

Plays for Young Audiences

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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Esperanza Rising

Story by
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Adaptation by
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LIST OF CHARACTERS

Principal Characters In Order of Appearance:

ESPERANZA.....wealthy rancher's daughter
HORTENSIA..... maid from Oaxaca
THREE MARIACHIS.....musicians/clowns/mailman
DON SIXTO..... Landowner,Esperanza's father
RAMONA..... Esperanza's mother, Sixto's wife
SERVANT GIRL.....8yrs old
MARIELENA.....Esperanza's best friend
MIGUEL.....ranch hand, Hortensia's son
LUIS.....Sixto's brother, town mayor, bank owner

“OKIE” FAMILY

Boy..... 8 years old
Father
Mother

ISABEL.....8yr old. Miguel's cousin
MODESTA.....Isabel's young mother,Hortensia's sister-in-law
ALFONSO.....Modesta's husband,Hortensia's brother
MARTA..... Modesta's sister.

WOMEN WORKERS I,II and III

There are also crowd scenes with peasant workers, people crossing the border, neighbors at the camp, guards, strikers, workers at the fiesta. All actors not in a specific scene can be used as part of the crowd in that scene.

All action takes place between 1929-1930 at Rancho Linda Flor,at the Mexico-USA border crossing and at various locations at the workers camp in California.

ACT 1: SCENE 1

OPENING SONG:

M(ariachi)1
(*SHOUTS OVER MUSIC*)
Mexico!

M2
Viva mexico!

M3
Viva Mexico!

ALL THREE
Bonito es mexico entero
Bella tierra nacional
Donde Dios puso un letrero
Como esta no hay otra igual!

M1
Yes. Yes. I love you Mexico!

M2
Mexico Lindo!

M3
Ahora en ingles!

ALL THREE
All of Mexico is beautiful
As seen with loving eyes
Where God himself put up a sign
This is paradise!

M1
You tell them!

M2
Okay!

M2
La Virgen tendio su manto
En la tierra de amor

Y con eso hizo el rancho
Que se llama linda flor!

M3

Yes. Yes. El rancho Linda Flor

M1

In the state of Aguascalientes!

ALL

The Virgen spread her mantle
Over a land that she adored
And so created el rancho
That we now call Linda Flor.

(THE STAGE IS DARK EXCEPT FOR A SPLENDID BED LOOKING AS IF IT IS SUSPENDED IN AIR.AMONG THE WHITE LACE COVERS AND MANY RUFFLED AND BEADED WHITE PILLOWS WE SEE MOVEMENT.ESPERANZA TURNS OVER IN HER SLEEP. DRESSED IN A WHITE SILK AND LACE NIGHTGOWN, SHE AT FIRST LOOKS LIKE PART OF THE BED.BUT WE SEE HER DARK HEAD MOVE.

SHE LIFTS HER HEAD AND SUDDENLY A HUGE PILE OF COLORFULLY WRAPPED BIRTHDAY PRESENTS LIGHTS UP AT THE FOOT OF HER BED WHICH WE NOW SEE IS ON A PLATFORM. SHE SITS UP AND AS SHE DOES HORTENSIA IN LOCAL DRESS RUSHES IN WITH A SILVER TRAY WITH A BRUSH AND ROSES ON IT.)

HORTENSIA

They're coming. They're coming. Miss Esperanza. Quick into your dress.
(ESPERANZA GETS UP SLEEPILY AND HOLDS OUT HER ARMS. HORTENSIA SLIPS ON HER WHITE FRILLY DRESS AND BUTTONS IT).

ESPERANZA

You woke me up! I was having the best dream!

HORTENSIA

May the rest of your life be a beautiful dream, nina . But now- hurry!.Let's brush your hair!
(HORTENSIA BRUSHES OUT HER HAIR)

ESPERANZA

I want the red satin ribbon.

HORTENSIA

The white one is just as pretty.

ESPERANZA

You didn't iron the red one, did you!

HORTENSIA

I've been busy with your birthday.

ESPERANZA

Fine then. The white one will do.
Ouch- You're pulling my hair!

HORTENSIA

Que latosa es Usted!.

(WE HEAR THE BEGINNING OF 'CIELITO LINDO". AS HORTENSIA TIES THE RIBBON IN ESPERANZA'S HAIR)

ESPERANZA

They're here! Hurry up!
(SHE RUNS TO THROW OPEN THE LARGE DOORS TO THE PATIO. LIGHT STREAMS IN. THE THREE MARIACHIS, THEIR BLACK SUITS STUDED WITH SILVER START PLAYING AND SINGING THE TRADITIONAL BIRTHDAY SONG "LAS MANANITAS". TWO CAMPESINOS ARE HOLDING POLES WITH A BANNER SAYING 'RANCHO LAS TRES ROSAS" WITH THREE LARGE BEAUTIFUL ROSES PAINTED ON IT. BEHIND THEM IS A CROWD OF CAMPESINOS IN WORK CLOTHES, AND A LITTLE SERVANT GIRL. FRIENDS AND FAMILY ARE THERE TOO- DECKED OUT IN EUROPEAN STYLE. ESPERANZA'S FATHER ,SIXTO, IS HOLDING TWO ROSES. MIGUEL BESIDE HIM IS HOLDING A LARGE BRIGHTLY WRAPPED BOX. THEY ALL SING.)

ALL

Estas son las mananitas
Que cantaba el rey David
A las muchachas bonitas
Se las cantaba asi:

Despierta mi bien, despierta
Que ya se amanecio
Y los pajaros ya cantan
La luna ya se metio.

(THEY END WITH CHEERS OF "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" FELIZ CUMPLEANOS, AND SOME CHANT, "ESPERAN-ZA!", ESPERAN-ZA!" AND CLAP. THEY ALL COME FORWARD WITH LITTLE GIFTS OR OFFERINGS OF FRUIT)

ESPERANZA

Mama,Papa-what a beautiful fiesta ! You've made me very happy.

RAMONA

Then I'm happy too.

SIXTO

(APPROACHES WITH MIGUEL BEHIND HIM)

M'hija adorada! What a sad birthday it would be without a gift of roses!

Twelve roses- one perfect rose for each precious year of your life!

ESPERANZA

Mmmmmmm. Huele a dulce. They smell so delicious.

(THE LITTLE SERVANT GIRL COMES UP AND STANDS ON TIPTOE TO SMELL THEM. FIRST SHE LOOKS AT SIXTO TO MAKE SURE IT'S ALL RIGHT. HE NODS TO ESPERANZA WHO HOLDS THEM OUT TO THE GIRL.)

SERVANT GIRL

Mmmmmmm. Huele a dulce. *(SHE RUNS AWAY)*

ESPERANZA

Ay!

SIXTO

What is it?

ESPERANZA

My finger. Look, mama

HORTENSIA

(CROSSES HERSELF)

That means bad luck!

SIXTO

No Hortensia- that's life- No hay rosas sin espinas. You can't have roses without thorns.

RAMONA

(RUBS HER FINGER)

Sana, sana

Colita de rana

Si no sana hoy

Sanara manana!

SIXTO

(HE KISSES HER FINGER)

Now

All better! Yes?

ESPERANZA

Yes papa.

SIXTO

Miguel.Ven.

(MIGUEL STEPS FORWARD WITH THE PACKAGE)

As I have every year since you were born-a beautiful doll for my own munequita

ESPERANZA

Yes! Yes!

(MARIELENA APPROACHES TO SEE.)

SIXTO

This year's doll comes right from Spain-Sevilla..con mantilla. Ole!

ESPERANZA

Oooooooooo.

SIXTO

This doll is the most special of any I have given you before. Do you know why?.

ESPERANZA

It's the most beautiful!

It's eyes open and close!

SIXTO

No. this doll is special because it is the last doll I will ever give you.

ESPERANZA

But papa-

SIXTO

Next year you'll be thirteen.On your way to being a young woman. You won't want dolls anymore.

ESPERANZA

I'll always want dolls!

SIXTO

I'm afraid not.You'll want dresses and purses and shawls and even more ribbons for your hair. So treasure this doll- and keep it always to remember what it was like to be twelve and how much your papa loved you!

Now- todos- a divertirse! Today is a fiesta.Dance, eat, drink, andale mi gente. You too Miguelin, Dona Hortensia!

(SOME CAMPESINOS COME UP AND KISS SIXTO'S HAND OR RAMONA'S AND SAY "gracias patron", "gracias seno", "gracias patrona", senora" THEY SAY "felicidades senito" TO ESPERANZA)

(SIXTO GOES TO RAMONA AND PRESENTS HER WITH A SINGLE ROSE)

SIXTO

And you, mi amor, as I said since the first day I met you- I give you my life in this rose!

RAMONA

You have such good taste.

SIXTO

Yes. Of course, the good taste to fall in love forever!

Shall we dance?

(HUGE PLATTERS OF FOOD ARE BROUGHT OUT. THE LITTLE SERVANT GIRL CARRIES A VERY HEAVY ONE WHICH MAKES HER STAGGER. MIGUEL HELPS HER. THE MARIACHIS PLAY AND SOME PEOPLE DANCE.)

ESPERANZA

Hortensia!

HORTENSIA

Yes, mi reina...

ESPERANZA

Buckle my shoes ,please. My hands are shaking. I'm too excited. My papa's brought me a doll from Sevilla!

(HORTENSIA SHAKES HER HEAD .AS SOON AS THE SHOES ARE BUCKLED ESPERANZA RUNS FOR THE DOOR WHERE A WELL-DRESSED GIRL, MARIELENA, APPROACHES HER. THE LITTLE SERVANT GIRL FOLLOWS.)

MARIELENA

Felicidades Esperanza Felicidades. I love your dress. So much lace. Almost like mine, oooo and a mountain of presents. You are so lucky. Let's open some!

ESPERANZA

Let's look at the doll!

(THE LITTLE SERVANT GIRL FOLLOWS HESITANTLY. BUT SHE ISN'T NOTICED UNTIL THEY ARRIVE AT THE STACK OF PRESENTS. MARIAELENA TURNS TO THE GIRL.)

MARIAELENA

Yes? What do you want?

LITTLE GIRL

To see all the pretty things.

MARIAELENA

Don't they need you in the kitchen?

(ESPERANZA UNWRAPS HER FATHER'S PRESENT. IT IS A TRAVELING CHEST WITH A BEAUTIFUL DOLL INSIDE.)

MARIELENA

Ooooo look, an itty bitty comb with pearls.. and a white mantilla and gloves. Mine doesn't have gloves.

ESPERANZA

And look at all these clothes !.
(SHE TAKES OUT DRESS AFTER DRESS.)

MARIELENA

What are you going to name her?

ESPERANZA

I don't know yet...I have to think of a very special name.

MARIELENA

She has real lashes on her eyes. Oooooooo. I'm so jealous!

(THE SERVANT GIRL REACHES OUT TO TOUCH THE DRESSES.)

SERVANT GIRL

Ayyyy, mona..que mona...

(ESPERANZA JERKS THE DOLL AWAY FROM HER. MARIELENA SLAPS HER HAND)

MARIELENA

India prieta - anda
I told you to go to the kitchen!

(THE LITTLE GIRL STARTS TO CRY. RAMONA AND HORTENSIA ENTER.)

HORTENSIA

Escuincla- que haces aqui?

SERVANT GIRL

Quise ver los regalos, no mas

RAMONA

Girls! Shame on you. I don't think it would hurt to let her hold the doll for a few moments!

ESPERANZA

Mama. This doll is special! Besides, she's poor and dirty ,...

HORTENSIA

Con permiso. Senora

(SHE EXITS WITH THE DOLL)

RAMONA

Esperanza!

ESPERANZA

What?

RAMONA

When you scorn these people, you scorn Miguel and Hortensia. And you embarrass yourself. Now, come in and receive the rest of your gifts from our gente, with a smile.

ESPERANZA

Ay mama, They only bring fruit. Let them put it in a bowl.

RAMONA

People give what they can .At the very least, you owe them respect in return. This life we enjoy, rests on their shoulders!

ESPERANZA

No .Their life rests on ours!

Papa made this life for us. He cleared this land with his own machete. He brought the grapes from Spain and the cattle from Brazil. He dug the roses from Sevilla and planted them here!Without us, our gente would have no work!

(TIO LUIS ENTERS WITH ONE PISTOLERO)

Isn't that true, Tio Luis?

(SHE LAUGHS AND STARTS TO RUN OFF. ONE OF LUIS' PISTOLEROS STOPS HER AND POINTS TO HER UNCLE.)

LUIS

Don't forget your manners, young lady.

ESPERANZA

Yes Tio. Hello tio.

LUIS

Muchacho-

(A PISTOLERO BRINGS OVER A LARGE PAPAYA)

I brought you this papaya from Veracruz.

ESPERANZA

Oh fruit! Thank you Tio.

LUIS

Happy birthday.
(*ESPERANZA EXITS*)

LUIS

Ramona, Que hermosa te ves. Como siempre

RAMONA

You're too kind.

LUIS

My brother is a very, very fortunate man.
I may have the money in the family - but he...he has the treasure! Verdad, muchacho?
(*THE TWO PISTOLEROS CHUCKLE AND SMILE IN AGREEMENT*)

RAMONA

Must you always bring your pistolero,Luis ? Certainly you have no enemies here.

LUIS

Yes-I apologize for this vermin. But, these are dangerous times. There are bandits in the hills,
and - Caray, as President of the bank, one must always show one is a very serious man. In my
position it is better to be feared than loved, don't you think.?

RAMONA

I think you've accomplished exactly what you wish.

LUIS

Good.Good.
Stay as lovely as you are, cunada.
(*HE BOWS.RAMONA HURRIES AWAY. LUIS AND HIS MEN GO MIX WITH THE OTHER GUESTS.*)

(*ON THE WAY TO HER FATHER ESPERANZA TAKES OFF HER SHOES,SHE RUNS WEAVING THROUGH THE CROWD PAST MIGUEL WITH HIS MOTHER.*)

ESPERANZA

Look Miguel. I'm a gypsy. I have no shoes!

MIGUEL

(*PULLS OUT HER RIBBON*)
Gypsies don't wear ribbons. They put flowers in their hair!

ESPERANZA
Hortensia Look what he did!

HORTENSIA
Here I'll tie it for you.

ESPERANZA
(TO MIGUEL)
Did you bring me a present?

MIGUEL
No.

ESPERANZA
Yes you did. Let me see!
(SHE TUGS AT HIS ARM)

MIGUEL
(PULLS SOMETHING OUT OF HISPOCKET AND HIDES THEM BEHIND HIS BACK!)
Pepe Ven. One, two-Mangos de Manila, suave y dulce como un meringue!. Your favorite!

ESPERANZA
Oh fruit! Thank you.. Would you put them in a bowl, Miguelin. I can't carry them around with me right now!
(SHE RUNS OFF TO JOIN HER FATHER)

MIGUEL
She's spoiled!

HORTENSIA
She's only twelve.

MIGUEL
You were selling tortillas in the street at twelve.

HORTENIA
Otro mundo,. And it's time you understood it.

MIGUEL
What do you mean?

HORTENSIA
You can't go around pulling her hair any more.

MIGUEL

So what if I pull her hair?! We always kid around.

HORTENSIA

"always" no longer exists. You're older now. So is she.
You can't be friends in the same way.

MIGUEL

Are you telling me to know my place?!

HORTENSIA

Yes. You are the housekeepers son . Esperanza is the ranch owner's daughter .

MIGUEL

And?

HORTENSIA

And a deep river runs between you ,Miguel. Esperanza stands on one side of this river and you on the other-And this river can never be crossed. Me entiendes?

MIGUEL

Claro que si.

(THREE VAQUEROS IN DUSTY CLOTHES RUSH IN AND OVER TO SIXTO. THEY PULL HIM AWAY EXCITEDLY. HE LISTENS AND BECOMES VERY SERIOUS.)

SIXTO

Andale pues.

(THEY HURRY AWAY)

Miguel! Ven!

MIGUEL

A sus ordenes.

ESPERANZA

What's wrong papa?

SIXTO

Nothing, mi munequita.. Just some trouble with the cattle!

SIXTO

Saddle our horses. There's trouble near the six hills!

MIGUEL

Right away, patron.

(HE RUNS OFF)

ESPERANZA

What do you mean trouble?

SIXTO

Nothing you should worry about!

ESPERANZA

I want to go with you, papa.

SIXTO

No. Not now.

ESPERANZA

I can ride a horse too Why does Miguel get to go, not me?

SIXTO

Because Miguel knows how to fix things and he's learning his job!

Now, enjoy your party. Don't eat too many mangos. Leave some for me. You promise?

ESPERANZA

Yes papa.

(SHE RUNS AFTER MIGUEL AND WATCHES AS HE STRAPS ON A GUN AND KISSES HIS MOTHER. SIXTO HURRIES OUT. HE STOPS AND WHISPERS SOMETHING TO RAMONA .)

RAMONA

Ay no! So close?!

SIXTO

No le hagas. Soy hombre de acero mi amor.!

RAMONA

Be careful!

END OF SCENE 1

ACT 1: SCENE 2

(IT IS NIGHT.THE PATIO HAS BEEN CLEARED. THERE IS A HUGE MOON.WE SEE RAMONA SILHOUTTED AGAINST IT. THE MARIACHIS ARE PLAYING SOFTLY.BUT THEY ARE INVISIBLE TO THE PEOPLE ONSTAGE. RAMONA IS SINGING THE SONG THE MARIACHIS ARE PLAYING SHE IS SEARCHING THE HORIZON.AS SHE SINGS ESPERANZA OPENS HER WINDOW. SHE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO SLEEP EITHER. HORTENSIA ENTERS AND STARTS PLACING LIT CANDLES EVERYWHERE.)

RAMONA

Ay si la ra la ra la

Ay, la,la,la

Vuela, vuela jilguerillo

Rayo brillante del sol

Llevate este papelito

Al dueno de mi amor.

Ay si la ra la ra la

Ay la la la

(ESPERANZA OPENS HER WINDOW. SHE SINGS THE SECOND VERSE. RAMONA IS STARTLED.)

Vuela vuela jilguerillo

Donde tu puedes volar

A buscar mis amores

Que no los puedo olvidar

Ay si la ra la ra la

Ay la,la,la

ESPERANZA

Ay si la ra la ra la

Ay la la la

RAMONA

Did my singing wake you?

ESPERANZA

No.I couldn't sleep.

RAMONA

I know. Ven mi amor.

(ESPERANZA IN HER NIGHTGOWN CLIBS OUT THE WINDOW AND RUNS TO HER MOTHER. THEY EMBRACE.)

Did papa come home? ESPERANZA

No. RAMONA

Ay. ESPERANZA

He's just a little late. RAMONA

I know. But mama? ESPERANZA

What m'hija? RAMONA

I saw Miguel take a riffle. ESPERANZA

Yes RAMONA

Papa too? ESPERANZA

Yes. RAMONA

I heard Hortensia warn Miguel about the bandits.
Who are the bandits? ESPERANZA

They're desperate men. RAMONA

Why are they desperate? ESPERANZA

They have no land .They're very angry. RAMONA

Are they angry with us? ESPERANZA

RAMONA

Yes.

ESPERANZA

But they don't even know us.

RAMONA

They don't see us as people, they only see our land. They see cattle grazing on acres and acres as far as the eye can see, while some of them are forced to eat cats. Imagine. Many of these bandits hate all people who own a lot of land. They try to..to hurt them and make them leave. People say these bandits steal from the rich and give to the poor. But these men don't always give to the poor and they kill innocent people.

ESPERANZA

Papa says we own a lot of land.

RAMONA

Yes we do. But your papa is a good and generous man. Our workers eat for free. And your papa has given them land of their own and houses. The people know that.

ESPERANZA

But do the bandits know that?

RAMONA

I hope so.

HORTENSIA

(ENTERS WITH SOME CANDLES)

Senra is there something I can get for you?

RAMONA

No thank you

HORTENSIA

Some candles

Surely Our Lady will see our little lights of hope

(THEY LIGHT THEM)

(HORTENSIA KNEELS NEAR ONE OF THE CANDLES AND PRAYS QUIETLY)

ESPERANZA

Mama?

RAMONA

Yes.

ESPERANZA

Will we lose our land?.

RAMONA

No. This is our home.

(ESPERANZA LIES DOWN ON THE GROUND)

Esperanza! What are you doing?.

ESPERANZA

I'm afraid. I need to feel the land.

(SHE LIES DOWN)

You lie down too, mama.

RAMONA

Not now, mi amor.

ESPERANZA

Please.

RAMONA

Why?

ESPERANZA

Because the land will speak to you. If you are very very still and very patient you can hear it's big heart beat and if you wait even longer, you can feel it breathe. Papa always says, if you are connected to the land, you are connected to life! Lie down ,mama! I hear something! Listen!

RAMONA

Now is not the time..

I think you need a quiet heart to hear the earth..

Now,I would only hear my own heart beating.

(THE MARIACHIS GET UP AND SHRUG THEIR SHOULDERS. THEY DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING. IT STARTS TO GET DARKER.)

(ONE OF THE MARIACHIS TAPS ANOTHER ON HIS SHOULDER AND POINTS EXCITEDLY IN THE DISTANCE)

RAMONA

(JUMPING TO HER FEET)

Horses!M'hija. Horses!

ESPERANZA

Oh.

Someone's coming! Papa! Papa!

(SHE SINKS TO HER KNEES AND PRAYS SILENTLY. ESPERANZA JOINS HER.)

(A SILHOUETTE APPEARS AGAINST THE MOON WALKING TOWARDS THEM. FOLLOWED BY SOME MEN. THEY ARE CARRYING SOMETHING HEAVY BETWEEN THEM. THE MARIACHIS GO QUICKLY TO SEE THEM.)

RAMONA

Sixto? Is that you?

(MIGUEL STEPS FORWARD INTO THE LIGHT.)

MIGUEL

It's me, Dona. Miguel.

RAMONA

And Sixto?...

ESPERANZA

Where is papa?!

MIGUEL

Over there

RAMONA

Dios mio! Sixto, Sixto. Mi amor, mi vida!!

(SHE RUNS TO THE MEN AND EMBRACES THE FORM THEY ARE CARRYING. WE ONLY SEE THIS IN SILHOUETTE. MIGUEL AND ESPERANZA ARE THE ONLY TWO STANDING IN THE LIGHT.)

MIGUEL

.I'm sorry.

ESPERANZA

What?

MIGUEL

I'm so sorry

He's dead, mi reina.

(ESPERANZA TAKES HER FATHER'S BELT AND HAT, COVERS THEM WITH KISSES AND STARTS CRYING.)

ESPERANZA

Liar!

MIGUEL

It's true.

ESPERANZA

No!

MIGUEL

Yes.

ESPERANZA

Then it's your fault.

MIGUEL

I didn't kill him!

ESPERANZA

How dare you come back here alive when he's dead. How dare you show your face. You let him die. Bestia! Cobarde!

MIGUEL

No, mi reina. I didn't leave him. I loved him like a father. I would have given my life for him, but he went off on his own...and they shot him.

ESPERANZA

Shot him.

MIGUEL

Yes.

ESPERANZA

Was it the bandits, Miguel? Tell me.

MIGUEL

Yes.

I'm sorry .

ESPERANZA

He lied then! Papa lied!
How can land mean life- if they killed my papa for land?!!
(*SHE CRIES*)

END OF SCENE 2

ACT 1: SCENE 3

(THE MARIACHIS SING AS A LONG LINE OF WORKERS , NEIGHBORS AND THE FAMILY FOLLOWS ESPERANZA AND RAMONA TO A GRASSY SPOT NEAR THE HOUSE.DON LUIS HAS HIS TWO PISTOLEROS PLACE A HEAVY HEADSTONE IT AMONG THE ROSES.

THE WORKERS ARE IN THEIR WORK CLOTHES. THE FAMILY IS DRESSED VERY FORMALLY IN BLACK.RAMONA AND ESPERANZA WEAR HEAVY BLACK MANTILLAS.

A PRIEST SPRINKLES HOLY WATER ON THE GRAVE . ALL KNEEL AND CROSS THEMSELVES. THE LITTLE SERVANT GIRL CUTS ROSES AND GIVES THEM TO EACH PERSON PRESENT SO THEY CAN PLACE THEM ON THE GRAVE.)

(The rhythm of a corrido is that every other verse has the accent on the first syllable. The remainder of the verses are accented on the second)

CORRIDO OF EL RANCHO LINDA FLOR

Here fell Don Sixto Otega
In the dust of his ranch Linda Flor.
Shot in the back by bandidos
Who kill the rich and rob the poor!

Ramona his widow is crying
His daughter distraught and in tears
His ranch Linda Flor in disorder
His brother Luis much too near.

(SERVANT GIRL SINGS AVE MARIA)

(RAMONA ALMOST FAINTS AT ONE MOMENT. DON LUIS- HELPS HER TO STAND. SHE PULS AWAY FROM HIM.)

(ESPERANZA IS KNEELING SMELLING THE ROSES. MIGUEL APPROACHES.)

ESPERANZA

Do you remember ,Miguel. When papa planted these roses for us?

MIGUEL

I can never forget.

ESPERANZA

The pink ones.Like dawn for me?

MIGUEL

The red ones

ESPERANZA

Like sunset for you

MIGUEL

We were such small children then..

ESPERANZA

Papa loved you like a son..

MIGUEL

But I'm not his son. See?

(HE PLACES HIS ARM NEXT TO ESPERANZA)

Soy raza de bronce, reinita, and y ou- white as the best Spanish lace.

ESPERANZA

So?

MIGUEL

White is the color of money. Brown is the color of work..

ESPERANZA

But papa loved you-

MIGUEL

Your father was a good man. He gave us a cabin and land. Perhaps I was almost a son. But your uncle would take it all away and treat us like animals.

ESPERANZA

No! That will never happen. My mama will talk to him. He listens to my mother.

MIGUEL

Ojala.

(THEY JOIN THE CROWD AT THE GRAVE)

LUIS

Are you all right?

RAMONA

As you see.

LUIS

You look so sad and pale. Grieving does not suit you. I hope you won't wear black all year.

RAMONA

Black will be my favorite color, Luis

LUIS

It doesn't need to be.
I said, it doesn't need to be.

RAMONA

What do you mean?

LUIS

Ramona, I want you to know ..to know...

RAMONA

What Luis?

LUIS

You don't have to be alone. I'm here for you. in all ways. In any way that would bring you happiness..

RAMONA

Be careful what you say!

LUIS

I have always loved you.

RAMONA

You're grieving. You don't know what you're saying.

LUIS

I do. I have always longed for you. You knew that. You knew that!

RAMONA

Buitre! You offend me!
How dare you propose with the earth still fresh over your brother's grave!

LUIS

I'm concerned for you. I love you. I'm no beast. We would wait the appropriate amount of time out of respect for my brother. One year is customary, is it not?

RAMONA

.I have no desire to marry you, Luis. Now or ever

LUIS

I see. I am wounded to the core by your words. But emotions aside, I hope you will consider my proposal from another perspective.

RAMONA

There is no other perspective.

LUIS

Actually there is. Your husband Sixto Ortega left this house and all its contents to you and your daughter. You will also receive a yearly income from the grapes.

RAMONA

I'm aware of that Luis.

LUIS

Are you aware that women cannot inherit land! Sixto left the land to me. So, if you wish to be free of the burden of my continued presence-I will purchase the house for this amount.

(HE HANDS HER SOME PAPERS)

RAMONA

Are you mad?! This is our home. My husband meant for us to live here. And the house...is worth twenty times this much!

LUIS

Not really. I own the land the house is on. No one would dare buy it from you.

RAMONA

I would never sell it. We have no where else to live.

LUIS

I will give you a place to live.

RAMONA

The answer is still no.

LUIS

You will regret your decision, Ramona. Keep in mind that this house and those grapes are on my property. I can make things difficult for you. Very difficult. I will let you sleep on your decision- marry me or sell- both offers are more than generous!

(HE EXITS. RAMONA CRIES. ESPERANZA GOES TO HER)

ESPERANZA

Don't cry ,mama. Everything will be all right.

MARIACHIS

Here lies Don Sixto Ortega.
Shot like a dog in the back.
Red roses grow on his gravestone
His wife and his daughter in black.

HORTENSIA
Senora Ortega! Esperanza!

RAMONA
Here! We're here!

HORTENSIA
Jesus, Maria, Jose!

ESPERANZA
Wait!. Wait! I forgot something!
(*SHE RUNS BACK IN.*)

RAMONA
No! Esperanza. No!

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(*SHE TRIES TO GET UP AND CANNOT*)
Miguel! Esperanza's in the fire!

MIGUEL
Where? Esperanza!

ESPERANZA
Up here!

MIGUEL
Escalera! Escalera!

HORTENSIA
Hurry! Ai dios todopoderoso!

RAMONA
I have to get in there!
(*SHE TRIES TO WALK AND CAN'T*)

HORTENSIA
Can you get up?

RAMONA

No. Please God- I can't lose my daughter too!
(*RAMONA AND HORTENSIA HOLD EACH OTHER. MIGUEL COMES OUT WITH
ESPERANZA WHO CLASPS WHO DOLL IN ITS CASE. THEY ARE BOTH COUGHING AND
COVERED WITH ASH*)

RAMONA

Esperanza why did you do something so silly! I thought I lost you too!

ESPERANZA

I'm sorry . I'm sorry. I had to get Papa's doll. I couldn't let her burn. It's all I have of him

RAMONA

I understand.I know.

HORTENSIA

Ay look, the stairs are beginning to burn!

MIGUEL

The stables caught fire! Ay the horses! Vamanos Muchachos
(*HE RUNS OFFSTAGE*)

CHORUS

Claro! Pronto!

(*HE RUNS OFFSTAGE*
WE HEAR MORE HORSES. DON LUIS ENTERS.)

HORTENSIA

The vines! Oh the vines! Look, the whole hillside's on fire!
The rose garden is gone!
It's the end of the world!

RAMONA

We've lost everything

DON LUIS

Ramona!
I was out fixing fences! I saw the smoke!
Are you alright?

RAMONA

I'm fine.

ESPERANZA

Mama, Mama
What will we do? Where will we go?

LUIS

Don't be afraid. I will take care of you both.
Come. I will help you.
Now you must stay with me.

RAMONA

Thank you Luis. But I can't leave here. My husband is here. My life is here.

LUIS

But there's no where to stay.
Come home with me.

RAMONA

No. Luis.
We will stay in the servants quarters.
With Hortensia and Miguel..

LUIS

Of course. If you prefer.

RAMONA

I prefer.

LUIS

But...how long can you live with the servants?

RAMONA

Until I rebuild.

LUIS

You expect to rebuild?

RAMONA

Yes. Of course.

LUIS

But cunada-where will you get the money to rebuild?
The house is gone. The vineyards have burned to the ground. You are destitute. You have nothing.
I will not pressure you to marry me, but I must beg you to consider it. Right now you are only thinking of yourself, which is understandable . But you must think of others. Think of your gente who depend on you for their livelihood.
Think of your darling daughter. Sixto worked so very hard...you might say he gave his life, so you two would be cherished and protected. Do you think he would want anything less now-when you need it most?

ESPERANZA

Mama?!

RAMONA

Quiet . Let me think.

DON LUIS

A word from you- can make everyone's life easier...or not.

RAMONA

I see.

Yes Luis, I will consider your proposal.

ESPERANZA

Mama, No!

LUIS

I have no doubt that you will make the right decision. Although you don't love me, my heart is yours! I will be back in the morning for your answer.

(HE STARTS TO LEAVE)

ESPERANZA

(TO DON LUIS)

I hate you!

LUIS

And Ramona, if Esperanza is to be my daughter, she must learn better manners. In fact, today I will look into boarding schools where they can teach her to act like a young lady.

(HE EXITS)

ESPERANZA

Mama, Why? Why did you tell him that?.

RAMONA

I know what I'm doing. I will never marry that man. I have money in the bank.

HORTENSIA

His bank.

RAMONA

Friends will help.

HORTENSIA

And pay with their lives.

RAMONA

You are right. You are right.

HORTENSIA

Ay senora. The truth is—if you stay here, you will be destitute. You will have to marry Don Luis.

RAMONA

I don't know what to do.

(SHE TRIES TO WALK AND CAN'T)

I think my ankle is broken.

ESPERANZA

I'll help you, mama.

Sana, sana colita de rana.....

RAMONA

My ankle is the least of our problems. The bone can be fixed by a doctor. This situation can only be fixed by me. Our lives and the lives of everyone around us are depending on my decision.

HORTENSIA

Dona Ramona. There's something you should know.

RAMONA

Yes?

HORTENSIA

Don't sacrifice yourself for us.

Miguel and I have decided to go to the United States.

My brother Alfonso has been writing to us about the big farm in California where he works now.

He can arrange jobs and a cabin for us.

ESPERANZA

You're deserting us too?!

MIGUEL

We have his letter. Proof of work will allow us to cross the border.

RAMONA

When are you leaving?

HORTENSIA

Tonight, si dios quiere.

RAMONA

What if Esperanza and I went with you to the United States?

ESPERANZA

Mama- . We can't just leave!

RAMONA

What should we do Esperanza? Do you want me to marry Tio Luis and let him send you far away from me?

ESPERANZA

No.

RAMONA

Hortensia, what do you think?

HORTENSIA

Dona, I don't know.

MIGUEL

There's only field work there. Hard, dirty work.

RAMONA

I'm not afraid of work.

MIGUEL

.
Dona, with all due respect- you can't travel with a broken ankle. You can't work, and worse, they might stop us at the border because of you.

RAMONA

I have thought of that, Miguel. Let me speak to Esperanza for a moment.
Anza, come here.
Are you feeling strong?

ESPERANZA

Yes. I feel fine.

RAMONA

You are strong! Conste!

ESPERANZA

Si, mama.

RAMONA

Good.

You're only twelve. But twelve will have to be old enough. We are going to be like that beautiful bird, the phoenix, that dives into the fire and rises, reborn from its ashes. We will rise again- with a new life ahead of us..
in California with Hortensia and Miguel.

..
ESPERANZA

All right

RAMONA

Good. Because you will go first.

ESPERANZA

What do you mean me? What about you?

RAMONA

My ankle is broken. I can't travel. You must go without me for now.

ESPERANZA

No,no,no,no,no,no,no!Don't send me away, mama.. Please, please don't. I'll be good. I promise. I swear. I'll be nice to Tio Luis. Whatever you want .I promise.

RAMONA

You will go first . The nuns at La Gloriosa will care for me until my ankle heals. Then I'll come find you with enough money so we all can live well.

HORTENSIA

Don Luis is muy Macho. He'll never let you leave.

RAMONA

He won't find me.
He'll believe I fled with you.

ESPERANZA

No,no,no,no,no! I'll stay at the convent with you!

RAMONA

Hiding one is difficult enough. Hiding two is impossible! Hortensia, you know my life is my beautiful daughter. Can I trust you with my life?

HORTENSIA

Always. Que Dios Nos bendiga

MIGUEL

Mama-Esperanza has never worked a day in her life .She can't even braid her own hair. She'll be nothing but trouble.

HORTENSIA

Miguel!

MIGUEL

If she goes, I will not be her servant. Remember that!

(HE STOMPS OFF AND GOES TO DON SIXTO'S GRAVE. HE TAKES OUT A KNIFE AND VICIOUSLY STABS THE EARTH AGAIN AND AGAIN)

ESPERANZA

Mama, how can I live without you?

RAMONA

Are you living without papa?...

ESPERANZA

Yes. But I carry him in my heart and in my head.

RAMONA

And I will think of you and I will pray for you every minute of every day and every night until we are together again.

ESPERANZA

How will I know when you're coming?

RAMONA

I will be there before you know it! I will write you whenever I can..

ESPERANZA

Please get well. Please come to me soon.

RAMONA

I promise.

HORTENSIA

Dona, the cart is ready..

Miguel! Miguelin!

(MIGUEL IS STILL FURIOUSLY CUTTING THE EARTH)

MARIACHIS (singing)

LA ROSITA (folksong)

Cuando se mueren las rosas
Queda muy triste el jardin
Queda muy triste el jardin
Cuando se mueren las flores

Mueren las horas dichosas
Y ya no huele a jazmin
Y ya no huele a jazmin
Ni vuelan las mariposas.

When the roses die
The garden seems so sad
The garden seems so sad
When the flowers die.

The joy-filled hours die
And the scent of jasmine fades
And the scent of roses fades
And I can only cry.
Y ya no huele a jazmin
Ni vuelan las mariposas.

END OF SCENE 4

ACT 1: SCENE 5

(TWO SOLDIERS IN UNIFORM, ONE MEXICAN, ONE AMERICAN, MARCH IN CARRYING A HUGE BANNER THAT READS.. "THE BORDER". THEY STOP CENTER STAGE AND SECURE IT. TWO BUROCRATS CARRYING FLAGS ENTER. ONE MEXICAN ONE AMERICAN. AS THEY ENTER WE HEAR EACH COUNTRY'S NATIONAL ANTHEM. THEY SET UP SMALL DESKS AND SECURE THE FLAGS. THEY SALUTE EACH OTHER, TAKE OUT A HUGE PESTLE TO STAMP WITH AND SIT DOWN.

TWO OF THE MARIACHIS RUN IN OUT OF BREATH. THE OTHER ONE IS HALF IN AND HALF OUT OF A "COSTAL". HE GETS OUT AND BOWS TO A PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN AND HANDS HER THE COSTAL. THE THREE TIPTOE WITH MUCH FANFARE PAST THE BUROCRATS- OF COURSE NO ONE SEES THEM. THEY ARE FREE TO MOVE BACK AND FORTH AT WILL. THROUGHOUT THE SCENE, THEY WATCH ALL THE PEOPLE PASSING, TIP THEIR HATS AT PRETTY LADIES, STEAL FROM THE VENDORS, PEEK AT THE BUROCRATS PAPERS ETC.

A LONG LINE FORMS ON THE MEXICAN SIDE WAITING TO CROSS THE BORDER. A FEW PEOPLE ON THE AMERICAN SIDE ARE WAITING TO CROSS INTO MEXICO.. THERE ARE VENDORS ON BOTH SIDES, PEOPLE LOOKING FOR RELATIVES ETC. AN OBVIOUSLY POOR FAMILY, A MOTHER, A FATHER AND A LITTLE BOY ENTER ON THE AMERICAN SIDE. THEY ARE DISPLACED "OKIES". THE FATHER BEGINS TO PLAY A HARMONICA OR A VIOLIN AND THE LITTLE BOY DOES AN AWKWARD DANCE AND SINGS. THE MOTHER PASSES A HAT.)

Norteamericanos- bienvenidos a Mexico. Pasen, pasen Uds. Andale pues. (ONE OF THE MARIACHIS DOES A SORT RIFF ON HIS TRUMPET WHEN SOMEONE PASSES INTO MEXICO. THE OTHER TWO PULL HIM ALONG.)

AMERICAN BUROCRAT

American Nationals! Let'em pass! Welcome home!
(etc.)

ESPERANZA

Hortensia, I'm soooo hot.

HORTENSIA

We can take some of this off now, I think.

MIGUEL

Hijole. Que monton de gente!
Mama, We have to be careful. Any little thing you do wrong up there and they throw you back. We have to do something about Esperanza. The papers say she is my sister but she looks nothing like us. They'll stop us. They won't let us cross!

HORTENSIA

I know what to do!

(SHE BRAIDS ESPERANZA'S HAIR)

ESPERANZA

Stop that. I hate braids!

MIGUEL

Shhhhhh.

HORTENSIA

I'm sorry, nina- I have to do this

MIGUEL

Mama her dress is too nice.

HORTENSIA

(RIPS OFF THE HEM OF ESPERANZA'S DRESS SO IT IS TOO SHORT)

Your dress is too new and too pretty. I have to make it look like you borrowed it.

ESPERANZA

Why? Why?

MIGUEL

Reinita. You must calm down. If the guards see you cry. They may stop us and ask too many questions.

HORTENSIA

Talk to no one. Pretend you are mute!

MIGUEL

And whatever you do. Don't cry and call attention to yourself!

We are trusting you with our lives, entiendes?

ESPERANZA

Yes.

MIGUEL

She still doesn't look my sister.

HORTENSIA

Wait!

I must do this.

(SHE TAKES UP A HANDFUL OF DIRT AND RUBS IT ON ESPERANZA'S SKIN)

ESPERANZA

No!

HORTENSIA
We have to!

ESPERANZA
I look like a beggar!

MIGUEL
Your skin is too white.

ESPERANZA
Papa would be ashamed of me!

HORTENSIA
Muchachita- . It's a disguise. So you will be safe and come with us.
Let's pretend this is the most beautiful powder for your face.

ESPERANZA
It's dirt.
You and Miguel are clean. (*SHE STARTS TO CRY*)

MIGUEL
Don't cry. We've escaped before. Remember when the two bandits came and your parents weren't home?

ESPERANZA
Yes.

MIGUEL
We hid under your bed.

HORTENSIA
And we were saved by a mouse! One Miguel had hid in his shirt just to scare you.

MIGUEL
And you sneezed!
And the barefoot man yelled "Someone's here!". And you were so scared you let the mouse go.

HORTENSIA
Just in time.

MIGUEL
And they saw him, and one with the black boots said "There's no one here. It's just a "raton"

ESPERANZA
.And they left!

MIGUEL
We escaped!

ESPERANZA
Thank God.

HORTENSIA

So now, what do you say about your disguise? You'll wear it?

MIGUEL

Juega?(*HE SHAKES HER HAND*)

ESPERANZA

Okay.

Juega el pollo pelon!

(*THEY LAUGH AND GET IN LINE*)

(*AN OBVIOUSLY WEALTHY AMERICAN WOMAN AND HER DAUGHTER COME BY. THEY ARE HANDING OUT CANDY TO THE POOR CHILDREN. THE MARIACHIS NOTICE THEM AND RUN OVER TO GET A PIECE OF CANDY TOO. THEN THEY GET IN LINE BEHIND ESPERANZA. THE AMERICAN COUPLE STOP IN FRONT OF ESPERANZA.*)

AMERICAN WOMAN

Isn't she sweet ? Poor unfortunate creature. You'd think they'd wash once in a while. Would you like a piece of candy, dear? I know your mama can't afford it. Here.

(*ESPERANZA DRAWS HERSELF UP TO REFUSE, BUT MIGUEL GRABS IT AND HANDS IT TO HER*)

AMERICAN WOMEN

These people! They don't even say thank you!

(*SHE WALKS OFF*)

Why do I bother?!

ESPERANZA

(*HANDING THE CANDY TO MIGUEL*)

You keep the candy!

MIGUEL

Sure. What's wrong Anza?

ESPERANZA

She felt sorry for me!

She thought I was poor.

MIGUEL

Good. Your disguise is working perfectly!

AGENT

Next!

*(THE AGENT EXAMINES THEIR PAPERS. LOOKS THEM UP AND DOWN .
TO HORTENSIA)*

What's in that bag?

HORTENSIA

Our papers, senior.

AGENT

I see you have papers. Empty your bag.

*(HORTENSIA EMPTIES THE BAG. THE AGENT LOOKS OVER EVERYTHING.POINTS TO
THE DOLL CASE.)*

And that?

HORTENSIA

It's..it's only a doll.

(THE AGENT OPENS IT.)

AGENT

Where did you get something like this!

HORTENSIA

It belongs to her. To my daughter.

MIGUEL

My sister.

ESPERANZA

Yes. Yes..the...the..lady of the house where we worked didn't want it anymore.She said I could have it.

AGENT

She did?

ESPERANZA

Yes..She was very nice. It was my birthday.

AGENT

(losing interest)

Good. Good.Good.

Mexican Nationals- let'em pass!

(THEY CROSS THE BORDER.

THE OKIE FAMILY IS STILL PERFORMING. MIGUEL

HANDS THE CANDY TO THE LITTLE BOY- WHO GOBBLES IT DOWN.)

ESPERANZA

Are we through?

HORTENSIA

(CROSSING HERSELF)

He didn't bother to look at our papers!

MIGUEL

The future is ours! Arriba y adelante!

OKIE BOY

(SINGING, THE BOY DANCES)

Many days you have lingered all around my cabin door

Oh hard times come a-gain no more.

Oh hard times come a-gain no more.

*(THE MARIACHIS...STRIKE UP A WELCOME AS HORTENSIA, MIGUEL AND ESPERANZA
PASS TO THE OTHER SIDE)*

ESPERANZA

This is America?

END OF ACT I