh my Jesus.

JOHN

It hurts.

MADAME CARLOTA

(To Candela)

Get him some *aguardiente*.

CANDELA

Yes, madame.

JOHN

My esophagus.

MADAME CARLOTA

Hurry!-

Candela exits.

BOB

John, stay with me pal, we're getting you help okay?

JOHN

Okay, I'm with you.

BOB

I'm going to get your pulse, okay?

JOHN

Sounds good.

Bob comes close to him.

LULU

Careful Señor Bob, he could kick you.

He checks his pulse

BOB

His pulse is extremely fast.

JOHN

My heart is...twisting.

LULU

He's been possessed.

MADAME CARLOTA

No, he is not possessed it's the the curse of the *guaquero*-

JohN

I'm cursed?

LULU

Yes.

BOB

What's that?

SOFI

It punishes the greedy.

Re-enter Candela with a bottle of aguardiente and walks near John.

CANDELA
Open up.

JOHN
Ahhhhh-

BOB
Ok, ok, I think this is enough-

MADAME CARLOTA
Better drunk than in pain, my life motto.

BOB
It's hard to believe that in the 21st century there are curses, we need a doctor.

SOFI
Candela is a nurse.

CANDELA
Yes, but I only finished two semesters, I can't do anything in this case.

BOB
This man needs a plastic surgeon.

JOHN
Am I disfigured?-

MADAME CARLOTA
Don't bother, Mr. Marine at this point not even a surgeon can save him, the curse of the *guaquero* (*emerald hunter*) is in progress regardless of your belief system. Soon his other ear will grow and then his head and tail, until the metamorphosis is completed. And then he will remain like this forever.-

JOHN
I can't see myself.-

BOB
What the fuck is going on?

LuLU
She's right Mi Amor, I heard about this curse before-

Sofi
The other ear is beginning to grow!

JOHN
Owwwwgghh-

CANDELA
It's making his skull bleed a lot-

MADAME CARLOTA
Get a towel fast, my floor-

LuLU
I can't watch this any longer-

BOB
Close your eyes, my love, this is too much. John hang
in there-

JOHN
Owwwghhhhh-

MADAME CARLOTA
Your friend disturbed the powers of malevolent magic.

BOB
This is not happening.

JOHN
Ow-

MaDAME CARLOTA
Yes, it is, Mr. Marine, welcome to Colombia.

BOB
What are we supposed to do, come on help us out.

MADAME CARLOTA
How am I supposed to know? This is a new situation for
me too.

BOB
Ok, ok, let's think.-

JOHN
(mustering out some words)
Tell... my mother... that I love her-

MaDAME CARLOTA
I'm thinking. Girls, help me think.-

LULU

CPR?

CANDELA

How is that gonna do anything, his bones are being crushed.

BOB

Ron, we're in deep trouble, I mean how are we supposed to explain this one to the chief?

RON

We should conduct an analysis.

SOFI

(Petting him)

Chocorramo we need your help-

RON

Ok, what if these are only temporary symptoms and he will be better soon-

JOHN

(gargled and barely understandable)

Mercy-Haw

MADAME CARLOTA

These are not symptoms, these are permanent effects...Unless...

RON

Unless what?

MADAME CARLOTA

If we keep the emeralds, he will stay a donkey and then all of our tragedies will begin to mirror each other; the losses, the pains. It has already begun.

BOB

What has begun?

Can hear John moaning in the back

MADAME CARLOTA

Our journey to green hell, Mr. Marine.

BOB

(to Lulu)

I'm so lost right now and I'm still drunk, sorry. What does that mean? Help me to understand.

LULU

We are all in danger.

JOHN

Owwwwggh-

MADAME CARLOTAI

Yes, Lulu, as long as this emerald is here.

RON

We need to take action.

MADAME CARLOTA

Yes, I will take the emerald out of Hotel Happy immediately and you will wait here with your friend, understood? Girls, you are coming with me.

RON

Um...understood.

BOB

How long will you be?

MADAME CARLOTAI

However long it takes.

JOHN

Owwwghhh-

SoFI

The hooves are coming.

LuLU

His nostrils are growing.

RON

His muzzle. Ouch.

BOB

Give him space.

SOFI

God is speaking through him.

Everybody is still.

CANDELA

He's going to speak!

Long Pause until

JOHN

(speaks like a donkey)

Hee Haw, Hee Haw, Hee Haw...

(into infinity)

The others watch the metamorphosis in quiet terror

Lights fade

Scene nine

Madame Carlotta appears, staring into our souls.

MADAME CARLOTA

What is a sanctuary? That's a rhetorical question. Sanctuaries are possible without the work of saints. An oasis made by regular people. When the perils of war have taken the purity of a smile. Of a kiss...Of a touch. When war is everything you know, then a place for holiness is necessary. Where angels exist and miracles must happen. A place where even fugitives are immune to the law and there is asylum from the sovereign authority. Where there is protection for the displaced. For the ones who have lost family, the ones who have lost homes, taken violently from their habitats where they belong, or have abandoned their lands for a better future...

Lights shift, Chocorramo, Sofi, Candela and Lulu enter with rope tied to his muzzle.

MADAME CARLOTA
Is everybody ready for the expedition?

SOFI/Candela/lulu
Ready.-

MADAME CARLOTA
Helmets?

Sofi/CANDELA/lulu
Ready.

MADAME CARLOTA
Goggles?

SOFI/CANDELA/lulu
Ready.

MADAME CARLOTA
Gloves?

SOFI/Candela/lulu
Ready.

MADAME CARLOTA
Wire Cutters?

Sofi/Candela/lulu
Ready.

Madame searches around her and realizes she does not have her machete.

Madame Carlota
My machete? Where's my machete?

SOFI
Here, Madame.

Passes her the machete. Madame wields it, spins it and then holds it up toward the sky.

MADAME CARLOTA
Tonight we go to the zenith.

They all fasten helmets, goggles, putting on gloves and get on skateboard platform which he pulls.

No movement.

SOFI

He doesn't want to move.

MADAME CARLOTA

What do you mean he doesn't want to move, tell him to move.

SoFI

Come on Chocorramo, it's time to get moving. Please.

No movement.

CANDELA

He's frozen.

MaDAME CARLOTA

Donkey, you're being difficult.

SOFI

(To Chocorramo)

We need to work together, I understand you might be frustrated but we can't stay here anymore.

Madame gets off of the wagon and tries to get him to move. Chocorramo makes strange braying sounds.

MaDAME CARLOTA

You can't stand there all day!

CANDELA

Something is wrong with him.

SOFI

He's trying to communicate. Listen.

CANDELA

He looks hungry.

SOFI

No, this is different.

MADAME CARLOTA

Bathroom?

SOFI

He just went.

MADAME CARLOTA

Then he's being stubborn. Come on Donkey, move!

SOFI

Madame leave him.

MaDAME CARLOTA

I grew up around many donkeys, I know their behavior.

She pulls on him. But he doesn't move an inch. She continues to try but to no avail.

MADAME CARLOTA

Whoa! Whoa!!! Haw! Haw!

She tugs and pulls, huffs and puffs, but still no movement.

CANDELA

He's not going anywhere, what do we do?

SOFI

We wait. Eventually he'll start going.

MADAME CARLOTA

Give him a smack. He will get the point.

SOFI

No, no!

Madame about to give Chocorramo a whack

Candela steps down and gets in between them.

CANDELA

Madame, no, you can't impose your will on him, that's not how it works.

MaDAME CARLOTA

I just want him to make a decision.

CANDELA

Well, if that's the case, you can't pull his rope and force him.

MADAME CARLOTA

Then what am I supposed to do, pues?

Candela walks up to Chocorramo

CANDELA

First, you have to respect him, try to understand him-

MaDAME CARLOTA

What is there to understand?

Chocorramo sighs and breathes.

CANDELA

For example, you can check his feet, what's underneath?

Chocorramo lifts his feet and Candela wipes off some loose rocks.

You offer him a carrot.

She brings out a carrot from a her satchel.

You touch his shoulder gently, build trust.

MaDAME CARLOTA

Oh.

CANDELA

They respond best to kindness, and when you speak to them calmly. Imagine if every time I spoke to you I yelled, you wouldn't like that would you?

MadAME CARLOTA

No.

CANDELA

That's a life lesson, Madame- treat others with compassion, even in difficult situations.

Sofi smiles

SOFI

Yea, Madame, and you can't always be in control.

Candela gently strokes Chocorramo's head and dangles the carrot in front of him. But still nothing.

CANDELA

And then if the carrot doesn't work, that's when you

bring out the Chocorramos.

She pulls out a bright orange package, it s a glorious ChocorrAMO for ChocorrAMO. She opens it and ties it to a stick.

He smells it.

She moves forward.

He follows, one step at a time.

SOFI

Oh my god, Candela, you did it!

Slowly but surely Chochorramo is now moving forward.

MADAME CARLOTA

On to the wagon, the night awaits.

They get in the wagon but Candela stays with the ChocorrAMO

CANDELA

Nice and easy, here we go. You're doing very good.

MADAME CARLOTA

Is this as fast as we will go?

SOFI

For now.

Madame rolls her eyes

ChocorrAMO is walking super super slow, the lights shift as the scenery changes. We go from Hotel Happy, to the streets of Bogotá, passing an array of obstacles up a mountain, as we transition Madame falls asleep on Sofi's shoulder and Candela is asleep on Lulu's shoulder. The stars are twinkling in the dawn light. We are entering a new reality, full of shadows and effigies, worlds within worlds sprouting open before us.

SOFI

I had no right to judge you for wanting to leave. I'm a bitch.

LULU

You were jealous.

SOFI

Ok, yes, maybe a little.

LULU

As long as you recognize it.

SOFI

It's the best thing for Melky---A new beginning.

LULU

That's what I want.

SOFI

I'll miss you both, so much.

LULU

We will miss you too.

SOFI

We made a family, I was happy for the first time in many years.

LULU

Me too. But this is not real. This is not happy.

SOFI

Please don't be mad at me.

Sofi starts to bawl

LULU

Aw, you're so stupid, I can't stay mad at you. Sofi, please,

SOFI

I'm sorry, I have been holding it in.

LULU

It's ok, it's ok. Everybody has the right to break.

SOFI

You're strong, Candela is strong, I'm fragile.

LULU

You're strong too.

SOFI

No, I miss my mom, I miss my dad, I miss my home, I'm trying to move on, but I'm not like you.

LULU

It's hard for me too.

SOFI

You're going to forget about me and become a little American girl.

LULU

No... I promise. I will call you every day, and remind you to plug in the ice maker.

SOFI

Really?

LULU

And whenever you're ready you can come visit me.

SOFI

I want hand written letters, at least once a month.

LULU

Ok.

Candela awakes.

Candela

I'm gonna miss you too, Lu.

LULU

I'll never forget how much you helped me with Melky these last years. Thank you for taking him to the dentist and thank you for getting him ice cream and *Chocorramos*, even when I told you he couldn't have sweets.

CANDELA

That was the only way to get him to listen and calm down, through extortion.

Madame waking up

MaDAME CARLOTA

Where are we?

SOFI

I don't know.

CANDELA
Heaven.

Chocorramo reaches a fork in the road and comes to a stop.

MADAME CARLOTA
Give him another cake.

LULU
Which way, Sofi?

SOFI
Let me think.

CANDELA
Left, Right?

MADAME CARLOTA
North, South, East, West?

SOFI
I don't know, I can't remember. I'm not good with directions.

LuLU
Do you recognize anything?

SOFI
It all looks the same.

CANDELA
Come on Sofi.

Sofi looks stressed and confused.

MADAME CARLOTA
Ok Sofia, focus, which path do we take to get to the cave?

CAndela
Look around. Do something!

SOFI
This tree wasn't here the last time.

Chocorramo begins to walk again

SOFI

Follow him.

The group follows him.

Chocorramo leads them through the correct path,
safely.

As they approach the vaporous cave, the ground beneath them becomes rocky and unstable. They struggle to keep their footing and make their way towards the entrance. Madame Carlota stumbles and nearly falls, but Sofi and Candela catch her before she hits the ground.

CAndela

I hear water.

Sofi

That's the entrance.

LuLU

It's so dark I can't see anything.

CaNDELA

It's getting colder.

LULU

Turn on your flashlights.

They light up the space.

As they walk further into the cave

CANDELA

Oh my god!

Pre historic cave drawings are on the wall, stone markings, coded language. They appear like motion graphics, fading in and out.

A story of pictograms begins to be unveiled as they look at the wall.

SOFI

It's telling a story.

Hundreds of stick figures and other geometrical shapes are illuminated by flashlights. Images of humans and animals such as fish, turtles, lizards and birds, people dancing, holding hands.

CANDELA

Disfigured atoms, explosions-

MADAME CARLOTA

Fire, star dust-

LuLU

Ocean creatures floating-

SOFI

Flying insects with long tentacles and expansive wings.-

LULU

A giant turtle.-

CANDELA

Snakes.-

SOFI

Fish.

MADAME CARLOTA

Many fish.

The cave story continues.

A new portal opens full of signs.

Arrows, swirls, a You-Are-Here indicator, a Do-Not-Enter, a Go sign, a Stop sign, an almost there sign, keep going, layers and layers.

CANDELA

The world was once tranquil waters.

SOFI

An ocean full of plants...and...what is that?

MADAME CARLOTA

A giant lizard.

CANDELA
A reptile.

LULU
That's a dinosaur.

Candela keeps reading the wall

CANDELA
Then one day a volcano erupted and killed everything.

SOFI
Fire dropped from the sky.

MADAME CARLOTA
Revelations before Revelations-

LULU
And created a new world.

CANDELA
Dry, Dark.

SOFI
Full of Rocks.

BOB
Sloths, Mastodons-

CANDELA
Then it rained for years.

LULU
The world turned green.

SoFI
And Blue.

RON
Pyramids.-

CANDELA
And Gold.

LULU
Stick people.

SOFI
Look!

Donkey Hieroglyphics depicts donkeys carrying, pushing, pulling and working in difficult terrains.

MADAME CARLOTA

Donkeys built the world.

A pictogram of a gathering of people, with a giant jewel at the center. We then see a stick figure donkey carrying the jewel into a cave.

Chocorramo comes very close to the pictogram and puts his nose close.

SOFI

This cave is his home.

CANDELA

Look over there, the story goes on and on.

SOFI

Follow Chocorramo.

They trot

MADAME CARLOTA

Ahead, by the waterfall. That's where we have to go.

CANDELA

We can't pass.

They have reached a rock formation that is blocking their path. Only Chocorramo is capable of getting over. He looks back.

MADAME CARLOTA

What does he want?

SOFI

Give him the jewel.

Madame walks toward him and from her satchel pulls out the jewel wrapped in linen cloths.

MADAME CARLOTA

Now, tonight, we break the curse of all our problems. The curse of centuries, the curse of fighting, the

curse of the unloved, the curse of the missing people, the massacres, the curse of the color green, the curse of the mafias. The *chanclas*, the chisme. The curse of the Colombian soccer team. The curse of Deyanira the Hyena, The curse of the rain, the landslides, the floods, the fire---the curse of destroying everything. Go Donkey, take this where it belongs. Save us.

Chocorramo takes the Jewel.

He doesn't move.

SOFI

I will miss you. I'll come back and visit.

Sofi runs and gives him a final good bye hug, and so does Candela, and so does Lulu, and so does Madame.

CANDELA

Good bye burro.

Chocorramo waves tail.

Chocorramo makes a daring climb over a rock and gets over the other side. He disappears along with the jewel.

A magnetic force is felt.

The ground glows.

MaDAME CARLOTA

Balance is restored.

CANDELA

Peace.

As this energy settles, the lights shift and show Ron, and Bob taking care of John.

RON

How you feeling, John?

JOHN

(Barely Understandable)

Better. I can't wait to go back home.

End of play