

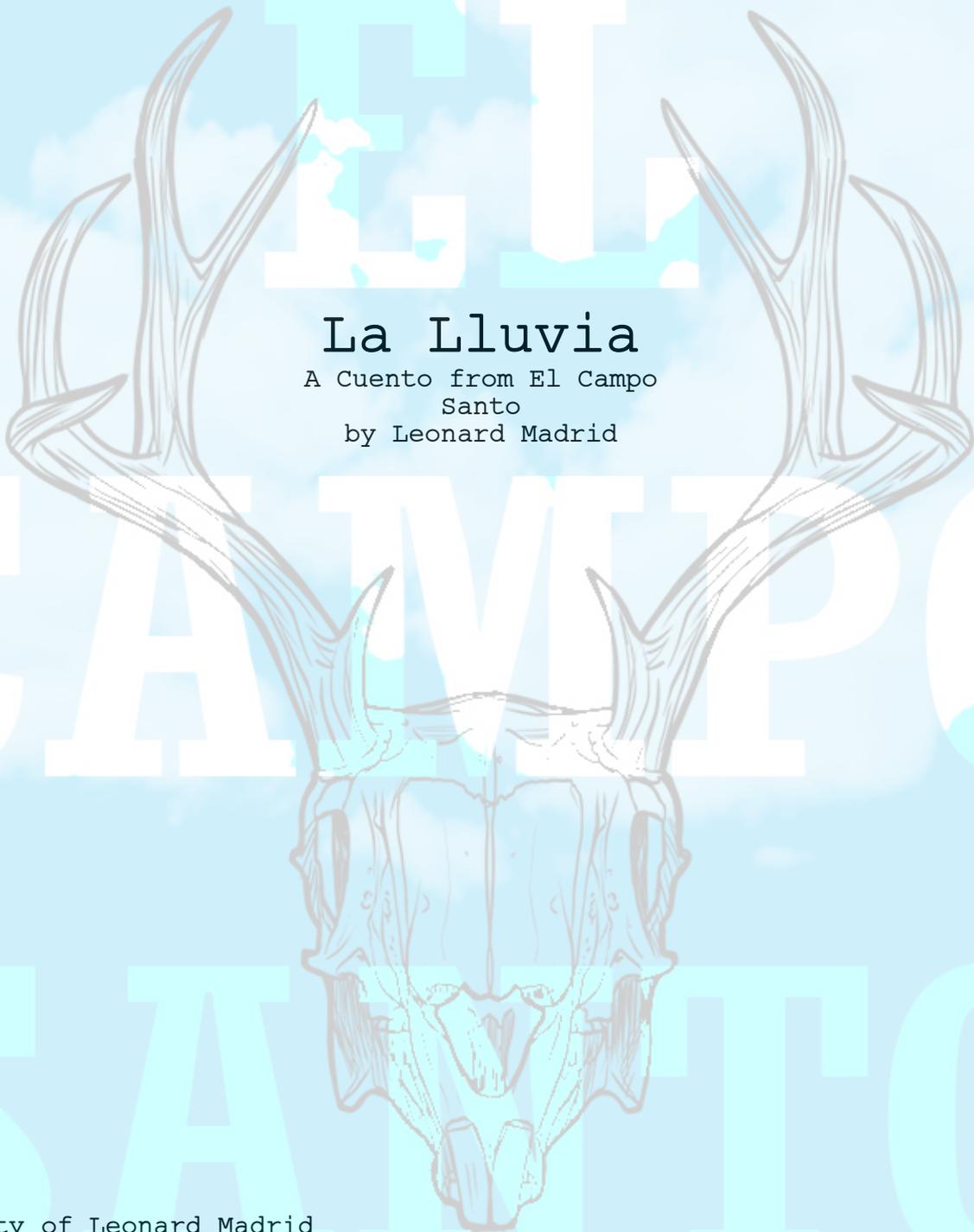
EL

## La Lluvia

A Cuento from El Campo

Santo

by Leonard Madrid



Property of Leonard Madrid  
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CHARACTER NAME

AGE

GENDER

Eliana  
Julia  
Clara  
Lluvia



SCENE ONE.

A thunderstorm in Barelas

The kind where you can hear the trees  
sing through your walls

And your house creaks a litte to join  
the song.

Eliana sits. Maybe she drinks out of a  
mug. Maybe she draws.

The lights flicker.

ELIANA

When the flood first came to Barelas, it came in a wave. it  
swept cars and people down fourth street. Scraped up pieces  
of people's yards, until it finally started to take parts of  
their houses.

Marta Romo went floating down the street on her front door  
and we never saw her again. The sirenas came from el rio and  
caught her in their arms and took her to live at the bottom  
of the rio forever.

The saints and monsters that live in every doorway and alley  
were swept down...sometimes as far south as Belen.

La Lluvia was so angry...so proud... so strong that summer  
that she wouldn't listen to anyone talk.  
Some say her tears took over that summer...tried to eat her  
whole when her husband...the Sun found another lover. Her  
tears tried to eat her whole...and so she...she tried to eat  
Barelas whole.

Years past before people were able to rebuild their houses,  
buy new cars, fix their yards.

Years past, before Barelas was back to normal.

That was the first time the flood came to Barelas.

A knock at the door

ELIANA

Years before every little creature moved back into their  
doorways and yards. Under porches.

A knock at the door.

Eliana stands and goes to the door.  
She doesn't open it.

ELIANA

Wela!

A pause

ELIANA

Wela! There's someone at the door.

Clara enters.

CLARA

Then answer it, mija. You don't leave nobody out in the rain like this.

ELIANA

I don't wanna.

CLARA

Porque? You're right there.

ELIANA

...

CLARA

Mija?

A pause. The rain changes. It get's louder. Harder.

Another knock.

CLARA

Eliana, go get your Mama. Tell her to grab the salt.

ELIANA

But...

CLARA

Now, Mija. This ain't one of them times.

Eliana exits slowly.

Clara stares at the door.

Another knock.

She opens the door.

Lluvia Enters

She is not wet.

LUVIA

Clara Aguilar.

CLARA

Clara Pacheco.

LLUVIA  
Aren't you going to invite me in?

CLARA  
To invite the rain into your home is to invite tears.

LLUVIA  
The ground is thirsty. The rio is a it's own shadow. Seeds wait in the ground for decades.

CLARA  
...

LLUVIA  
Aren't you happy to see me?

CLARA  
Of course.

LLUVIA  
Then invite me in.

CLARA  
You don't need an invitation. This house is as much yours as it is mine.

LLUVIA  
Then why won't you invite me?

CLARA  
Because...

LLUVIA  
Because?

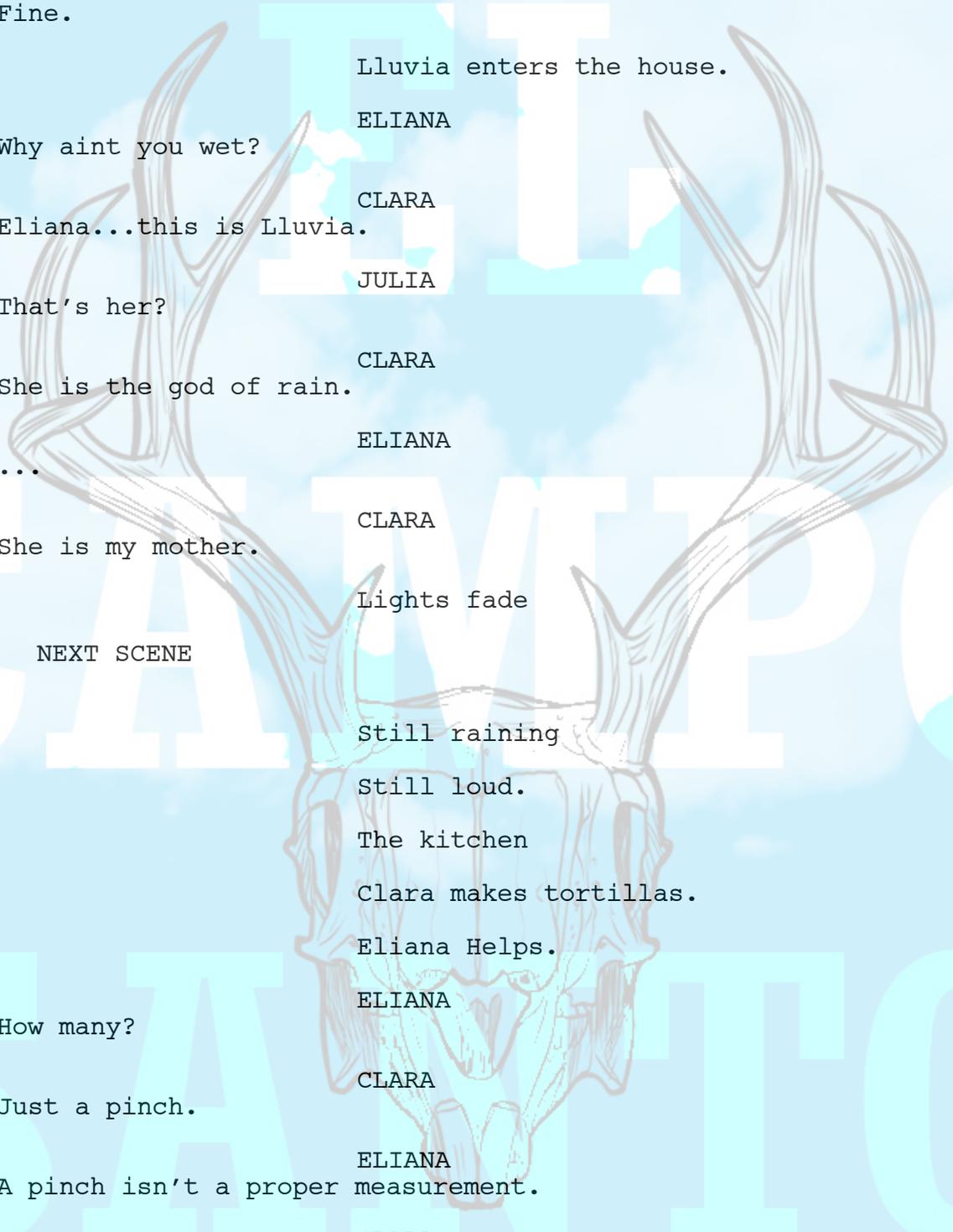
CLARA  
You're not asking because you want in, you're asking because you want to make me ask you to come in.

LLUVIA  
Am I that petty?

Enter Eliana and Julia.  
Julia is carrying a salt shaker.  
Julia drops the salt shaker..  
.it breaks.

CLARA  
That's not the word I would have picked... it's just simply who you are.

ELIANA  
Mama, who's that lady?



JULIA

Shh.

LLUVIA

Fine.

Lluvia enters the house.

ELIANA

Why aint you wet?

CLARA

Eliana...this is Lluvia.

JULIA

That's her?

CLARA

She is the god of rain.

ELIANA

...

CLARA

She is my mother.

Lights fade

NEXT SCENE

Still raining

Still loud.

The kitchen

Clara makes tortillas.

Eliana Helps.

ELIANA

How many?

CLARA

Just a pinch.

ELIANA

A pinch isn't a proper measurement.

CLARA

Enough to make the sign of the cross two times. But don't waste it, we don't have much salt left....we might need it.

ELIANA  
Big crosses or little ones.

CLARA  
In this bowl? To the edge.

ELIANA  
Nnnhnnn.

CLARA  
Now just squeeze it.

ELIANA  
Squeeze it?

CLARA  
Yeah...you gotta just squeeze it all together.

ELIANA  
Knead it.

CLARA  
Yeah, you need to do it.

ELIANA  
How much?

CLARA  
Until it all comes together.

Enter Lluvia

ELIANA  
It's too sticky.

CLARA  
It's always sticky in the beginning. You gotta give the trigo a chance to wake up, then it all starts to come together.

ELIANA  
Nnnn

CLARA  
If it's too sticky later, just add harina.

LLUVIA  
You do this all the time?

ELIANA  
Senora.

LLUVIA  
Nieta.

CLARA

People got to eat...even when the streets are full of rain.

LLUVIA

You make tortillas together?

CLARA

It's a thing grandmothers do with their grandchildren. It's a things mothers do with daughters. You wouldn't know that.

LLUVIA

...

CLARA

Have you cooked with any of your other children? There have to be hundreds.

LLUVIA

I can't be shamed for having children, Clara.

CLARA

You shouldn't be ashamed of giving birth to children...but have you actually ever HAD children? Don't you just abandon them all as soon as they're born.

LLUVIA

What do you know?

CLARA

I am not the only one. I know I am not special enough to even be not special.

LLUVIA

Eliana? Do you like making tortillas?

CLARA

You don't have to answer.

LLUVIA

Eliana?

ELIANA

Of course. I like learning anything Wela can teach me.

LLUVIA

Wela?

CLARA

Abuela.

LLUVIA

Does she even know what that means?

Yes. ELIANA

Yes. CLARA

LLUVIA  
Do you like making the tortillas or do you like learning from you Abuela?

Both. ELIANA

LLUVIA  
Which do you like more?

ELIANA  
... I like being with Wela. I like whatever she has to teach me...

LLUVIA  
Why?

ELIANA  
Because if she wants to teach it to me, then it's worth learning.

LLUVIA  
She's probably taught you things that aren't worth learning at all.

ELIANA  
Maybe.

CLARA  
Maybe?

ELIANA  
The world is changing. Maybe some things worth learning now aren't worth always learning...I guess.

LLUVIA  
...

ELIANA  
Do you want a tortilla when they're done?

CLARA  
She doesn't eat.

LLUVIA  
I eat.

CLARA

She only eats people.

ELIANA

Well, we won't be making people, but once the tortillas are done, you can put butter on them.

NEXT SCENE

The living room.

More thunder.

More rain.

Julia looks out the window.

Lluvia sits.

JULIA

The streets are flooding again. Not a wave this time...like last time. It's slowly rising...taking over street by street. Iron, Stover, HAZeldine, Atlantic, Santa fe, Pacific, Cromwell.

LLUVIA

Did you know that there used to be an acequia right in the middle of Barelás? Right in the heart of it all, a lasting temple to me. Barelénos have always been water people. My people. From the moment I came here, before the moon, my twisted brother in law, was in the sky. Before the spider fell to earth...this place was all ocean. All mine. But later it all dried up, just leaving the rio and the acequia. But the people...the people always remembered. Even people who moved here from the other side of the world...they feel it.... they're here for the water and what it brings.

JULIA

The statues on fourth have started to loose their feet, Redball's door wouldn't open, if they were there to try. Barelás coffee house is a tiny island gazing across the street at her sisters.

LLUVIA

Then, they forgot? How do you remind people of who they are? How do you remind people who they are? How do you remind people who they are?

JULIA

How?

LLUVIA

By reminding them of who I am.

JULIA  
Is that why you're doing this?

LLUVIA  
Doing what?

JULIA  
Is that why you're flooding the streets...to remind us of who you are?

LLUVIA  
No.

JULIA  
...

LLUVIA  
...

JULIA  
Then why?

LLUVIA  
Because, I want to.

JULIA  
What should I call you?

LLUVIA  
What you want.

JULIA  
You're officially my grandmother. Should I call you Abuela?

LLUVIA  
Then call me that.

JULIA  
It doesn't make you feel old?

LLUVIA  
I am old. It doesn't hurt me to point it out.

JULIA  
... Fine...then I...gues...I...But...

LLUVIA  
Yes?

JULIA  
We are thankful for the rain, Abuela. But could you make it stop before it ruins anything.

Yes. LLUVIA

... JULIA

... LUVIA

Would you? JULIA

No. LLUVIA

Lights fade

NEXT SCENE

More rain.

More thunder.

ELiana and Julia are at the table.

Five days. JULIA

Five days? That's like almost a whole week. ELIANA

You can probably mark today on that calendar too. It's almost night time. JULIA

Has it ever rained that long? ELIANA

Yeah...it has. It can rain for days and days. JULIA

Then why don't we build our houses on stilts or something? ELIANA

I can rain for days, but just not this much... JULIA

This is the most rain I have ever seen in my life. ELIANA

Me to, jita....me Too. JULIA

NEXT SCENE

More rain

More thunder

More lighting

The living room

Clara and Lluvia sit

CLARA

So what is it that you want?

LLUVIA

Anything anybody would want.

CLARA

Any person or any of you?

LLUVIA

Anyone.

CLARA

Everyone doesn't have the ability to drown a city, Lluvia.

LLUVIA

You used to call me Mama.

CLARA

That was before I learned what mothers do.

LLUVIA

...

CLARA

But none of you...none of you...you don't care. You just cover the ground with your huerfanos. Like snakes...you just leave us to fend for ourselves...

LLUVIA

...

CLARA

I won't call you mother, because you are not a mother.

LLUVIA

...

CLARA

Why are you here, Lluvia? What do you want with me?

LLUVIA

The girl.

NEXT SCENE

More rain

More thunder

More lightening

Clara stands alone

CLARA

Water falls downward...it scrapes whatever is on the top of the house, whatever trash that has been at the top of the roof and drags it downward. Til finally the bottom of the house is covered in whatver crap and trash was on the top...whatever is at the bottom gets dragged to the bottom. the same thing is true with us...whatever horrible thing your parents have gets dragged to their children and dragged further to the grandchildren and on and on...but sometimes...if you make a choice...if you fight...then you can let the good things, the love, the songs, the dance, the books, the hugs flow downward...you can let the awful things stop with you...it can stop with you.

NEXT SCENE

More rain

More thunder

More lightening

Julia and Clara sit

JULIA

Why?

CLARA

Who knows?

JULIA

You have to have some idea why?

CLARA

Hija...I am trying, but I can't see through the scars. I can't see any reason.

JULIA

Is she a sacrifice? Gods need sacrifices.

CLARA

All we do here is sacrifice. People killed in war, people killed by drugs, people killed by loneliness. All of Barelas has put itself on every altar for every god who has ever set foot on our dirt. If she needed a soul to take with her, she could have her pick.

NEXT SCENE

More rain

More thunder

More lightening

Lluvia and Eliana are at the table

LLUVIA

How old are you?

ELIANA

Thirteen years old.

LLUVIA

How many seasons is that?

ELIANA

Uuumh...

LLUVIA

If your mother had raised you right, she would have taught you to count your age in seasons. How many summers. How many winters. How many autumn winds have kissed your hair since the day you were born.

ELIANA

Hold on. Fifty-two.

LLUVIA

Then a child still.

ELIANA

Yes.

LLUVIA

A child is still flowing and beautiful. Learning and wild. When they grow up, they become more like stagnant ponds that don't want to move.

ELIANA

How old are you?

LLUVIA

What?

ELIANA  
How many summers have kissed your...your hair?

LLUVIA  
All of them.

ELIANA  
Oh.

LLUVIA  
You dont seem to like that answer.

ELIANA  
I'm not sure if it was an answer.

LLUVIA  
You could come live with me, you know?

ELIANA  
What do you mean? Like in the clouds?

LLUVIA  
Sort of. You could come with me and be mine. Be my daughter.

ELIANA  
Why don't you take your real daughter? She's in the other room.

LLUVIA  
She hates me.

ELIANA  
I mean...

LLUVIA  
What?

ELIANA  
I..it's just that...

LLUVIA  
What?

ELIANA  
I didn't know that my grandmother had a mother.

LLUVIA  
She didn't tell you about me.

ELIANA  
I didn't know that if she did that the woman would look younger than my own mother. Closer to my age.

LLUVIA

Why didn't she tell you about me?

ELIANA

She didn't tell me about you until you came to visit. She would have told me sooner, if you had come to visit sooner.

LLUVIA

I've changed my mind. I don't think I want you to come live with me.

ELIANA

That's a game they play at Washington. Offering you something then taking it away when they don't get what they want.

LLUVIA

It's not a game.

ELIANA

Would it make you feel better if I called it a technique?

LLUVIA

No.

ELIANA

An approach?

LLUVIA

Who taught you cruelty?

ELIANA

Protecting myself is not cruel.

LLUVIA

Where I go is more beautiful than any place you could ever imagine. I could give that to you. I would be protecting you.

ELIANA

Do you really want me to go with you?

LLUVIA

Yes.

ELIANA

How long?

LLUVIA

Forever.

ELIANA

Why?

LLUVIA

I don't need a reason why.

ELIANA

I do.

LLUVIA

... why?

ELIANA

Because I am happy here. With my Welita and Mama. I am happy with Paletas on Sunday morning and El Modelo on Saturday afternoon...walking the bosque on summer days. I know every doorstep in this neighborhood, every song from every window. Every dog who will bark at me, but will still let me pet them on my walk to school. I know that at three o'clock in the afternoon, I can hear the monkeeyes call to each other at the zoo, and at six, I can hear the lion roar.

LLUVIA

If you don't come with me, all of that will be under forty feet of water. You will lose everything. Your dogs, your apes, your precious Abuela will all be washed down the rio. Is that what you want?

ELIANA

No.

LLUVIA

Then come with me.

ELIANA

No.

LLUVIA

Why?

ELIANA

I just wanted to make sure you heard somebody say it at least once. No.

The rain comes down louder.  
Thunder

The wind rattles the windows.

Lighting flashes.

The house screams.

The lights go out.

## NEXT SCENE

More rain

More thunder

More lightening

Julia stands alone

JULIA

She came to me as a child. I... was angry at something. I didn't get what I wanted, so I thought I would run away. And when I ran away those days, I would run to the bosque, I thought she would never find me in all of those trees along side the rio grande. I thought she would never even think to look there. Like who would even run away to the bosque? People who would run away would head straight for the interstate, right? Hitchike west all the way to California. So, while she gathered everyone, I would think, she would send them the wrong way, and I would just be here on the Bosque. I could live here forever amongstst the monsters that lived beneath the trees.

But she would always find me. She would give me a little while to cool off, and then she would find me. Always in the same place, hungry and lonely,,, and there she would be with a little bag of burritos she had just made. Here...she would say. Let these keep you fed until you learn to fish or hunt for your food.

I would eat them, while she helped me set up my new home. She would clear out leaves and branches and help me choose the place where my bed would be...all the while giving me advice on how to build a fire or a tent...by the end of it all, I would decide to go home with her. She never said anything...she just...said goodbye, but then she would ask if I wanted to come by for a vist....like Now. And I would say yes.

Because... because she was the only thing that ever mattered to me.

But one time....just One time...things were different. While I was still angry, I was throwing things into the river...sticks or rocks... I saw the light change....and Out of the water came the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. She looked familar to me, like the memory of a dream...like when your friend's mom makes your favorite food...like something should be there, but just isn't...

She talked to me for hours and told me stories...then she asked me to come with her...and live in the rivers forever...with her and her magical people...I almost said yes...but then I heard my Mama, walking down the trail.

Her chanklas clacking the way her chanklas clack...in that rhythm...her special song....I Heard her walking down the path, and saw her with that same bag filled with burritos for me...so I wouldn't starve my first few days living on my own in the wild...so I would have something to eat while I learned how to fish or hunt. And right then I knew...that woman...Clara Pacheco loved me more than any person she had ever known in her entire life and I knew that I could never leave her...so I said no to the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. I said no. And I went home. after that the droughts came.

## NEXT SCENE

More rain

More Thunder  
MoreLighting

Water

Flood.

The walls are swept away. The furniture is swept away.

Clara grabs Julia.

Julia Grabs ELiana.

Eliana grabs Clara.

And they hold tight.

As the world washes away.

Lluvia enters.

The world moves around her.

She reaches out her arms to Eliana

Julia and Clara hold her tight.

The water rises.

Lights out

More rain

More wind

More thunder

More water

Silence.

NEXT SCENE

ELIANA

When the flood came to Barelas again, it flooded the streets slowly. Rose slowly, but it came harder and faster...for one house. One house was swept away down to the foundation. When the rain finally left, flowed downstream...the only thing left was the three people that lived there with the clothes on their back.

