

Blackout Theatre Proudly Presents

The Sparrow's
Aunt
Daughter
Cuento

March 18-March 27th

At The Box

Tickets

XX \$ Gen/ XX\$ Student

Thursday-Saturday Performances
at 8pm

Sunday Performances at 2pm

www.blackouttheatre.com



Act One

Scene one-- Running away

Alma and Fina enter dark, shadowy stage with backpacks.
In silhouette or in shadows.

ALMA

Okay.

FINA

Okay. You got everything?

ALMA

Uh, I think so.

Fina

Alright, sleeping bag, spare change of clothes, and enough food until we reach the next town.

ALMA

Okay...

FINA

Are you hesitating?

ALMA

No. Uh. But I might need a heavier jacket.

FINA

Come on!

ALMA

I mean, don't you think so? Do you need one? A heavier jacket?

FINA

No. It's perfect.

ALMA

Maybe we should wait till tomorrow.

FINA

No! We've got to do it now or we're never going to do it. Look, we're just going to head east until we hit the freeway and then we'll hitch hike.

ALMA

Okay?

FINA

We'll get to the next town and change our names, make some money, get our own place. We'll be good. No one telling us what to do.

They stop. Sounds start.

FinA (CONT'D)

You nervous?

ALMA

Yeah.

FINA

Here.

ALMA

What's this?

FINA

I brought Makers Mark.

ALMA

Where did you get it?

FINA

My mom's cabinet.

ALMA

Okay.

They open their cans and drink some. Sounds around them begin to happen subtly.

FINA

You're nervous.

ALMA

I just feel I'm going to miss my dad. I mean, I can just see the look on face when finds that I'm not there tomorrow. I feel sorry for him.

FINA

You're going to miss him controlling you?

ALMA

My dad is not like that. He's...strict.

FINA

Uh-huh. He's controlling. Didn't he drive your mom crazy? That's why she left.

ALMA

I don't know what happened to my mom. But that would make sense. If he treated me like he treated my mom I'm sure I would have left, too. I mean, I am leaving.

FINA

You don't know why your mom left?

ALMA

No, she left when I was too young to remember. And my dad never talks about her.

That's another thing. It seems like he never really opens up. I know there is so much he wants to say, but he just hides it.

FINA

Weird.

ALMA

Like I said, he's just sad.

More sounds are heard. Scurrying round them.

FINA

So, do you want to call this off or what?

ALMA

No! I just...

FINA

Let's go then.



ALMA

We have to do it at night?

FINA

Yeah. With the stars. They'll guide our way.

Fina finishes her beer and throws the can. She picks up her backpack to leave. Alma hesitates.

ALMA

Okay.

FINA

Come on.

Alma starts to get up when they hear the Cucuy lullaby being sung lightly. And other scary sounds.

ALMA

Do you hear that?

FINA

Sounds like someone is singing their kid to sleep.

ALMA

No, something is out here with us. I feel it.

FINA

It's probably some dog...

A sound

FINA (CONT'D)

Or something...

ALMA

It's dark. Turn your light back on.

FINA

My flashlight isn't working.

ALMA

I think it's coming from over there in that bush.

FINA

These are new batteries...

ALMA

It's alright. I'm going to light some matches. My dad told me to always keep them on me.

FINA

Okay.

Something runs across the stage. The song gets louder.

ALMA

What was that?

FINA

Probably an animal... Rabbit... Or something.

ALMA

What was that?

FINA

It's probably just our minds playing tricks on us. Let's go.

ALMA

I'm scared.

FINA

Look we'll get to the freeway and hitch hike.

The thing runs across the stage again.

ALMA

Did you see it?

FINA

Yeah....

It's coming from behind that bush.

Alma

Where? There?

Yeah

fina

Alma walks to the bush.

Okay, light a match then.

FINA (CONT'D)

Should I just throw it in?

ALMA

Yeah?

Fina

I don't see anything.

Alma

Nevermind! It's probably nothing. Can we just go?

Fina

Come on. If it's hurt we should help it. What if it is a dog?

Alma

I think I saw a car over here.

fina

Fina starts to walk toward the car she just saw and something grabs her swiftly. The song is loud now.

Fina? Fina?

ALMA

Alma begins freaking out screaming looking for Fina. She is in full panic as creepy song and sounds surround her. She starts lighting match after match until she finally decides to light the bushes on fire.

ALMA!!!!!!

FINA

FINAAAAAA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

ALMA

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Scene Two--Smelling a Lie

Alma is a statue. Dad is welcoming an old friend.

DEATH

Hello Cesar.
How are you?

DAD

I'm excellent. Not used to you dropping in. How are you?

DEATH

I'm great! It's beautiful.

DAD

What brings you out here?

DEATH

I heard about some interesting things. I'm on vacation.

DAD

Just vacation? Not work.

DEATH

Not yet. I might have to take some orders though. Vegetables.

DAD

Local vegetables.

DEATH

Mhm.

DAD

From this city?

DEATH

Hello, Alma.

Alma stares at him, weirded out.

Dad

Alma don't be rude.

ALMA

Hi.

DAD

This is my daughter, Alma.

DEATH

Hi. I was telling your father, I'm here on vacation. I was thinking about checking out the mesa. How is it out there? Have you been lately?

Dad tries to redirect Death.

DAD

Maybe you don't have to stay too long.

DEATH

I won't. I just came to check on her. And on you.

DAD

Me? You mean...

DEATH

I mean, I will be back soon. I can't say exactly when, but I'll be back. That's why you need to tell her. She needs to know.

DAD

Hmmm.

Dad takes Death into the Kitchen.

DAD

How has your business been lately?

DEATH

Good. Busy.

DAD

(Whispers)

Busy on the mesa?

DEATH

(Whispers)

No, that wasn't me.

DAD

(Whispers)

So, no news?

DEATH

(Whispers)

She's fine. As far as I know. You know as much as I do. That's all I got.

Alma gets curious and invites herself into the kitchen.

ALMA

Don't be rude, Dad. Offer your friend...

DeATH

Sebastiano.

ALMA

Sebastiano, coffee or tea.

DAD

Sure you don't want water? Coffee?

DEATH

Coffee. Black.

DAD

So you are busy?

DEATH

Must be something in the air.

DAD

Not sure what that means these days.

DEATH

I have a feeling work might get busy pretty soon.

DAD

That's exactly what I expected to hear.

Death drinks all his coffee like it's water.

DEATH

Well, it was nice seeing you. I'll come back with those summer fruits for you. I'll see you soon. Goodbye, Alma.

DAD

Goodbye old friend.

Death leaves. Alma sneaks back to the couch and television. Dad finds her,

DAD (CONT'D)

Thank you for being polite. Haven't said a word in two days. Almost expected spider webs to come out when you talked.

ALMA

....

DAD

You know that TV is going to be there tomorrow. How about we try some more of this talking thing.

ALMA

...

DAD

That TV didn't give you birth, you know.

ALMA

Okay. Fine. It'll be there tomorrow.

DAD

Maybe not.



ALMA

Fine.

DAD

How are you doing?

ALMA

Fine.

DAD

Fine.

ALMA

Fine.

DAD

Fine.

ALMA

Who was your best friend?

DAD

Sebastiano. I know him through work.

ALMA

He was annoyingly happy.

DAD

I know. He really shouldn't be so happy.

ALMA

What kind of a person comes to the mesa on vacation?

DAD

That person. They're the type of people you want to avoid.
This is the most I've heard you talk in three weeks. I like it.

ALMA

What else do you know about people from the mesa? Do you have lots of other friends on the mesa?

DAD

No.

ALMA

Just Sebastiano?

DAD

He likes to visit the mesa. You seem pretty interested in the mesa. Maybe you two have something in common.

ALMA

I just think it is interesting that he wants to be on the mesa a couple days after that fire.

DAD

Yeah. Interesting. That fire.

ALMA

It doesn't seem normal.

DAD

You know what doesn't seem normal, is that no one has any idea where you were that night. I like to know where you are, you know.

ALMA

Locked up in my room.

DAD

Well I think you proved you can't make your own decisions.

ALMA

Whatever.

DAD

Now that your finally talking, are you going to let me know what really happened out there? Talk to me. What happened?

ALMA

It was so stupid.

DAD

What was stupid? I just want to know you are okay.

ALMA

(Sighs)

DAD

You come home smelling like burnt weeds! What should I expect?

ALMA

How many times did you go out to the mesa when you were a kid?

DAD

You know what they say about little girls starting fires on the mesa?

ALMA

What are you trying to say?

DAD

I can smell lies, you know that.

ALMA

You want to know what happened? We started a big fire and there was nothing.

DAD

Alma, I can smell a lie, but if I could smell the truths, I wouldn't have to keep asking you the same questions over and over.

ALMA

Who was that, man?

DAD

Sebastiano. He comes by now and then. He's an old friend.

ALMA

Hmm.

DAD

You want to stay here and hmm all day?

ALMA

Whatever.
I smell like lies.

DAD

I'm not the only one that wants to talk to you, you know.



ALMA

You think that Fina disappeared because of me!

DAD

Alma, it's not your fault. I just worry about you. I need to know where you were that night, and I need to know what happened to Fina. Her mom keeps calling.

ALMA

I don't know what happened to Fina!

DAD

Where were you?

ALMA

Out. Just hanging out. Not doing anything wrong. We just wanted to see the stars on the mesa. We can't see them that well from the back deck. In town.

DAD

So you WERE on the mesa. That fire have anything to do with you?

ALMA

You were the one who told me to always have matches.

DAD

I also told you to dig a fire pit when you're burning things.

ALMA

We did!

DAD

Then where did Fina go and why did you burn the mesa?

ALMA

I don't know what happened.

DAD

Did someone take her?

ALMA

We got separated by the fire. She was on one side and I was on the other.

DAD

Someone took her?

ALMA

We heard this song.

DAD

What?

ALMA

Whistling. And singing.

DAD

Like a bird? Or a man?

ALMA

It was like a song. I don't know. Sounds stupid.
I didn't see anything. I didn't see anyone.

DAD

Whistling?

ALMA

Yes.

DAD

Como eso?

Dad whistles the Cucuy lullaby.

ALMA

Yeah.....

DAD

Exactly like that?

ALMA

What's that song?

DAD

Nothing.

ALMA

How do you know that song dad. What aren't you telling me?

DAD

It's just the... Bad people sing that song.

ALMA

Do you know who took Fina?

DAD

If I knew, I would be right out there helping the police find him.

ALMA

Would you dad?

DAD

Look I have no idea what happened.

ALMA

I think you do, and you're not going to tell anyone.

DAD

I don't know. I just know people who get mixed up in bad things sing that song. It's the kind of people your mom got mixed up with.

Will you tell me if you saw a person out there?

ALMA

Who was it dad?

DAD

Did you see that person?

ALMA

I didn't see anybody. We just heard the song and I ran away.

DAD

Good. You're a smart girl. You should never be on the mesa at night. There are dangerous people up there. Murderers.

ALMA

You know, I can smell your lies too, dad. It's genetic. You know more than you're telling me.

DAD

Lila is been waiting to hear from you forever. She's carved circles in her linoleum floor with her constant pacing. You need to tell her what happened.

ALMA

It sounds so stupid and irresponsible. She's just going to blame me.

DAD

She won't I promise. She just needs to hear what happened.

Dad grabs keys to car and begins to leave.

DAD (CONT'D)

So are you going to come with me or what?

ALMA

Fine. Let's go.

DAD

Do you want to drive?

ALMA

Sure, I'll drive.

Blackout

Scene 3--House of tears

Fina's Mom is hunched over and La Llorona is lurking over her.

DAD

Oye, Lila, can we come in?

FINA'S MOM

Company!

Come on in. Please, come in. Have a seat. Can I get you anything?

DAD

No, thank you.

FINA'S MOM

I'll get some water. Everyone needs water.

Fina's mom leaves to get water.

DAD

Margie.

LA LLORONA

Cesar.

DAD

Should have know. The tears are falling. The old crow has to come and prey on that.

FINA'S MOM

It's nice to see you, two. Thank you for stopping by. It's so nice to have company. Sorry I haven't had time to clean up. I wasn't expecting company.

DAD

It's okay, Lila. We brought you something to eat. Would have brought you something, Margie, but I think you've had enough today.

FINA'S MOM

That's so kind of you. ay dios these glasses are dirty! I'm so sorry. I'll get different glasses. I have plates, too. For the food. Margie, where are those dishes we cleaned.

DAD

Please have a seat with us Lila. Margie, why don't you get us some coffee.

They sit. Margie eyes Dad and then exits.

FINA'S MOM

I think I have some cookies in the cupboard. I should get some for our coffee.

DAD

No, thank you. Just sit. Alma would like to talk to you.

FINA'S MOM

Oh.

ALMA

....

DAD

Alma.

FINA'S MOM

Are you sure you don't want any cookies?

DAD

I'll go get them!

FINA'S MOM

Thank you.

ALMA

How are you Miss Chavez?

FINA'S MOM

Oh I'm fine. It's so great to have Margie here to help little old me out. She's truly one of God's children. Met her at church. So sweet. Understanding. Caring. Motherly.

ALMA

Uh.

FINA'S MOM

How are you child?

ALMA

I'm...uh... okay. Just a little...I don't know.

FINA'S MOM

You can tell me. Tell me what happened that night.

La Llorona appears out of no where. Dad stays hidden in the shadows watching.

LA LLORONA

Yes. Tell her. Tell her what happened, Alma. Tell her everything.

ALMA

Well...uh... We said we were going to the movies.

FINA'S MOM

Yes. I remember.

LA LLORONA

Remember.

ALMA

We weren't doing anything bad. We were going to go to the movies, but we wanted to look at the stars.

LA LLORONA

Yes. It's ok, Lila. Listen to the child.

ALMA

We weren't drinking or smoking or anything. We just went to see the stars on the mesa.

FINA'S MOM

On the mesa...

LA LLORONA

She was on the mesa! With the fire.

Fina's mom begins to weep.

ALMA

We were building a fire and then it got going to big and I don't know it got so big. We were just sitting hanging out and talking and then I don't know how this big fire started and it got so big and we got separated and....

They all start crying. La Llorona hunches over the mother.
It gets kind of creepy.

ALMA (CONT'D)

No there was something else, though! There was something else I haven't told anyone. Um. We were just talking, but there was something else there and it wasn't human and it wasn't supposed to be there. We felt like we weren't alone so we started to look around and couldn't see anything but it wasn't a voice it was like an instrument.

DAD

Okay, I think that is enough.

ALMA

There was something weird out there. Like a monster.

DAD

I think what she means is someone might have abducted your daughter.

ALMA

There was something out there. I know it. I felt it.

DAD

Let's not make up stories. Tell the truth.

FINA'S MOM

No. That can't be true. Mi hija!

LA LLORONA

Don't run away from this. Listen to her. Cry

DAD

Leave her alone.

LA LLORONA

Some people don't know how to be with their grief. She just needs to settle in and feel it.

DAD

I don't think your the right person to help her with that.

ALMA

I'm sorry. I don't know. We built a camp fire and then we heard a sound and I couldn't see anything and then all of a sudden she was gone. It was like she was swallowed by the darkness.

DAD

We think somebody kidnapped her.

ALMA

Like someone put a bag on my head and then she was gone. That's what I saw and that's what I heard and that is the whole truth.

DAD

I'm sorry. I talked to her and she doesn't know where your daughter is. We're sorry.

FINA'S MOM

Mi Hija!!!!

ALMA

I'm sorry Ms. Chavez! I don't know where she is.

DAD

Come on. Let's go.

Enjoy the meal.

Dad takes alma's hand and they exit.

Blackout.

SCENE FOUR

ALMA

I just told her what I told you dad.

DAD

I brought you there to help her out. It's part of the grieving process and you go off and tell her that it's monsters.

ALMA

I just told her what I know.

DAD

Listen to me young lady. You don't tell a lady who's daughter was kidnapped that it was monsters. She needs to be grounded in reality. You need to learn this. You are going to be dealing with grieving people the rest of your life and you can't say monsters are involved.

ALMA

Dad.

DAD

What did I say?

ALMA

I'm just supposed to help her out.

DAD

And?

ALMA

And...

DAD

That there are no monsters. No magic.

ALMA

How do you know?

DAD

Look when things get stressful your mind can make things up.

ALMA

I saw something.

DAD

A guy with a mask becomes a monster.

ALMA

I saw something!

DAD

I brought you here to comfort her, and you made her cry a lot.

ALMA

I know what happened. Something was out there and you know it happened

DAD

Yes, I know there was a guy stalking two 16 year old girls, and you ran because you were smart.

ALMA

And he sings songs in the shadows!? I know it was something else.

DAD

Were you taking drugs?

ALMA

No!

DAD

Alma, were you?

ALMA

No!

DAD

Hija, I believe that you believe what you think you saw. But you were scared.

ALMA

What about that woman in there?

DAD

What about the woman in there?

ALMA

You can't tell me you didn't find her the least bit creepy.

DAD

That woman is just a creepy church lady.

ALMA

There are a lot of creepy ladies in this town. But you knew her. You knew that lady. She kept looking at you. Like you were old friends or something.

DAD

So?

ALMA

Tell me something. Anything!

DAD

About what?

ALMA

I don't know. Tell me how you know the same song I heard when Fina disappeared? Or who is Margie, the crying woman? Maybe you can start with what happened to mom?

DAD

Enough! Conversation over. Get in the car.

Blackout

SCENE FIVE

Alma sits in bed. She reads a book with her flashlight.

She hears a noise offstage and points the flashlight around the room. Nothing.

ALMA

Get a grip, Alma.

There is nothing there.

Only you and your imagination.

She goes back to reading. A shadow passes over the room.

The singing from the mesa starts.

ALMA

Who...Wha... Who is there?

FINA

Alma. Alma I'm here Alma. Turn off the light Alma it's me.

ALMA

Who?

FINA

It's me. Turn off the light. Alma.

Alma turns off the light.

ALMA

Uh...

FINA

You have to help me . You have to come back to the mesa.

ALMA

But you're...

Fina appears

ALMA (CONT'D)

Ahhhh but, you're dead!

FINA

Shhh! I'm still...

Steps are heard.

FINA (CONT'D)

Come! You have to come!

ALMA

What?

Alma gets up

FINA

He's in the room here! He has me stuck in the shadows.

ALMA

Who?

FINA

The man that took me. Please! You have to find me! Tell your father--

A hand comes over FINA's mouth and drags her away.

A knock at the door.

DAD

Alma...

Dad opens the door and turns on the light.

SCENE SIX

DAD

Alma is everything...

ALMA

Dad! Dad! I just saw Fina. Not Fina like...Fina...but... She came to me! Her spirit. She came to me. She is still alive. She needs me to save her. We need to go save her.

DAD

Honey you are sick . You are just seeing things. Hallucinations.

ALMA

No, Dad. Really.

DAD

Where is she then? Is she in here now? Is she under your bed?

ALMA

No, Dad. She's somewhere in the shadows.

DAD

Okay, you've had a really long day, and you need to rest.

ALMA

I think she's still on the mesa!

DAD

Alma, Fina is gone!

ALMA

No! She is somewhere. She's still alive. Dad, I will not sleep or do anything unless I save her. I felt her hand. I heard her voice.

DAD

Go back to bed now. I'll get you some medicine from the store. You have a fever.

ALMA

What? Like Robitussin?

DAD

No! This is enough! I am finished, Alma. You need to calm down and go to sleep. You didn't see her. You are so much like your mother.

ALMA

Do you mean crazy? Because if I am crazy, it's because of you. And that's probably what happened to mom.

DAD

Alma, please.

ALMA

Fina came. She was there. Right there where you stand. My friend is out there and I need to save her. I have to try. I will go crazy if I try to ignore this.

DAD

Stop it! Close your eyes. Go to sleep.

Dad starts to exit. He hesitates to shut off the lights. He turns them off and slams the door. Alma begins to cry. Suddenly, El Venado appears in Alma's room. A light radiates from him.

EL VENADO

There are a lot of dangerous things you do not understand and you need to turn your back

on them.

ALMA

Wha?? Who?

EL VENADO

I am El Venado and I am here to warn you, Alma.

ALMA

Warn me?

EL VENADO

Little bird tells me you know about the shadows.

ALMA

What do you mean?

EL VENADO

You have merely caught a glimpse of a world that most aren't aware exists.

ALMA

Well, something in that world has my friend Fina. I have to save her.

EL VENADO

Alma you need to listen to me. I know about this world and it is too dangerous for you to enter. There are things out there that want to kill you. If you can see them, they can see you and they will hunt you down and haunt your life. Please close your eyes. Just go to school. Be a teenager. Don't go down this path.

ALMA

I have to get my friend back.

EL VENADO

El Cucuy took her and she is not coming back.

ALMA

El Cucuy? What? Like the boogeyman?

EL VENADO

Yes. El Cucuy. He preys on young girls and boys like you, who are alone. But he is a shapeshifter. He rarely appears as himself, and only in the shadows. In fact, when you thought you saw Fina, it was only Cucuy taking on her form.



ALMA

Well if this El Cucuy has her, I have to save her. You're from that other world, right? Take me. Help me.

EL VENADO

That's not my job. I am merely the gate keeper. The peacekeeper between the world of magic and the world of reality.

ALMA

Well the peace has been disturbed. A person of reality has been dragged into the world of shadows by El Cucuy. You're not being a very good gate keeper.

EL VENADO

...

ALMA

Take me there.

EL VENADO

I can't.

ALMA

You can't or you won't.

EL VENADO

I won't.

ALMA

Why?

EL VENADO

You are human. It is too dangerous.

ALMA

Why won't you help me.

EL VENADO

I will not disturb the balance.

ALMA

I can see them. The people of the shadows. If you won't help me, I will find someone else to take me there and I will save Fina.

EL VENADO

Alma, I'm only here to warn you. If you go into the shadows, you may never come back. And the shadows are a place that will suck the life out of you and slowly eat away at your soul. And no one, not your father, not your mother, no one will ever see or hear from you again. Ever. Do you understand?

ALMA

Yes.

EL VENADO

You've been warned.

El Venado disappears.

Alma sneaks out of her window. Blackout.

SCENE SEVEN

The sound of weeping women as Alma enters. Ms. Chavez is crumpled in the corner sobbing with La Llorona lurching over her. Alma approaches slowly.

ALMA

I've come back. You know my father, and I know he's not telling me the truth. So will you tell me the truth?

LA LLORONA

Mi hija!

FINA'S MOM

Mi hija!

LA LLORONA

Donde estas mi hija?

FINA'S MOM

Donde estas mi hija?

LA LLORONA

Porque!?

FINA'S MOM

Porque!?

La Llorona slowly turns her head to Alma. Everything she says is closely echoed by Ms. Chavez.

LA LLORONA

I know who took your friend. That's what you want to know.

ALMA

Who? El Cucuy?

LA LLORONA

There are many things you would like to know. There are many things I would like to tell you.

ALMA

Do you know where I can find Fina?

LA LLORONA

Come closer, hija. Let me see you.

ALMA

Where is Fina?

LA LLORONA

Such beautiful brown hair. Soft and long. Just like mi hija.

Alma stops, cold in her tracks.

ALMA

I'm leaving. This is ridiculous.

LA LLORONA

El Cucuy took Fina. But you already knew that.

ALMA

How do I find her?

LA LLORONA

Mi hija. Come sit with Ms. Chavez and I will tell you. I can help you.

ALMA

Tell me bruja!

LA LLORONA

It will not be easy, but I can see that you are strong, like mi hija. Open your eyes, Alma. Look and see everything. It's in your blood.

ALMA

What do you mean?

LA LLORONA

If you want to enter the world of the shadows, there are three things you must do before you can find Fina. First you have to open your eyes and see it! I can help you. Come sit with me and Ms. Chavez and cry with us. I will take you there. Come, Alma. I can help you. I've been trying to take Ms. Chavez there to find her daughter, but she is not strong. Which is the second thing you have to do. You have to be strong. Grieve with us, Alma.

Alma, caught in a trance begins to be pulled towards the grieving women.

ALMA

But what is task number three?

LA LLORONA

Sit with us, and I'll tell you. There my darling. Right next to me. Task number three is you have to let go.

ALMA

Let go.

La Llorona takes Alma's head into her chest to comfort her. Alma begins to fall asleep.

ALMA

Please, let me go.

Suddenly, Dad bursts through the door with great conviction. That is right. Conviction!

DAD

You're playing with fire, Margie.

LA LLORONA

You.

DAD

I'm asking you, old lady, is that really what you want to do with my daughter?

LA LLORONA

Your daughter is stronger than you know.

ALMA

Watch out Dad she's not normal.

LA LLORONA

Her eyes are peaking through the veil.

Dad raises his hand and telekinetically pins La Llorona against the wall, like Syler in Heroes. She covers her eyes as if great pain is taking place or something.

DAD

Tread carefully, Llorona, or you might not have eyes for those tears to depart from.

ALMA

Dad?

DAD

Remember that time we went to the buffet, Alma? That lady in the front of the line was taking all the food and the last of the dessert. Then she came back for seconds, and thirds, and fourths, and on the fifth time the kitchen staff finally yelled at her and told her to leave.

LA LLORONA

I'm sorry. I'm sorry!

DAD

Nobody likes a glutton.

Dad releases his grip.

DAD (CONT'D)

Get out of here. Leave Ms. Chavez alone. Never come back to this house.

La Llorona runs out. Ms. Chavez collapses, her eyes wide open. Dad walks over and shuts her eyes.

ALMA

Dad?

DAD

She'll be fine now. Let's go.

They Exit

END of Act 1

ACT TWO

ALMA

What just happened?

DAD

Well, you were there.

ALMA

I was there, but a lot crazy and unexplained things just happened. So tell me what exactly is going on.

DAD

...

ALMA

What was that? You grabbed her from across the room.

DAD

There was a draft.

ALMA

No.

DAD

Well. I... There is....You know how she was a creepy person before. Well she has another side

ALMA

Sure.

DAD

Okay.

ALMA

Why was she afraid of you

DAD

You know how she was Margie and she was also the other thing. A monster. There are lots of people like that.

ALMA

Tear eating monsters and humans?

DAD

Not everyone is a monster. There are people in live in both worlds.

ALMA

But.

DAD

Two things. You know how sometimes you go to school looking like that and then at school you change clothes.

ALMA

This isn't an alternate personality.

DAD

A whole different world.

ALMA

So your part of another world?

DAD

Look there are a lot of things around us that are part of both worlds. Some good. Some bad.

ALMA

Like all those things I thought I saw as a kid?

DAD

Yes. Children's eyes aren't as blinded from the other side. This is why they believe in El Cucuy and La Llorona. As you grow up, you learn to ignore the other world. Most adults are completely cut off from it. But throughout your life you've caught mere glimpses of the other side.



ALMA

Well how do I see it all?

DAD

Abre los ojos.

ALMA

My eyes are open.

DAD

Your inside eyes.

ALMA

My inside eyes?

DAD

The eyes that help you see everything for what it really is.

ALMA

My nature eyes?

DAD

Sure let's call it that.

ALMA

So I've got to walk around and "see" things.

DAD

You could kill a chicken. That usually works.

ALMA

Dad! Stop being a jerk and help me.

DAD

Part of doing it is learning how to open your own eyes. A clue.

ALMA

Fine I got it. Deep breath.

DAD

Ha!



ALMA

Come on Dad! Let me do this, okay? I got... I got some dirt. And Rocks!

DAD

Did you try talking to the rock?

ALMA

Will that help?

DAD

No, because its a pinche piedra.

ALMA

Water. Here's some water. I need elements.

DAD

Right.

ALMA

I need fire. Give me one of your matches.

DAD

They're strike anywhere.

ALMA

So I got air, earth, water and fire.

DAD

What about heart, para la Captain Planet.

ALMA

Ready. Okay, I just got to believe. I just got to think about.nothing is happening.

DAD

I totally saw a unicorn.

ALMA

Nothing is happening. I'm looking at myself in the water nothing is here.

DAD

I'm sorry. Maybe you're not ready.

ALMA

I have to see it. Fina is trapped in this other world and I need to save her. I have to! Right now!

Alma starts to cry a little.

DAD

Do you want to light another match? Blow some smoke on something? There could be a chant!

ALMA

Dad.

DAD

I'm sorry hija. I can't tell you. It's the rules. You have to figure it out yourself. Like one of those games you played as a kid. Keep looking around.

ALMA

Fine. I see some grass and an ant.

DAD

Okay let's use this. Look at the ant. You know how if you stare at an ant for a while then you finally see all the ants.

ALMA

It's an ant hill!

DAD

Exactly. You're looking for the ant hill. But not the actual ant.

Alma looks into the water again and she sees it. Something epicly magic overtakes the stage and Dad turns into El Venado. That's right. Epicly! Figure it out.

ALMA

Woah!

DAD

You'd think there would be string instruments, huh?

ALMA

It's....

DAD

Is this a bad time to tell you, you didn't need the water or the matches?

ALMA

Wow! Look at this place!

DAD

It's pretty incredible.

Alma turns around and finally sees her dad.

ALMA

You're the deer.

DAD

Yes. You remember me?

ALMA

Oh my God!

DAD

See. Now, I'm here to help you.

ALMA

You've been here the whole time. Why didn't you tell me about this?

DAD

You knew parts. Like when you saw Margie and the Chupacabra when you were kid. But I couldn't let you know everything.

ALMA

Why?

DAD

I was just trying to protect you. Now that you can see all of this, they can see you, too. But I need to let you know, because eventually, you will take my place.

ALMA

As the deer?

DAD

Yes. I'm not going to be here forever. I need you to take over. But you first need to learn

how to navigate through this world.

Alma ignores her dad's warning and starts exploring a tree or flowers or something that will turn dangerous soon.

ALMA

This world is so cool! Everything is alive! I can't believe you are the gatekeeper to this.

DAD

You have to be careful. Watch every step you take.

ALMA

Look at this place! It is awesome! It is so colorful. Everything.

DAD

There's always a line between color and darkness but sometimes it isn't so well defined. You have to be careful. You'll get lost and then things aren't as they seem.

ALMA

How do bad things come from here though? It's so beautiful.

Alma begins to roll around in the bed of flowers or starts hugging the tree and it slowly starts to consume her.

DAD

Magic doesn't discriminate.

ALMA

Its so peaceful!

Alma has become trapped and hypnotized by the magical entity enchanting her.

DAD

Alma get out of there now.

ALMA

It's so peaceful, Dad.

DAD

Alma!

Dad rips Alma out of the grasp of the magical entitiy.

ALMA

Ah. Dad! I'm sorry. I don't know what happened. I got lost somewhere.

DAD

You must be very careful here, Alma. You must learn to maintain a balance. Keep a foot in both worlds or you might become trapped in one. That's how I lost your mother?

Dad is obviously emotional about this issue. Alma senses something. Maybe a bird flies in or something.

ALMA

What happened?

DAD

She got lost.

Lights dim and we see the story unfold.

SCENE TWO

DAD

Not everyone is meant to open their eyes to this world. It is my job to maintain this balance. To pull the veil over the eyes of those not ready. Your mother was not ready. She should not have seen any of this. And she wouldn't have, but while she was pregnant with you, things started to reveal themselves to her. I tried to explain them off as odd occurrences, but you, being my child were constantly drawing the unwanted attention of the beings of this world. Young blood is so attractive to creatures of darkness. Finally, I decided it would be safest to open your mother's eyes for her. I thought it would help her protect you when I was not around.

This world was too attractive to your mother. She began to spend too much time in the magically realm. She would get lost in the bosque. Lost on the mesa. And always with you growing inside of her. Attracting. Attention. One day I found her in the bosque, building a nest out of branches and leaves. I approached and as I got closer I saw one single egg in the nest and one bright beak growing on her face. She was becoming a sparrow in front of my eyes. She clawed at me to scare me off. I left you with her that night in the bosque. Then late one night, while she nested over you, I snuck to the nest and stole your egg. I brought it home and you hatched immediately. Premature, but alive. We stayed locked in the house for 4 weeks while the crows circled and cracked all of our windows. When they finally let up I found it safe to take you out. Told everyone your mother gave birth at home and was very depressed so ran away in the night. She's stuck though. She has become a sparrow and can never return to her human self.

AIMA

I want to see her.

DAD

Ok.

Come with me. I'll take you to her nest.

SCENE THREE

DAD

Are you ready?

ALMA

Yeah I think. I don't have any flowers, or anything.

DAD

I don't think she'll mind.

ALMA

Is this her nest?

DAD

Yes. She is here.

Sound of a bird chirping and flapping its wings.

ALMA

Is that her?

DAD

Faria. Te le quervas.

Feria appears, half human, half bird.

MOM

Ay. Cesar. You have some more wrinkles.

DAD

Hmmm. It looks like some of your feathers have gone gray.

MOM

Don't be silly, these feathers have always been gray.

DAD

It's good to see you, Feria.

MOM

I've missed you, Cesar.

Feria looks confused. Staring at Alma.

DAD

Go ahead.

ALMA

Hi. Um. I'm Alma..

DAD

Give her some time she doesn't remember.

MOM

Alma?

ALMA

Yes.

MOM

Alma. My daughter. Oh, you are so beautiful. Your hair. Like how mine was. So dark.

DAD

I thought it was time you too finally meet.

MOM

You're finally here. Oh, I've missed you, so.

ALMA

Yes.

MOM

Oh dear, it's so good.

ALMA

I don't know what to say. I wondered about you. And now you're here.

MOM

How I've longed for your return. You're so big. How old are you now?

ALMA

Uh...16 now.

MOM

16 years old! I knew you would return to me.

ALMA

Yeah. What should I say?

Dad shrugs.

MOM

You can stay here now. Your father doesn't want you anymore. We'll build you a nest just like mine, Alma. Thanks for bringing her home, Ceasar.

ALMA

It's really..

MOM

Look around. It is all here. Everything you need is right here. Isn't it so beautiful. So magical. All your dreams will come true here. We can be together at last.

ALMA

Mom... I can't--

MOM

Of course you can! You are my daughter! Look around, Alma. It is all here. Home is ready for you. You've come back for me. Because you love me and want to be with your mother. Right?

ALMA

I want to. But... I can't stay.

DAD

That's right, Alma. Stay strong. You can't stay here. You belong in both worlds.

ALMA

I don't understand. Why do you want to be with me now?

MOM

I was always there, Alma.

ALMA

I never had you.

MOM

Look around you! Can't you see why I stayed?

ALMA

But you didn't come back. You left me.

MOM

I'm your mother! I never left you. He took you away.

DAD

Feria. Please, let's not fight.

ALMA

Mom, I'm only here to find my friend, Fina. Then I have to go back to reality. Do you know where she might be?

MOM

But you're my daughter! You can stay with me!

DAD

It's hard to explain duty and loyalty to a bird.

ALMA

I need to find Fina. She is depending on me. If you won't help me, then I will just do it by myself.

DAD

A bird can only fly away.

ALMA

No. You never told me either, dad. You helped keep her away.

DAD

Would it have helped?

ALMA

I would have had a mom.

DAD

You did. Every time you cried in your room at night, she was at your window. She watched you while you played in the bosque.

ALMA

But I didn't know she was there.

DAD

She did what she could, hija.

ALMA

I'm just... I need to go. I can't...

Alma walks off, crying.

DAD

Don't go too far, Alma. It's starting to get dark It's not safe.
Feria, she doesn't mean to hurt you.

MOM

That is what they all say.

DAD

I know it isn't easy to feel abandoned. So does she.
It's funny. She is is so much like you. Beautiful, wild, and free.

MOM

Really? Because she reminds me of you. Enchanting, but stubborn.

DAD

She needs you.

MOM

I want her to come back.

DAD

You need to go to her. You have to show that you are ready.

MOM

How do I do that when you keep her away?

DAD

Alma. I said don't go to far. Alma!

Dad runs offstage.

SCENE FOUR

Dad runs onstage. Alma is weeping in the corner. Hiding her face. It is darker.

DAD

Alma, you can't run off like that in the dark. Not here.

Alma cries.

ALMA

You were a horrible father growing up! I really wish I had a mom. You were never there for me.

DAD

Alma, I did the best I could. I was trying to keep you safe. You can't doubt that I loved you. It was for your own good. Can you ever forgive me?

ALMA

You've lied to me for 16 years

DAD

I wasn't lying. I was protecting you from the truth.

ALMA

That is the same thing!

DAD

Sometimes the best things are left unsaid.

ALMA

I don't need you lying to me anymore, dad. I've never needed you.

DAD

Hita, you don't mean that you are just upset. Come here it is getting dark.

ALMA

No, dad.

DAD

I know that was hard for you. But there are more than one way to be strong. You don't have to start being rude to your father.

ALMA

You're right. I need to be strong on my own right now. I don't need you to hinder me

DAD

Hinder?

ALMA

I think I'm ready to find Fina on my own, Dad.

DAD

Fine. I understand if you don't need me. I just want you to know I am here for you if you need help. I know you are very mad at me right now. Come here, Alma. Give me a hug. I think it'll help you feel better.

ALMA

No. I've been crying. I don't want you to see me.

DAD

Like I haven't seen you al mocosa before?

ALMA

Fine. You can come over here and give me a hug.

Dad goes into the shadows to hug Alma and she stabs him.

ALMA (CONT'D)

How's it going, Venado?

DAD

Cucuy.

ALMA

You really fell for it this time.

DAD

You...

ALMA

Ha, ha, ha! Alright, you got to admit that one was good. I got you. I got you! No one is

going to believe this. Well now I just have to step back and wait for your precious Alma to remove your antlers.

DAD

You leave her alone

ALMA

I deserve this power. Finally. I've waited so long to have my free reign on the other world. The only thing that has stood in my way was you, but that is not going to happen anymore.

Cucuy, as Alma, exits. Dad tries to get up but can't. Real Alma comes running on stage.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Dad!

DAD

Alma. Be careful Alma. Quickly. It's getting dark. Take the matches out of my front pocket and light one. El Cucuy is a creature of the shadows. He cannot enter the light. The light will keep you safe Alma. Remember..

ALMA

Dad! Dad! What happened? What are you talking...

DAD

El Cucuy. He hurt me. He looked exactly like you and he tricked me. He's here, Alma.

ALMA

But, But...

DAD

Listen to me Alma! El Cucuy is here! He lurks in the shadows and listens to every word we say.

ALMA

What do I do?

DAD

You have to go on without me.

ALMA

But how?

DAD

I can't tell you, Alma. El Cucuy is listening. He will use anything I tell you against you. You have to figure it out on your own.

ALMA

But I can't!

DAD

Yes, you can, Alma. You'll figure it out. I believe in you.

ALMA

Dad. We'll apply pressure with this sweater.

DAD

Don't ruin your sweater. You were given these tasks alone. Not you and I. You have to keep your eyes open.

ALMA

They're still open.

DAD

You got to be strong. And now I'm just going to close my eyes. You can do this on your own.

ALMA

No Dad, you will be fine. Dad. Dad!!!

Dad closes his eyes.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Dad! Please Dad! Help me. I'm scared Dad.

The shadows around Alma start to scurry and it starts getting darker. Alma grabs the knife El Cucuy left behind.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Oh God! No. Where do I go? Dad. We've got to get out of here.

Alma grabs her dad and drags him offstage.

SCENE FIVE

Alma drags her father around the stage as creatures in the shadows stalk her.

When she gets tired maybe she stops and lights a match.
Cries. Whatever.

Alma is stopped over her father. Death appears.

ALMA

Sebastiano?

DEATH

Actually, I have many names. Santa Muerte, the Angel of Death, the Grim Reaper, the Devil of Death. Et cetera. I've come to visit an old friend.

Alma grabs her dad's body and drags him away from
Death. Death appears again.

ALMA (CONT'D)

No! Please leave me alone. He's not dead yet. Go away. Sebastiano.

DeATH

What do you think you are doing?

ALMA

I can't just leave him here. I don't know what I'm doing, but I know I can't just leave him here.

DeATH

Where do you plan on taking him?

ALMA

I hadn't thought that far.

DEATH

Right.

ALMA

He's really dead?

DEATH

He's mostly dead. His human body is dead. But I can't take him like this.

ALMA

You're here to take my dad.

DEATH

Yes, but not El Venado. That part I can't take away. It is like a force of nature. You can't take away the elements but you can take away the man.

ALMA

You can't bring him back

DEATH

I only take life, but, you as the next in line, have to inherent this element and continue its legacy. El Venado is more than your dad. Before him it was his dad. The role has to continue.

ALMA

But he didn't train me. He never taught me what to do. I don't know the first thing about being El Venado.

DEATH

Neither did he but he did fine. It's in your blood. It's not perfect, but that is life. We're never ready. The only thing we can do is let go.

He is suffering. You've got to take these antlers off. Use that knife. Just take them off and I can get going.

ALMA

How?

DEATH

Once you take off his antlers, he will be free, as Cesar, to go to a place where he will finally be happy.

Alma takes the knife and hovers over her dad. She hesitates.

ALMA

I don't think I can do it. Can't you just do it?

DEATH

You are the next in line. No one else can take off the antlers but you. It's your role to take them, Alma.

Alma takes he knife and turns to her fathers body.

ALMA

I'm sorry dad.

Alma uses the knife to cut off her fathers antlers.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Oh god . ay dios.

DEATH

You did good, Alma. Hey, Cesar, time to go.

Death takes Cesar's hand and helps him stand up.

Dad looks lovingly at Alma.

DEATH (CONT'D)

I'll give you a moment.

Dad walks to Alma.

ALMA

I'll miss you dad.

Dad smiles and raises a hand to Alma but doesn't touch her.

DEATH

Come on Cesar. I'm a busy guy.

Dad turns around and walks off with Death. Before Death exits he turns to Alma.

DEATH (CONT'D)

Alma, I should let you know that I haven't seen Fina yet. She's still alive. Good luck.

Death exits. Alma kneels and preys with a lit match. The darkness sinks in.

SCENE SIX

As Alma preys the shadows surround her. She has to keep lighting matches as they burn out.

ALMA

Oh God, please help me through this. Protect me. Guide me. Show me how to find my way through the darkness. Oh God!

Lights a match

ALMA (CONT'D)

I can do this God. Help me find the strength within myself to take on this mantle. Oh God! How do I take on this role? How do I find the balance? How do I stand up against this force?

Alma lights another match and she is standing. There is little light left and she can see the figures moving all around her.

EL CUCUY

Alma.

ALMA

Cucuy. I know you are there. I know you are watching me. Stay back.

EL CUCUY

Alma.

ALMA

Stay back.

EL CUCUY

What are you going to do when you run out of matches, Alma?

ALMA

I'm not afraid of you.

EL CUCUY

Then turn out that match and join the darkness with me Alma.

ALMA

Give me back Fina.

Fina appears behind Alma.

Alma!

FINA

Fina! Come with me we have to get out of here.

ALMA

But Alma, I'm dead. El Cucuy killed me.

FINA

No he didn't Fina. He's pulling a trick on you. Your still alive. I talked with Death. I know you aren't dead yet.

ALMA

But Alma, I am dead.

FINA

No Fina. Come her into the light with me. I'll keep you safe.

ALMA

We're both dead Alma! Turn out the light Alma and join the darkness with me.

FINA

Cucuy! Alma lunges the match at Fina and she retreats to the shadows

ALMA

Ha ha ha!

EI CUCUY

You can't trick me Cucuy.

ALMA

Alma lights another match.

Mi Hija!

La LLORONA

Stay back.

ALMA

LA LLORONA

Come cry with me Alma.

ALMA

Stay back.

El CUCUY

You don't even know how to be El Venado. Just give up the antlers Alma.

ALMA

Never.

Alma lights another match and Ms. Chavez appears.

FINA'S MOM

Alma. Where is mi hija. Mi hija. Have you found her? Please Alma.

ALMA

Back!

El CUCUY

Ha, ha, ha! You're running out of matches Alma.

ALMA

I want what is mine! You came into my world and took my best friend.

CuCUY

El Venado, begging? It's pathetic.

Alma lights another match.

El CUCUY

One match left, Alma.

The shadows start coming at her fiercely.

FINA

Alma help me.

LA LLORONA

You should go to Ms. Chavez and cry.

FINA'S MOM

Mi Hija!

DAD

Hija it is me. Let's go back home and get some rest. You are feeling sick. You've been talking to yourself all night. You're making me worried.

ALMA

Dad?

DAD

Come here, Alma. Let me take care of you. You're not looking to well. Let's go back home.

ALMA

Dad, I...

Alma's match is running out.

DaD

Shush, now. I'm here. I know that you are scared, but there is nothing be afraid of. It's just me. Take my hand, and we'll go back home.

ALMA

I have to get Fina.

DAD

Mi hija, Fina would never be lost if it weren't for you.

ALMA

What?

DAD

You make me so sad. My own daughter won't listen to me. You ran away from me. Yes, I knew you ran away. And you lost your best friend Fina. You were so irresponsible. All of this because you were mad at me. And not a care in the world for my heart.

But I've come back. You don't have to loose me. Sebestiano gave me a second chance. He saw how endangered you were. How completely unprepared you are. He let me go to save you. Please, my child take my hand.

ALMA

I'm sorry father. I didn't mean to disappoint you. Don't leave me, again.

DAD

I'm not going anywhere. Alma, I will never leave you.

ALMA

It's really you?

DAD

Yes, Alma.

ALMA

Same clothes.

DAD

Same clothes. Same everything. It's your dad.

Alma's last match goes out.

ALMA

Dad.

DAD

Alma.

ALMA

I know you always carry a box of matches in your pocket. Mind if I use one.

Alma lights Dad on fire. The light explodes. Filling the entire stage with light. El Cucuy shrieks and runs away.

Blackout.

SCENE 8

Lights up. Alma has the antlers on. She is El Venado. Fina enters dazed and lost.

FINA

Alma!

ALMA

Fina!

FINA

Alma this thing took me and I was scared and it took me to this place and it was all dark and I couldn't get away and it was dark and....

ALMA

Fina.

Alma closes Fina's eyes.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Fina, I'm sorry. So much of this is my fault. But I need you to close your eyes. You have seen so much, you poor things. I have to take away your memories. It will be go okay. There, there, everything will be fine. We were out on the mesa. We talked about running away from home. We had a good time. We drank some whiskey and we lit a lot of matches. The bushes caught on fire and you ran. You must have felt so guilty that we lit the mesa on fire. That's why you hid in the bosque for a few days and didn't come home. Remember?

FINA

I ran?

ALMA

You ran.

FINA

Oh yeah. That's right. I should get home and tell my mom. I bet she's been worried sick. And your dad. He's going to be so mad at you. You're going to be grounded for months.

ALMA

Uh...

FINA

Alma? What's wrong?

ALMA

My dad--

Mom enters. Not as a bird.

MOM

Alma? Where have you been?

ALMA

Mom? You came back.

FINA

This is your mom?

ALMA

What are you doing here?

MOM

I'm your mom. I was worried sick. Good thing I found you. Hello, Fina.

FINA

Hello, misses...uh.... Alma's mom?

MOM

You can call me Feria. Come on, Alma. Let's go home.

ALMA

Home? Like our house?

MOM

Yes, to our house.

Alma and Mom hug.

ALMA

I missed you.

End of play

