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Writing the Warrior: A Latina Writes Latinas

Patricia S. Crespin

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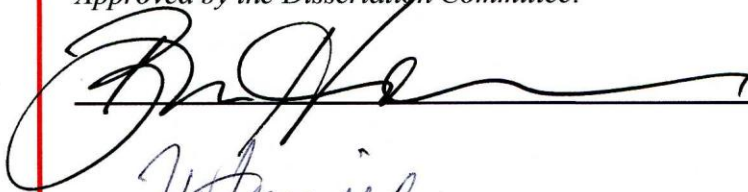
Candidate

Theatre and Dance

Department

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Approved by the Dissertation Committee:

 _____, Chairperson

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WRITING THE WARRIOR: A LATINA WRITES LATINAS

BY

PATRICIA S. CRESPIN

B.A., Vocal Performance, New Mexico Highlands University, 2003

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Fine Arts
Dramatic Writing**

The University of New Mexico
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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the relationship between Latina writer and her warrior woman character on the stage. It defines the warrior woman from an extrapolated viewpoint and it reveals the motivations behind the inspiration to create a Latina woman who has many distinct attributes and nuances. It investigates the idea of a silent warrior and a vixen/victim warrior and how she comes to the stage through the mind of the writer and challenges the idea that even writer's who are aware of the stereotypical identities given to Latina women, use these distinctive identities for the sake of drama.

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Introduction

The Latina warrior, as she exists onstage, is a compelling entity to create. Using the women I grew up with as representations for the characters in my plays and drawing inspiration from other contemporary Latina writers, there are often moments of quandary and cliché that surface as I attempt to construct such a complicated and ever-changing creature.

Growing up as a Latina in Central and Northern New Mexico, I was faced with the inevitability of an existence that exemplified that of a warrior. Not in the sense that I was “fighting” or “wrestling” physically, but rather in a more emotional and psychological sense. I was in a constant battle. Part of the battle was self identification and the other problematical element was sexual misrepresentation. The women in my circle, consisting of about fifty aunts, cousins, grandmothers, great-aunts, sisters and nieces, were no doubt strong women, yet we were always struggling to rise above our conflict with personal individuality and sexual identity. Being labeled a Latina, or a Hispanic woman, as I called myself for many years, meant you were a hot-tempered, crazy, sexual, fast talking women. It was difficult to be distinguished beyond that typecast and it was not uncommon in our community to be labeled exotic or erotic whether you were thin or buxom, tall or short, heterosexual or lesbian. As a matter of fact, it was mostly our own people who were doing the labeling.

I knew that our circle of women was unique, however it did not go unnoticed that some Latinas outside my ring of women were experiencing the same issues. 1800 miles away and several years prior, Rita Moreno describes the familiarity in an interview when

she says, “We were oversexed, always left by the guy...you had to be vivacious, fiery!”¹
This concept of the Latina being “oversexed...vivacious and fiery” was evident in the roles that were written for Latinas at the time Rita Moreno was in her prime.

With these ideas in mind I offer up the notion that I, among other Latina playwrights who have inspired me, such as Paula Vogel, and Migdalia Cruz create Latina characters based on the emotional struggles with self identification and sexual misrepresentation that many Latinas in the United States are facing. I call this conflict the “Adelita syndrome.” It is the ability of the Latina writer to create a “Latina warrior” based on her own interpretations of a warrior yet with the same essence of the stereotypical Latina who is highly spirited and over sexual. For me, it is not unintentional but rather a way of introducing to my audiences a woman of power and dynasty. She is a distinctive individual and she has many layers.

In this paper, I will be discussing the warrior woman and my relationship to her as a writer and a Latina woman. I will use the term warrior to describe the Latina I write for the stage because I believe that all women are warriors in their own right. I will define the warrior woman from an extrapolated viewpoint in which I gather definitions given by theatre artists and combine it with my own to create one definition. I will examine how a Latina writer draws upon her own experiences as a Latina woman as a source for her Latina characters and I will examine two types of Latina warrior onstage, the silent warrior and the vixen/victim, who often interchange personalities, as a defense mechanism to safeguard her from the oppressive world from which she emerges. I will use characters, dialogue, and images from my plays *The Medea Complex* , *We are*

¹ <http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/16/carmen.html>

Hispanic American Women...okay?, and the plays of Paula Vogel, and Migdalia Cruz to typify these two women as they exist onstage. I will also examine the idea of the “Adelita Syndrome” and how it influences the creation of the highly amatory character on the stage. Finally, I will question my own definition of a warrior woman as it relates to the four Latina icons that exist in my newest play *Living Purgatory*. (2008)

Defining the Warrior

There are several characteristics that fit into the definition of a Latina warrior. Therefore, I knew that I would have to go outside my box to come up with the most complete meaning I could attain. I began by investigating my own upbringing because I felt that to identify with the Latina warrior one must first understand the world in which she grew up in. Oftentimes, there are unwritten codes that exist for the females in Latino/a households, guiding them towards the same characteristics their mothers have. Not in the sense that they “become” their mothers but more that they “inherit” the warrior woman legacy.

I grew up in a household of women who were raised to believe that women must not be weak. We used words like strength and courage to define ourselves. We were not inclined to be fragile and we were not allowed to need. I recall one of my first lessons in being a Latina warrior took place at my hometown community pool. I was eleven years old and I was a member of the swim team. I was swimming the 100 meter freestyle relay when just as I was finishing the last 15 meters I tried to take in a breath and swallowed a big gulp of water. I panicked and struggled to get to the edge of the pool without drowning. I was not in enough distress to draw attention so I left the pool on my own, coughing and trying to regain my normal breath. The minute I saw my mother I started crying. I walked over to her expecting her to open her arms and hold me until I didn't feel scared anymore. She did hold out her hands but instead of comforting me, she spoke. “Why are you crying?” My response was, “I swallowed water!” Now, I realize how ridiculous I must have sounded at the time, but I couldn't express to her the fact that only a few seconds earlier, I thought I was going to die. She pulled me into her and

whispered in my ear. “Stop crying. Do you hear me?” I nodded. She let go of my arm and I stopped crying immediately. That was all she needed to say. There was an unspoken understanding on my part that, “I’m supposed to be tough.” From that day forward it became my duty to always “be tough.” I accepted my mother as a warrior and paid close attention as she spent most of her adult life unconsciously teaching us the ways of a Latina warrior, much like her own mother did with her. Once a warrior woman education has begun in our family, usually going back hundreds of years, the cycle is difficult to break. I spent most of my childhood consciously trying to understand my mother’s struggle and believing that it would be simple to mark my path in different ways. As an adult, I have accepted the fact that my warrior education stuck and is still with me today.

The next step in defining the warrior was to get feedback from my fellow artists. I conducted a survey asking them to define what they thought a warrior woman was. As I suspected, the respondents used words like power, feminine, independent, beautiful, strong, fierce, in charge, in control, fighting.

-*“A woman who stands up for her beliefs against everyone else.”*

-*“A woman who takes on the challenges traditionally perceived as problems men deal with”.*

-*“A woman that has ultimate power and refuses to say no.”*

-*“A woman who is fighting to change her status in the hierarchy of a male run society.”*

-*“I would define a warrior woman as a sort of “Xena” persona.”*

-*“A woman who doesn’t depend on others...for their own strength and identity.”*

-*“Gets done what she needs, sacrifices...stays true to herself.”*

- *“A woman in charge/in control of her own destiny.”*

- *“Strong. Beautiful. Independent, emotionally and physically.”*

- *“Fierce, built. Shows of femininity yet portrays strength and fighting capabilities.”*

The Latina warrior I create as well as the Latina warriors I will speak of in this paper all have one or more of these same characteristics. She is powerful and independent. She is also strong, beautiful and fierce and although her identity has seemingly been unmasked as one stereotype, she is constantly at war to self identify and represent herself on her own terms and in her own way. Therefore, I maintain that all women are warriors in their own right because they are our connection to life and they have confronted many obstacles with the sense of a soldier who has just returned from battle.

The Silent Warrior

A perfect example of the silent warrior is Ramona from my play *We are Hispanic American Women...okay?* (2006) Ramona is a mid 60's Latina woman from New Mexico. She is a mother of four children and three grandchildren. She has a husband who has just been diagnosed with liver cancer. As are many Latina women in New Mexico, Ramona is heavily influenced by her Catholic religion. It is the biggest authority in her life besides her family. **(Figure 1)**

She spends most of her time praying, whether it is in a whisper while she's cooking or when she sits down to pray the rosary and talk to her saints. She is bound by her conviction towards her religion, depending heavily on the help of the Lord and *La Virgen de Guadalupe* to get through the bad times. She has been a silent warrior, taking care of her family for over 40 years, raising her children, supporting her husband, taking care of her elderly, alcoholic mother after her own father dies. Caught in a world where she is the least important person, Ramona is a seemingly simple woman on stage however, she is captivating to watch. She moves around the stage doing dishes, making tortillas, praying the rosary, adoring her granddaughter, cooking enchiladas for her son, lecturing her daughters on the proper behavior of a Hispanic woman and filling her mama's coffee cup and making sure her tequila bottle does not empty, all the while she is in constant worry that her husband, Carlos, will die from cancer. And she does all this without complaint.



Figure 1. Juanita Sena-Shannon as Ramona.

Teatro Paraguas production of *We are Hispanic American Women...okay?*
February- March, 2009

Oftentimes when I am faced with Ramona onstage, I am constantly aware of her presence, whether she is speaking or not because her power is emanating throughout the entire space. Most of her time is spent listening to her daughters carry on and argue, but they do not squelch her spirit or her strong identity as a Hispanic, Catholic woman. Her biggest challenger is her daughter, Antonia who is actually the one who most resembles her mother's inner warrior.

ANTONIA: Come on *Mamá*, live a little. It'll help you relax.

RAMONA: That's what I have God for.

ANTONIA: Who do you think gave us all that stuff? Alcohol, pot, valium...God did...to relax!

RAMONA: Antonia! Why do you talk to me this way? *¿No tienes respeto o qué?*

ANTONIA: *Lo siento Mamá.* I do have respect for you okay?

RAMONA: Not just for me! For God too! And for his son Jesus Christ! He died for you, you know?

ANTONIA: I know! I do have respect for God and I think Jesus was a good man, but...I just don't have respect for organized religion. It's wrong how they manipulate the truth to get people and their money into their greedy, insanely large, pockets.

RAMONA: You don't make any sense to me Antonia, but you're talking about our faith and I brought you up to be a good Catholic.

ANTONIA: Well *lo siento mama pero* if you ask me, being a Catholic sucks.

RAMONA: That's Satan talking through you!

ANTONIA: Not Satan mama, Anheiser Busch...

RAMONA: Are you smoking marijuana Antonia?

ANTONIA: No.

RAMONA: Antonia, *no me mientes.* I'll know.

ANTONIA: Mama, I'm not smoking marijuana and even if I was, so what? I'm an adult.

RAMONA: It makes you *loca*!

ANTONIA: It does not.

RAMONA: It's a sin.

ANTONIA: Oh, okay, it's a sin! Everything's a sin according to Catholics! Like drinking, isn't that a sin?

RAMONA: No.

ANTONIA: I guess *Nanita's* going straight to hell. And *papá* is too. I've seen him put quite a few beers away in my lifetime.

RAMONA: Antonia.....

ANTONIA: What about you *mamá*? You like the taste of tequila! Are you going to hell?

RAMONA: Okay Antonia, I get your point.

ANTONIA: Come on *mama*, it's the 21st century. Get with the times. Your religious beliefs are just a bunch of crap.

RAMONA slaps ANTONIA.

ANTONIA: Ow!

RAMONA: That's it Antonia! You don't talk to me this way in my house, *sabes*?

ANTONIA: *Sí mamá.*

RAMONA: I was brought up to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that's the way I want it to be, *sabes*?

ANTONIA: *Sí mamá.*

RAMONA: If you want to throw your soul away by being some... atheist, then that is your business, Antonia. It's no matter, I always pray for your soul anyway. But don't you dare put down my faith to me no more, *sabes*? No more Antonia!

ANTONIA: It's atheist mama.²

In this excerpt, Antonia is challenging Ramona's faith once again and instead of portraying the silent warrior, Ramona chooses to activate her power and attack Antonia, beating her at her own game. It becomes obvious at this point that even the most silent of warriors has a breaking point.

² Patricia Crespin, *We are Hispanic American Women...okay?*, 2006, Pg. 19-22

The Latina Warrior: Vixen and Victim

One of many legends that exist of the Latina warrior is that she is a dark, voluptuous goddess. She is a forceful being full of heat and passion and Latina-ness. This sexual fallacy often becomes a powerful theme in a Latina writer's work at one time or another because although it is a misleading notion, it exemplifies a candid representation consistently used to describe the Latina woman. In my play *The Medéa Complex*, (2007) the protagonist, Medéa, is the quintessential vixen warrior. In the essence of Euripides' haunting tale of Medea, my Mexican Medéa is a woman with vast powers, physically, mentally and sexually. Her sexuality is her strongest weapon because it works for her in many ways. She uses it as a controlling device against the opposite sex. She uses it as her defense against any weaknesses that she encounters on her journey, and she uses it to manipulate her opponent by shocking them with her words or her actions.

Her ability to enchant the opposite sex is a powerful tool. It often gets her what she wants but not always for the greater good. When it comes to Jason, Medéa's sexuality reigns supreme. Even at the point where his hatred for her was infinite, he could not kill her and avenge the death of his two daughters. To guide Jason to his death, Medéa uses one last seduction. He knows he must die to stop his guilt and pain, but he doesn't have the heart to do it himself. At this point Medéa is much like the black widow spider. She seduces him then kills him. She is a rock, fulfilling her destiny without a tear, even though she loved Jason more than herself. Inside she was dying. She maintains her sensuality and eroticism up to the final moment when she put the knife

through Jason's heart, because it works like a shield for her, a powerful exterior to hide her own grief. **(Figure 2)**

Although Medéa is outwardly bold and resolute, her sorrow is apparent only through the use of her inner world where she goes to evaluate her situation and control it as she moves into the past. She takes with her a faithful *Guitarrista*, an ambiguous, spiritual guide who sings only the songs of Cuco Sanchez to help Medéa transition her grief into physical and mental power. This is the defense mechanism of interchangeable personalities. It allows Medéa to escape mentally when the sting of her actions becomes unbearable. She interchanges between the vixen and the victim, showing signs of both strength and weakness. Medéa doesn't directly become a silent warrior. Instead, she floats in between the vixen and victim, consciously intimidating Gilberto while she is in her inner world, yet still hiding there to maintain control as she re-imagines her torturous actions. **(Figures 3a and 3b)**

She uses this tactic because her victim-ness comes from the same place as her vixen-ness. Her sexuality is her biggest asset and her strongest downfall.



Figure 2. Riti Sachdeva as Medéa and Bernardo Gallegos as Jason.

The Medea Complex directed by Valli Rivera, produced at the University of New Mexico Department of Theatre and Dance Experimental Theatre, April, 2008. Photo courtesy of Erin Phillips.



Figure 3a. Medea in her Inner World.



Figure 3b. Lenore Armijo as the *Guitarrista*.

The Medea Complex directed by Valli Rivera, produced at the University of New Mexico Department of Theatre and Dance Experimental Theatre, April, 2008. Photo courtesy of Erin Phillips.

On the other side of this sexual prowess lies a woman whose innocent identity has been diminished and replaced. She is more than likely a child, grown into a woman's body, usually too early in her youth and therefore becomes a victim of circumstance, or more specifically, a victim of her sexuality.

Paula Vogel explores the idea of the vixen/victim through her character Li'l Bit in her play, *How I learned to Drive*. (1997) According to Vogel, "When I write, there's a pain that I have to reach, and a release I have to work toward for myself...it's really a question of the particular emotional circumstance that I want to express, a character that appears, a moment in time, then I write the play backwards."³ As with most Latina playwrights, Paula tends to lean towards the more sensitive issues Latina women face as a whole. She is a master of making the brutal honesty of a woman's life theatrical.

She introduces us to the character Li'l bit from age eleven to eighteen as she deals with her ongoing sexual, yet non-penetrating affair with her Uncle Peck. This is a touching story about a young girl loaded with insecurity who turns to her Uncle for admiration and respect. He sees this as a perfect opportunity to take advantage of her and we have a girl with a 13 year old mind and a 20 year old body entertaining the possibility that she is a sexual being.

Li'l Bit: 1965. The Photo Shoot.

(Li'l Bit steps into the scene as a nervous but curious thirteen year old...Music plays, something seductive with a beat...Peck fiddles, all business with his camera...Li'l Bit stands awkwardly...)

PECK: Are you cold?

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paula_Vogel

LI'L BIT: --Aunt Mary is?

PECK: At the National Theatre Matinee. With your mother. We have time.

LI'L BIT: But—what if—

PECK: --And so what if they return?...Pretend you're in a room all alone on a Friday night with your mirror—and the music feels good—just move for me, Li'l Bit—

(Li'l Bit closes her eyes. At first self-conscious; then she gets more into the music and begins to sway. We hear the camera start to whir...)

PECK: That's it. That looks great. Okay, just keep doing that. Lift your head up a bit more, good, good, just keep moving, that a girl—you're a very beautiful young woman. Do you know that?...

LI'L BIT: No. I don't know that.

PECK: ...Well you are. For a thirteen year old, you have a body a twenty-year-old woman would die for.

LI'L BIT: The boys in school don't think so.

PECK: The boys in school are little Neanderthals in short pants. You're ten years ahead of them in maturity; it's gonna take a while for them to catch up.

(Peck takes another shot; we see a faint smile on Li'l Bit...)

PECK: Girls turn into women before boys turn into men.

LI'L BIT: Why is that?

PECK: I don't know, Li'l Bit. But it's a blessing for men.⁴

Li'l Bit is a young girl, conned into her vixen-ness. It is not the act itself that creates the vixen, but rather the manipulating words Uncle Peck uses to charm and sway her. The more Uncle Peck cons her, the more apparent her sexuality becomes to her. But she is not cunning with her sexuality. She uses it mainly to have some sort of control over what is happening.

⁴ Paula Vogel, *The Mammary Plays: How I learned to Drive and The Mineola Twins.*, Theatre Communications Group, 1998, pg. 59-63

In her play *Fur* (1995), Migdalia Cruz introduces us to Citrona, a hirsute woman who has been sexually mutilated by her mother and sold into imprisonment to a seedy and strange man named Michael. As all women do in Cruz's plays, Citrona uses her body as her sole commodity. Migdalia Cruz defines Citrona as this:

“The protagonist in *Fur*, Citrona, though considered a disposable piece of human sideshow flesh, comes to realize her own power through the act and reaction of love. Citrona is both the beauty and the beast defining her own postapocalyptic fairy tale...”⁵

Here is another example of a Latina writer expressing the authenticity of the Latina woman as a sexual force, yet demonstrating that she is more than that. Cruz says in her own words, “In my work, I define beauty as the transformation of women from sexual object to spiritual being”.⁶ The fact that Citrona, a woman whose beauty has been damaged by genetics and her mother, can realize her power through her woman-ness, enforces the idea of the Latina vixen/victim warrior woman. She enchants Michael, even though she is somewhat of an “animal”, because he sees beauty in her, but it is not anything physical about her that is beautiful. It's her otherness, her Latina-ness, her heat, that turns him on.⁷ In this excerpt from the play, Michael exhibits his attraction to Citrona in a bizarre, almost psychotic manner.

MICHAEL: ...Clean water. Drink it. Go ahead, beauty. It's for you. It's fresh beautiful water. I collected it. It's rainwater. It'll make your fur shine and your eyes will go white if they're red when you drink this. All for you. All yours. It's straight

⁵ Migdalia Cruz. *Fur*. Out of the Fringe:Contemporarty Latina/Latino Theatre and Performance. Caridad Svich and María Theresa Marrero, Ed. Theatre Communications Group, 2000.

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ Svich, Marrero, pg 73

from God. Now that you're home with me, you can be my lady friend. You are so pretty. You have soft eyes—soft brown eyes. You make me melt with eyes like that—when you look at me like that. You know things about me. You know how to make me feel better. We could get away, beauty. Go somewhere...I'm not letting anything stop me, if I'm with you...you'll make me happy. I know you will. I never would have guessed that love would cost so little...your mother doesn't have a mind for business. She told me to keep you in a cage. "She's a wild one," she said. But if you'll love me—I'll set you free. Love me and I'll build you a palace.

All of these protagonists have one thing in common. They are victims of their sexuality. Even if the Latina woman uses her sexuality as a weapon for herself, it is only because that is what she is accustomed to. She is a casualty of the idea that a woman's body is her only asset. Consequently, as each woman is a victim of her sexuality, it is that same sexuality that destroys her. They are bound to a male dominant society, a background of oppression, and an image that define them as objects of desire.

La Adelita: Identifying the Typecast

The word “Adelita” has been used to identify the women who fought in the battlegrounds of the Mexican Revolution. “Women were not only important as political figures and role models. They also were successful on the battlefields. These women were called the *soldaderas*, or soldier-women. They were the battlefield heroes of the Mexican Revolution. Unfortunately, the names and personal information of most *soldaderas* have been forgotten or omitted from the history books, the name of one lives on in legend: Adelita.”⁸ It is the name most recognized specifically with these women and was mainly a term of affection, yet somewhere along the way the term Adelita changed from an active one to a passive one and began the idea that the women who fought in the war were highly sexual, submissive beings. This misleading notion that the Adelita’s were voluptuous vixens donning makeup and sexy clothing has been famously depicted in “La Adelita”, the popular painting that is produced yearly on Mexican Calendars by Angel Martín. It is the perfect example of exaggerated Latina representation. **(Figure 4)**

What is illustrated as a woman *soldadera* fighting in the Mexican Revolution, seems more like an exaggerated, overly sensualized version of the true fighter. In this particular painting, Adelita is a beautiful, dark, raven Mexican woman. She is shown holding the Mexican flag. She has a cornet in her left hand, a sombrero at her side and a two cartridge belt slung across her chest. She is also wearing a skirt that is pulled up slightly above her knees, showing her beautiful thick thighs. She has an off the shoulder white top and no bra, revealing an ample chest and protruding nipples. Her lips are full

⁸ <http://www.ic.arizona.edu/ic/mcbride/ws200/mex-jand.htm>

and red. Her teeth are as white as the untouched snow and her makeup is just enough to be sexy, not enough to be trashy. She wears large, hoop earrings that exoticize her petite delicate ears. Her hair blows in the wind ever so gently. She is ready for battle. Or is she? “In our contemporary society, north and south of the U.S.-Mexico border, Adelita’s heroism is used as a commodity.”⁹ Instead of being the legendary heroine of the revolutionary war, she is “objectified and glamorized” to be an object of desire rather than a woman going into battle. She has become a product of consumerism, appealing to the masses as more of a “femme fatale”, rather than the warrior woman that she was.¹⁰ “Most of the fictional *soldaderas* tend to be one dimensional and lack an awareness of gender struggles that were waged within the context of the Revolution.”¹¹ **(Figure 5)**

It is not an uncommon idea for writers of contemporary drama to use these same tactics in their work. La Adelita, although she is a powerful warrior woman who fought in the war for her freedom and for herself, she is remembered also for her mythical characteristics and is written as such.

⁹ Arrizón,

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ <http://books.google.com/books?id=enT>



Figure 4. “La Adelita” by Angel Martin.

Reproduced from the popular calendars
published annually in Mexico by Calendarios y Propaganda, S.A.



Figure 5. A real *Soldadera* in the Mexican Revolution.

Photo compliments of latinafeminist.blogspot.com

The Warrior Woman in Purgatory

When I started my research for *Living Purgatory*, it became clear to me that I was facing a task far more difficult than I ever imagined it would be. This play and the women in it have brought me to tears more times than I would like to count and the pain of the battle is taking its toll. One question I gave myself at the beginning of this project is “How can I call a woman who murders her own children a warrior?” I knew that to find the answer I was looking for, I would first have to understand who these women really were.

The purpose of *Living Purgatory* was to explore the side of motherhood that most writers don't like to explore, the dark side. To investigate the mother warrior at her weakest points, those that include her children. I decided to use four of the biggest icons in Latino history to help me tell my story. Frida Kahlo, Lupe Velez, La Llorona, and La Malinche have all experienced motherhood in one form or another and they all dealt with it differently. Three of them were considered murderers. One of them wanted a child so bad she tried three times to become a mother even though doctors told her that her body was not capable of bearing the weight of a child. Problematically, each one of these women, with the exception of Malinche and Frida Kahlo, did not handle motherhood in “warrior-like” ways. They betrayed the sanctity of the womb and committed the unthinkable. Each one murdered her child. La Llorona, a woman much older than I was first taught to believe, was introduced to me by my mother as the woman who drowned her two children in the river after she realized that their father, the love of her life, loved the children he shared with her more than he loved her. Lupe Velez, an exotic movie star in the 1930's and 40's, took her life while she was pregnant with her lovers child. La

Malinche was forced into a relationship with Hernán Cortes and eventually bore him a son, ensuring that her people would forever classify her as a traitor. Frida Kahlo, the most innocent of the group is a woman torn between her desire to have a child of her own and her love for her big baby Diego.¹²

“Much of women’s experience in the world is unedifying.”¹³ The truth is that Latina women are accustomed to carrying a heavy load emotionally and physically, especially as mothers. There are days when that load becomes too heavy to carry. It is in this moment when, a mother whose heart cannot be big enough to hold the love she has for her child, cracks and her whole world falls apart.

Frida exhibits her pain, through her work, boldly and forcefully. She paints with fascination the image of the womb in its many forms. After her last abortion, she recreated the images of her torment in her piece, *Henry Ford Hospital* (1932). (**Figures 6a and 6b**)

The cold bitterness she felt exists in the industrial background of Detroit where she was when the baby was lost. She is bitter and full of love at the same time. She is bitter because the overwhelming love that she has for life and for people is not enough to make her pain go away. Her constant pain won’t let her enjoy all of the pleasures of life to the full extent and that creates a well of bitterness that smothers her and the people around her.

¹² Hayden Herrera *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo*, Harper and Row Publishers, New York, New York, 1983

¹³ Anna Lanyon. *Malinche’s Conquest* Allen & Unwin 1999



Figure 6a. Image of *Henry Ford Hospital* (1932), by Frida Kahlo.



Figure 6b. An image of *My Birth* (1932), By Frida Kahlo.

In this letter to her doctor and friend Dr. Leo Eloesser, Frida allows her uncertainty of having a child to come forth.

Letter from Frida Kahlo to Dr. Leo Eloesser:

I will begin by telling you that...my health is not at all good...I am two months pregnant; for this reason I saw Dr. Pratt again...he examined me and he told me that no, that he is completely sure that I did not abort and that his opinion is that it would be much better if instead of making me abort with an operation I should keep the baby and that in spite of the bad condition of my organism, bearing in mind the little fracture of the pelvis, spine, etc., etc. I could have a child with a Cesarean operation without great difficulties...Two years ago I had an abortion with an operation in Mexico, when I was more or less in the same condition as now, with a three months pregnancy. Now I am only two months pregnant and I think it would be easier, but I do not know why Dr. Pratt thinks it would be better for me to have the child...In the first place with this heredity in my blood I do not think that the child could come out very healthy. In the second place I am not strong and the pregnancy will weaken me more...I do not think that Diego would be very interested in having a child since what preoccupies him most is his work and he is absolutely right. Children would take fourth place. From my point of view, I do not know whether it would be good or not to have a child, since Diego is continually traveling and for no reason would I want to leave him alone and stay behind in Mexico...¹⁴

Frida is trapped by her indecision to have a child. She wants one so desperately. But she is also aware of the difficulties that may arise due to her health and even more importantly, she's aware that if she is actually able to carry a child full term, she may lose the affection of her soul mate, Diego.

La Llorona is a complicated woman with a rich history. She goes back 500 years to the time of Moctezuma's empire, before the Spanish Inquisition. Legend has it that she was a prophet, a crying woman who foretold the Invasion through her tears¹⁵.

However, as a result of the influence of Christianity in the indigenous society, La Llorona

¹⁴ Hayden Herrera. *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo*. Harper and Row Publishers, New York, New York, 1983, pg 138-139

¹⁵ Domino Renee Perez There was a Woman: La Llorona from Folklore to Popular Culture University of Texas Press 2008, pg. 16

evolved from a hero of the people to an evil murderer who suddenly is a subject of God's wrath, alluding to the "devastating effects of Christianity on Native communities."¹⁶ Her new image is one of jealousy and witchery. Christianity reclaimed her as a "devil woman" who was tortured by her sins against her children and against god. **(Figure 7)**

*"Storytelling isn't practiced so much today, and many of the old tales have been forgotten. But one old story continues to work its spell upon the people-the story of La Llorona. It is told throughout the Southwestern United States, and all over Mexico as well. No other story is better known or dearer to Hispanic Americans. LA LLORONA is truly the classic Folk story of Hispanic America."*¹⁷

Although the Christian influence that expelled La Llorona from being a worthy force to her people has been my influence throughout my own childhood, it is my goal to explore that aspect of her that is a seer of the future and a curandera who wanders, not to frighten and kill but to frighten and prepare her people for tragedy. La Llorona is a significant figure for Chicanas because she enlightens us about "suffering, punishment, and resistance". Although these are not the only definitions that identify a Latina woman, they are important concepts that help to understand how "cultural/social forces or a single act can shape a person's or figures entire identity."¹⁸ Her place in purgatory is to punish her for her Christian "sins", nevertheless, she is also there to achieve redemption by helping the other women to see the error of their ways and not make the same mistakes she did.

¹⁶ Perez, pg. 156

¹⁷ Perez, pg. 149

¹⁸ Perez, pg. 110

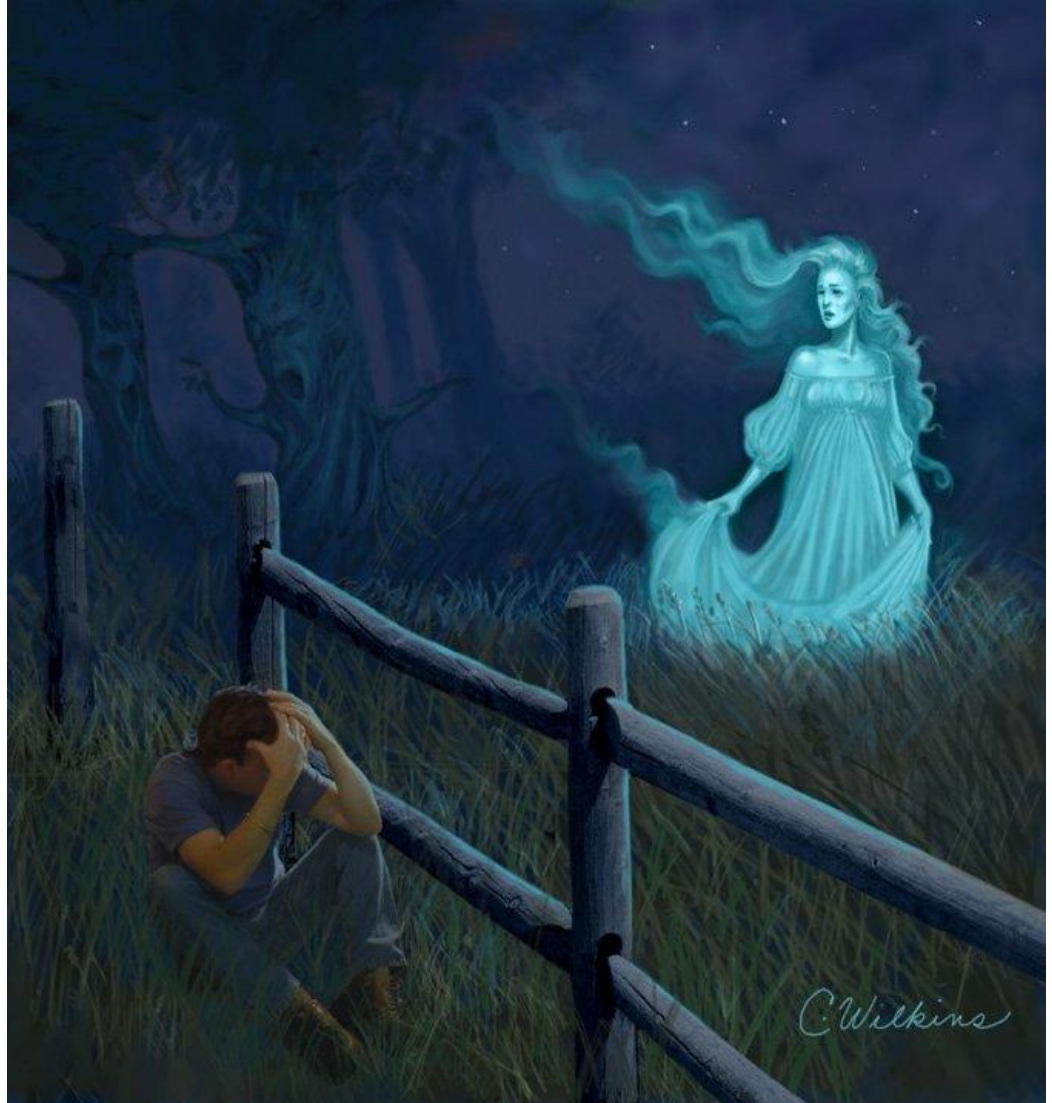


Figure 7. An image of La Llorona by C. Wilkins.

La Malinche, whose original Nahautl name is Malintzín, was a beautiful Mexica Princess sold into slavery first to the Mayans then to Hernán Cortés. She became his interpreter and later, his lover and bore him a son, creating a Mestizo race that was doomed from the very beginning and assuring that her son would always be considered a traitor by his people and therefore killed. La Malinche is also a complicated woman with a rich yet obscure past. **(Figure 8)**

Malinche can be seen tied to a pole with her son, Martin. There is a priest standing next to her reading from the bible and to her right there is a fire burning and her people stand beside her, watching her suffering with redemption. These are the people that send Malinche to *Living Purgatory* to redeem herself, the people who felt betrayed by her actions and her love for Cortés. Once again, however, the Catholic Church has lent its influence to the actions of the people. She is considered a traitor, but it is not acknowledged by anyone at that point how many lives were spared because of her ability to communicate with Cortés. Her place in purgatory therefore becomes not as a punishment by her people but rather a punishment from herself for allowing the birth of her son lead to his death some 25 years after she is gone.



**Figure 8. Detail of Mural showing Malinche
and the son she shared with Cortes, Martín.**

Partial shot of *La Historia de Mexico de la Conquista al Futuro*, by Diego Rivera

Lupe Velez is yet another vague and complicated woman in the play. She was born in Mexico on July 18, 1908 to an army officer and an opera singer. She arrived in the United States at the invitation of Richard Bennett, who was interested in her playing the lead in his film *The Dove* (United Artists 1927), but he immediately canceled her for the show and she was left to find her own way. It did not take long for her to break into American films after being dropped by Bennett, and although she could not land a contract with one studio, she did make a lot of films in the United States.¹⁹ She was a shining star just waiting for her career to skyrocket into superstardom like Rita Hayworth's did. She made several attempts to Americanize herself, such as "lightening her hair, marrying an all-American athlete, buying a big convertible," yet the more Lupe tried to be an "American" woman the more she was labeled as an outsider, or an "exotic ambassador".²⁰

The tragedy of Velez began when the studios and press disrespectfully intertwined her personal life with her characters in film. On one hand she was a childish, tantrum throwing, heavily accented spitfire who men found irresistible and the other she was, as most Hollywood Latinas were in the early 1900's, considered a "voraciously sexual... Latin American woman"²¹ She had countless affairs with huge male figures, such as Gary Cooper, who was the love of her life, John Barrymore, Olympic athlete Johnny Weissmuller, and oftentimes she would be caught in a heated fight with any one of them at any given time. When she found out she was pregnant with the French actor, Harald Ramond's baby she expected marriage. What she got was the proposal of a

¹⁹ Victoria Sturtevant, *Spitfire: Lupe Vélez and the Ambivalent Pleasures of Ethnic Masquerade*. The Velvet Lighttrap, Number 55, Spring 2009, ©2005 University of Texas Press. Pg. 19

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ Sturdevant, Pg. 21

contract stating that she understood he was only agreeing to marry her to give a name to her child. She was enraged and instead opted to take her own life and the life of her child in a dramatic scene right out of Hollywood. In this letter, she expresses her feelings with the theatricality that bought her success.

*“To Harald. May God forgive you and forgive me too but I prefer to take my life away and our baby’s before I bring him shame or kill him. How could you, Harald, fake such a great love for me and our baby when all the time you didn’t want us? I see no other way out for me so goodbye and good luck to you. Love, Lupe.”*²²

Lupe took her suicide to the utmost extreme, placing roses and gardenias on her bed and lighting candles. She dressed in a silver lame evening gown, took an overdose of Seconol and lay on her bed in a glamorous pose to await her death. The Seconol made her nauseous and instead of drifting into a peaceful slumber, she drowned in the toilet while vomiting.²³

Unfortunately the media, in all its glory, took advantage of the grotesque demise of Lupe Velez and turned her death into yet another comedy rather than the sad, heartfelt cry for help that it was. The picture in figure 10 shows an exemplary vision of Lupe’s anguish. She grabs her arm, fingers digging into her skin, as if she were trying to inflict pain on herself, possibly to try to control her urge to scream. **(Figure 9)**

²² Floyd Conner. Lupe Velez and her Lovers. Publishers Group West, 1951. pg. 229

²³ Sturtevant, 19



Figure 9. Photo of Lupe Velez, courtesy of Hurrell's Hollywood Portraits.

It is my wish, as I venture another layer deeper into the Latina warrior, to give the Icons of *Living Purgatory* the redemption they are seeking in the beginning of the play. It is not an unusual request that I place upon myself. It was necessary for Medéa to find redemption by the end of her journey with Gilberto to allow me to truly acknowledge her warrior status in *The Medea Complex*. There is no difference when it comes to the women of *Living Purgatory*. It is only fair that the woman who makes the choice to murder her own children be put through certain tests to ensure that she is a sincere warrior, otherwise there will always be the opportunity for uncertainty. By exposing each woman at her most vulnerable points in life, we can reveal her weaknesses and accept them. The tragedy that befalls the women of purgatory did not start when their lives began. Each woman was forced into her calamity by circumstances beyond her control. La Llorona was forced into murder by Christianity. Frida was forced into her extreme love and indecision by her big child, Diego and the child that never would come. La Malinche was sold like an animal by her mother even though she was born a princess. Lupe Velez was forced into a stereotype that haunted her until the day she died.

Although I am still evolving *Living Purgatory* and each woman will manifest more clearly as the play progresses, at this point, I am certain, that the Latina Icons that live in this play are warriors.

In Reflection

It is never an easy task to stand in front of a mirror and look, really look, at one's own reflection. Writing plays that explore the Latina woman invites others to take a look into my life and who I am. Writing plays about Latinas also allows me to put up the mirror and reveal the truth, about myself and my relationship with my characters. Without that truth, I could never really write the Latina warrior. I could only pretend her.

It is not certain where the break from reality turns into fiction. It seems that the Latina is always caught in the center somewhere between actual and fantasy. Alicia Arrizón, in her book *Latina Performance: Traversing the Stage*, calls it “in-between-ness”, an “identity drawn between the real and the fictitious.”²⁴ It is the place where the Latina resides. She is herself and she is many things. This “in-between-ness” is the driving force that moves me to write about Latinas. I can exist as the Latina exists on the page, in-between reality and imagination. I can create the warrior I strive to be or the one I am frightened to become and then return to the safety of my reality. In all frankness, it is a miraculous yet complicated work that leads me to constantly question the validity of my Latina warriors and to examine my own use of their sexuality for the benefit of drama.

The Latina warrior I grew up knowing is one that I will keep close to my heart forever. By examining the plays of other Latina writers, I hope to develop my knowledge of the Latina warrior. It is my goal as a Latina writer to recognize the beauty and passion

²⁴ Alicia Arrizón, *Latina Performance: Traversing the Stage* (Indiana University Press, Blomington, Indianapolis, 1999) pg. 106

of the Latina woman and expand the reality that this is a woman of inherited fortitude and endurance.

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Living Purgatory

By Patricia Crespín

Patricia Crespín
4200 Montgomery Blvd. NE Apt. 222
Albuquerque, NM 87109
505-718-8231
p_crespin@hotmail.com
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Cast of Characters—Prologue and Act I

Frida Kahlo...A Mexican painter. Lived from 1907-1954

Lupe Velez...A Mexican American film actress. Lived from 1908 to 1944

Denise...Young woman in her early 30's.

Malinche...Slave, Interpreter and lover of Hernán Cortéz. Lived from 1496-mid 1500's

La Llorona...500 + Legendary woman who murdered her children.

The Baby...Denise's baby. Represented by a puppet.

Setting: *Purgatorio*

Cast of Characters—Act II

Allegra...Denise's daughter. In her early 20's.

Denise...Allegra's mother. A ghost.

Tia Frida...Allegra's aunt

Tia Lupe...Allegra's aunt

Malinche/Tia Marina...Allegra's aunt.

La Llorona/Tia Sofia...Allegra's aunt. A very old woman with a child's mind.

The Singer...Ideally played by La Llorona, but can be any one of the four icons.

Setting: Purgatory, New Mexico

/ indicates points in the dialogue that overlap.

For the scene changes in Act I, A change in lighting is the only indication of a transformation. The light changes should be as brief as possible and all women are on stage for the duration of Act I, but remain "out of light" when the focus is not on them.

...This play is dedicated to mothers everywhere...

Prologue

A black stage.

*The sound of the women's voices
Are heard overlapping each other.*

LA LLORONA

Mis hijos...

MALINCHE

¡Mi gente, no me/ traicionén!

LUPE

I prefer to take my life away and our baby's before I bring him shame/ or kill him.

FRIDA

I hope the leaving is joyful and I hope I never return...

*The lights rise to a soft illumination.
We get a faint look at the 4 Women
Standing, looking down at the stage.*

LA LLORONA

Mis hijos...

FRIDA

Shh...*Llorona* stay quiet...

LUPE

This is ridiculous. What the hell are we doing here? What is this dump?

FRIDA

Shh...don't say a word. She's coming.

Lights dim. Night falls.

*A slide reads:
SOMEWHERE NEAR SILVER
CITY, NEW MEXICO*

*Late night. There are a million stars
in the sky.*

DENISE walks onstage holding

BABY ALLEGRA'S hand. DENISE looks as if she is high on alcohol or drugs or both.

DENISE

Hmm...maybe I shouldn't have stopped so far away from everything. Hey, there's a sign. Let's go see what it says!

*A slide reads:
PURGATORY CHASM TRAIL*

DENISE

If it's a trail then it has to lead to somewhere, right? Let's follow it and see where it goes.

They walk the trail to the river.

DENISE

Do you smell that Allegra? It smells like mint leaves. Hmm...I wish it wasn't so dark.

Lights illuminate the river. It is a Beautiful, crystalline body of water That runs along the center of the Stage.

DENISE

Look! A river! Let's go put our feet in!

DENISE drags BABY ALLEGRA to the river and step into the water. BABY ALLEGRA whimpers.

DENISE

What? Are you cold? It's not that cold. Come on. Toughen up. We can handle cold can't we? Shit, we can handle all kinds a cold. We're from Wisconsin.

BABY ALLEGRA whimpers.

DENISE

Alright come on out you big baby. Let's sit down here. Let's lay down right here, right by the water.

DENISE plops down next to the River.

DENISE

Come on! Come lie down here with me.

*She pats the ground next to her.
BABY ALLEGRA lies down with her.*

DENISE

See, isn't this great? Just you and me in nature. I told you we were going to have an adventure. And we don't need that stupid dad of your's either! Look baby. Look up at the sky. There's a million stars out there in the sky right now. I bet if we tried we could count every one of them. You want to try? Come on, count the stars with mama. Ready? One...two...three...are you counting? Four...five...close your eyes...

*BABY ALLEGRA lies quietly.
DENISE'S voice turns into a whisper
and she closes her eyes.*

DENISE

Six...seven...eight...nine...

DENISE is suddenly very groggy.

DENISE

Ten...eleven...

*She jerks as if she is going to vomit,
Then passes out.*

*BABY ALLEGRA gets up and walks
away.*

*Lights softly illuminate the women's
faces. They are still standing above
and behind DENISE and BABY
ALLEGRA.*

LUPE

What? She's just going to sleep while her baby wanders off?

FRIDA

She's not asleep.

MALINCHE

Her spirit has left her body.

LUPE

What about the baby?

FRIDA

She won't survive.

LUPE

Great! What the hell are we supposed to do about this?

MALINCHE

We must wait for her to come to us. Then our work begins.

LLORONA

Mis hijos...

Blackout.

End Scene.

Act I, Scene 1

Lights rise.

The stage is a womb.

*A slide reads: PURGATORY
A place of temporary punishment.
A purification of the soul.*

*FRIDA KAHLO,
LUPE VELEZ, LA MALINCHE,
And LA LLORONA, are all in their
Respective corners.*

*The river from the prologue is still
Center stage, but has lost some of its
Glow.*

*FRIDA sits at an easel. In front of
Her, placed on a stool or chair of
Some kind, is a jar with a fetus in
Formaldehyde. FRIDA paints the
Image. She is dressed like Mexico.*

*LUPE sits in her settee chair looking
Fabulous and smoking a cigarette in
An old fashioned but elegant
Cigarette holder. She is dressed in a
silk slip and robe with fuzzy heel
slippers. She is the perfect display of
Hollywood in the 1940's.*

*MALINCHE hovers on a mountain
top nursing her wounds. She has
bruises and cuts all over her body
and face. She is dressed like an
Aztec princess but her clothes are
torn and dirty.*

*LA LLORONA sits as close to the
river as she can get. She has her two*

children sitting in her lap. She rubs their heads gently as she hums an eerie tune. She wears a soft White gown. Both she and the gown look as if they have been in water for a hundred years.

*Tableau.
A spotlight rises on LA LLORONA.
The other women are placed in darkness.*

*The sound of running water
And children laughing.*

FREEZE.

The sound of a woman's voice.

V.O.

La Llorona. The weeping woman. Cursed to walk the rivers for eternity.

UNFREEZE.

*LA LLORONA lays a gentle kiss on
Each of the children's foreheads.
She places them gently in the water.
They play for a few moments and
then LA LLORONA grabs them and
holds them under the water. They
struggle.*

LA LLORONA

He loves you too much...

*She holds them under until their lifeless bodies lay still and floating.
She stares at them for a few moments
And lets out a blood chilling cry.
She grabs them and holds them to
Her chest.*

The sun sets. Night falls.

LA LLORONA finally let's go of

*The children. Their bodies float
Down river. She watches them until
they disappear then steps into the
Water and kneels. She washes
Her face and sings.*

*A Slide reads:
My heart is tired from the pain. I
have no one left to love me. My
betrayal to my children is my crime.
My love for a man is my damnation.
Oh poor me.*

LA LLORONA

*Mí Corazon está cansado de dolor
No tengo nadie qué me amé
Mi traición a mis niños es mí crimen
Mi amor por un hombre es mí desgracia
Ay, pobre de mí*

She washes her face in the water.

Lights fade.

*The sound of children's voices
whispering inaudibly. The voices of
the children turn into the voices of
an angry mob yelling:*

V.O.

¡PUTA! ¡PUTA! ¡Traidora! ¡Traidora!

*MALINCHE is standing on a
Mountain top. She moves around as
if she is dodging rocks thrown at her
by the townspeople.*

FREEZE.

The sound of a woman's voice.

V.O.

*Malintzín. Malinali. Doña Marina. La Malinche. Aztec Princess. Interpreter and Lover
of Hernán Cortes.*

UNFREEZE.

MALINCHE

¡Mí gente! ¡No me traicionén!

*MALINCHE falls to the ground and
Covers her body as best she can
From the rocks. The yelling fades.
She struggles to move as she tends to
her wounds.*

MALINCHE

¡Animales! You know nothing of survival! You throw rocks at me and call me *puta* and *traidora*, but it is you who are the traitors, you who are the whores! I gave you protection from the *Conquistadores*, yet you still betray me as if I were the enemy. I sacrificed my son for you! The time will come when you are challenged with the same grief that has been bestowed upon me. What will you do when your honor is taken away!? What will you do when your children no longer belong to you!? Who will save you?

*Lights fade on MALINCHE and rise
On LUPE VELEZ.*

*LUPE is sitting in a settee chair
smoking a cigarette that is in an old
fashioned but elegant cigarette
holder. Next to her is a small side
table with a pill bottle, a bourbon on
ice, and an ashtray on top of it.
There is a bed that has a silver
evening gown laid on it and roses
and gardenias thrown all about the
bed. There are candles lit all around
her.*

FREEZE.

The sound of a woman's voice.

V.O.

Lupe Velez. 1930's and 40's Mexican American film star. Mexican Spitfire.

UNFREEZE.

LUPE

If things turn out right, I'm glad. If not, it is destiny. I'm going to put that on my gravestone when I die.

*She gets up and puts out the
Cigarette and takes a long drink.*

LUPE

Mexican spitfire, my ass. I'm a fucking clown! *Soy un payaso* for the *gringos* to laugh at.

*She mimics her own persona from
Her Mexican Spitfire character.*

LUPE

*"Oh pleese no, Seeñor. I have no papers to geef you and my husband ees at work
and I am new to theeese Country" ...*

She drops character.

LUPE

What do they take me for anyway? I should go to that movie studio right now and kick all their asses!

*She sits back in her settee chair
And proceeds to look fabulous.*

Tableau.

Lights rise on FRIDA KAHLO.

FREEZE.

The sound of a woman's voice.

V.O.

Frida Kahlo. Mexican painter. Visionary. Revolutionary.

UNFREEZE.

Lights rise on all the women.

FRIDA
(Singing)

*Que viva...toda la gente que viva...
viva la revolución...*

*She stops painting and looks at her
Work.*

FRIDA

Ora si. ¡Perfecto! You want to see what I have done with your portrait *chiquito*?

*She picks up the fetus and takes it
To the painting.*

FRIDA

Do you like it? I wish your father could see it. He would be very happy with my work. Diego! Diego, where are you, you fat bastard? You come out here right now and look at this painting! *¡Andale!* Diego?!

LA LLORONA whimpers softly.

FRIDA

If I had any sense I would rip out my heart to keep from loving him. Oh, but I do love him! How I long to be back in my home in Mexico with my dogs and my monkeys and my dear sweet Diego. My heart doesn't beat the same without him near me. That son of a bitch! Right now he is probably painting some low life woman who is ignorant and beneath him. Beneath him. Ha, did you hear that, ladies? I made a joke.

*LA LLORONA'S cries become more
Defined.*

LA LLORONA

Mis hijos...mis hijos...

FRIDA

Calmate Llorona. Your cries give me a headache.

*She holds the fetus in her arms and
Rocks it back and forth.*

FRIDA

*Que viva...toda la gente que viva...
viva la revolución...*

FRIDA

I'm so glad you're here with me *chiquito*. I know Diego didn't want you, but you know what? I did. I wanted you so bad. My little *niño chiquito*. You make me so very happy.

LUPE yells to FRIDA from her Settee.

LUPE

It is disgusting how you talk to that thing!

FRIDA

Mind your own business, *Estrella!*

DENISE
(*offstage*)

Hello? Is anybody there?

FRIDA

The baby is here!

She gives the jar a kiss and puts the Painting back on the easel.

FRIDA

Prepare yourselves *mujeres*. The *gringa* has arrived.

DENISE enters.

DENISE

Hello? Baby? Stop hiding! Come out to mama this instant! Do you hear me? Come on out now. Where the hell did you go?

LA LLORONA whispers.

LA LLORONA

Mis hijos...

DENISE

What the fuck! Who's there?

LA LLORONA moans. She moves Into the light. DENISE gasps.

DENISE

Holy shit. Uh...you just stay right there where I can see you. You hear me? I got a knife!

DENISE puts her hand to her back Pocket.

DENISE

I'm not afraid to use it.

FRIDA

It wouldn't do you any good to kill her, *gringa*. She is already dead.

DENISE

Dead? Who's dead? Who are you?

FRIDA

I am Frida.

FRIDA walks over to DENISE

FRIDA

It's about time you show up. We've been waiting for you. Where's the baby?

DENISE

Waiting for me? What are you talking about? What's going on here? Who are you?

FRIDA

Don't you know what's happened? Malinche, isn't it strange that she doesn't know what has happened to her?

MALINCHE

She wasn't meant to know.

FRIDA

Bueno. No le hace.

DENISE

Don't talk Spanish to me. I don't understand it.

FRIDA

Of course you don't. You are from *gringolandia*. Come. Let us find that baby of yours.

DENISE

Don't come any closer I'm warning you.

FRIDA

Warning me? You have a lot of nerve. We're all here to help you and your baby. You could show some appreciation.

DENISE

What the fuck are you talking about?! Look, I really need to find my kid and get out of here.

FRIDA

Yes, it is important that we find her immediately. She must feel very alone right now. There is nothing more frightening than being alone. When was the last time you saw her?

DENISE

Could you just point me in the right direction please?

FRIDA

Follow me *gringa*. We have a lot of work to do.

DENISE

I'm not going anywhere with you! I don't even know you!

FRIDA

Really? Perhaps you would prefer to stay here with *La Llorona*. You could cry together for your lost children. Or maybe you would desire to spend time with the *India* while she gets stoned to death by her own people? Hmm? Or better yet, you can go with the delusional *estrella* from Hollywood. She has no respect for *La Vida*. You two have a lot in common.

FRIDA exits.

*LA LLORONA is kneeling
By the river clutching herself and
Rocking.*

*DENISE watches LA LLORONA as
She sings her song.*

*A slide reads:
At night I cry for my children.
I took them to die in the river.
If they come back
My soul will sleep.*

LA LLORONA

*Lloro por mis hijos en la noche
Los llevé a morir al río
Si ellos vuelvan
Mi alma dormiré*

*She washes her face in the water,
Then looks up at DENISE.*

*DENISE moves away, frightened.
She runs into MALINCHE who is
Kneeling and touching the ground,
Running dirt through her hands.
She is saying a prayer of her
Ancestors.*

*A slide reads:
Thank you creator in water
In wind and in our mother earth
And fire. Thank you with reverence
For my children.*

MALINCHE
*Tahzocamatic yocoyáni
Nin atl ni ehécatl
Uan nin tletl
Tahzocamatilintzin
Nin mo pilhuan.
Tahzocamatic well miá*

DENISE
Excuse me? Have you seen my baby daughter?

The sound of an angry mob.

V.O.
¡PUTA! ¡PUTA! ¡Traidora! ¡Traidora!

*MALINCHE falls to the ground as
the attack from the angry mob begins
again.*

DENISE
Hey! Are you okay?

*MALINCHE flinches and doubles
Over again and again.*

MALINCHE

¡Mí gente! ¡No me traicionén!

DENISE

This place is nuts! Hey, Mexican lady, wait up!

End scene.

Act I, Scene 2

*Voices fade as MALINCHE sneaks
Off the mountain and goes center
stage.*

She knocks on an invisible door.

The sound of a Spanish man's voice.

V.O.

Who goes there?

MALINCHE

It is me, *Señor*.

V.O.

¿Como se llama?

MALINCHE

Doña Marina.

V.O.

¿Qué quieres aquí?

MALINCHE

I want to talk to *Hernán*.

The sound of male laughter.

V.O.

You want to talk to *Señor Cortes*?

MALINCHE

Sí. Por favor, Señor. I must talk to him. It is of the utmost importance.

V.O.

Señor Cortes is busy.

MALINCHE

Tell him it is me. He will see me, I am sure of it.

More male laughter.

V.O.

Ah yes, because you are his *puta*...

MALINCHE

I am the mother of his child. He loves me. He will listen to what I have to say.

V.O.

Señor Cortes is with his wife. They are preparing to leave for Spain.

MALINCHE

I want to see my son...please, *Señor*.

V.O.

Imposible...

MALINCHE

I have to see my son before he leaves. I must warn him never to return to his homeland.

V.O.

Your son will be baptized and raised with Cortes and his wife. Spain will be his new homeland.

MALINCHE

Por favor Señor. Let me see my son. I must warn him. If he comes back here they will kill him. They will kill him because he is my son.

V.O.

You've been dismissed *Doña Marina*. Take your family and go live your life. We have no more use for you here.

MALINCHE

No...no! Wait, please, *Señor!* Let me see my son! You do not understand the cruelty of my people! They feel they have been betrayed by me! Please *Señor!* Let me save my son! I want to save my son! I am his only hope of surviving, please! Don't go! *¡Señor!*
¡Señor!

The sound of a door slamming shut.

MALINCHE

Then he will die because of me.

Lights fade.

End scene.

Act I, Scene 3

*LUPE sits in her settee chair
Smoking a cigarette in her fancy
Cigarette holder.*

*She sits up and in the style of Joan
Crawford she says:*

LUPE

I am doing the work of a whore. There is nothing as sad in the world as an old prostitute.

She breaks character.

LUPE

Good old Barrymore sure knew how to use his words. Too bad he didn't know how to make love. He had the biggest member I had ever seen but not the ass to push it in with.

*She sits back down and grabs an
Imaginary tablet and pen and begins
To write.*

LUPE

To Harald. May God forgive you and forgive me too but I prefer to take my life away and our baby's before I bring him shame or abort him. How could you, Harald, fake such a great love for me and our unborn child when all the time you didn't want us? I see no other way out for me so goodbye and good luck to you. Love, Lupe.

She get up and in a very Melodramatic style puts on her Dress, touches up her makeup and Walks to the table. She empties the pill bottle in her hand and takes the pills. She goes to her bed and lies down, closing her eyes.

FRIDA and DENISE enter LUPE'S Space.

FRIDA

¡Bravo! ¡Bravo!

LUPE

Hey! What the hell are you doing here?

FRIDA

We were watching your performance.

LUPE

Performance? This is no performance, *cabrona*, this is my life! *¡Qué huevos, entrar aquí! ¡Chingate Cabrona! ¡Maldita! ¡Quitate de aquí! ¡Andale! ¡Deja me sola! ¡Deja me sola por una vez!* Get out of here before I kick your ass!

She starts to attack FRIDA and DENISE.

FRIDA

Step back, *gringa*. She might hurt you.

*DENISE steps back.
FRIDA grabs LUPE by the cheeks
And gives her a kiss on the forehead.
LUPE pushes herself away.*

LUPE

Ah! . I hate that! You know I hate that!

FRIDA

I love your passion, *Estrella*.

LUPE lights her cigarette and strikes

A pose.

DENISE spots the pill bottle on the Table.

DENISE

What are those? Are those pain killers?

She runs to the table and tries to Grab the bottle.

FREEZE.

The sound of a woman's voice.

V.O.

SECOBARBITOL. A

Barbiturate derivative drug.

Anaesthetic, anticonvulsant,

Sedative, hypnotic...

Cause of death of Judy Garland

Cause of death of Marilyn Monroe

Cause of death of Jimmy Hendrix

Cause of death of Charles Boyer

Cause of death of Lupe Velez

UNFREEZE.

LUPE slaps her

Hand before DENISE can get to it.

LUPE

You keep your hands off of my things *gringa!* Who do you think you are coming in here and messing with my things uh?! I will kick your ass!

LUPE goes after DENISE. DENISE Unconsciously hides behind FRIDA.

FRIDA

Enough playing around. We're looking for her baby.

LUPE

I don't see any babies here. Do you see any babies here?

FRIDA

We need to find her.

LUPE

Happy hunting.

FRIDA

We need your help.

LUPE

Why? It isn't my problem.

FRIDA

It is. You know it is.

LUPE

I did not ask to be here.

FRIDA

I didn't ask to be here either but we are here and we must do our part to help that innocent child.

LUPE

Why won't you leave me be? Can you not see my pain?

FRIDA

You have no idea what pain is.

LUPE

Ah yes, of course. You are the queen of pain!

FRIDA

Yes, I am! I have had a lifetime of physical and mental anguish. Yet I still managed to live my life to the fullest! Can you say the same about yourself?

LUPE

You won't find that baby.

FRIDA

If we do not find her and get her out of here then none of us leave. Is that what you want, to be stuck in this place forever?

LUPE

I want to be left alone.

FRIDA

Well I don't! I hate being alone! I want to get out of here! Do you hear me?

*LUPE sits back in her settee
And strikes another pose with
Cigarette holder in hand*

FRIDA

You are a selfish woman, *estrella*. *Vamonos, gringa*. We will leave her to her misery. There is no life more painful than the life unlived, *Estrella*. You'd be wise to remember that.

LUPE

What do you know?!

DENISE lingers.

LUPE

What do you want?

DENISE

Is that bourbon you have there? I really could use a drink.

LUPE

Get out of here!

DENISE exits.

End scene.

Act I, Scene 4

*Lights rise on MALINCHE. She is
Kneeling, saying a prayer to the
Virgin.*

*As MALINCHE begins her prayer,
The lights rise on LA LLORONA and
DENISE. LA LLORONA listens to
MALINCHE'S prayer, recalling the
Woman she once was.*

*DENISE stares also. Enchanted with
The mysterious and powerful woman
In prayer.*

*A slide reads:
Holy Mary, mother of God,
pray for us sinners, now, and in
the hour of our death.
Amen.*

MALINCHE
*Santa María, Madre de Dios,
ruega por nosotros, pecadores,
ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte.
Amen.*

*MALINCHE makes the sign of the
Cross and rises, moving to the river.*

DENISE walks over to MALINCHE.

DENISE
Excuse me. I hate to bother you while you're praying and all, but I really need to get out of here. Do you know where there's an exit or something...

MALINCHE
There are no exits. There is only the smell of death.

DENISE
Right. Okay...

MALINCHE
Do not be afraid, Denise. We are here only to repent. We must accept our sorrow and allow the will of the Gods to manifest.

DENISE
How do you know my name?

MALINCHE
We have been chosen to help you with your child. But you must repent also, or else you may anger the gods.

DENISE
I don't need help! I just want to find the way out of here!

*Lights rise on FRIDA sitting at her
Easel painting.*

FRIDA
Fascinating place isn't it?

DENISE
Why did you disappear?

FRIDA
I tried to help you, but you wouldn't listen.

DENISE

Please, lady. I'm begging you. Help me get out of here. I'm so scared. I've never been so scared in all my life.

FRIDA

Good. Now you know how your baby felt when you left her alone to die.

DENISE

Why is everyone so damn interested in her anyways? She's just a baby.

FRIDA

She is *la Vida!* She is the life that we have all been missing.

DENISE

All I know is that I'm lost somewhere in bum fuck New Mexico! And there's nothing here but a bunch of creepy old ladies.

*LA LLORONA is watching DENISE,
Intensely. LA LLORONA whimpers
Softly.*

DENISE

What's the matter with her? Why does cry like that?

FRIDA

Pobre La Llorona. She has been confined to the river to mourn the death of her children. She can only express her grief through her tears.

LA LLORONA

mís hijos...

DENISE

What happened to her kids?

FRIDA

They drowned in the river.

DENISE

That river?!

FRIDA

Yes.

DENISE

What if my baby's in there!

DENISE runs to the river.

FRIDA walks to the river.

FRIDA

Why did you leave your child alone in the desert?

DENISE

I don't know, you know. I mean, we were doing a road trip and we went for a walk and then we stopped to look at the stars and then we took a little nap...

FRIDA

Why would you go for a walk in the middle of the night with your baby? *¿En el desierto?*

DENISE

I don't know. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

FRIDA

It is never a good idea to leave your child alone.

DENISE

She wandered off! It wasn't my fault! I just closed my eyes for a minute!

FRIDA

You left her. You left her to die alone!

DENISE

No, I didn't! I mean...what do you mean to die? She's not dead! She's just hiding. She's trying to get me in trouble!

FRIDA

Do you know how frightening it is to be alone? I have never understood why a god who is supposed to be so good would place a child in the hands of such bad people.

DENISE

I'm not a bad person!

FRIDA

You did the worst thing a mother can do to her child.

DENISE

We were taking a nap!

FRIDA

She didn't take a nap. You took a nap! You passed out!

DENISE

What? How could you possibly know that?

FRIDA

I'm going to do what I can to find that little child, *gringa*. For you sake and ours, I hope I do.

FRIDA walks away.

DENISE

Well aren't you the goddamn martyr! Hey! Where are you going? You can't leave me in this place by myself! That ghost lady might get me!

FRIDA

Look around, *gringa*. You're surrounded by ghosts.

DENISE

Well fuck you! I'm not a bad mother, you are!

FRIDA exits.

DENISE sits near the water.

DENISE

It's not easy being a mother.

She turns to LA LLORONA.

DENISE

You know what I'm talking about don't you?

LA LLORONA moans softly.

LA LLORONA

Mis hijos...

DENISE

I need to find a way out of here. You don't know how to get out of here do you?

*LA LLORONA cries softly
And washes her face in the
River.*

DENISE

I'll take that as a no.

Lights fade.

End scene.

Act I, Scene 5

*LUPE sits in her settee chair.
She holds an imaginary paper and
Pen. She seems more agitated than
Normal as she writes.*

LUPE

To Harald. May God forgive you and forgive me too but I prefer to take my life away and our unborn child's before I bring him shame or abort him. How could you, Harald...Oh forget it!

*She throws the imaginary pen and
Paper across the room and gets up,
Frustrated.*

LUPE

What am I wasting my time for? He doesn't love me. He'll never love me!

She grabs the bottle of pills and empties the bottle in her hand And stares at them for a moment Then throws the bottle and pills Across the room.

She goes to her bed and lies down. Closing her eyes.

The BABY appears. She watches LUPE lay peacefully on the bed then Goes to her, cuddling beside her.

LUPE

What is this? What? Who are you? Get out of here! Shoo! ¡Andale! Shoo! Shoo!

The BABY holds on to LUPE for Dear life as she tries to shake her Off.

LUPE

Get off of me! You little troll! Get off me! ¡Ayuda me! ¡Ayuda me! Help!

FRIDA enters.

FRIDA

You found her. Is she alright? Let me see her.

FRIDA inspects BABY ALLEGRA.

FRIDA

I think she needs some sustenance.

LUPE

Take her to her mother. She should be the one responsible for feeding her.

FRIDA

She's cold. Give me that dress. We will wrap her in it.

LUPE

Oh no! I am not taking this dress off so you can cover a naked, dirty baby!

FRIDA

Andale estrella, She is frozen.

LUPE

Do you have any idea how much this dress is worth?

FRIDA

Give me the dress right now or I will kick your ass!

*LUPE reluctantly takes off the dress.
FRIDA grabs it and wraps it
Around the BABY.*

LUPE

Be careful, you are going to wrinkle it!

FRIDA

There, see? Now you can be warm and get some color back in your beautiful cheeks, no?

LUPE

It is disgusting how you talk to her.

*DENISE'S voice can be heard from
Off stage.*

DENISE

Hello? Mexican lady? Where are you?

She enters.

FRIDA

Where have you been? The baby needs milk. Here, feed her.

DENISE

I don't have any milk.

FRIDA

From your *chi chi's gringa!* Why does it seem that you have not been a mother up to this point?

DENISE

These tits dried up a long time ago.

LUPE

You see? There is no milk. The baby is doomed.

FRIDA

How can you not have any milk?

LUPE

It would seem we are all doomed.

*She sits back on her settee chair
And lights a cigarette. Her breasts
begin to leak excessively.*

FRIDA

What is wrong with your *chi chis*?

LUPE

What? What the hell is this?

FRIDA

You are pregnant!

LUPE

No!

FRIDA

Yes! You have milk!

LUPE

No, it's not possible! Get away from me!

She tries to escape FRIDA.

FRIDA

You have a child inside of you and you took your life? How could you do something so horrible!

LUPE

I am not here to be judged by you!

FRIDA

Here, feed this child.

LUPE

No!

FRIDA

Yes!

FRIDA puts the baby up to LUPE'S Breast. The BABY latches on.

The sound of loud sucking noises.

LUPE
She is going to ruin my beautiful breasts.

FRIDA
Who cares? You are dead anyway.

DENISE
I don't like this.

FRIDA
It's not your choice.

The BABY seems to be enjoying her Meal. All is quiet for a few moments As they watch the beauty of the Moment.

LUPE
Ow! Watch it midget, it is not a toy!

DENISE
I guess she was hungry.

FRIDA
I have always wanted to experience the joys of breast feeding. What does it feel like, *estrella*?

Lights rise on LA LLORONA and MALINCHE.

LUPE
It hurts!

DENISE
Yeah it does.

FRIDA
The pain can be ignored. *Andale*, describe to me the sensations you are having. Be generous, I do not want to miss a single detail.

LUPE

It is too difficult to describe what I am feeling.

FRIDA

Close your eyes and imagine the inside of your body. Explain what you see happening.

LUPE closes her eyes. DENISE, LA LLORONA, and MALINCHE all Close their eyes too. As LUPE Begins to describe her sensations, The women all place a hand to their Breasts.

LUPE

There are a thousand strings being pulled towards the center of my body. They are all connected and moving to my breasts. Everything is warm, safe...peaceful. There is a slight tickle deep within. It feels sensational but it does not follow through. It feels like the beginnings of an or-...oh forget this. This is absolutely ridiculous.

FRIDA

You were about to say something else.

LUPE

No.

FRIDA

¡Sí! Tell me.

LUPE

No. You will think I am a lunatic.

FRIDA

I already think you are a lunatic. Tell me!

LUPE

I feel a little bit like...I want to have an orgasm.

FRIDA

An orgasm?

DENISE

An orgasm?

LUPE

Yes! An orgasm!

*She starts laughing and then she
Starts to cry.*

LUPE

It is the most unusual feeling I have ever had. I do not know why this is happening to me. Am I crazy? I feel crazy.

FRIDA

You are feeling the joys of motherhood!

DENISE

I don't like this. I don't like this one bit! Give me back my baby.

FRIDA

What?

LUPE

She is still eating.

DENISE

I don't care! Gimme her! She's my baby, give her back!

*DENISE grabs the BABY from
LUPE.*

*The sound of a loud popping noise as
DENISE pulls the baby away from
LUPE'S breast.*

LUPE

Hey! That hurt!

FRIDA

What is the matter with you *gringa*. Your baby is hungry.

DENISE

I tried breast feeding her, okay? But I didn't like it. My nipples got all raw and sore! It feels like they're getting sucked right off your boobs! I bet you didn't know that part did you, miss Hollywood?

LUPE

For your information, my nipple is very sore.

FRIDA

That is part of the pleasure, *no?*

DENISE

I'm not gonna sit here and put up with all this craziness. You ladies are nuts! All of you are nuts! I'm taking my baby and we're getting the hell outta here.

*She storms out and
Returns to the river. LA LLORONA
Watches her.*

*DENISE and the BABY plop down by
Water.*

DENISE

You just stay right here with me, you hear me? We're not going anywhere until I figure out what to do, you hear me? We're just gonna stay by this river and figure out what the hell is going on. And don't go near that ghost lady over there. She wants you. They all want you. I can feel it.

End scene.

Act I, Scene 6

*LA LLORONA is kneeling next to
DENISE, who is lying down, asleep.
The BABY is sitting in LA
LLORONA'S lap as LA LLORONA
Sings to her.*

*A slide reads:
Take me to the river. Wash me*

Of my sins.

LA LLORONA
*LLévame al río, lavame
mis pecados.*

*LA LLORONA places BABY
ALLEGRA in the
Water and steps into the water with
Her.*

*LA LLORONA holds BABY
ALLEGRA'S hands as she attempts
To play a child's game.*

BABY ALLEGRA giggles.

*MALINCHE comes down from the
Mountain and goes to the river.*

MALINCHE

The river of life holds many secrets *Llorona*. The secrets of many women.

*LA LLORONA holds BABY
ALLEGRA tight to her body.*

MALINCHE

She is not yours to keep, *Llorona*. We must send her back.

LA LLORONA

Mis hijos...

MALINCHE

It's time.

*MALINCHE takes BABY
ALLEGRA from LA
LLORONA and places her in
The water.*

*MALINCHE stands and holds her
Arms up in the air.*

MALINCHE

Chalchiuhtlicue. Goddess of rivers, lakes and oceans. Patroness of birth and baptism.
Guide us through our journey to send the child back to her life.

*She faces the opposite direction,
Still holding up her arms.*

*Thunder and lightening fill the
Stage.*

DENISE awakens.

*LA LLORONA cowers in fear, but
Keeps the baby tight against her.*

DENISE

What the hell is going on? Hey! Let go of my baby!

MALINCHE

*Santa María, Madre de Dios, protejenos de las fuerzas que nos amenazán, hagase tu
voluntad y guíanos el camino del perdón.*

*FRIDA is sitting at her easel.
She goes to the river.*

FRIDA

What's happening *India*?

MALINCHE

The time has come to begin our journey. Together, we must push the child out of here.

LA LLORONA whimpers.

DENISE

What's happening?!

FRIDA

What do we have to do, *India*?

DENISE

Give me back my baby!

More lightening and thunder.

MALINCHE

It is no use, Denise. The child is not yours anymore.

DENISE

What's happening? This is freaking me out!

MALINCHE

We have made peace with Chalchiuhtlicue and we have been blessed by the Virgin Mother. Let us continue to pray to the goddesses of the heaven's and the earth to guide us.

DENISE

No! I don't want to pray! I want to get out of here!

MALINCHE

Don't be afraid, Denise. You shall be forgiven. But you must pray!

DENISE

I don't wanna fucking pray! I hate you! I hate all of you crazy ladies and I hate this awful place and I hate that stupid river and I hate being a mom! You want her you can fucking have her! Do you hear me? I don't want to be a mother! I don't want to be a mother!

DENISE backs away until she is consumed in darkness.

FRIDA

Gringa, come back here! ¡Gringa!

MALINCHE

She has no sorrow for her child. There is no hope for her.

LUPE screams.

LUPE

Agh!

FRIDA

¡Estrella?

LUPE

¡Ayudamé!

LUPE goes to the river.

LUPE

Something is wrong with me.

Agh! LUPE

She points to FRIDA.

This is your fault! LUPE

*The women all start to experience
Labor in different ways.*

My breasts are leaking! FRIDA

*FRIDA tries to stand, then
Doubles over with pain.*

Agh! FRIDA

Mi dolor... LA LLORONA

We have been blessed. MALINCHE

You call this a blessing? I feel like I am going to explode! LUPE

This is so wonderful... FRIDA

LUPE'S water breaks.

Agh...yuck, what the hell is that? LUPE

Your water has broken! MALINCHE

Help me fix it! LUPE

You cannot fix it! You are having a baby! Agh! FRIDA

FRIDA'S water breaks.

*LA LLORONA and MALINCHE'S
Water break.*

*The women all move unconsciously
Into the water, creating a circle
around the BABY.*

It's coming! LUPE

The pain is unbearable! FRIDA

Hija...hija! LA LLORONA

I can feel its head! Ouch. Get out! Get out! LUPE

Push *mujeres!* Push! MALINCHE

That little troll better be worth it! Agh! LUPE

They scream simultaneously.

Agh!!! FRIDA/MALINCHE/LA LLORONA/LUPE

Lights go crazy.

Blackout.

Silence.

Sound of a baby's heartbeat.

*Lights rise on ALLEGRA. She is a
Grown woman.*

*She appears to be naked and covered
in Afterbirth. She walks to the river,*

And washes herself off.

There are a million stars in the sky.

End of Act I

Act II, Prologue

The lights rise to reveal

A room with a couch and a few other pieces of furniture and debris from Act I. It still a part of Purgatory but with a more modern touch to it.

A spotlight shines on the 4 Iconic women from Act I. They are standing around the couch Where ALLEGRA is sleeping Peacefully.

FRIDA
She's so beautiful.

LUPE
What happened to the baby?

FRIDA
This is the baby.

LUPE
Then it's over? We're free?

MARINA
No, Lupe. It is not over.

LUPE
What are we supposed to do with her now? She's all grown up! We don't need to raise a grown woman!

MARINA
We won't be free until she has broken the curse.

LUPE
Damn it! This is not fair! We've done enough. Haven't we done enough?

FRIDA
We'll do what ever it takes.

LUPE
Agh! I'm tired of being here! What is this place we're in now? It's another dump!

SOFIA struggles to say this next line.

SOFIA

It's...b...b...

LUPE

Oh for crying out loud. You can talk now. Spit it out, *Llorona!*

SOFIA

Better.

FRIDA

Her name is Sofia. Call her Sofia.

SOFIA

It's...better than...the last place...not so much...grief...

LUPE

I hope there is a store here at least! Must I be forced to look like such a commoner?

SOFIA

Is...she...our...daughter?

LUPE

Let's hope not!

ALLEGRA lets out a sigh and turns.

SOFIA

Is she?

MARINA

We are here for her only as guardians to guide her down the right path.

LUPE

What if she doesn't want to go down the right path? What if she's a screw up like her mother?

*The women all look at each other
With concern.*

MARINA

Then we stay here forever.

End scene.

Act II, Scene 1

The stage is dark. Lights rise on ALLEGRA. She's sitting at a table in A bar holding a pool stick and Drinking a beer. She's dressed sexy, but not slutty. A woman sits in The background. She's playing Guitar and singing "Tu recuerdo y Yo" by José Alfredo Jiménez.

THE SINGER

*Estoy en el rincón de una cantina
Oiendo una cancion que yo pedi
Me estan sirbiendo haorita mi tequila
Ya va mi pensamiento rumbo a ti...*

DENISE appears behind THE SINGER. She is a ghost.

*A slide Reads:
I am in the corner of a cantina
Hearing a song that I asked for
They're serving me my tequila
My thoughts are drifting towards
you...*

ALLEGRA talks to a MAN that can't Be seen.

ALLEGRA

What kind of shot was that?...I'm just saying, if I had that shot I would've made it.

She gets up and walks to an Imaginary pool table and shoots.

ALLEGRA

Shit!...Oh shut up. You couldn't have made it either. Hey bartender, give me a shot of tequila!

She takes a long drink of her beer, Emptying it.

DENISE grabs a tray with two shot glasses on it and takes it over to ALLEGRA. She sits down On the chair and puts ALLEGRA'S Shot on the table. She talks to ALLEGRA, but cannot be heard.

DENISE

Cheers.

DENISE downs the shot.

DENISE

I swear to God you listen to the exact same music he did. The same sad songs.

ALLEGRA

Take the shot already. It's an easy shot.

DENISE looks towards the invisible Man.

DENISE

This guy ain't bad looking. Nice butt. You could do better though. Hell, that guy you're gonna get hitched to is cuter than him.

ALLEGRA

I'm gonna die from old age if you don't hurry the fuck up!

ALLEGRA downs her shot of tequila.

DENISE

You got your dad's dark good looks. That's why you have men throwing themselves at you all the time. But you got some of your mother in you too. Hell, I've had my share of men, believe me! I ain't the foxiest chick on the block but if you got good pussy... it don't matter what your face looks like.

ALLEGRA

I'd like to shoot sometime this year!

DENISE

You got his temperament too. He was so impatient, never wanted to wait for a damn thing.

ALLEGRA

It's about time.

She gets up and shoots.

THE SINGER strums the guitar.

DENISE

You like all the songs he did. I used to play them in the car when you were a baby. Do you remember that? We'd go for drives and I'd play those songs over and over again.

She starts to laugh but changes her Mind.

DENISE

I was playing them that night we were driving through New Mexico...

ALLEGRA gets a chill and looks at Her watch. She gets up and starts To walk sexily towards the unseen MAN.

ALLEGRA

Hey Handsome. It's midnight. My wedding day. You want to be the first to take me to bed?

DENISE

Yup. Like mother like daughter.

ALLEGRA leaves with the man.

SINGER

*Yo se que tu recuerdo es mi desgracia
Y vengo aqui no mas a recordar
Que amargas son las cosas que nos pasan
Cuando ay un Corazon que paga mal...*

DENISE

I know that your memory is my damnation
And I come here, only to remember how bitter
Are those things that happen to us
When there is a heart that can't pay back...

Lights fade to black.

End scene.

Act II, scene 2

*Early morning. The sun is shining.
The birds are singing.*

*FRIDA, LUPE, SOFIA, and
MARINA are in a living
Room. FRIDA paints. LUPE
Poses with her cigarette holder.
SOFIA is reading a Harlequin
Romance novel. She is crying softly.
MARINA rocks in her chair, eyes
closed, praying.*

Freeze.

A clock ticks.

Unfreeze.

LUPE
Allegra! Light a fire under that ass of yours! You're going to be late for your own wedding! Isn't anyone else upset about this?

FRIDA
Be patient Lupe. She wants it to be perfect.

LUPE
¡Mentiras! The whole thing is a scam!

FRIDA
It's not a scam. This is the nicest man she's met so far. And he truly loves her.

LUPE
It is not love. He is infatuated with her. She's a freaking goddess!

SOFIA
Infatuation is the same as love. There is no difference!

MARINA
If you desire someone enough, the love comes naturally.

LUPE

Agh!

LUPE goes to view FRIDA'S work.

LUPE

Why are you always painting yourself in such grotesque ways? What is the matter with you?

FRIDA

I am expressing my pain.

LUPE

Well, why don't you self medicate like the rest of us?

FRIDA

I wish I could. It's too bad you took all those pain killers. I could use one about now.

SOFIA

Rachel saw Harold from across the room. He was smiling at her. His gaze moving slowly over her face. She suddenly felt quite breathless and found herself unable to continue...He walked across the room, never letting her eyes leave his...

SOFIA throws her book across the Room.

SOFIA

¡Mentiras! Lupe, these romance novels are a lie. It never happens like this!

LUPE

Of course not. That's the point, Sofia. If they spoke the truth no one would buy them. Here.

*She hands FRIDA a pill.
FRIDA grabs it and picks up a glass
Of water, downing it in one gulp.*

FRIDA

You are such a hopeless romantic Sofia. It's a refreshing contrast to this sour puss.

LUPE

Allegra! You would think she was marrying a prince!

FRIDA paints. LUPE paces. SOFIA reads. MARINA prays.

LUPE

I don't know why she is getting married. She screws around all the time. Shouldn't she stay single?

SOFIA

She has to get married.

LUPE

Why?

MARINA

It is the way it has to be.

LUPE

Fine. Then let's get her married and get out of here! Allegra!

Before LUPE can finish yelling her Name, ALLEGRA appears in a white Dress looking angelic.

ALLEGRA

I'm here. I'm ready. Stop yelling.

*The women stare at her in awe.
SOFIA cries.*

FRIDA

You are the most beautiful girl I have ever seen.

LUPE

Are you sure you should be wearing white?

FRIDA

Of course she should. Allegra, I have to paint you just as you look right now.

ALLEGRA

Thank you *Tia* Frida.

LUPE

You clean up good.

ALLEGRA

Is that supposed to be a compliment?

LUPE

Yes.

MARINA

You are a beautiful mixed breed child, Allegra.

ALLEGRA

Thanks *Tia*. I think.

MARINA hugs her and hands her a Beautiful necklace that looks as if It dates back to antiquity.

MARINA

Take this. Your *Tío Cortes* gave it to me. He brought it all the way from Spain.

ALLEGRA

No, *Tia* Marina, I can't. It's too beautiful.

SOFIA

You can't refuse a gift from your elders! It's bad luck! Take the necklace.

FRIDA

Here, give me that Marina. I'll put it on her.

FRIDA puts on the necklace while LUPE waits impatiently for her to Finish.

FRIDA

There. *Ah si*, Marina, that looks very beautiful. Now maybe if you had some flowers.

She pulls some flowers from her hair And tries to put them on ALLEGRA But LUPE gets in her way and grabs ALLEGRA with both hands by the Face.

LUPE

Move it. *Andale, quitate de aqui*. Allegra, *mira mija*. You are a beautiful girl. I know men throw themselves at you all the time. But you have a good man now, he is rich! And he loves you. What more could you ask for, *ah?* Whatever you do, no matter what happens, do not fuck this up.

ALLEGRA

¡Tia Lupe! I'm not gonna fuck this up. Why are you all so hyped up anyway?

FRIDA

We're just so happy that you're getting married, Allegra. We don't want you to have the same struggles we did.

ALLEGRA

What struggles? You never talk about your past.

Beat.

FRIDA

Some things are better left unsaid.

LUPE

All right, all right. Enough chit chat! ¡Vamonos!

ALLEGRA

I'll be right there. I just need a few seconds alone.

LUPE

You had all morning!

FRIDA grabs LUPE gently by the Shoulders.

FRIDA

Come on Lupe. We'll wait for you, Allegra.

LUPE

Damnit!

The women usher LUPE out as She complains.

ALLEGRA turns to an invisible mirror on the wall. DENISE walks up behind her. A few seconds go by before DENISE speaks.

DENISE

Your Aunt Lupe's right you know. You're gonna fuck it up just like I did.

ALLEGRA

Come on Allegra. Grow some balls. You're doing the right thing. He's a good guy.

DENISE

Yeah sure. They all seem like good guys until you need them.

*ALLEGRA practices introducing
Herself.*

ALLEGRA

Mrs. Leo Davidson, how do you do?...Hello, I'm Mrs. Leo Davidson. Allegra Davidson...Valenzuela...Hi, Allegra Davidson-Valenzuela, pleased to meet you...

DENISE

What's the matter? Having second thoughts?

*She watches herself for a few
Moments.*

LUPE yells from offstage.

LUPE

Allegra!

ALLEGRA

Shit!

She looks back at the mirror.

ALLEGRA

Here goes nothing.

*She runs out the door.
DENISE watches her leave.*

Lights fade.

End scene.

Act II, scene 3

A slide reads: Eight weeks later.

*ALLEGRA sits on the toilet seat.
She's holding a pregnancy test under
Her bottom as she pees. She finishes
Up, flushes the toilet, closes the seat,
Places the test on the seat, washes
Her hands, picks up the test and sits
Back down on the toilet seat and
Waits.*

DENISE is pacing. Furious.

DENISE

How could you let something like this happen? What's the matter with you girl?! Don't you know what a fucking condom is? You're a fucking idiot.

ALLEGRA

Oh, god. How could I let this happen? I'm a fucking idiot.

A clock ticks.

*ALLEGRA checks her watch. Waits
A few seconds more.*

The clock ticks louder.

DENISE continues to pace.

ALLEGRA checks her watch.

The clock ticks louder.

*ALLEGRA looks at her watch, then
closes her eyes.*

ALLEGRA

Please be negative...please be negative...

She opens her eyes slowly and peeks at the test.

DENISE stands behind her and Looks.

Horrified with the results, ALLEGRA Drops the test to the floor and Slides off the toilet seat to the Ground. She puts her head in her Hands and cries softly.

DENISE shakes her head.

DENISE

Well, get ready to kiss your sex life goodbye!

End scene.

Act II, scene 4

*FRIDA, LUPE, SOFIA, and
MARINA are in a living room.*

*FRIDA paints, LUPE sits in her
Settee chair looking fabulous.
SOFIA reads another romance
Novel. MARINA sits in her chair
Saying a prayer to the Gods.*

*ALLEGRA storms in. DENISE
Is right behind her.*

*FRIDA looks up from her easel
Spotting DENISE.*

FRIDA

Allegra! ¡Gringa! What are you doing here?!

ALLEGRA

I came to visit. Why are you calling me *gringa*? You know I hate that.

LUPE

Allegra, what you *Tia* is saying is -Oh! No! Not you!

ALLEGRA

What?

DENISE

I thought you would be happy to see me, ladies.

LUPE

Why are you here?

SOFIA

She's bad. She's very, very bad!

SOFIA throws the book at DENISE.

MARINA

Tahzocamatic yocoyani...

ALLEGRA

What the hell is the matter with you guys?!

FRIDA

Nothing. Sorry. We're very happy to see you *querida*.

DENISE

Not for long. Go ahead, Allegra. Tell them what you came to tell them.

ALLEGRA

I'm pregnant.

Beat.

FRIDA

¿Embarazada?

ALLEGRA

Yes!

LUPE

Whoo hoo! *¡Qué maravilloso! ¡Qué fantástico!*

LUPE jumps off the settee and grabs ALLEGRA spinning her around.

FRIDA

This is wonderful news!

LUPE

We're free! We're free!

*LUPE tries to dance with ALLEGRA
But ALLEGRA pulls away.*

FRIDA

Pull yourself together Lupe.

SOFIA

That was fast. Too fast.

MARINA

Be happy for her Sofia.

ALLEGRA

Why should she be happy for me? I'm not.

FRIDA

But why?

DENISE

Why do you think?

FRIDA

A baby is the most wonderful thing that could happen to you, *querida*.

ALLEGRA

Whatever.

MARINA

What makes you unhappy, Allegra?

ALLEGRA

Well...

SOFIA

Everything changes with a child. Is that what you're worried about? Are you afraid that your whole life will become something fake and miserable and the man you thought was the love of your life will turn out to be a conniving, brutal deceitful man with bulging biceps and wavy, black hair that glistens in the sun light?

ALLEGRA

Okay. You all need to get out of this house more.

MARINA

Tell us what's troubling you child.

DENISE

Tell them.

ALLEGRA

It's not his baby.

FRIDA
What did you say?

LUPE
Oh no!

DENISE
The look on your faces right now...umm...priceless.

LUPE
Oh shut up you idiot!

ALLEGRA
Tia Lupe!

LUPE
What? You don't think you are an idiot?

DENISE
This is so good.

FRIDA
Stay out of this, *gringa!*

ALLEGRA
What the hell is going on here!?! Are you all on drugs on something?

DENISE sits on top of the couch.

*LUPE falls dramatically on the
Settee chair.*

FRIDA
Nothing is going. Keep talking.

ALLEGRA
There's nothing else to say! I'm pregnant. It's not Leo's baby. I'm totally screwed!

LUPE
Ay, Allegra, how could you do this to us? Does your husband know? You don't have to tell him.

MARINA
A man knows his own children.

SOFIA

Yes, they can sense those things.

LUPE

Bullshit! A man doesn't know one child from the next! Tell him it's his! He'll be tickled you're having his baby! Then you can raise it together and live happily ever after, no?

ALLEGRA

I'm going to tell him the truth and hope that he can forgive me.

LUPE

What? Are you out of your mind!?

SOFIA

Ha! Ha ha ha ha ha ha!

DENISE

Yeah, tell him. If he can't handle it then fuck him. It's the right thing to do.

ALLEGRA

It's the right thing to do.

LUPE

You cannot tell a man you are married to that you are having another man's baby! He will kill you!

ALLEGRA

It's hopeless. I am just like my mother.

FRIDA

No! Do not say that. You are nothing like her.

DENISE

Oh yes she is.

Beat.

DENISE

Hello! You could have an abortion.

FRIDA

How could you say such a horrible thing?

No! It's a sin!

LUPE

Absolutely not!

MARINA

It is too dangerous.

SOFIA

What's too dangerous?

ALLEGRA

She's not getting an abortion.

FRIDA

An abortion?

ALLEGRA

Why not? You had three!

DENISE

How dare you judge me *gringa!* It is none of your damn business!

FRIDA

Why don't you get out of here!

LUPE

I thought I could come to you for help. If you want me to leave, I will!

ALLEGRA

Allegra, no, wait! We're here to help!

MARINA

ALLEGRA leaves.

She's not really turning out to be the angel you expected is she?

DENISE

Don't even think about interfering with this, *gringa.*

FRIDA

I'm not here to interfere! I'm here to help her! You ladies don't know what the fuck you're doing!

DENISE

DENISE exits.

End scene.

Act II, scene 5

*A slide reads:
THE CANTINA*

*ALLEGRA is sitting at the
Bar. DENISE stands behind the
Bar.*

ALLEGRA

Bartender, give me a bourbon on ice.

DENISE

Coming right up.

DENISE grabs the bottle of bourbon.

*ALLEGRA looks at her stomach and
rubs.*

ALLEGRA

Wait! Make it a coke instead.

DENISE

Coke?! Oh come on, what's the big deal? I drank all the time while I was pregnant with you. And you turned out fine.

*DENISE pours a coke in a glass and
Puts it in front of ALLEGRA.*

DENISE

Don't be too bummed Allegra. He wasn't that great. I mean, it's cool that he's rich, but where's the passion?! You should get yourself a Mexican man...they're really sexy.

The women enter.

ALLEGRA

¡Tias! What are you doing here?

MARINA grabs ALLEGRA from Behind, forces open her mouth and pours a tiny vial of liquid into her mouth.

DENISE

Hey! What the hell is going on?

MARINA lays the unconscious ALLEGRA onto the floor.

SOFIA grabs DENISE from behind.

SOFIA

I got her Lupe! Now's your chance! Hit her!

DENISE

Let me go! You're hurting me!

LUPE

Alright, *gringa!* Get ready to see some more stars!

LUPE puts her fists up.

FRIDA

Lupe!

LUPE

What? I can take her out with one punch!

DENISE

I'm not afraid of you!

LUPE

Oh yeah?!

Yeah!

DENISE

DENISE and LUPE take a fighting Stance.

FRIDA

That's enough! Both of you!

LUPE

Oh come on! Let me kick her ass! I want to kick her ass!

MARINA

What are you doing here, Denise? Why have you come back?

DENISE

That's none of your damn business.

FRIDA

You're not wanted here *gringa*.

DENISE

Yes I am. Allegra wants me here. She called for me!

LUPE

Bullshit! Why would she want you? You abandoned her!

DENISE

She needs someone to help her get away from you crazy ladies!

FRIDA

She said this to you?

SOFIA

She wouldn't! She loves us!

DENISE

Ouch! Let me go! You're squeezing me too hard!

MARINA

Tell us the truth, Denise.

DENISE

Allegra needs my help.

SOFIA

No! She does not!

DENISE

Yes, she does! You give her horrible advice! Making her get married when she doesn't want to! Convincing her to have a baby! It's bullshit! You're ruining her fucking life!

LUPE

You're going to wreck everything we've done!

DENISE

This is all about you. You ladies don't even care about her. The only reason you're even helping her is because you want out of here! You don't give a shit about Allegra!

FRIDA

That's not true. We love her.

SOFIA

She's our baby...

DENISE

She's my baby!

FRIDA

You didn't want her!

SOFIA squeezes DENISE hard.

LUPE

That's it. Hold her Sofia. I'm going to sock her a good one!

DENISE

Damnit, let go of me you crazy bitch!

MARINA

Let her go, Sofia.

SOFIA

No!

*MARINA gently pulls SOFIA away
From DENISE.*

MARINA

Let her go.

DENISE

Thank you, Marina. I always thought you were the most level headed of the group.

MARINA

You must leave, Denise.

DENISE

I'm not going anywhere. Allegra needs me and I'm going to help her. I don't care what you guys do to me. I'm not leaving.

SOFIA

You had your chance to help her! It's our turn!

DENISE

Go ahead and kick my ass! I'm staying with Allegra!

MARINA

You're taking the risk of destroying her forever. Is that what you want?

DENISE

You're the one's destroying her. I'm her only hope of being happy.

*The women stare each other down
For a few seconds.*

ALLEGRA stirs.

MARINA

She'll wake up soon. Let's go.

LUPE

What?

SOFIA

No!

MARINA

Denise is right. We can't stop her from being here. But we can stop her from poisoning Allegra's mind.

DENISE

Give it your best shot.

LUPE attacks. MARINA stops her.

MARINA

Let's go.

DENISE stands her ground. The Women exit. FRIDA turn to DENISE.

FRIDA

This isn't over, *gringa*.

Lights fade.

End scene.

Act II, Scene 6

*ALLEGRA is sitting on the couch
Holding her newborn BABY.
The women stand behind her.*

DENISE lingers.

ALLEGRA

*Lullaby and goodnight.
Hmm hmm hmm hmm hmm
Hmm hmm*

DENISE

This is bullshit! She never should have had this baby!

ALLEGRA

I'm never going to leave you alone my little girl. Okay? I'm gonna be a good mother. I promise.

FRIDA

Of course you will. You will be the best mother a child could have.

ALLEGRA

I've never felt anything like this before. I love her so much it makes my heart hurt. Is it supposed to feel like this?

DENISE

Oh please!

MARINA

Yes.

ALLEGRA

She's so tiny and helpless. What if I do something wrong? What if I hurt her?

FRIDA

You are going to be fine.

MARINA

A mother's instincts come naturally.

DENISE

Give me a break.

SOFIA glares at DENISE.

SOFIA

Hopefully you will not get the sickness, Allegra.

LUPE

It is going to be difficult not to get depressed, Allegra. But you can do it! I know you can.

SOFIA

Her biggest worry is that she will resent her child.

ALLEGRA

I could never resent her. Look at her. Doesn't she look like a little angel?

DENISE

Yeah, sure. Just wait till you're knee deep in shitty diapers and bloody nipples! Then see if she's an angel!

FRIDA

She is a beautiful shining star.

LUPE

Is she supposed to be wrinkled like that?

MARINA

Another child to carry the burden of being a woman.

SOFIA starts to cry.

DENISE

Her life will never be the same...

Lights fade.

End scene.

Act II, scene 7

*The women are in the living room
Doing their thing.*

*ALLEGRA storms in with the BABY.
DENISE follows behind her.*

LUPE

What the hell happened to you Allegra? You look horrible!

ALLEGRA

Here. Take her!

*ALLEGRA hands the baby to LUPE.
LUPE handles her with
Inexperience. LUPE passes the
BABY off to FRIDA.*

ALLEGRA

I can't fucking take this anymore! She's driving me crazy!

FRIDA

What's wrong with her?

ALLEGRA

How the fuck should I know! She won't stop crying.

FRIDA

She's fine now. Maybe she just needed a little air.

ALLEGRA

Yeah, now she's quiet. You should have seen her earlier! She wouldn't shut up!

DENISE

You're a natural Frida. Maybe you should raise the baby and Allegra can finally get a life.

MARINA

Come Allegra. Sit down. Let me get you some tea.

ALLEGRA

I don't want tea. I need a drink. I'm gonna leave the baby here for a while.

MARINA

No. She can't stay here.

FRIDA

¿Por qué?

DENISE

Why not?

LUPE

Marina is right. The baby is yours Allegra. You should be responsible for your own child.

SOFIA whimpers softly.

MARINA

You're struggling with motherhood right now. As all women who have children do. But it will come to you. Be patient.

ALLEGRA

No! I'm losing my mind, can't you see that? I'm trying to be a good mother but I don't even know what that is! I don't have anything to base it on. I don't remember my mother. I don't remember any of you being mothers. All I know is that I woke up one

morning on your couch in your living room and I was 21 years old! I didn't even get a chance to live a real life before I was tied down and married. And now I'm stuck with this damn baby I don't even want!

FRIDA

Allegra...

DENISE

I told you so.

MARINA

Of course you want the baby. She is your blood.

DENISE

Not everyone is cut out to be a mother. But you already know that, don't you ladies?

FRIDA

Go on! Get out of here! You're nothing but bad news!

ALLEGRA

What?!

FRIDA

The energy in this room is bad. I'm shooing it away, see?

She fans the air with her hands.

FRIDA

Shoo...shoo...

ALLEGRA

Somebody tell me something about my mother?

FRIDA

The *gringa*?

DENISE

Me?

ALLEGRA

Yes. None of you talk about her. I just want to know something. Anything!

The women all glance at each other.

FRIDA

Okay. What would you like to know?

ALLEGRA

What was she like? Do I look like her at all?

DENISE

A little bit.

ALLEGRA

What was her favorite music? Did she love my dad?

DENISE

I sure did.

FRIDA

She was wild, like you. She loved *Corridos*. Very sad Mexican *corridos*. She said they reminded her of your father.

ALLEGRA

So she did love him?

DENISE

Yes.

FRIDA

Yes.

ALLEGRA

But she didn't love me. That's why she left me. And now I'm turning out to be just like her.

DENISE

I did not leave you! Tell her the truth, Frida! I didn't leave her!

FRIDA

That's not possible. You will never be anything like her.

DENISE

It wasn't my fault! I passed out!

ALLEGRA

How do you know? You all talk and talk about how wonderful it is to be a mother, but how do you know? None of you have kids! You don't know what it's like! You don't know the hell I'm going through!

DENISE

That's it baby! You tell them!

SOFIA

Stop!!

*SOFIA grabs ALLEGRA by the
Shoulders.*

SOFIA

We know a lot about babies. We know how to give them life...and we know how to take their life away...

ALLEGRA pulls away from SOFIA.

ALLEGRA

I'm tired of taking advice from a bunch of washed up old ladies. It's time I started making my own decisions!

LUPE

Agh! Did you just call me old?!

ALLEGRA

I'm leaving the baby. You don't have a choice. You have to watch her. I know you won't leave her alone. I'll be back in a couple of days.

*ALLEGRA exits, leaving the
Women stunned.*

DENISE lingers.

DENISE

I told you she wasn't ready for a kid. But would you listen? No! All you can think about is yourselves. Tough luck.

DENISE exits.

End scene.

Act II, Scene 8

Blackout.

*A spotlight on DENISE. She is
Driving in a car. It is the past.*

ALLEGRA is having a memory.

DENISE

Whoop hoo! We just passed the New Mexico state line, Allegra! And we're gonna find your daddy. You'll see. We'll find him and we'll be one little happy family together. You like that? Hmm? Sounds good, doesn't it?

*Spotlight disappears and the lights
Rise.*

*A slide reads:
CANTINA*

ALLEGRA is sitting at the bar.

DENISE walks up to her.

DENISE

You're starting to remember.

*ALLEGRA goes to the jukebox and
Plays a song.*

*THE SINGER appears. She
Strums her guitar.*

*ALLEGRA takes the glass of
bourbon that is on the bar and sits
down at a table nearby. DENISE
grabs a bottle of bourbon and sits
down next to ALLEGRA.*

THE SINGER

*Por tu amor que tanto quiero
Y tanto extraño*

The SINGER strums an instrumental.

DENISE

You're Aunt Frida was right about one thing. These songs remind me so much of your daddy. I've never met anyone like him. He made me feel things I'll never feel again. He was so intense. It was really awesome but in a sort of suffocating way you know what I mean? Sort of the way your aunties suffocate you. I think it's some kind of Mexican tradition to do that to people. He would take me to some old bar. We'd shoot pool and drink beers. And he would play like five or six of the same songs over and over again in the jukebox. Real sad Mexican songs. He loved those damn songs. I guess he loved being sad. After he left, I went to that bar and found the names of the songs he was listening to and bought every CD that had those songs on them. I listened to them over and over again, just like he did. They made me sad too, but I couldn't stop listening to them.

THE SINGER

*Que me sirvan otra copa
Y muchas mas*

*Que me sirven de una vez
pa' todo el año
que me pienso seriamente emborrachar*

*THE SINGER continues with an
Instrumental.*

DENISE

Allegra? I wish you could hear me. I'd tell you my side of the story.

*ALLEGRA spots a man across the
Room.*

ALLEGRA

Hey cowboy! Long time no see.

She walks towards the unseen man.

ALLEGRA

I just got a divorce. Want to be the first to take me to bed?

ALLEGRA exits.

DENISE

For the love I love so much and miss so much
Serve me another drink and many more
Set me up with a whole
Year's worth. I am really going to get drunk

End scene.

Act II, Scene 9

*ALLEGRA is in a dream. The scene
Is very surreal and bizarre.*

*FRIDA, LUPE, MARINA, and
SOFIA are in back in their
Purgatory from Act I.*

*FRIDA paints her fetus. LUPE sits
In her settee chair writing her letter
To Harald. SOFIA is with her
children by the river. SOFIA cries
softly. MARINA is on her
Mountain top nursing her wounds.*

*ALLEGRA walks the stage taking it
All in.*

She spots FRIDA.

ALLEGRA

Tia Frida?

FRIDA

*Qué vivá...toda la gente
Qué vivá...vivá la revolución...*

ALLEGRA picks up the fetus.

ALLEGRA

Tia Frida?

FRIDA

¡Hola querida! I didn't see you standing there.

ALLEGRA

What is this?

FRIDA

That's my little Dieguito! Your primo.

*FRIDA takes the jar from ALLEGRA
And kisses it.*

ALLEGRA

He's dead, Tia.

FRIDA

Nonsense! He's not dead! He's sleeping.

FRIDA starts to dance with him.

FRIDA

This will wake him up. He loves to dance.

ALLEGRA

Tia Frida, are you okay?

FRIDA

Of course I am, *querida*. I have my baby with me. What more could I ask for? Diego didn't want him. But I did. So I had the doctor put him in this jar so he would be safe and warm, just like he was inside my *pansa*. Would you like to see my painting of him? I think it's my best work!

ALLEGRA

No, that's okay. I have to go...

ALLEGRA leaves FRIDA.

FRIDA

*Qué vivá...toda la gente
Qué vivá...vivá la revolución...*

ALLEGRA spots LUPE. She is holding a bottle of pills. She empties the pills into her hand.

LUPE puts the pills in her mouth and Grabs a glass of bourbon nearby.

ALLEGRA

Tia Lupe, no!

LUPE swallows the pills.

ALLEGRA

No!

LUPE falls onto the chair. Her body Begins to convulse.

ALLEGRA runs to her.

ALLEGRA

¿Tia?

LUPE does not respond. ALLEGRA Sees the letter to Harald. She reads It.

ALLEGRA

To Harald. May God forgive you and forgive me too but I prefer to take my life away and our baby's before I bring him shame or abort him. How could you, Harald, fake such a great love for me and our unborn child when all the time you didn't want us? I see no other way out for me so goodbye and good luck to you. Love, Lupe.

ALLEGRA cries softly. She kisses LUPE on the forehead and walks Away.

ALLEGRA sees SOFIA by the river. SOFIA is humming softly with her Children in her lap.

ALLEGRA

No...

SOFIA takes the children and puts Them in the water and drowns them.

ALLEGRA cries harder. She is Unable to look away from the Macabre scene in front of her.

The sound of an angry mob captures ALLEGRA'S attention.

V.O.

¡PUTA! ¡PUTA! ¡Traidora! ¡Traidora!

MARINA is getting stoned to death By her people.

ALLEGRA runs to help MARINA.

ALLEGRA

Tia Marina? Are you okay?

MARINA

No. You can't be here child. Go back.

ALLEGRA feels the stones hitting Her back.

ALLEGRA

Ow! What's happening?

MARINA

I have created a mixed breed child and betrayed my people. Now they will kill him.

V.O.

¡PUTA! ¡PUTA! ¡Traidora! ¡Traidora!

ALLEGRA

They're going to kill your son?

MARINA

Yes.

ALLEGRA

We can stop them. I'll help you!

MARINA

It's too late for him, Allegra. But not for you! You must go back!

ALLEGRA

I can't just leave you here! You're hurt!

MARINA

You must go back! I couldn't save him! I couldn't save my son! I couldn't save him! I couldn't save him!

ALLEGRA runs off the mountain.

The voices stop.

*The sound of a BABY crying from
A distance.*

ALLEGRA

Baby? Is that you?

ALLEGRA follows the sound.

ALLEGRA

Baby? Baby? Come on out. Come to mama.

The crying stops.

The sound of DENISE'S voice.

DENISE

Screw him, we don't him Allegra. We don't need that father of yours. Let's just get the hell out of New Mexico! Wow, what a beautiful night. Hey I have an idea. You wanna go for a walk and look at the stars?

ALLEGRA

Who's there?

*DENISE appears. She's walking
With BABY ALLEGRA to the river.
The stars appear.*

DENISE

See, isn't this great? Just you and me in nature. I told you we were going to have an adventure. And we don't need that stupid dad of yours either! Look baby. Look up at the sky. There's a million stars out there in the sky right now. I bet if we tried we could count every one of them. Come on, count the stars with mama. Ready?
One...two...three...are you counting? Four...five...close your eyes...

*BABY ALLEGRA lies quietly.
DENISE'S voice turns into a whisper
and she closes her eyes.*

DENISE

Six...seven...eight...nine...

DENISE is suddenly very groggy.

DENISE

Ten...eleven...

DENISE'S body convulses. She dies.

*BABY ALLEGRA gets up and walks
away.*

*ALLEGRA watches the scene in
Tears.*

Lights fade.

End scene.

Act II, scene 10

A black stage.

The sound of a baby's heartbeat.

A spotlight on DENISE.

Allegra?
DENISE

ALLEGRA enters.

Denise?
ALLEGRA

Yeah, baby. It's me.
DENISE

What do you want?
ALLEGRA

I want to talk to you.
DENISE

Get away from me. I don't want to talk to you.
ALLEGRA

ALLEGRA walks away.

Wait! Just listen for a minute.
DENISE

I'm not interested in anything you have to say.
ALLEGRA

I deserve to tell you my side of the story!
DENISE

Oh you do? Okay. What's your side of the story Denise? I'm just dying to know why you drove me across the country just to die from an overdose and abandon me.
ALLEGRA

I didn't abandon you.
DENISE

Yes you did! You were so jacked up on pills and booze, what did you think would happen?
ALLEGRA

That's not fair!
FRIDA

ALLEGRA

It's not fair that you never gave me a chance!

DENISE

I fucked up! Okay? I know it! You know it! Your goddamn aunties know it!

ALLEGRA

You ruined me.

DENISE

I did you a favor! You were better off without me.

ALLEGRA

I should have been the one to decide that. Now, I'm a horrible mother and it's your fault.

DENISE

You can't blame me for that.

ALLEGRA

I don't even want my own child! I can't make myself love her!

DENISE

I know! You're just like me.

ALLEGRA

I don't want to be anything like you!

DENISE

I know. I was a lousy mother.

ALLEGRA

Yes. You were. But you did do something right. You let my aunts raise me.

ALLEGRA walks away.

DENISE

Allegra?

ALLEGRA

What?

DENISE

I do.

ALLEGRA
What the hell are you talking about?

DENISE
I do love you.

ALLEGRA
I wish I could say it back, but I can't.

ALLEGRA exits.

Lights fade.

A campfire starts.

*The women are sitting around the
Fire. They pass a bottle of mescal
Tequila.*

LUPE
Who's going to swallow the worm?

FRIDA
Why don't we decide it when we get there?

SOFIA
I don't want the worm. I want to see Allegra.

LUPE
Ha! Don't hold your breath Sofia. She's probably trying to get as far away from us as possible!

SOFIA
Do you think she hates us?

MARINA
She just needs some time to think.

ALLEGRA enters.

*She walks to the campfire and sits
Down with the women.*

A few moments pass.

ALLEGRA

Was it a dream?

The women share a look.

FRIDA

No.

ALLEGRA is close to tears.

ALLEGRA

Then...it's all...true? Everything I saw? Everything you did?

FRIDA

Yes.

SOFIA cries softly.

FRIDA

We were trying to help you...but we failed.

LUPE

I'll say.

SOFIA

Can you...forgive us?

A long silence.

FRIDA

Allegra...say something.

ALLEGRA

It's not my forgiveness you're looking for, *Tia Sofia*. All of you have put all your hopes and dreams into me, but it's not about me. It's about you. It's time to release yourselves from your pain and you guilt. You're drowning in your own guilt. Let it go. Let it go and find peace.

*ALLEGRA goes to MARINA and
Grabs her hand.*

ALLEGRA

I'm sorry you couldn't save your son. You've suffered enough.

ALLEGRA kisses MARINA'S hand.

ALLEGRA

You've all suffered enough.

She turns to FRIDA.

ALLEGRA

I have an uncontrollable urge to see my daughter.

FRIDA

She'll be happy to see you.

ALLEGRA

Thank you for taking care of me. I know it wasn't easy.

FRIDA

It was worth every minute.

*ALLEGRA gives FRIDA a hug.
She kisses LUPE on the forehead.
Then walks to SOFIA and wipes a
Tear from her face.*

ALLEGRA

Don't cry anymore Tia Sofia. It's over now.

ALLEGRA exits.

*The fire goes out.
The women disappear.*

The stage is dark.

*Spotlight on ALLEGRA
And THE BABY. They are
Driving in an imaginary car.*

*ALLEGRA stops and her and the
BABY get out of the car.*

There are a million stars in the sky.

ALLEGRA

Okay, I think this is it. Are you ready? We're going to go on an adventure, okay? Just you and mommy.

They walk. The lights shift.

ALLEGRA

I think we're close. What's that up there? Is that a sign?

A slide reads:

PURGATORY CHASM TRAIL

ALLEGRA

Purgatory Chasm Trail. Yup that's it. Kind of spooky name, huh? Let's follow it and see where we end up.

They walk to the river.

ALLEGRA

This is it, baby. This is the same river your grandma brought me to when I was your age. She wasn't a very good mother. Some women just can't love their babies. But that's okay. You stick with mommy and everything's gonna be alright. We'll start over, okay? There's nothing wrong with starting over. Here, let's lay this blanket down. You want two blankets? It's not too cold is it? Wow, look at that. There are a million stars in the sky. Want to try to count them? Let's try, come on. One...two...three...four...five...do you smell that baby? It smell like mint leaves.

Lights fade.

End play