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REYNOLDS, ISABELL DOYLE. A Production of Alejandro Casona's  
La dama del alba. (1973) Directed by: Dr. Herman Middleton,  
Pp. 210.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the script, to produce the play, and to evaluate the production of Alejandro Casona's La dama del alba.

The first chapter includes the following: (1) Research of the playwright's background, (2) research of the play's background, (3) character description and analysis, and (4) a discussion of the setting.

The second chapter consists of the prompt book for the production, performed in the Cultural and Educational Center, Chatham, Virginia, on May 2 and 3, 1973. Types of notations included are: (1) movement, composition and picturization, (2) tempo, (3) stage business, and (4) sound and lights. Four production photographs are included.

The third and concluding chapter is the director's critical evaluation of the production. Discussed in this chapter are: (1) achievement of interpretation for the production, (2) actor-director relationships during the rehearsal period, and (3) audience reaction to the production.

A program, the letter of permission from the Sociedad General de Autores de España, and the review comprise the Appendix.

A PRODUCTION OF ALEJANDRO CASONA'S  
"LA DAMA DEL ALBA"

by

Isabell D. Reynolds

A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro  
1973

Approved by

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APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following  
committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The  
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David R. Batcheller

May 9, 1973  
Date of Examination

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my daughter, Susan,  
who, since the age of eight, has been my most competent  
assistant and ablest critic.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful acknowledgement is made to Dr. Herman Middleton for his help and encouragement as thesis adviser; to Dr. David R. Batcheller and Miss Kathryn McA. England for serving on the committee, to Miss John Boyle, the translator, who first brought the work of Casona to my attention, and to the cast and crews for their work in the production.

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CHAPTER I  
ANALYSIS OF "LA DAMA DEL ALFA"

Background of Playwright

In his book on the life and theatre of Alejandro Casona, Richard quotes the following from a letter written by Casona to William H. Shoemaker, editor of his play,

Nuestra Natacha:

I was born and raised in an old ancestral mansion which, by being the largest in the village, is called by all 'la casona.' It is common in villages (where, because there exist so many relatives, names are often the same) to distinguish the families by the place where they live; thus one says, 'los de la Fuente,' 'los del Valle,' and in my case, 'los de la Casona.' On publishing my first book destined for the public, I decided to adopt this pseudonym which I have used ever since.

Thus the man born Alejandro Rodríguez Álvarez in the little Asturian village of Besulla in the rugged country of north-western Spain on March 23, 1903, became Alejandro Casona, the prolific playwright we know as "one of the masters of contemporary theatre . . . whose plays have been translated

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<sup>1</sup> J. Rodríguez Richard, Vida y Teatro de Alejandro Casona, (Oviedo: Gráficas summa, 1963), pp. 12-13.

and performed with great success in many countries, in both  
the New World and the Old."<sup>2</sup>

Casona's education and choice of a career were undoubtedly influenced by his parents who were both dedicated teachers. His early schooling was in the many parts of Asturias to which the professional duties of his parents took them ending in Gijón, Asturias, where Casona spent his first two years in high-school. His last two were completed in Murcia, after which, he entered the University of Murcia where he graduated in 1921. In 1922 he began his studies at the Escuela Superior del Magisterio, a training school for elementary-school superintendents and normal-school professors. He was graduated in 1926 and, in 1928, went to an isolated village in the Pyrenees, Les, Valle de Arán, as an elementary-school superintendent.

It was in Gijón, during those first two years of high-school, that Casona made two wonderful discoveries: first, the reading of the play, La vida es sueño by Calderon, and second the discovery of the theatre itself.

Then I saw theatre for the first time. And this disturbed me in a terrible manner, even to the point that I could not sleep. I had discovered something sensational, a marvellous world . . . which appeared

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<sup>2</sup>

Jose A. Balsiero and J. Riis Owre, Eds., La barca sin pescador, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. v.

to me better than any book of stories, better than any novel, better than anything I had seen in my life up to that moment.<sup>3</sup> I could not have dreamed the discovery of the theatre.

While attending the University of Murcia, he began to write for some reviews, to make presentations to various literary gatherings, and to participate in theatrical presentations given by the University.

The three years Casona spent in Valle de Arán were fruitful ones for his future in the theatre. He founded a children's theatre, El Pajaro Pinto, in which the school children acted in simple dramatizations of traditional themes, written in the dialect of the region. There, also, he wrote three plays, later to be produced professionally: Otra vez el Diablo, La sirena varada, and an adaption of a story by Oscar Wilde: El crimen de Lord Arturo. He wrote and published a volume of poems, La flauta del sapo (1930). This is the first book in which the author appears under the pseudonym, Alejandro Casona. His other publications carried the name A. Rodríguez  
<sup>4</sup> Alvarez.

On April 14, 1931, the Second Republic was established. Among its reforms was the modernization of education in Spain,

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<sup>3</sup> Rodríguez Richard, Vida y Teatro de A. C., p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Rodríguez Richard, Vida y Teatro de A. C., p. 19.

especially in the rural areas. Under the supervision of the Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes, D. Manuel Bartolome Cossío was in charge of an organization called the Patronato de Misiónes Pedagógicas. The purpose of this group was to supplement the work of the schools, providing both adults and children "a means of contact with the artistic and scientific culture of the urban world and thus to stimulate both intellectual activity and a sense of awareness of membership in the nation."<sup>5</sup> The dramatic activities of the Misiones were divided between Federico García Lorca and Alejandro Casona. García Lorca was made director of the travelling university-theatre, La Barraca, while Casona directed the activities of the Teatro del Pueblo--the theatre of the people. For five years (1931-1936) Casona wrote, adapted, and directed plays acted by his group of students who performed "in the plazas and arcades and parks of more than three hundred towns. And, as he modestly says, if he has done one fine thing in his life, it was this."<sup>6</sup> Retablo Jovial contains five one-act plays written and performed by the Teatro del Pueblo, two of which: Sancho Panza en la

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<sup>5</sup> Ruth C. Gillespie, Ph.D., "Introducción," La sirena varada, (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1951), p. vi.

<sup>6</sup> Balsiero and Owre, La barca sin pescador, p. xvii.

Ínsula and Entremes del mancebo que casó con mujer brava were later produced in the professional theatre.<sup>7</sup>

In 1934, La sirena varada was performed by the professional company of Margarita Xirgu and Enrique Borrás on March 17 in the Teatro Español in Madrid. The year before, it had won the Lope de Vega prize for new plays. The play was a brilliant success and established Casona as one of the outstanding dramatists of Spain. He was now to devote himself completely to the professional theatre.

Otra vez el diablo, the first play he had written, although now somewhat revised, was performed by the Xirgu-Borrás company in the same theatre in 1935. The same year saw the production of El misterio del María Celeste, based on a story by and in collaboration with Hernandez Catá. This was done in Valencia by the Rambal company. Both of these were successful, but not outstanding. Then in February, 1936, came the opening of his play Nuestra Natacha in the Teatro Victoria in Madrid. The leading part was played by Josefina Díaz. Natacha is an idealistic young woman who, in the face of cruel and stupid traditional conventionalities upheld by the directors of her school, and at great personal sacrifice is able to put into effect her ideas for the

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<sup>7</sup>Alejandro Casona, Retablo Jovial, (Buenos Aires: El Ateneo, 1949).

rehabilitation of underprivileged youth. Natacha apparently was seen as a symbol of non-conforming youth in the Second Republic.

Casona took no part in politics, and it may be he wrote this play with no militant purpose in mind. Perhaps the same may be said of Galdós. But because of Electra the Conservative cabinet of Marcelo Azcarraga fell and was succeeded by the Liberals under Sagasta. When Nuestra Natacha opened in León two days before the outbreak of what Casona has called 'la hondura total de la tragedia,' its author was marked as a republican, and all those who had gathered there at a banquet to celebrate his triumph were later executed.<sup>8</sup>

Casona fled with his wife and daughter to Asturias and on to France in December, 1936. There he was offered the position of literary director of the Díaz-Collado company which was about to tour America. Casona accepted the offer and he and his family left Cherbourg for Mexico in March, 1937, and an exile that lasted twenty-five years.

Two years of touring, writing new plays, producing the old and the new in Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Columbia, Peru and Chile followed. Everywhere Casona's plays were met with enthusiasm. Finally, the tour reached Buenos Aires, and it was there, in 1939, that Casona decided to make his home. It was there in 1944 that La dama del alba had its première. He also purchased a country home in Punta del Este,

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<sup>8</sup> Balsiero and Owre, La barca sin pescador, p. xx.

Uruguay, which he called "la Sirena" in memory of his first success. While continuing to write almost a play a year for the stage, he was active in the development of the motion-picture industry in Argentina.

Then, in April, 1962, there was an occasion of great joy for Casona. His La dama del alba was presented in the Teatro Bellas Artes on April 22 by the company under the direction of José Tamayo. It was the first play presented to the Spanish public by Casona since Nuestra Natacha in 1936. Casona went to Madrid for this performance and, greatly moved by his reception, returned to make his home in Madrid.

The Spanish audiences soon began to see his plays: February, 1963, Otra vez el diablo (Madrid); December, 1963, Los árboles mueren de pie (Madrid - directed by Casona); La casa de los siete balcones (Madrid - directed by Casona); El caballero de las espuelas de oro (Madrid); and on September 10, 1965, Las tres perfectas casadas (Madrid). The critic for the newspaper Ya, in his review following this performance, notes: "It [the play] was followed with interest by the public who applauded at great length at the end. Ismael Merlo advanced before the tumult to communicate to the audience that Casona, convalescing from surgery, was not in the theatre, and to thank them in his name for the prolonged

applause that was heard."<sup>9</sup> Casona had been suffering from a heart ailment. He died on September 17, 1965.

### Philosophy of Playwright

Teacher and poet--here we have already two qualities which, directly or indirectly, with greater or lesser emphasis, will continue to appear in Casona's writing. For in all his works--even those in which the fanciful predominates--we can find a wholesome lesson, a constructive didacticism. The didactic purpose, although subordinated by Casona's artistry to second place, is always apparent, arising from a fusion of imaginative richness, intellectual subtlety, and lyrical grace which is the characteristic atmosphere of his drama. To express this differently: the useful becomes beautiful, the inexpressible leads to the discovery of truth which, if it gives pain, also brings salvation.<sup>10</sup>

"The didactic purpose" is undoubtedly the reason for Casona being a wonderful storyteller, for one can start the plot story in his plays, in every case, with "once upon a time." Trilling discusses "the drastic reduction in the status of narration, of telling stories," in our modern literature, discussing how the modern author has turned against Aristotelean precepts,<sup>11</sup> Casona, however, in marvelous poetic prose, tells a story which has a beginning,

<sup>9</sup> Teatro Español: 1965-1966, (Madrid: Aguilar, 1966), p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> Balsiero and Owre, La barca sin pescador, p. xiii.

<sup>11</sup> Lionel Trilling, Sincerity and Authenticity, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 134.

a middle, and an end. The stories may tell of real people in an unreal world, of unreal people in a real world, with such protagonists as God, Death, Devil, or Love, but he produces a fiction capable of holding our attention and wonder throughout the tale and a sense of satisfaction at the end.

All of this is done with tenderness and humor. All is done on a realistic level. We accept characters from "mas allá," the other side of real, as completely real. His characters "glow with intrinsic reality, with a joyful vitality, with a pure inner poetry, and with a healthful and altruistic purpose."<sup>12</sup>

Gutza, in La Realidad Caleidoscópica de Alejandro Casona, chapter by chapter, shows how Casona makes a reality of the irrational, a reality of fantasy, a reality of illusion, a reality of "mas allá," a reality of dreams and predictions, a reality of love, and concludes:

Casona, then, is assured his place in the Spanish theatre and in the universal theatre, because he has done more than ask questions, he has given the public very positive answers to 'what can the soul do for and through itself,' if it lets itself be guided by two important forces, both manifestations of the Absolute: love and life.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Balsiero and Owre, La barca sin pescador, p. xxv.

<sup>13</sup>Esperanza Gurza, La Realidad Caleidoscópica de Alejandro Casona, (Oviedo: La Cruz, 1968), p. 136.

From his plays, the man Casona is found to be a man who loved life, loved people, loved beauty, loved music, and was capable of expressing all this in dramatic language, characterized by humor, charm, grace, irony, and poetry.

Plays of the Playwright

Casona's plays are listed below with the date and estreno (first performance) in parentheses.

1. Otra vez el Diablo (Madrid, 1935). The first play Casona wrote - probably in 1928.
2. El crimen de Lord Arturo (Zaragoza, 1929). This was later produced in Havana in 1938. It is based on an Oscar Wilde story.
3. La sirena varada (Madrid, 1934). Winner of the Lope de Vega prize.
4. El misterio del 'María Celeste' (Madrid, 1935). Written in collaboration with and based on a story by Alfonso Hernandez Catá.
5. Nuestra Natacha (Madrid, 1936).
6. Prohibito suicidarse en primavera (Mexico City, 1937). A delightful translation of this play into English may be found in Modern Spanish Theatre, edited by Michael Benedikt and George E. Wellwarth, A Dutton Paperback (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1969.)

7. Romance de Dan y Elsa (Caracas, 1938).
8. Sinfonía inacabada (Montevideo, 1940).
9. Marie Curie (Buenos Aires, 1940). In collaboration with Francisco Madrid.
10. Las tres perfectas casadas (Buenos Aires, 1941).
11. La dama del alba (Buenos Aires, 1944).
12. La barca sin pescador (Buenos Aires, 1945).  
  
La barca sin pescador has been translated into English and may be found in The Modern Spanish Stage: Four Plays, Edited by Marion Holt (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970).
13. La milinera de Arcos (Buenos Aires, 1947).
14. Los árboles mueren de pie (Buenos Aires, 1949).
15. Siete gritos en el mar (Buenos Aires, 1952).
16. La tercera palabra (Buenos Aires, 1953).
17. Corona de amor y muerte (Buenos Aires, 1955).
18. Carta de una desconocida (Buenos Aires, 1957). This play is based on a novel by Stefan Zweig.
19. La casa de los siete balcones (Buenos Aires, 1957).
20. Tres diamantes y una mujer (Buenos Aires, 1961).
21. El caballero de las espuelas de oro (Madrid, 1964).

#### Background of the Play

In an interview given in Buenos Aires in 1952,

reported by Richard, Casona said:

The most lasting works will always be those which have their roots profoundly imbedded in the enigma: terrestrial energy, panoramas, legends, superstitions, characters of the native land. I am certain that as soon as I put myself to planning a plot, the types and places of the land where my eyes opened to the marvel of light, begin to awaken in my subconscious,-- that Asturias rainy, cloudy, which in my boyhood memories smells of woods and wet grass; Asturias of mines and sea, of enormous deep ravines, of sharp cliffs, and of the inaccessible peaks lost in the mysterious gray of snow.<sup>14</sup>

This may be an important reason for the writing of this play: Casona's deep nostalgia for his native land. That the play was written in 1944, the same year that it was produced in Buenos Aires, is generally agreed upon, but Richard feels that it must have been growing within for a long time during these first seven years of his exile from Spain.<sup>15</sup> The setting is in a little village in Asturias and is filled with examples of life, superstitions, and stories of Asturias.

In another interview given in Barcelona in 1963, Richard quotes Casona as saying:

I am accustomed to plan my comedies while taking a walk and almost all of them have come to birth in the Botanical Gardens (in B.A.), except for La dama del alba, which was born in the square of San Martín

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<sup>14</sup>Rodríguez Richard, Vida y Teatro de A.C., pp. 13-14.

<sup>15</sup>José Rodríguez Richard, ed., La dama del alba, (Madrid: Ediciones Alcalá, 1968), pp. 13-14.

when it was the most beautiful corner in Buenos Aires. Now, divided in two and traversed by automobiles. . . , it no longer serves as a place to write comedies.<sup>16</sup>

It may also have been written with Marguerita Xirgu in mind since the brilliant Spanish actress who produced La sirena varada and Nuestra Natacha, playing the feminine lead in both (as well as in many others of his plays) was now in Buenos Aires.<sup>17</sup> Her company did produce it first on November 3, 1944, and she played the part of Peregrina.

Then, in La dama del alba, we find recurring the themes of suicide, the unreal in the real world, the solution of problems by love, the facing up to facts in the real world, which apparently turned over in Casona's mind all his life and variations on which are found in many of his plays.

With this constant use of ideas and characters which are apparently analogous, there is a danger of Casona's restricting his art to a single norm. Fancy--that maiden whom Goethe once called the eternally restless daughter of Jupiter--might indeed lose her fresh charm at the hands of a dramatist less expert than Casona, and become monotonous; but in his work this constant use of the same type of materials is, rather, a means of achieving thematic unity.<sup>18</sup>

Some critics have accused Casona of having taken his

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>18</sup> Balsiero and Owre, La barca sin pescador, p. xxv.

story from Asturian legends, but Casona denied this: ". . . there does not exist in Asturias or outside it any such legend that I know of similar to my Dama del alba."<sup>19</sup> Nor has such a legend been found is Richard's final word on the subject.

Included in the Xirgu Company in the Buenos Aires première were Amélia de la Torre (Angelica), Susana Canales (Dorina), and Albert Closas (Martín). The play was thought by the critics the best yet written by Casona and it was so popular with the audiences that it continued to play two months longer than was originally planned.

La dama del alba has been performed in French in Paris (1948), in English in Johannesburg (1949), in German in Zurich, Munich, and Berlin (1949, 1950, 1951), in Portuguese in Lisbon (1950), in Hebrew in Tel Aviv (1951), in Flemish in Antwerp (1951), in Greek in Athens (1957), in Swedish in Norrkoping (1958), in Czech in Prague (1962). There is also a version of this play prepared for opera: libretto by Andre Bell, music by Emil Demais. It was performed in Tours, France, in 1962. In Spain since its enthusiastically received début in Madrid in 1962, it has been put on film (1965) and on television (1965).

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<sup>19</sup> Rodríguez Richard, La dama del alba, pp. 15-20.

Theme

Completely developed theatrically, the theme of La dama del alba concerns Death as a companion and friend, the objective being to humanize Death. Death is not an abstract personification. Here, Death is a beautiful woman who only performs deeds of kindness. Death is always behind the mirror, the reflection of our thoughts and deeds.

Secondary themes handled in the play are love as hope, suicide, and adultery.

Form

La dama del alba is a serious comedy in four acts. Comedy is here applied because the play ends happily in its promise for the future of its characters. There is unity of plot and place. All four acts take place in the same setting: In a place in Asturias, Spain, in what may be called the family room of a farmhouse. The author designates the time as: "Sin tiempo"--without time. It is a play that can be played in any period of time.

The time that passes between the acts is clearly designated: Act II follows Act I by a half-hour. Act III is seven "full moons" later, followed by Act IV a few hours later that same night.

Style

The style of this production is realistic. Much time was spent in researching Spanish architectural details and furnishings in order to give an authentic Spanish atmosphere to the setting. Costumes have been gathered on the advice of two of the cast who were recently in Spain. Death is portrayed with no special effects; she appears just what she is called: La Peregrina--a pilgrim lady with her pilgrim staff in her hand. Electric lighting operated by the cast is being used since the time of this production is present, and we know that a huge hydroelectric plant is functioning in the area in Asturias where the action very well may have taken place. Since it is also the area through which for several hundred years people have made the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, there is nothing unusual about the appearance of a pilgrim.

Characters

La Peregrina (The Pilgrim Lady) is death presented in the form of a beautiful, loving woman. She longs to be loved, but that is denied her. She is "the lady of the dawn" who brings blessings in disguise. She has a blessing for all, but "I do not command, I must obey." She wishes very much that people see her as a friend and companion. Her touch is icy, but brings peace. She is the mirror always with us.

Telva is the housekeeper for the family, a comedy

character. She is in her sixties: practical, worldly wise, quick to speak her mind and loves a bit of gossip. She lost her husband and seven sons in a mine explosion, but she does not sit at the door and weep. She washed them, buried them, and then planted seven trees in whose shade she finds peace. She is a wonderful mixture of religious and ribald sentiments.

Abuelo (Grandfather) is a man "almost seventy." He was close to death in the mine accident and he knows death because he has thought of it often. He loves his daughter and grandchildren. He would be a happy man were it not for Madre. He is wise and kind, a man of vitality. He recognized Peregrina for what she is and stands up to her with vigor and sometimes with a sense of humor. He says, "Though this life is harsh, it is the best that I know."

Madre is a woman in her forties, the character that creates the conflict in the family. She has never recovered from the death of her oldest daughter, Angelica. Although she has three other children, she will never be at peace until her daughter's body is found and buried where she can visit her and put flowers on her grave. She has imposed mourning on the whole family and is very difficult to live with. "The children walk in stocking feet," says Telva. "She is carrying a thorn in her side," says Grandfather, "and she will never

give it up." Later, in the play as she is somewhat won over by Adela, she is a very likeable person, but she has become over-protective, especially of Martín.

Martín is a young man of twenty-six or seven who was married to Angélica for three days before she disappeared in the river. He is a good man, a good worker, and for four years has kept his tongue over a secret that would hurt the whole family. Madre appreciates him but gives him trouble by insisting that he think more about Angélica. To keep him close by she hides his guns and tries to run his life. He is brusque with her at times but only because he is a man who is carrying in his breast a terrible secret. He is capable of tender and abiding love.

Adela is a girl of twenty who, by that age, as an orphan, had had so little happiness in her life that she attempts suicide. She had known only "one day of happiness." On being saved from the water and being adopted by the family, she glows with love. The family comes to adore her and Martín to love her. She brings sunshine into the house of mourning. She is gentle with all the family. She sings and tells stories and generally softens all the lives around her.

Angélica is Madre's daughter who disappeared four years ago and is believed drowned. Her family loved her,

thinking her the sweetest, best-natured girl in the world. At twenty she married Martín and left him three days later. For four years she has "been passed from one hand to another like a filthy coin." She had run off with another man who quickly left her. She seeks forgiveness for her sins and to be taken back in her family. But the mirror tells her this cannot be.

Quico is a mill hand on the farm, a comedy character. He is young with quite an eye for the ladies. He is quick to hold his own both with the sharp tongue and the gossip. He becomes attached to Adela. He is courteous and respectful to Madre.

The three children: Andrés, the eldest, age 14; Dorina, a girl, age 12, and Falín, the youngest boy, age 10. These are the ages chosen for this production. They are sweet and good children who have been kept from school and outside activities by their mother's mourning and fears. They love stories and seek them on every occasion. They love games, but the quiet ones that do not disturb Madre. They love Martín for he represents life to them. They play with Death.

The three young men and three young women in Act IV: these young people are out to have a good time at the fiesta.

They bring comedy to Act IV as they sing, they tease, they gossip, and they carry out the superstitions of the fiesta. They are quick to be overwhelmed by the "miracle" of the waters, and fall to their knees in prayer.

### Plot

Act I opens in the family room of Grandfather's house in Asturias. The family, composed of Madre, Andrés, Dorina, Falín, and Grandfather are just finishing supper. Telva is hovering around waiting to clear the table. We learn from the conversation that the children are not allowed to go to school because they will have to cross the river. Madre would have no one in her family go near the river. In the ensuing conversation it comes out that this is the very day in December on which four years before, Angélica, Madre's eldest daughter, three days married to Martín, who has moved in with the family, drowned herself in the river. Her scarf was found on the river bank but her body has never been found. Madre remains in mourning and imposes her will on the entire family. A Pilgrim lady comes to the door and asks to rest a little while. Martín leaves for the high pasture to cut out some young bulls for a fair, but worries Madre because he is going to ride "Commandante," a wild young colt. Martín says he must do this because the mare he ordered saddled has run

off. Madre is also upset because Martín will not spend this evening by her side. Martín is abrupt about her pleas. When he goes to look for his spurs, Peregrina, the Pilgrim lady, brings them to him and puts them on for him. He leaves for his trip with the children running out with him to "hold the reins." Madre goes upstairs to pray and Telva sits quietly by shelling peas. Grandfather feels he has seen Peregrina before and questions her. She admits to having been in this region before, but it has always been at a time of death as Grandfather later reasons out. The children come running in and Telva announces that it is their bedtime, but they beg to stay with Peregrina who may have some new stories for them. Grandfather agrees to look after them and Telva goes off grumbling. Noticing that Peregrina seems cold, he goes out to gather more wood for the fire and she is left alone with the children. The children tell her about the times when Angélica told them stories. Peregrina asks: "Who is Angélica?" Peregrina and the children then play games which end in her laughing almost to the point of hysteria. The children discover that she has never laughed before, but then they are used to adults who do not laugh. Peregrina is tired now and the children lull her to sleep with sing-songs. Before she goes to sleep, however, she warns them to wake her at nine o'clock because she has an

appointment she must keep at that hour. Grandfather sends the children to bed and sits pondering where he had seen her before.

Act II opens on the same scene close to a half-hour later. Grandfather in conversation with Telva comes upon the truth about who Peregrina is. He sends Telva to guard the children while he confronts Peregrina with who she is and what is she doing here. She had come to take Martín who was supposed to have an accident at the El Rabión pass on his way to the high pasture, but now the hour has passed and she has failed. Grandfather greets this news triumphantly. But then Peregrina says that this hour of hers never passes entirely; it is only postponed. Since Grandfather sees no more harm in store for his family at present, he agrees to part with her as an old friend. But, at this moment, Martín is heard shouting for Telva to open the door. Grandfather tries to get Peregrina to leave by another door so she won't see Martín, but she says, "His hour is already gone." She waits in the shadows for the door to be opened. Madre comes running down the stairs as Martín enters with a girl in his arms whom he has rescued from the river. Madre, for a moment, thinks it is Angélica. Grandfather disposes of this. All try to revive the girl. When she comes to, she tells them

that she is an orphan with no future and no hope who can only remember one day of happiness in her life. She had intended suicide. Against the protestations of Madre, the girl, Adela, is put in Angélica's room. Left alone together, Grandfather taunts Peregrina with missing out on another death this night. But she says: "Yes, it is all the same, a deep river, a drowning girl, this house, but it wasn't this night! Seven moons are still lacking." So she leaves with a promise that she will return when the moon is full again seven times.

Act III is the evening of Peregrina's promised return. Grandfather is busy watching the roads and warning Adela, for whom he fears, to stay close to him. It is the eve of Saint John's Day--midsummer night--the shortest night of the year. It is a time of fiesta when the waters are full of miracles and the night is filled with superstitious happenings for lovers. Adela has won over the hearts of everyone in the house. She is shown singing and storytelling with the children who adore her. We learn that she and Martín are in love with each other though it has not been mentioned between them. Madre has taken a walk through the village and plans on attending the fiesta. Peregrina arrives and Grandfather tries to talk her out of taking anyone from the house unless

it be himself. When he asks why she was not satisfied with Angélica four years ago, she asks, "Who is Angélica?" She does not know her, she assures the Grandfather, but figures Martín must know something and she will get to the bottom of this mystery. Grandfather is sent off as Martín comes downstairs. Peregrina calls Adela and goes into the kitchen. Neither Adela nor Martín know that she is there. So Martín confesses his love for Adela, but tells her they can never marry because Angélica did not die four years ago; she ran off with another man. Martín leaves saying he will go away tomorrow. Adela runs upstairs in tears. But Peregrina has figured out what must be done and when the children return from a first trip to the square, they beg Peregrina a story. She tells them about a girl long dead in the water is found with flowers in her hair and a smile on her face miraculously preserved by the water. "It hasn't happened yet, but it's near. This night all the waters of the world carry a drop from the Jordan."

Act IV is much later that night. Young men and young women come singing into the house looking for wood for the bonfire. Telva joins them in a bit of spicy gossip about the Eve of San Juan's doings and off they all go to the square. Martín and Adela decide to make the most of time together and have a good time dancing tonight. Madre, meanwhile, has made

it clear to Adela that she knows they are in love and is not opposed to it. This makes Adela very unhappy knowing that she and Martín can never marry while Angélica lives and that she cannot tell the secret. She starts once again for the river, but is stopped by Peregrina who assures her there is a happy future for her and that tomorrow all will be well. Adela, Grandfather, and the children leave for the fiesta. Then a strange girl appears and Peregrina says, "Angélica!" Defeated and repentent, Angélica has returned home hoping for the love and forgiveness of her family. Peregrina shows her how her going away four years ago almost destroyed the family and that her return would destroy it again. Peregrina convinces her to salvage the only good thing left her: the memory of her. Angélica agrees to go with her. Peregrina puts a crown of flowers on her head and gently leads her to the river. The others return to the house and a short time later, Quico enters with the news that Angélica had been found, "venerated by the water as if she had just died." We know from the looks on the faces of Adela and Martín that all is well with them now. Madre prays and cries with joy. Her daughter is returned to her. The "miracle" of the waters has solved the problems of the play. Peregrina goes on her way satisfied.

Choice of Script

With all the plays in the world to choose from, the director was having a difficult time finding the "right script," the one that interested and challenged her, the one she might be able to cast properly, the one that would appeal to audiences, and the one that was suitable for the times. She planned to do the play on a proscenium stage and preferred a realistic style of production.

Suggestions were asked from Miss Jean Boyle, a fellow-teacher at Chatham Hall, who asked whether the director had ever heard of Alejandro Casona, the Spanish playwright. The director had never heard of him. Then Miss Boyle said she was translating one of his plays into English. There was, to her knowledge, no English translation and she rhapsodized over the wonderful story, the wonderful characters, and the wonderful philosophy of the play. The director wanted very much to read the play. Miss Boyle finished her translation during the summer of 1972, and the script was put in the director's hands in September, 1972. The director read the script and became as enthusiastic about the play as the translator. It was a brand new story with a brand new twist told in an intriguing poetic manner. It was a play with all sorts of realistic possibilities. It was simple and charming, but the most exciting thing about it was the fact that it would be a première performance in the United States.

In January, 1973, the director received her script to keep and the work was begun. The name of the play was La dama del alba--the lady of the dawn.

#### Director's Note

The goals which the director set for herself in doing this play were: (1) to present Casona's intent of portraying a realistic troubled family in realistic surroundings as a serious comedy in which the playwright's super-objective was to present Death as a humanized friend who solves the problems of the family and brings the play to a happy close, (2) to create in the mind of the audience the illusion of reality by convincing human-life characterizations of this family in Asturias, Spain, (3) to present in the United States a premiere performance in English of La dama del alba, and (4) to create a foundation for the organizing of a community theatre in Chatham, Virginia, where the play was to be done.

In order to aid the illusion of reality in the atmosphere of a Spanish family in Spain, it was decided to keep the Spanish pronunciation of the names, and to keep in as many Spanish words that would be normally understood by the audience, and to adhere to a literal translation of the play. This was

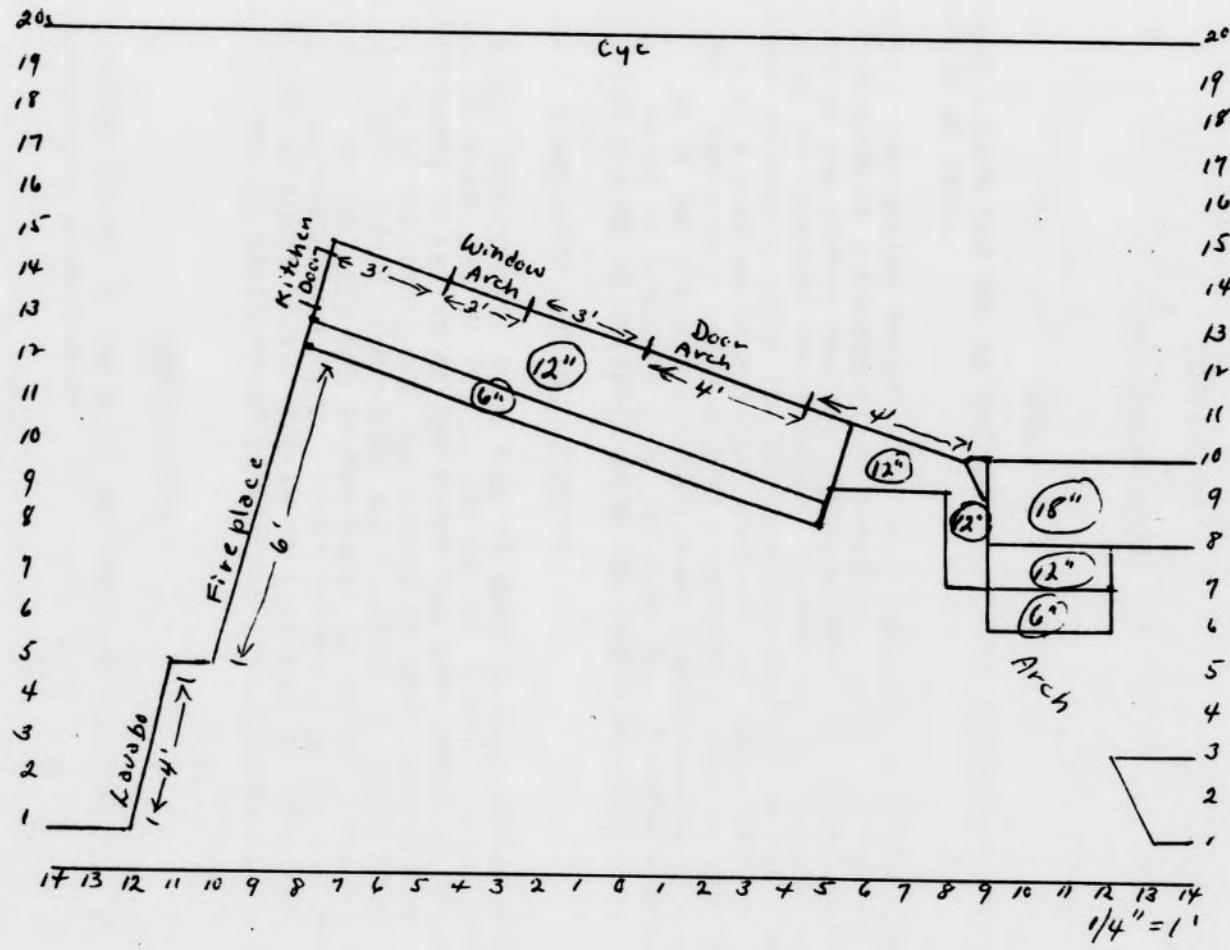
done in all but one detail: the name Angélica, pronounced with a breathed "h" sound for the letter "g" and accented on the second syllable was not easy for the cast or the director to handle, so its diminutive, Angelita, was substituted in this production.

The translator, for years, had hoped to organize a community theatre in Chatham, Virginia. The director was persuaded to assist in fulfilling this hope. It was decided to give the production in the Cultural and Educational Center in Chatham, Virginia, with tryouts open to the townspeople.

Figure 1. The Set



Figure 2. The Floor Plan



CHAPTER II  
THE PROMPT BOOK

Act I

HOUSE LIGHTS DIM OUT AS THE CURTAIN OPENS WITH STAGE LIGHTS COMING UP FULL.

SCENE: THE ACTION TAKES PLACE IN A COMBINATION DINING AND LIVING ROOM IN A FARMHOUSE IN ASTURIAS, SPAIN. A DOOR UC LEADS TO THE CORRAL AND THE OUTBUILDINGS. AN ARCHED, CURTAINED DOOR UR LEADS TO THE KITCHEN. STAIRS UL JUST BEYOND A WIDE ARCHED OPENING L LEADS TO THE SLEEPING QUARTERS OF THE FAMILY. OFF L IS A DOOR WE CANNOT SEE WHICH IS THE FRONT DOOR OF THE HOUSE. THERE IS A LARGE HOODED FIREPLACE R WITH A FIRE BURNING. DS OF THE FIREPLACE IS A LAVABO BENEATH WHICH IS A LOVE-SEAT. THERE IS A WINDOW R OF THE DOOR UC. A TABLE NOW BEING USED FOR DINING IS EXTENDED FROM THE FIREPLACE TO C.

TIME: A NOVEMBER EVENING, PRESENT.

AT RISE: GRANDFATHER IS SEATED IN WHAT WE CALL GRANDFATHER'S CHAIR AT RIGHT END OF TABLE. US OF THE TABLE IS A BENCH ON WHICH MADRE IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT END AND ANDRES AT THE LEFT END. DS OF THE TABLE ARE TWO STOOLS ON WHICH ARE SEATED DORINA AT R ACROSS FROM MADRE AND FALIN AT L ACROSS FROM ANDRES. AT THE LEFT END OF THE TABLE IS AN EMPTY CHAIR. THE FAMILY IS FINISHING DINNER. TELVA ENTERS FROM THE KITCHEN CARRYING AN EMPTY TRAY. SHE XS TO LEFT END OF TABLE AND PLACES TRAY ON TABLE AS GRANDFATHER SPEAKS. (Figures 1, 2)

GRANDFATHER

(BREAKING A PIECE OF BREAD.) The loaf is still warm. It smells of the broomflower.

TELVA

(CARRYING CHAIR FROM LEFT END OF TABLE TO DS OF ARCH L AND RETURNING TO TABLE AS SHE TALKS.) The broomflower and the

vine shoots are dry; there is no better wood for heating the oven. And what do you say of the golden color? It is the last white wheat of the sunny place.

GRANDFATHER

The flour is good, but you help it. You have the perfect hands from God to make bread.

TELVA

(WORKING AT CLEARING LEFT END OF TABLE.) And the sugar-pancakes? And the slices of bread fried in egg? In the winter you like bread dipped in warm wine. (SHE LOOKS AT MADRE WHO HAS HER ELBOWS ON THE TABLE AS IF ABSENT FROM THE GROUP.) Are you not going to eat anything, Senora?

MADRE

Nothing. (TELVA SIGHS RESIGNEDLY AND ADDS MILK TO THE GLASSES OF THE CHILDREN.)

FALÍN

May I crumble the bread in the milk?

ANDRÉS

And may I? May I bring the cat to eat with me at the table?

DORINA

(GESTURES TO KITCHEN UR.) The place for the cat is in the kitchen. It always has its paws in the dirty ashes.

ANDRÉS

And who asked you? The cat is mine.

DORINA

But I wash the tablecloth.

GRANDFATHER

Have consideration for your sister.

ANDRÉS

Why? I am older than she is.

GRANDFATHER

But she is a woman.

ANDRÉS

Always equal! The cat likes to eat at the table and you do not let it. I like to eat on the floor and you won't let me do that either.

TELVA

When you are older, you will command in your own house, young man.

ANDRÉS

Yes, yes. You say the same thing all the time.

FALÍN

When are we grown up, Grandfather?

GRANDFATHER

Soon. When you know how to read and write.



ANDRÉS

But if they don't order us to go to school we will never learn.

GRANDFATHER

(TO MADRE.) The children are right. They are already grown. They ought to go to school.

MADRE

(PASSIONATELY. RISING.) They will not go! In order to go to school they have to cross the river. I do not want my children to go near the river.

DORINA

All the others go. Even the little ones. Why can't we cross the river?

MADRE

(XING TO ULC WHERE CRUCIFIX IS HUNG ON WALL L OF DOOR.) Would to heaven nobody in this house had to go near it!

TELVA

(XING R TO CLEAR MADRE'S PLACE.) Enough! Don't talk of these things. (TO DORINA WHILE SHE COLLECTS GLASSES.) Would you like to make a corncake? The oven will already be getting cold.

ANDRÉS

(RISING, HAPPY TO DO SOMETHING.) We will make it hot again. I'll help you.

FALÍN

(RUNNING HIS STOOL TO DS CHAIR L.) And I too?

DORINA

(RUNNING HER STOOL TO US OF FIREPLACE.) May I put a little honey over it?

TELVA

(GATHERING UP HER TRAY AND STARTING FOR KITCHEN WITH THEM.) And underneath a leaf of the fig tree to keep it from scorching. You must start learning how. Soon you will be a woman--and the only one in your house.

GRANDFATHER

(TO MADRE WHO IS STANDING FACING CRUCIFIX.) You ought not to talk so in front of the children. They are always breathing the air of anguish that does not let them live.

MADRE

(TURNING TO HIM.) She was their sister. I do not want them to forget her.

GRANDFATHER

But they have to run in the sunshine, laughing and shouting. A child that is quiet is not a child.

MADRE

At least they are safe at my side.

GRANDFATHER

(RISING.) Don't be afraid; the misfortune does not repeat itself in the same place. Don't think about it any more.

MADRE

Can you do anything else? (XING TO CHAIR DL, SITS). Although

you don't mention it, I know what you are thinking when you remain for hours in silence and let the cigarette go out in your mouth.

GRANDFATHER

(XING TO L OF C.) What is the value of looking back? What has happened, has happened. You have a home that ought to restore your happiness as before.

MADRE

Before it was easy to be happy. Angélita was here; and where she put her hand all was happiness.

GRANDFATHER

You have three others. Think of them. (XS BACK AND TURNS HIS CHAIR FROM TABLE.)

MADRE

Today I can't think of anything but Angélita. It is her day. It was a night such as this one. Four years ago.

GRANDFATHER

Four years already. . . (THINKING, HE SITS TO LIGHT CIGARETTE. QUICO, A MILL SERVANT ENTERS FROM THE CORRAL UC LOOKING PLEASANT, CARRYING A ROSE THAT ON LEAVING HE PUTS BEHIND HIS EAR.)

QUICO

(REMAINING A FEW STEPS INSIDE DOOR ENTRANCE.) A good moon-light night for traveling. The mare is already saddled.

MADRE

(TURNING HER HEAD SHARPLY TO HIM.) Saddled? Who ordered you to?

GRANDFATHER

I did.

MADRE

And who asked you?

GRANDFATHER

Martín wishes to go to the high pasture to separate the young bulls for the fair.

MADRE

Does it have to be precisely today? A night as this he would do well to stay at home.

GRANDFATHER

The fair is tomorrow.

MADRE

(AS A COMPLAINT.) If he prefers it so, it is well. (TELVA ENTERS FROM KITCHEN UR WITH TRAY AND GOES TO TABLE TO CLEAR REST OF DISHES AND TABLECLOTH. HER WORK CONTINUES THROUGH SEVERAL SPEECHES.)

QUICO

Something you order, Señora?

MADRE

Nothing. Are you going to the mill right now?

## QUICO

There is always work. And when not, I like to fall asleep listening to the sound of the millwheel and the water.

## TELVA

(CUNNINGLY.) Moreover, the mill is near the granary of the mayor, and the mayor has three young daughters--each one worse than the other. They say that they poisoned the dog because he was barking when some man jumped over their walls at night.

## QUICO

(STRONGLY TO TELVA.) They say--they say! Also they say that hell is paved with the tongues of women, old wicked one! (HE TURNS AND BOWS CHARMINGLY TO MADRE.) God guard you, Señora. (EXITS WHISTLING HAPPILY.)

## TELVA

(GESTURES TO HIM AS HE GOES.) Yes, yes, you corrupt! (TURNS BACK TO HER WORK.) As if I had been born yesterday! When he goes to the mill, he wears sparks in his eyes; when he comes back, he brings a happy fatigue rolled about his waist.

## GRANDFATHER

(REPROVINGLY.) Will you not be silent, woman?

## TELVA

You don't speak badly of anyone. If sometimes I say more things, it is for helping my nerves, as if I am breaking dishes. (GESTURES AROUND ROOM.) Is this a life? The mistress with her eyes glued to the wall; you always silent in the corner; and these children of my soul, who have been accustomed to never making a sound--as if they walked in their stocking-feet. If I don't talk, who speaks in this house?

MADRE

This is no day for speaking loudly. Being silent I remember better.

TELVA

Do you think I have forgotten? But life does not end. How does it help you to draw the curtains and persist in shouting that it is night? Outside the window, the sun shines every day.

MADRE

Not for me.

TELVA

(XS A COUPLE STEPS TOWARD MADRE.) Do this for me, Señora. Open Angélita's room completely and remove the sheets to the balcony instantly, sheets that are cooling under the dust of the closet.

MADRE

The sun has no right to enter her room. This dust is the only thing that is left me of that day.

GRANDFATHER

(AS TELVA RETURNS TO US OF TABLE TO CLEAR MORE.) Don't tire yourself. She is as one who carries a thorn stuck in her and she won't let herself be cured.

MADRE

Blessed thorn! I prefer a hundred times to wear it stuck in my flesh, before forgetting as you all have.

## TELVA

It is not so. Not speaking of a thing does not mean you do not feel it. When I was married I thought that my husband did not love me because he never spoke beautiful words to me. But always he used to bring me the first bunch of grapes from the vine; and in the seven years that he lived he left me seven sons, all men. Each one different in his own way.

## GRANDFATHER

Yours was a perfect husband. (ADDING WITH PRIDE.) As the men in this country have always been.

## MADRE

A husband comes and is gone. He is not flesh of our flesh as is a child.

## TELVA

(STOPS CLEARING TABLE.) Are you going to tell me about a child? Tell me? You have lost one, well and good. I lost seven sons on the same day! With earth ground in their eyes and black from the charcoal they were brought out of the mine. I myself washed those seven bodies, one by one. What then? For that was I going to cover my head with a shawl and sit down and cry at the door? I cried for them standing up, working. (HER VOICE CHOKES FOR A MOMENT. SHE BRUSHES A TEAR FROM HER EYE WITH THE CORNER OF HER APRON. STARTS TO FOLD CLOTH FROM TABLE.) After that, since I was unable to have other sons, I planted seven tall trees in my garden and beautiful as seven men. (SOFTLY.) In the summer when I feel like grieving in their shade, I think I am not so alone. (GRANDFATHER AND TELVA FOLD TABLE AND CARRY IT TO UL, R OF STAIRS.)

## MADRE

It is not the same. Your sons are under the earth where the grass grows and the grain increases. My daughter is in the

water. Can you kiss the water? Can anybody take it in her arms, or throw herself upon it to cry? That is what sticks fast in my blood.

GRANDFATHER

(REMAINING LC FACING MADRE, WHILE TELVE XS R AND BRINGS BENCH TO L, PLACING IT IN FRONT OF TABLE UL.) The whole town searched for her. The best swimmers went down until they dragged the bottom.

MADRE

They did not look for her enough. They would have found her.

GRANDFATHER

(XING BACK TO SIT IN HIS CHAIR.) The same thing has happened other times before. The backwater has no bottom.

TELVA

(AT BENCH.) They say that within there is a whole town with its church and all. Sometimes on the night of San Juan, the bells under the water have been heard.

MADRE

Though there might be palace, I do not want her in the river where everybody throws stones on passing by. The Bible says, Man is earth and ought to return to earth. Only the day that they find her will I be able to rest in peace. (TELVA EXITS TO KITCHEN WITH TRAY AND CLOTH. MARTÍN COMES DOWNSTAIRS TO LC. HE IS DRESSED FOR RIDING AND CARRIES A CLOAK.)

MARTÍN

(TO GRANDFATHER.) Is the mare saddled?

GRANDFATHER

Quico saddled her before he went to the mill.

MADRE

Is it necessary for you to go to the high pasture tonight?

MARTÍN

I myself want to separate the cattle. There have to be eight young bulls of choice feet and with saffron heads for the fair.

GRANDFATHER

If it is no more than that, the overseer can do it. (TELVA RETURNS WITH BOWL OF PEAS; REMAINS STANDING BY WINDOW UR.)

MARTÍN

He does not like them as I do. When they were very young, I used to give them salt with my hands. Today, as they are going, I myself want to place on them the brand of my house.

MADRE

(RISING, XS TO HIM.) Has it not occurred to you to think that this is the night I need you more than ever. Have you forgotten the date of today?

MARTÍN

(LOOKING AT MADRE FOR THE FIRST TIME.) Today? (LOOKS AT GRANDFATHER AND TELVA WHO LOWER THEIR HEADS.) Yes.

MADRE

I know that you don't want me to remind you. But I don't ask you to speak of her. It would be enough for you to sit near me--in silence.

MARTÍN

(EVADING.) The overseer is waiting for me.

MADRE

(A STEP TOWARDS HIM.) Is this trip necessary?

MARTÍN

(TURNS SHARPLY TOWARDS HER.) Otherwise I would not go. It is worth more to sow a new harvest than to cry for that which is lost.

MADRE

I understand. Angelica was your sweetheart for two years but your wife for only three days. A little time for loving.

MARTÍN

(TURNS FROM HER.) She was mine and that was enough! I could not have loved her more in thirty years than in those few days.

MADRE

(MOVES TO HIM, LOOKS AND SPEAKS INTENSELY.) Then, why do you never mention her name? Why? When the whole town was looking for her crying, you shut yourself up in the house exercising care and diligence. (SHE COMES CLOSER.) And why do you not look at me face to face when I speak of her?

MARTÍN

(CRISPY.) It is enough! (EXITS UC TO CORRAL.)



GRANDFATHER

(RISES, XS TO R OF C.) You will succeed in Martín ends hating this house. A memory cannot support itself thus, always open as a wound.

MADRE

(SADLY RESIGNED.) Even you? Nobody loves her, nobody . . .  
(SHE TURNS AND RETURNS TO HER CHAIR DL WHERE SHE SITS  
PENSIVELY. OUTSIDE IS HEARD THE BARKING OF A DOG. GRAND-  
FATHER RETURNS TO HIS CHAIR.)

TELVA

(LIFTS HER HEAD FROM QUIETLY SHELLING PEAS AND LOOKS OVER  
AT MADRE.) Do you want to help me shell the peas? It is  
like reciting a green rosary: the beads go slipping through  
the fingers--and thought flies.

MADRE

To what place do your thoughts fly, Telva?

TELVA

To the seven tall trees. And yours, where do yours go,  
Señora?

MADRE

Mine are always fixed--in the water. (THE DOG BARKS MORE.)

TELVA

That dog barks a great deal.

GRANDFATHER

And very nervously. There will be some traveller. He knows  
the people of the village from far off. (DORINA, ANDRÉS AND  
FALIN RUN IN FROM KITCHEN ON WORD "VILLAGE" LOOKING CURIOUS  
AND A BIT FRIGHTENED.)

DORINA

(XS L TO HER MOTHER.) It is a woman, Mother. She must be lost in walking.

TELVA

Is she coming toward this place or passing by?

FALÍN

(AT WINDOW UR.) Toward here.

ANDRÉS

(LOOKING OVER FALÍN'S SHOULDER AT WINDOW.) She is wearing a hooded cloak and she has a staff in her hand like a pilgrim. (THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR UC. TELVA LOOKS QUESTIONINGLY AT MADRE.)

MADRE

(TO TELVA.) Open the door. One cannot close the door at night to a traveller. (TELVA XS UC DEPOSITING THE BOWL OF PEAS ON THE TABLE UL. SHE OPENS THE DOOR. PEREGRINA STANDS IN THE DOORFRAME. MADRE RISES.)

PEREGRINA

(SHE IS A BEAUTIFUL, YOUNG WOMAN WHO SPEAKS SWEETLY AND SIMPLY.) God protect this house and free from evil those who live in it.

TELVA

(CROSSING SELF QUICKLY.) Amen. Are you looking for lodging? The inn is on the other side of the river.

PEREGRINA

But there is no boat going there at this hour.

MADRE

Please come in. Travellers have the right to a fire and they bring peace to the house that received them. (PEREGRINA ENTERS XING DSC. TELVA CLOSES DOOR AND REMAINS US L OF DOOR OPENING. CHILDREN REMAIN IN PLACE.)

GRANDFATHER

(RISING.) Have you lost the way?

PEREGRINA

I lost the strength for walking it. I come from far away and the air is cold.

GRANDFATHER

(INDICATING HIS CHAIR. HE IS DSR OF IT.) Sit down by the fire and if we can do anything to help you. . . . Travellers get hungry and thirsty.

PEREGRINA

I don't need anything. (XING R TO FIREPLACE, LEANS HER STAFF AGAINST IT, AND XS BACK TO GRANDFATHER'S CHAIR WHERE SHE SITS.) A little time by the fire is enough. (SHE LOOKS AROUND AT THE PEOPLE.) I was sure of finding you here.

TELVA

(HAS CROSSED DL BELOW TABLE WHERE ANDRÉS AND FALÍN JOINED HER WHILE PEREGRINA WAS GETTING SEATED.) That's not much to foretell. Did you see the smoke from the chimney?

## PEREGRINA

No, but I saw the children behind the window. Houses where there are children are always warm. (SHE THROWS BACK HER HOOD FROM HER HEAD REVEALING A BEAUTIFUL FACE, YET PALE, WITH A CALM SMILE.)

## ANDRÉS

(IN A LOW VOICE TO TELVA.) How beautiful she is!

## DORINA

(XING CLOSER TO TELVA.) She seems like a queen in disguise!

## PEREGRINA

(TO GRANDFATHER WHO HAS BEEN OBSERVING HER INTENSELY.) Why do you look at me so fixedly? Do I remind you of something?

## GRANDFATHER

I don't know. But I would swear that this is not the first time we have met!

## PEREGRINA

It is possible. I have been over so many towns and so many roads. (SHE TURNS HER ATTENTION TO THE CHILDREN WHO ARE TIGHTLY GROUPED AROUND TELVA. MADRE HAS RESUMED HER SEAT IN HER CHAIR. GRANDFATHER DURING NEXT SPEECH SITS DSР LOVE-SEAT.) And you? Your eyes are going to pop out if you continue looking at me so. Are you afraid to come closer to me?

## TELVA

Excuse them. They are not used to seeing strange people. And less so in this garment. (SHE GESTURES TOWARD THE PILGRIM COSTUME PEREGRINA WEARS.)

PEREGRINA

(TO CHILDREN.) Do I frighten you?

ANDRÉS

(XING TO HER RESOLUTELY.) Not me. The others are smaller.

FALÍN

(XING TO HER ALSO, A BIT TIMIDLY.) We have never seen a Pilgrim before.

DORINA

(XING TO HER. ANDRÉS MOVES ABOVE CHAIR TO R OF IT. FALÍN XS DS OF PEREGRINA AS DORINA MOVES TO L OF CHAIR.) Yes, I have--in pictures. They wear a round thing on the head like the saints.

ANDRÉS

(SUPERIORLY.) The saints are old and they all have beards. She is young. She has hair like silk and white hands like a great lady.

PEREGRINA

Do I seem beautiful to you?

ANDRÉS

Very beautiful. Grandfather says the most beautiful things always come from far away. (GRANDFATHER NODS APPROVAL.)

PEREGRINA

(SMILES, PATS HIS HAIR.) Thank you, little one. When you become a man the women will notice you. (SHE CONTEMPLATES THE HOUSE.) Grandchildren, Grandfather, and a glowing fire.

A happy home.

GRANDFATHER

(LOOKING OVER AT MADRE.) It has been.

PEREGRINA

It is called the house of Martín del Narcés, isn't it?

MADRE

He is my son-in-law. Do you know him?

PEREGRINA

I have heard talk about him. A young man in the prime of life, popular at the Fair, and the best judge of horses in the mountains. (MARTÍN ENTERS UC.)

MARTÍN

(ANGRILY XS TO LC.) The mare is not in the corral. They left the door open again. She was heard neighing in the mountains.

GRANDFATHER

It cannot be. Quico left her saddled.

MARTÍN

Is he blind then? The horse that he saddled is Commandante.

MADRE

The colt? (SHE RISES QUICKLY.) Certainly not that one? You won't think of riding that bundle of nerves that is frightened of lightning!

MARTÍN

And why not? After all, sometime someone has to be the first.  
Where is my spur? (TURNING US LOOKING.)

MADRE

(A STEP TOWARDS HIM.) Do not tempt the elements, Son. The roads are slippery with ice, and the pass at El Rabión is dangerous.

MARTÍN

(TURNING TO HER.) Always with your fears. Do you want to put me in a corner like your children? I am fed up with the counsels of a woman who hides my hunting guns. (XING L TO ARCH ABOVE MADRE, ENERGETICALLY.) Where is my spur? (TELVA AND GRANDFATHER WATCH QUIETLY. PEREGRINA RISES TO FIREPLACE AND PICKS UP SPUR ON MANTELPIECE.)

PEREGRINA

Is this your spur?

MARTÍN

(LOOKS AT HER WITH SURPRISE. SOFTENS HIS TONE.) Forgive me for having spoken so harshly. (HE IS MOVING TO C.) I had not seen it. (LOOKS AT OTHERS QUESTIONINGLY.)

GRANDFATHER

She is travelling the road, fulfilling a promise.

PEREGRINA

You have offered me your hospitality and I want to pay with an act of humility. (XING TO C, GETS ON KNEES BEFORE MARTÍN.) Allow me? (HE EXTENDS FOOT AND SHE GIRDS ON SPUR.)

MARTÍN

Thank you. (THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER FOR A MOMENT IN SILENCE.)

PEREGRINA

(RISING.) The Narcés were always good horsemen.

MARTÍN

So they say. If I do not return to see you, a happy journey.  
(TO MADRE, A BIT FORCEFULLY.) And a peaceful sleep, Madre.  
I don't like you to wait up for me with a light in the windows.  
(HE TURNS UP TO DOOR.)

ANDRÉS

(XING TO HIM.) I'll hold the stirrup for you.

DORINA

(XING UP. THEY ARE GOING THROUGH DOOR.) And I, the reins!

FALÍN

Me too! (RUNNING THROUGH AND CLOSING DOOR AFTER.)

TELVA

(TO MADRE.) You are to blame. Don't you know men yet? In order for them to go from here, they have to say that they are going from there.

MADRE

Why do women always want sons? (XING TO CHAIR L BUT DOES NOT SIT.) Men are for the fields and the horse. Only a daughter fills the home. (TURNING TO PEREGRINA WHO HAS RETURNED TO

CHAIR BY FIRE ON EXIT OF CHILDREN AND MARTÍN.) Forgive me that I must leave you, Señora. If you wish to await the day here, you will lack for nothing.

PEREGRINA

Only a little time for rest. I have to continue my way.

TELVA

(FOLLOWING MADRE TO FOOT OF STAIRS UL.) Are you going to sleep?

MADRE

To be alone for a little. Yes, no one wishes to listen to me. I will retire to my room to pray. (ASCENDING STAIRS AND OFF.) To pray is to cry in a low voice. (PAUSE. DOG BARKS.)

TELVA

(RETURNS TO BENCH BELOW TABLE L WHERE SHE HAS BEEN SITTING. SHE HAS FINISHED SHELLING PEAS. SHE PICKS UP KNITTING FROM BENCH IN HALL AT FOOT OF STAIRS AFTER MADRE'S EXIT AND NOW SITTING ON BENCH, SHE KNITS.) Wretched dog! What is bothering him tonight?

GRANDFATHER

He is not used to hearing strange people.

PEREGRINA

(TO GRANDFATHER.) What did she say that dangerous pass in the mountains is called?

GRANDFATHER

El Rabión.

PEREGRINA

El Rabión is near that great chestnut tree, isn't it? Lightning struck it a hundred years ago, but there it is with its trunk twisted and its roots stuck in the cliff.

GRANDFATHER

For being a stranger, you know these places quite well.

PEREGRINA

I have been there sometimes. But always in passing.

GRANDFATHER

It is what I am trying to remember since you arrived. Where have I seen you another time? And when? You do not remember me?

TELVA

Why would she have to notice? If you were a young man and a gallant one, I wouldn't say that; but the old ones are all the same.

GRANDFATHER

It had to be here. I have not travelled ever. When were you other times in the village?

PEREGRINA

The last time was the great festival day with bag-pipes and drums. For all the couples came down the footpaths on horses

adorned with green branches and luncheon cloths covered the whole countryside.

TELVA

The wedding of the Mayorazga! Dios mio, what a celebration! Barrels of cider poured copiously and the people of all the villages around collected in the Pradón field to dance the giraldilla!

PEREGRINA

I saw it from afar. I was passing along the mountain.

GRANDFATHER

That was two years ago. And before that . . . ?

PEREGRINA

I remember another time: a day in winter. A heavy snow was falling so greatly that all the roads were blocked. It seemed like a village of dwarfs with their white hoods in the chimneys and their beards of ice hanging on the tiles.

TELVA

The Nevadona! There was never another like it!

GRANDFATHER

And before that? Much before that?

PEREGRINA

(WITH AN EFFORT TO RECALL.) Before. . . ? It's so many years ago that I scarcely remember. A heavy thick smoke was

floating that affected the throat. The siren of the mine howled like a dog. . . Men ran clenching their fists. . . That night all the doors were opened and the women were crying aloud within the houses.

## TELVA

(BLESSES HERSELF APPREHENSIVELY.) Virgin of Holy Memory, spare me that day! (DORINA, FALÍN AND ANDRÉS ENTER UC HAPPILY.)

## DORINA

(XING L TO TELVA.) Already Martín goes galloping the mountain road!

## FALÍN

(FOLLOWING TO R OF DORINA.) He's the best horseman in a hundred miles!

## ANDRÉS

(JOINING THEM.) When I am older I shall break horses like he does!

## TELVA

(RISING, PUTTING KNITTING ON TABLE.) When you are older, God will decide. But, meanwhile, to bed! It is late. Stretched out, you will grow more quickly. (XS L TO FOOT OF STAIRS.)

## ANDRÉS

(COMPLAINING.) It's very early. The Señora, who has seen so many things, will know stories and romances to tell.

TELVA

(INDICATING UPSTAIRS.) The best one is that of the white sheets.

PEREGRINA

(RISING, TURNING TOWARD TELVA.) Let them stay. Children are my good friends and I am going to be here only a little while.

ANDRÉS

(XS TO HER.) Are you going to follow your trip tonight? If you are afraid, I shall go with you to the pond.

PEREGRINA

You? You are still very young.

ANDRÉS

And so what? A young man is worth more than a grand lady. Grandfather said it. (GRANDFATHER NODS COMPLACENTLY.)

TELVA

Hear him! They are of the hide of Barrabas! Give them a hand and you will soon see that they take a foot! To your bed! I have spoken.

GRANDFATHER

Let them stay, Telva. I shall remain with them.

TELVA

So! Take away my authority and give them a bad example! (GOES UPSTAIRS AND EXITS GRUMBLING.) Well, I said what I said! If the priest plays the fool, what will the laymen do?

GRANDFATHER

If you are going to Compostela, I can show you the way.

PEREGRINA

(RETURNING TO SIT IN CHAIR BY FIRE.) I don't need it. It is marked in the sky with the dust of the stars.

ANDRÉS

(CIRCLING US OF CHAIR TO R.) Why do the stars mark out this road?

PEREGRINA

So that the pilgrims going to Santiago will not lose the way.  
(ON FOLLOWING SPEECHES, DORINA AND FALÍN X TO PEREGRINA:  
DORINA TO L OF CHAIR WHEN SHE SITS ON FLOOR, FALÍN DS TO R OF  
CHAIR WHERE HE TOO SITS ON FLOOR.) (Figure 3)

DORINA

And why do the pilgrims have to go to Santiago?

PEREGRINA

Because there is the tomb of the Apostle.

FALÍN

And why is the tomb of the Apostle there?

GRANDFATHER

Take no notice of them. A child asks more than a wise man can answer. (RISING, SEEING HER CROSS HER ARMS INTO HER SLEEVES.) The fire is going out. So you still feel cold?

PEREGRINA

In my hands, always.



Figure 3. Peregrina and the Children

## GRANDFATHER

(TAKES BERET FROM POCKET, PUTS IT ON AS HE XS TO USC DOOR.)  
I'll cut some wood and bring the branches of heath that  
scents the room on burning. (EXITS.)

## DORINA

Now that we are alone, will you tell us a story?

## PEREGRINA

Doesn't your grandfather tell them to you?

## ANDRÉS

Grandfather knows how they all begin, but he doesn't know  
the ending of any one. His cigar goes out in his mouth and  
then he is lost--the story is finished.

## DORINA

Before it was different. Angélica knew a hundred stories,  
some even with music. And she used to tell them as if she  
were seeing them.

## ANDRÉS

The one about Delgadina! And the one about the young girl  
who dressed herself as a man in order to go wars in Aragón.

## DORINA

And the one about Xana who spun golden thread at the fountain.

## FALÍN

And the one about the cunning blind woman who was going to  
cure the eyes of Santa Lucía!

PEREGRINA

(LOOKS QUESTIONINGLY AT EACH ONE. SLOWLY.) Who was  
Angélica?

DORINA

Our oldest sister. Everybody loved her as if she were their  
own. But one night she was taken away by the river.

ANDRÉS

And after that no one can speak loudly, nor do they let us  
play.

FALÍN

Do you know any game?

PEREGRINA

I believe I have forgotten all of them. But if you teach me,  
I can learn.

FALÍN

(GAILY.) "Serrín, serrán, dust of San Juan!"

DORINA

No, not that one. "You will give, I shall give! Down, little  
donkey, and I shall mount up!"

ANDRÉS

(GESTURES DEPRECATINGLY.) Not that one! (THINKS.) Wait!  
(XS L, TURNS BACK TO PEREGRINA.) Turn your head and close  
your eyes tightly. (PEREGRINA DOES. ANDRES MOTIONS FALÍN  
AND DORINA TO JOIN HIM WHERE THEY HUDDLE, WHISPER A MOMENT,

AND NOD AGREEMENT. TO PEREGRINA COMMANDINGLY.), Now this is it. First, we have to sit on the floor. (ANDRÉS SITS USC, DORINA XS TO DSL, FALÍN SITS DSR. PEREGRINA HESITATINGLY SITS USR. AN OPEN CIRCLE IS FORMED.) So! Now, each one starts speaking and all repeat. The one who makes a mistake, forfeits! Ready?

ALL

Start! (THEY BEGIN A CHILD'S GAME OF PSALMLIKE CHANTS, IMITATING WITH GESTURES THE WORDS THAT ARE SAID. THE ONE WHO LEADS STANDS UP, THE REST RESPOND IN UNISON SEATED IN THE CIRCLE.)

ANDRÉS

(RISES, PANTOMIMES HOLDING UP BOTTLE AND PLACING IT ON FLOOR AS HE RETURNS TO SIT.)

This is a bottle of wine  
That a neighbor keeps in his house. (SITS.)

ALL

(IMITATING HIS PANTOMIME WHILE REMAINING SEATED.)

This is a bottle of wine  
That a neighbor keeps in his house.

FALÍN

(RISES, ADDS HIS PANTOMIME TO ANDRÉS.)

This is the cork  
That plugs  
The bottle of wine  
That a neighbor keeps in his house. (SITS.)

ALL

This is the cork  
That plugs  
The bottle of wine  
That a neighbor keeps in his house.

## DORINA

(RISES, ADDS HER PANTOMIME AND REPEATS THAT OF FALÍN AND ANDRÉS.)

This is the cord  
That ties  
The cork  
That plugs  
The bottle of wine  
That a neighbor keeps in his house. (SITS.)

## ALL

This is the cord  
That ties  
The cork  
That plugs  
The bottle of wine  
That a neighbor keeps in his house.

## ANDRÉS

(RISES, ADDS PANTOMIME OF SCISSORS AND CONTINUES THROUGH ALL OTHER PANTOMIMES.)

These are the scissors  
That cut  
The cord  
That ties  
The cork  
That plugs  
The bottle of wine  
That a neighbor keeps in his house. (SITS.)

## ALL

These are the scissors  
That cut  
The cord  
That ties  
The cork  
That plugs  
The bottle of wine  
That a neighbor keeps in his house.

## PEREGRINA

(SHE HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY PLAYING THE GAME. NOW SHE RISES AND PANTOMIMES WITH EXAGGERATION THE MOVEMENTS AND GESTURES OF A DRUNKEN MAN. HER MOVEMENTS TAKE HER TO C OF CIRCLE.)

And this is the drunken robber  
Who cuts the cord  
That loosens the cork  
That raises the jug  
And drinks the wine  
That a neighbor kept in his house.

(THERE IS A BURST OF LAUGHTER FROM THE CHILDREN WHO RISE, JOIN HANDS ENCIRCLING PEREGRINA AND MOVE COUNTER CLOCKWISE SHOUTING:)

## ANDRÉS, DORINA, FALÍN

Drunkard! Drunkard! Drunkard! (PEREGRINA LAUGHS. THE CHILDREN LAUGH. BUT PEREGRINA'S LAUGHTER MOUNTS--A NERVOUS UNEASY LAUGH THAT IT BECOMES A LOUD CONVULSION THAT FRIGHTENS THE CHILDREN. THEY STOP LAUGHING AND GROUP, ANDRÉS US OF DORINA WHO IS US OF FALÍN. THEY STAND CLOSE TOGETHER WATCHING PEREGRINA FEARFULLY. FINALLY SHE REGAINS HER COMPOSURE AND APPEARS ASTONISHED AT HER OWN BEHAVIOUR. SHE HAS MOVED TO LC.)

## PEREGRINA

(WONDERINGLY.) But what am I doing? What is this that fills my throat and jars my teeth?

## DORINA

(REMAINING IN PLACE AND WITH A FEARFUL, HESITANT MANNER.) It is laughter.

## PEREGRINA

Laughter? (SHE FURTHER COMPOSES HERSELF WITH AN EFFORT.) What a strange thing! It is a joyous trembling that runs

within like squirrels run through a hollow tree! But then it smacks the waist and relaxes the knees! (THE CHILDREN RELAX THEIR WORRIED LOOKS.)

ANDRES

(XING THREE STEPS TOWARD PEREGRINA.) Have you never laughed?

PEREGRINA

Never. (SHE FEELS HER HANDS.) That is curious. It has left my hands warm. And what is this that palpitates in my wrists? And what leaps within me?

DORINA

It is your heart.

PEREGRINA

(ALMOST IN FEAR.) It cannot be. It would be marvelous-- and terrible! (SHE RELAXES AND SIGHHS.) What wonderful fatigue! I never imagined that a laugh could have such strength.

ANDRES

Grownups tire very quickly. Do you want to sleep?

PEREGRINA

Afterwards. I can't now. (EMPHATICALLY, LOOKING OUT FRONT.) When the clock strikes nine, I have to leave. Someone is waiting for me at the Rabi n Pass.

DORINA

We shall call you. (XS R TO R OF GRANDFATHER'S CHAIR.) Come, sit down.

PEREGRINA

(QUICKLY.) No! No! I can't lose a minute. (SHE RAISES A FINGER TO HER LIPS.) Silence! Do you hear far away a horse galloping? (THE THREE CHILDREN LISTEN.)

FALÍN

I don't hear anything.

DORINA

It will be your heart again.

PEREGRINA

Would it were so! Ah, my eyelids are so heavy. . . .  
(XING R TO CHAIR.) I can't. . . . I am not able. . . .  
(SITS LEANING HER HEAD BACK.)

ANDRÉS

(XS TO DSR OF CHAIR. DORINA MOVES TO USR OF CHAIR. FALÍN XS TO L SIDE OF CHAIR.) Angelica knew some words to make us sleep. Do you want me to tell you them?

PEREGRINA

Tell me. But do not forget--at exactly nine o'clock. . . .

ANDRÉS

(LEANS TOWARD HER.) Close your eyes and repeat without thinking. (HE SPEAKS SLOWLY AND SOFTLY. THE THREE CHILDREN, IN TURN, SPEAK IN THE SAME MANNER, AS IF ENCOURAGING A BABY TO SLEEP.) Alla arribita, arribita--

PEREGRINA

(REPEATS AS SHE DOES AFTER EACH CHILD SPEAKS, EACH TIME WITH LESS FORCE.) Allá arribita, arribita--

ANDRÉS

There is a white mountain--

PEREGRINA

There is a white mountain--

DORINA

(LEANS IN TO HER AS ANDRÉS STRAIGHTENS UP.) In the mountain, an orange tree--

PEREGRINA

In the mountain, an orange tree--

FALÍN

(LEANS TO HER AS DORINA STRAIGHTENS UP.) In the tree, a branch--

PEREGRINA

In the tree, a branch (GRANDFATHER ENTERS UC CARRYING AN ARMFUL OF WOOD AND DRY BRANCHES. HE REMAINS QUIETLY IN THE SHADOW OF THE DOORWAY WATCHING THE CHILDREN.)

ANDRÉS

And on the branch, four nests: two of gold and two of silver--

PEREGRINA

(ALMOST NO VOICE.) And on the branch--four nests--four nests--four--nests--(VOICE FADES OUT.)

ANDRÉS

(STRAIGHTENING, TO DORINA AND FALÍN.) She's asleep.  
(PEREGRINA SLEEPS WITH HER HEAD TURNED TOWARD FIREPLACE.)

DORINA

Poor woman! She should be tired with so much walking.

TELVA

(NOISILY COMING DOWNSTAIRS UL.) The game ended already?  
Well then, to bed!

DORINA

(ALL THREE CHILDREN GESTURE TO TELVA TO BE QUIET. DORINA XS TO HER LC.) We cannot now. We have to wake her when the clock strikes nine.

GRANDFATHER

(XING IN FROM DOOR TO R OF C.) I'll do it. Take them, Telva.

TELVA

(GRUMBLING.) It is going to be hard to have them go to sleep after so many new stories. (INDICATING UPSTAIRS.) Come along.

DORINA

(NOT WANTING TO GO, BUT SLOWLY STARTS UPSTAIRS.) She's so beautiful and so good. Why didn't you tell her that she could stay with us?

## ANDRÉS

(DRAGGING ALONG BEHIND DORINA.) She has no where to live.  
She has sad eyes. (FALÍN, FOLLOWING ANDRÉS ON STAIRS, TAKES  
A LAST LONGING LOOK AT PEREGRINA AND CONTINUES GOING UP.)

## TELVA

(FOLLOWING THE CHILDREN UP THE STAIRS AND OFF, STILL  
GRUMBLING.) It will be better for her to go back where she  
came from and quickly. I don't like women who are mysterious  
and walk alone on the highways at night. (BY NOW, CHILDREN  
AND TELVA ARE OUT OF SIGHT.)

## GRANDFATHER

(WHO HAS PUT WOOD ON THE FIRE AND STIRRED IT UP WHILE TELVA  
AND THE CHILDREN MAKE THEIR EXIT, RISES AND TURNS TO THE  
SLEEPING PEREGRINA AND STARES AT HER TRYING TO RECALL.)  
Where have I seen her before? And when? (SITS ON LOVeseat  
BENCH DR THINKING. THE CLOCK, OFFSTAGE L, STRIKES NINE. THE  
STROKES OF THE BELL ARE FOUR SECONDS APART. THE LIGHTS DIM  
DOWN AS THE CLOCK STRIKES SO THAT BY THE TIME THE SOUNDS ARE  
ENDED THE STAGE IS LIT ONLY BY THE FIRE IN THE FIREPLACE.  
ALTHOUGH THIS IS THE END OF ACT I, THE CURTAIN DOES NOT CLOSE.  
THE SCENE REMAINS LIKE A TABLEAU FOR ONE MINUTE.)

ACT II

A LIGHT IS SNAPPED ON AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS ILLUMINATING  
THE ALCOVE L BEYOND THE ARCH AND SPILLS INTO THE ROOM L.  
TELVA IS COMING DOWN THE STAIRS TALKING AS USUAL.

## TELVA

It took me some work but, finally, they are asleep. (GRAND-  
FATHER HURRIES L TO HER IMPOSING SILENCE ON HER. SHE GOES  
ON LOWERING HER VOICE.) What a devil about the babes! And  
how soon their heads are full of fantasies! What if she is  
the Virgin of the highways? What if she is a queen in dis-  
guise? Suppose she is wearing a dress of gold under her  
homespun cloak?

GRANDFATHER

(THOUGHTFULLY.) Who knows? At times a child sees more than a grown man. I also feel that something mysterious entered the house with her.

TELVA

At your age? That's all we need! To the old one--birds again!

GRANDFATHER

When you opened the door for her, didn't you sense anything? A thinness in the air?

TELVA

The shiver of white frost.

GRANDFATHER

And nothing more?

TELVA

Come to the point! I have my soul in my clothespress and two eyes well-placed in the middle of my face. Never have you made me drunk with stories!

GRANDFATHER

(PENSIVELY, LOOKING OVER AT PEREGRINA.) Nevertheless, that quiet smile, those colorless eyes--like two crystals, and that strange manner of talking . . .

TELVA

Evasions in order to hide that which matters to her. (SHE XS TO WALL L AND PULLS STRING TO LIGHT WALL LIGHT FIXTURE.

THIS ILLUMINES L STAGE TO LC.) For that matter I did not believe her since she came in. (TURNING TO GRANDFATHER.) I like a person who treads firmly and speaks clearly. (FIXES HER ATTENTION SHARPLY ON HIM.) But what is the matter with you, Señor? You are trembling like a baby.

GRANDFATHER

(SLOWLY, LOOKING OVER AT PEREGRINA.) I don't know. I'm afraid of what I am thinking.

TELVA

Then, don't think. Half the bad things are out of the head and only imaginary. (XS TO TABLE UL, PICKS UP HER KNITTING, SITS ON BENCH DS OF TABLE.) When an idea doesn't give me any peace, I collect my knitting and start to sing and implore help from the Saint.

GRANDFATHER

(SITTING ON R OF BENCH BESIDE HER.) Listen, Telva. Help me to remember. When did this woman say she had passed by here another time?

TELVA

(KNITTING. COMPLACENTLY REMEMBERING.) The day of the great snowfall, when the snow reached up to the window sills and all the roads were blocked.

GRANDFATHER

(LOOKING FRONT, INTENSELY REMEMBERING.) That day, the shepherd was lost crossing the mountain pass. Don't you remember? They found him the next morning dead among the sheep with his clothes stiff as an icicle.

## TELVA

(WITHOUT STOPPING HER KNITTING.) What a pity for the poor man! Saint Christopher used to appear with his shepherd's staff and monk's robe, but when he played the flute, the birds perched on his shoulders.

## GRANDFATHER

(PERSISTENTLY.) And the other time. Wasn't it the wedding of the Mayorazga's?

## TELVA

(KNITTING AND TALKING.) She said so. But she wasn't at the wedding. I saw it from a distance.

## GRANDFATHER

(EMPHATICALLY.) From the Mountain! (REMEMBERING.) The blacksmith had promised to shoot a deer for the young couple, and on bending to drink from the brook, his gun went off and he bled to death in the water!

## TELVA

So it was. The children found him when they saw the water red in the fountain. (SUDDENLY UNEASY, SHE STOPS KNITTING AND LOOKS FIXEDLY AT HIM.) Where is all this taking you?

## GRANDFATHER

(RISING, A STEP R. VOICE STRAINED.) And when the siren called for help and women cried aloud in their houses, do you remember? It was the day the gas exploded in the mine! Your seven sons, Telva!

TELVA

(RISES, STARTLED.) But, Dios mio, what is it that you are thinking?

GRANDFATHER

(FORCEFULLY.) The truth! Finally! (TURNS TO HER QUICKLY.) Where did you leave the children?

TELVA

(GESTURING TO UPSTAIRS.) Sleeping like three angels.

GRANDFATHER

(COMMANDING WITH GREAT INTENSITY.) Go up to them! (HE PUSHES HER TOWARD STAIRS.) Close the doors and windows! Warm them with your body if it's necessary. And whoever knocks at the door, let no one in!

TELVA

(GOES UPSTAIRS, CROSSING HERSELF, FRIGHTENED.) Angels of my soul! Lord, deliver us from all evil! (EXITS.) V

GRANDFATHER

(XS DL IN ARCH, REACHES BEHIND ARCH AND SNAPS ON LIGHTS. STAGE IS NOW ILLUMINATED AS AT THE BEGINNING OF ACT I. HE STARES AT PEREGRINA A MOMENT, THEN XS RESOLUTELY TO DS OF CHAIR WHERE SHE IS SLEEPING.) Now I know where I have seen you! (SHAKES HER VIGOROUSLY.) Wake up! Wake up, bad dream! Wake up!

PEREGRINA

(OPENING EYES SLOWLY AND TURNING HEAD FRONT.) I am going already. (BLINKING EYES AWAKE.) Who calls me?

## GRANDFATHER

(FORCEFULLY.) Look me in the eyes and dare to tell me that you don't know me! Do you recall the day that the gas exploded in the mine? I was also there with a landslide on my chest and the bad taste of smoke in my throat! You believed that my hour had arrived and you came very near. When at last the clean air came in, I had already seen your pale face and had felt your icy hands.

## PEREGRINA

(LOOKING AT HIM SERENELY.) You were expecting me. Those who have seen me once never forget me.

## GRANDFATHER

(SHARPLY.) What are you waiting for now? Do you want me to shout your name through the town so that the dogs and stones might harrass you?

## PEREGRINA

You will not do that. It would be useless.

## GRANDFATHER

Do you believe you can deceive me, do you? I am already very old and I have thought about you a great deal.

## PEREGRINA

Do not be arrogant, Grandfather. The dog does not think and he knew me before you did. (THE CLOCK STRIKES ONE STROKE. PEREGRINA RISES QUICKLY AND MOVES R OF C.) What time is it?

## GRANDFATHER

It is half-past nine.

PEREGRINA

(TURNS TO HIM, DESPAIRINGLY.) Why did they not wake me on time? Who bound me with such sweet threads that I never felt anything? I was dreading it and was unable to avoid it. Now it is too late.

GRANDFATHER

(HAPPILY.) Blessed sleep that bound your eyes and hands.

PEREGRINA

Your grandchildren are to blame. They infected me with your life here a moment. They made me imagine I had a warm heart. Only a child can perform such a miracle.

GRANDFATHER

You thought to pay with evil the love which they gave you.  
(XS QUICKLY TO FOOT OF STAIRS L.) And to think they have been playing with you!

PEREGRINA

(XS TO RC.) Bah! Children play with Death so many times without knowing it.

GRANDFATHER

(PERSISTENTLY, TURNING TO LOOK AT HER.) Whom are you looking for. (PLACES HIMSELF SQUARELY AS BARRIER TO STAIRS.) If it is one of them, you will have to pass over me.

PEREGRINA

(SHRUGS.) Who is thinking of your grandchildren? (LIFTS HEAD UP FRONT, PASSIONATELY.) It was a torrent of life that I expected this night. I myself saddled his horse and fastened his spur on.

GRANDFATHER

(APPALLED.) Martin?

PEREGRINA

(NODS.) The best horseman of the mountain. (REVIEWING HER ORDERS.) Next to the great cliff . . .

GRANDFATHER

(TRIUMPHANT MOVES TO LC.) The great cliff is only half a mile. He will have passed it long ago.

PEREGRINA

(TURNS TO HIM.) But my hour never passes entirely, as you well know. It is simply postponed.

GRANDFATHER

(XS TOWARD UC DOOR.) Then, go! What are you still waiting for?

PEREGRINA

(XS UP TO HIM.) Now, nothing. I would only wish before I go that you would say good-bye without hatred--with one good word.

GRANDFATHER

(XS DLC.) I have nothing to say to you. For hard as this life may be, it is the best I know.

PEREGRINA

(FOLLOWING TO HIS RIGHT.) Do you imagine my life so different from yours? Do you believe we can exist in one without the other?

GRANDFATHER

(STILL DOES NOT FACE HER.) Leave my house, I implore you.

PEREGRINA

(EARNESTLY.) I am going, but before I do, you must listen to me. I am a good friend to the poor and to men with a clear conscience. Why can't we talk to each other sincerely?

GRANDFATHER

(TURNS TO HER. STRONGLY.) I don't trust you. If you were sincere you would not enter houses in disguise in order to bring sadness to the dwellings at the hour of dawn.

PEREGRINA

(VERY CALMLY, REASONABLY.) And who has told you that I need to enter? I am always within, watching you grow from day to day from behind the mirror.

GRANDFATHER

(DIRECTLY.) You can't deny your instincts. You are treacherous and cruel.

PEREGRINA

(XS TO RC.) When men shove me one against the other, yes. But when you allow me my proper pace . . . . What tenderness to loosen the last bonds! And what smiles of peace when early morning releases them.

GRANDFATHER

(TURNING AWAY L.) Be silent! You have soft voice and you are dangerous to listen to.

## PEREGRINA

(XS A FEW STEPS L.) I don't understand you. Although I hear you grumbling about your life, why are you so afraid to leave it?

## GRANDFATHER

(REMAINING IN HIS QUARTER POSITION FACING L.) It's not that we want to remain here. It's only that we do not know what there is on the other side.

## PEREGRINA

(XS BACK TO RC.) The same thing happens when the journey is reversed. (TURNS TO HIM.) Because of that the children cry when they are born.

## GRANDFATHER

(UNEASY ANEW, XS TO FOOT OF STAIRS.) Again the children! You think too much about them.

## PEREGRINA

(SOFTLY AND SWEETLY.) I have the name of woman. And if, sometimes I cause them harm, it is not because I want to hurt them. It is a love that I have not learned to express. What, perhaps, I may never understand. (TURNS TO HIM AND SPEAKS WITH A TONE OF INTIMATE CONFIDING.) Listen, Grandfather. Do you know Nalón the old one?

## GRANDFATHER

The blind man who sings romantic ballads at the festivals?

## PEREGRINA

That one. (FRONT.) When he was a child he had the most beautiful look that I have ever seen on earth, a blue temptation which fascinated me from afar. One day I couldn't resist . . . and I kissed him on the eyes.

## GRANDFATHER

Now he plays his guitar and begs charity on the pilgrimages  
with his guide and his tin dish!

## PEREGRINA

(GENTLY.) But I continue loving him as before. And some day I have to requite him with two stars for the loss my love created for him.

## GRANDFATHER

(ABRUPTLY.) Enough! Don't pretend to envelop me with words. For beautiful as you want to present yourself, I know that you are the wicked weed in the grainfield and the fungus on the tree. (MOVING US AND GESTURING TO DOOR.) Go out of my house. I will not be calm until I see you far away.

## PEREGRINA

(XS UP TO HIM.) You banish me from you. It is good that cowards imagine that I am odious. But you belong to a people who have always known how to look me in the face, straightforward. (XS BACK RC.) Your poets sing of me as their sweetheart. Your mystics: as a salvation. And the greatest of your wise men call me "Liberty." I, myself, have heard it said by one of your scholars while he bled to death in the bathtub, he said, "You want to know where true liberty is? All the veins in my body can transport me to her."

## GRANDFATHER

(XS SLOWLY DSL.) I have not read books. I only know of you what the dog and the horse know.

## PEREGRINA

(A COMPLAINT WITH DEEP EMOTION.) Then why condemn me without knowing me? Why don't you make a little effort to understand me? I too want to adorn myself with roses like the country

people, to live among happy children, and to have a beautiful man to love. (SHAKES HER HEAD TORTURED.) But when I go to cut roses, the whole garden turns to ice. When the children play with me, I have to turn my head for fear that my touch will leave them frozen. And as for the men, those who serve my purpose are the most handsome who look for me on horseback. If I kiss them, I feel their useless arms slip weakly from my waist. (DESPAIRING.) Do you understand now the bitterness of my destiny? To witness all those sorrows without being able to cry? To have all the feelings of a woman without being able to use any one? And to be condemned to kill always, always, and never being able to die? (SHE FALLS OVERWHELMED IN GRANDFATHER'S CHAIR R, HER FACE IN HER HANDS, BUT UNABLE TO CRY.)

#### GRANDFATHER

(LOOKS AT HER, MOVED TO PITY. XS TO HER, PUTS HAND ON HER SHOULDER.) Poor woman! Pobrecita!

#### PEREGRINA

(LOOKS UP AT HIM SLOWLY AND GRATEFULLY.) Thank you, Grandfather. I had asked you for a little understanding and you have called me "woman." That is the most beautiful word on the lips of men. (RISES, XS TO FIREPLACE, GETS HER STAFF, TURNS, XS DS OF GRANDFATHER AND UC TO DOOR. TURNS BACK TO HIM. HE HAS WATCHED HER MOVEMENTS.) In your house, I have nothing to do this night. But they wait for me in other places. Adios. (AS SHE TURNS TO DOOR, MARTÍN IS HEARD OFF UL SHOUTING.)

#### MARTÍN

Telva! Telva!

#### GRANDFATHER

(REACTING QUICKLY, XS TO PEREGRINA AND URGES HER TO L.) It's Martín. Go out the other door. I don't want him to find you here.

PEREGRINA

(ACCEPTS HIS URGING TO L WHERE SHE STANDS JUST INSIDE ARCH.)  
Why not? His hour is already gone. Open it without fear.  
(SHE PLACES HER STAFF AGAINST DSL WALL.)

MARTÍN

(OUTSIDE DOOR WHICH HE KICKS WITH HIS FOOT. SHOUTING.)  
Quickly! Telva! (GRANDFATHER XS TO DOOR AS MADRE APPEARS  
ON STAIRS L.)

MADRE

Who is shouting at the door?

GRANDFATHER

(OPENING DOOR.) It's Martín. (MARTÍN CARRYING A GIRL IN  
HIS ARMS XS TO GRANDFATHER'S CHAIR AND SETS GIRL DOWN.)

MADRE

So soon? (DESCENDING STAIRS.) He hasn't had time to go  
half the way. (SEEING GIRL IN MARTÍN'S ARMS, CRIES OUT IN  
CHOKING VOICE AS SHE XS R.) Angélica! My daughter!

GRANDFATHER

(HAVING CLOSED DOOR AFTER MARTÍN, XS DOWN AND STOPS MADRE  
CS, GRASPING HER ARMS.) What are you saying! Have you lost  
your senses?

MADRE

(STARES OVER AT GIRL, DISILLUSIONED.) But . . . then, who  
is she?

MARTÍN

(TURNS FROM TENDING GIRL IN CHAIR.) I don't know. I saw her fall in the river and arrived in time to pull her out. She is faint, nothing more.

MADRE

(XS UP TO STAND FACING CRUCIFIX ON WALL ULC.) Why have you made me expect a miracle, Lord? It is not she. It is not she. (GRANDFATHER HAS XD TO RDS OF CHAIR WHERE HE CHECKS GIRL'S BREATHING. PEREGRINA CONTINUES TO WATCH THE OTHERS WITH INDIFFERENCE.)

GRANDFATHER

Her breathing is regular. Soon warmth will revive her.

MARTÍN

Try to revive her. (XS C TO PEREGRINA.) What can we do?

PEREGRINA

(WITH AN INDIFFERENT SMILE.) I don't know. I'm unaccustomed to this. (SHE REMAINS STILL IN THE SHADOW OF THE ARCH L.)

GRANDFATHER

(XING TO LAVABO DSR FOR VINEGAR BOTTLE.) Some rubbing with vinegar will help her.

MADRE

(XS QUICKLY TO HIM AND TAKES BOTTLE.) Let me. I'll do it. Would that I might have done it then. (KNEELS BEFORE ADELA, THE GIRL, RUBBING HER WRISTS AND TEMPLES WITH VINEGAR.)

GRANDFATHER

(REMAINS DSR, LOOKS AT MARTÍN.) And you--has anything happened to you?

MARTÍN

(TURNS TO HIM.) As I was passing El Rabión, a lightning flash dazed my horse and the two of us rolled down the gorge. But I have not been hurt.

PEREGRINA

(XING TO HIM.) Permit me. (SHE TAKES HIS SCARF.)

MARTÍN

(SURPRISED.) What?

PEREGRINA

Nothing. A little red spot here on your temple. (SHE WIPES TEMPLE WITH SCARF LOVINGLY.)

MARTÍN

(LOOKS AT HER. THERE IS A FASCINATION.) Gracias. (GRANDFATHER HAS WATCHED ALL ALERTLY.)

MADRE

(CALLS OUT.) She is coming around. (GRANDFATHER MOVES IN CLOSER. MADRE XS DSR TO REPLACE VINEGAR BOTTLE IN LAVABO. MARTÍN XS TO L OF CHAIR. MADRE TURNS BACK FACING ADELA. PEREGRINA XS BACK TO FORMER POSITION IN SHADOW OF ARCH L. SHE WATCHES THE SCENE WITH AN ETERNAL SMILE.)

GRANDFATHER

(AS ADELA SLOWLY OPENS HER EYES AND LOOKS WONDERINGLY AT THOSE WHO SURROUND HER.) Don't be afraid. You have already passed the danger.

ADELA

(SLOWLY GETTING STRENGTH TO SPEAK.) Who brought me here?

MARTÍN

I was passing near the river and saw you fall in.

ADELA

(WITH BITTER REPROACH.) Why did you do it? I did not fall; I went willingly.

GRANDFATHER

(KNEELS ON ONE KNEE AND LOOKS INTO HER FACE.) At your age? You haven't had time enough to know about life.

ADELA

I had to summon all my strength to dare it. And all has been useless. (THROUGHOUT THIS SCENE, ADELA SPEAKS AS THOUGH THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL EFFORTS INVOLVED IN HER ATTEMPTED SUICIDE HAVE WEAKENED AND EXHAUSTED HER.)

MADRE

Don't talk. Breathe deeply. (ADELA DOES.) There! Aren't you much better now?

ADELA

The air suffocates me like lead on my chest. On the other hand, in the river everything was so soft and so smooth.

PEREGRINA

(AS IF TALKING TO HERSELF. NO ONE NOTICES.) They all say the same thing. It is like a bandage of water in the soul.

MARTÍN

Courage! Tomorrow all this will have passed like a bad dream.

ADELA

(DESPAIRINGLY.) But I shall have to go back to walking alone as I've been until today--with no will--and without hope.

GRANDFATHER

Don't you have a family? A home?

ADELA

I've never had anything of my own. (LOOKS UP AT THE OTHERS ALMOST QUESTIONINGLY.) They say that those who are drowning recall their whole life in a moment. (SHAKES HER HEAD.) I couldn't remember anything.

MARTÍN

(UNBELIEVING.) Among all your days, have you never been happy?

ADELA

(SLOWLY. EYES LIGHTING UP LONGINGLY AS SHE RELIVES THAT DAY.) Only once, but it was so long ago. One vacation day I went to my friend's house. . . with the sun on the fields and the sheep climbing the mountains. When afternoon came, we sat around the table and talked of gentle things. That night, the whole plain smelled of apples and the windows were full of stars. (SADLY.) But Sunday is such a short day. (SMILES BITTERLY.) It's very sad that in my whole life I can remember only one day of happiness, (VOICE WEAKENS.) spent in a house that was not mine. (CLOSES HER EYES.) And now, to begin again. . . (INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS.)

GRANDFATHER

(FEELING HER HANDS AND PULSE.) Feeling has been lost. Her hands are cold. I don't feel her pulse. (LOOKS ACCUSINGLY AT PEREGRINA.)

PEREGRINA

(CALMLY, WITHOUT LOOKING AT HIM.) Calm yourself, Grandfather. She is simply asleep.

MARTÍN

We can't leave her here. She has to be put to bed at once.

MADRE

(SHARPLY.) Where?

MARTÍN

(LOOKING HER DIRECTLY IN THE EYES.) There is not more than one place in this house.

MADRE

(EXPLOSIVELY, XING TO L OF C.) Not in Angélica's room!  
(TURNING BACK TO HIM.) No!

GRANDFATHER

(XS QUICKLY TO HER R.) It has to be. We can't close the door on her.

MADRE

No! You can ask me to give my food and clothes. All that's mine. But my daughter's room, no!

GRANDFATHER

(PERSUASIVELY.) Think about it. She comes from the same river with water from that river in her hair. And it is, Martin who has brought her in his arms. It's like a command from God.

MADRE

(LOOKS AT HIM FOR A MOMENT. BOWS HER HEAD, YIELDING.) A command from God . . . . (SLOWLY SHE STARTS FOR THE STAIRS.) Bring her up. (MARTÍN PICKS ADELA UP IN HIS ARMS AND FOLLOWS MADRE UP THE STAIRS.) Telva! Open the chest and warm the linen sheets. (CALLING THIS, SHE, MARTÍN AND ADELA EXIT.)

GRANDFATHER

(WHO, ALONG WITH PEREGRINA HAS WATCHED SILENTLY AS THE THREE GO UP THE STAIRS AND DISAPPEAR.) You have become very thoughtful. (XS TO R OF C.)

PEREGRINA

(VERY THOUGHTFUL.) Very much. (XING TO LC) Much more so than you think.

GRANDFATHER

(ALMOST A LAUGH, TRIUMPHANT, SARCASTIC.) It's a bad night for you, isn't it. You have slept on duty and in that same time a man in the gorge and a woman in the river have escaped you.

PEREGRINA

The man, yes. I was not waiting for her.

GRANDFATHER

(STILL IN A LIGHT VEIN.) But you nearly took her. What would you have done if Martín had not arrived in time?

PEREGRINA

(DIGNIFIED ANSWER.) Another would have saved her or, perhaps, she herself. This girl was not destined for me yet.

GRANDFATHER

(SERIOUS.) Yet? What do you mean?

PEREGRINA

(PENSIVELY.) I don't understand it. Some one has resolved to forestall the things which ought to mature in their time. But that which is in my books cannot be avoided. (XS TO L WALL TO RETRIEVE HER STAFF.) I'll return on the appointed day. (STARTS X TO UC DOOR.)

GRANDFATHER

(A STEP TO HER LIFTING A RESTRAINING HAND.) Wait a moment. Explain your words.

PEREGRINA

(STOPS, QUARTER POSITION.) It's difficult because I don't see these things very clearly. For the first time I find myself before a mystery that I myself do not understand. (INTENSELY.) What force drive this girl before her time?

GRANDFATHER

(AGAIN THE SARCASM.) Wasn't it so written in your book?

PEREGRINA

(PAYS NO ATTENTION TO HIS TONE OF VOICE.) Yes, all the same. A deep river, a drowning girl, this house. (SHE HAS PEERED DEEP INTO HER MIND. THEN, THE REALIZATION OF THE TRUTH.) But this wasn't the night! (SHE HAS FACED FRONT. NOW A STEP FORWARD AND THE WORDS ALMOST BEAT OUT.)

Seven moons are still lacking!

GRANDFATHER

(PLEADING.) Forget her. Can't you pardon her at least once?

PEREGRINA

(TURNING TO HIM AND SPEAKING CURTLY.) Impossible! I do not command; I obey.

GRANDFATHER

(STILL PLEADING.) She is so lovely and love has given her so little! Why does she have to die in the fullness of her youth?

PEREGRINA

Don't you believe I know it? This happens many times to those in life and to me. That we don't know the road, but we always arrive at the place where we must go. (XS UP TO UC DOOR AND OPENS IT. LOOKS BACK AT GRANDFATHER.) Your hands are trembling again.

GRANDFATHER

(TURNS FRONT AND LOWERS HEAD.) For her. She's alone in the world and she can do so much good in this house filling up the emptiness that another one left. (TURNS TO HER.) If you were looking for me, I would receive you calmly. I am seventy years old.

PEREGRINA

(WITH SOFT IRONY.) Much less, Grandfather. You are not seventy--yet. (STARTS TO EXIT.)

GRANDFATHER

(DETAINING GESTURE.) Wait! Can I ask you one last question?

PEREGRINA

Ask me.

GRANDFATHER

When must you return?

PEREGRINA

(OPENING THE DOOR WIDER AND INDICATING THE SKY.) Look at the moon. It is completely full. When it has become full seven other times, I shall return to this house. And, on my return, a beautiful girl, crowned with flowers, will be my companion by the river. But don't look at me with bitterness. I swear to you that if I did not come, you yourself would call me. And on that day you will bless my name. (A BRIEF PAUSE AS SHE STARES AT HIM.) You still don't believe me?

GRANDFATHER

(LOOKING AT HER, TRYING HARD TO UNDERSTAND.) I don't know.

PEREGRINA

You will soon be convinced. Have confidence in me. And now that you know me better, tell me goodbye without hatred and without fear. We two are old enough to be good companions. (SHE STRETCHES OUT HER HAND TO HIM.) Adiós, friend.

GRANDFATHER

(TAKES HER HAND.) Adiós . . . (DIFFICULT TO SAY.), friend.

(PEREGRINA EXITS. GRANDFATHER CLOSES DOOR AFTER HER. HE TURNS WARMING THE HAND SHE HAD HELD. AND XS TO FIREPLACE TO WARM HANDS AS THE CURTAIN CLOSES. HOUSE LIGHTS UP. THERE IS AN INTERMISSION OF TEN MINUTES.)

### ACT III

THE SCENE IS THE SAME. IT IS JUNE OF THE FOLLOWING YEAR. THE TABLE IS ON STAGE R EXTENDING FROM THE FIREPLACE TO C AS IN ACT I. THE BENCH IS DS OF THE TABLE AND ON IT IS A SEWING BASKET. DORINA IS SEATED ON A STOOL AT THE R END OF THE TABLE MAKING AN ARRANGEMENT OF ROSES IN A BASKET. FALÍN IS SEATED ON A STOOL US OF THE TABLE AND IS PLAYING WITH A BUTTON BOX. ANDRÉS IS SEATED ON A STOOL AT THE L END OF THE TABLE WINDING EMBROIDERY THREAD ON PAPER BOBBINS. QUICO IS STANDING AT THE US L CORNER OF THE TABLE WATCHING THE CHILDREN. ON THE TABLE IS AN EMBROIDERY HOOP WITH A COLORFUL PIECE OF EMBROIDERY ENCIRCLED. ALSO ON THE TABLE ARE PIECES OF LACE, THE KIND WOMEN FASTEN ON THEIR HEADS WHEN ENTERING CHURCH. ON THE MANTLE OVER THE FIREPLACE SOME BOTTLES OF WINE AND GLASSES HAVE BEEN ADDED. ON STAGE L, ON THE END OF THE PLATFORMS NEXT TO THE STAIRS, A LARGE POT WITH A BIG GERANIUM PLANT IN FULL BLOOM HAS BEEN ADDED. GRANDFATHER'S BIG CHAIR IS NOW IN THE OPENING UL WHERE THE TABLE WAS IN ACT II.

HOUSELIGHTS DIM AS CURTAIN OPENS AND STAGE LIGHTS COME UP. THREE SECONDS AFTER THE CURTAIN IS FULLY OPEN, ADELA, DRESSED IN A WHITE LACE FIESTA DRESS ENTERS FROM THE KITCHEN UR. QUICO MOVES AWAY L FROM THE TABLE AND STANDS FACING HER, REMOVING HIS HAT. ADELA REMAINS ON THE PLATFORM NEAR THE DOOR UC.

QUICO

(STARES AT HER AS IF HYPNOTIZED.) They told me that you had to talk to me.

ADELA

(UTTERLY CHARMING WHEN SHE SCOLDS.) And when not? The grass is rotting of dampness in the cowshed. The mice have

eaten a whole measure of rye. And the stable continues without cleaning. What are you thinking of, man of God?

QUICO

I? Am I thinking?

ADELA

(INDICATING DOOR.) Why don't you get a move on then?

QUICO

I don't know. I like to hear you speak.

ADELA

Do you need music for your work?

QUICO

When the wagon sings, the oxen are less tired.

ADELA

A spur is better than a song. Go on! What are you waiting for? (HE DOES NOT MOVE JUST STARES AT HER AS IF ENCHANTED.) Have you suddenly become deaf?

QUICO

(TURNING HIS HAT IN HIS HANDS.) I don't know what is the matter with me. When the Señora speaks to me, I hear well. When Telva speaks to me, the same. But you have a way of looking when you talk to me that I don't hear anything you say. (IN SPITE OF HIS ENCHANTMENT, HE SPEAKS WITH AN ENGAGING IMPUDENCE.)

ADELA

(GESTURING MORE VIGOROUSLY TO THE DOOR UC.) Well, close your eyes and start walking before the sun goes down.

QUICO

(MOVES SLOWLY TO UC DOOR.) I'm going, my lady, I'm going. (TURNS IN DOORWAY AND GIVES ONE LAST APPRAISING LOOK AND EXITS. FALÍN UPSETS THE BUTTON BOX WHICH FALLS WITH A CLAMOR TO THE FLOOR. SOME BUTTONS ROLL L OF C.)

ADELA

(XING TO STOOL ABOVE TABLE WHILE FALÍN GETS DOWN ON FLOOR COLLECTING BUTTONS AND PUTTING THEM IN THE BOX.) What are you doing there, mischief?

FALÍN

I am helping.

ADELA

Yes, I see. Pick them up, one at a time and, in passing, see if you can learn to count them. (SITS US OF TABLE AND BEGINS WORK ON EMBROIDERY IN HOOP.)

DORINA

(ARRANGING FLOWERS.) When you embroider, can you think and talk of other things?

ADELA

Of course. Why?

DORINA

Angélica could too. And when the fiesta day arrived, she used to tell us magic tales of enchantments that always happen on the day of San Juan.

ANDRÉS

(GLANCING UP FROM WINDING THREAD.) Do you know one?

ADELA

Many. They are old romances that I learned as a child and I've never forgotten them. Which one do you wish?

DORINA

There is a merry one about a County who was taking his horse to drink at the lake.

ADELA

(STOPS HER WORK, THINKS A MOMENT, RAISES HER HEAD AND RECITES WITH A FAR-AWAY LOOK IN HER EYES.)

It was at daybreak when the Count of Olinos  
On the bright morn of our holy Saint John  
He paused a moment beside the cool water  
Of the deep lake to give his horse time to drink.

Then while his horse drank his fill from the water,  
The Count Olinos began singing a tune,  
All the sweet birds that were soaring above him  
Stopped in the flight as they heard his sweet song.

The lonely journeyman stops on the highway,  
He has forgotten the reason for travelling,  
The navigator who sails on the wide sea  
Turns his boat back just to hear the Count's  
sweet song.

(ANDRÉS AND DORINA KEEP WORKING, STOPPING OCCASIONALLY TO LOOK AT ADELA WHILE SHE RECITES. FALÍN, L OF C, SITS ON FLOOR LISTENING TO HER.)

ANDRÉS

Why did the birds and the travellers stop?

ADELA

Because the song was enchanted like the song of the sirens.  
(SHE PICKS UP HER EMBROIDERY AND WORKS ON IT.)

ANDRÉS

For whom was he singing it?

ADELA

For the child of the dawn--the daughter of the queen.

FALÍN

(FROM HIS SEAT ON THE FLOOR.) Were they married?

ADELA

No. The queen, full of jealousy, ordered them to be killed. But a white rosebush was born from her and from him a white hawthorn. And the branches grew until they were entwined.

DORINA

(INTERRUPTING QUICKLY.) Then the queen ordered them to cut the two branches. Wasn't it so?

ADELA

It was so. But neither did this continue to separate them.

From her was born a heron,  
From him a strong sparrow-hawk,  
Together they fly through the sky,  
Together they fly, a single pair.

ANDRÉS

(TURNS FRONT, DEPRECATINGLY.) Those things only happened before. Now there are no miracles.

ADELA

This one, yes. It is the only one that is repeated.  
Because when love is true not even Death itself can do  
anything against it.

DORINA

Angélica knew those verses, but she used to sing them. Do  
you know the music? (FALÍN XS TO US OF TABLE L OF ADELA.)

ADELA

Yes. (SINGS.)

It was at daybreak when the Count of Olinos  
On the bright morn of our holy Saint John,  
He paused a moment beside the cool water  
Of the deep lake to give his horse time to  
drink.

(REFRAIN WHICH THE THREE CHILDREN JOIN IN  
SINGING.)

The morn of Saint John  
On the bank of the river.

(CHILDREN AND ADELA LAUGH HAPPILY.)

ADELA

(SEEING GRANDFATHER WHO CAME DOWNSTAIRS AND REMAINED ON  
LANDING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SONG, WATCHING THE SCENE  
WITH CONTENTMENT.) Do you want anything, Grandfather?

GRANDFATHER

(COMING DOWNSTAIRS TO FLOOR, MOVING IN TO LC.) Nothing.  
I was admiring you among the children singing those old  
songs. And I seemed to be dreaming. (ADELA HAS RISEN AS  
HE SPEAKS AND XD TO HIM.) What dress is that? (REFERRING  
TO RATHER ELEGANT DRESS SHE IS WEARING.)

ADELA

Madre wanted me to put it on for the fiesta tonight. Don't you remember?

GRANDFATHER

How could I forget it. Angélica herself wore it and embroidered it with pearls on velvet. She began it the night of Saint John as today. (LOOKS AT EMBROIDERY SHE IS CARRYING IN HER HAND.) And this work?

ADELA

I found it already started in the bottom of the chest.

GRANDFATHER

Does Madre know that you are doing this?

ADELA

She herself encouraged me to finish it. Do you like it?

GRANDFATHER

Each day I find you more changed--more like Angélica. (A TROUBLED TONE IN HIS VOICE.)

ADELA

It will be my hair-style. Madre likes it so.

GRANDFATHER

Whereas, I would prefer that you were the same you without trying to resemble someone else.

ADELA

(SINCERELY.) Would that I were as she who began this embroidery!

GRANDFATHER

You are as you are and that is good. Now, putting on her clothes and fixing your hair the same, you are becoming so much like her that it frightens me.

ADELA

Frightens you? Why?

GRANDFATHER

I don't know. But if you had been robbed of your treasure and you find another, you would not return to hide it in the same place.

ADELA

(TROUBLED.) I don't understand you, Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER

(PATS HER ARM REASSURINGLY.) These troubles are mine. (XS DS OF ADELA TO OPEN DOOR USC. LOOKS OVER THE COUNTRYSIDE ANXIOUSLY AND EXITS L. ADELA WATCHES HIM, WORRIED, AND AFTER HIS EXIT XS TO US OF TABLE.)

ADELA

What's the matter with Grandfather today?

DORINA

(XING TO FIREPLACE WHERE SHE PLACES BASKET OF ROSES ON MANTEL.) He's watching the roads the whole afternoon.

ANDRÉS

If he's expecting the bagpiper, it's too early. The fiesta doesn't begin until tonight.

FALÍN

Are we going to see the bonfire?

ADELA

And to dance and leap over the top of the flame. (FALÍN BOUNCES UP ON STOOL US TABLE AND JUMPS WITH JOY.)

ANDRÉS

(EXCITED.) Really? They never let us go before. And it gave me fits to hear the fiesta from here with the windows closed.

ADELA

(FIRMLY.) That is past. Tonight we'll all go together.

FALÍN

Me too?

ADELA

(PUTTING HER ARMS AROUND HIM.) You first like a little man. (SHE KISSES HIM SOUNDLY, PUTS HIM ON FLOOR WHERE SHE SLAPS HIS BEHIND PLAYFULLY SENDING HIM TOWARD USC DOOR.) Oh, to work! To look for wood for the great bonfire! (TO DORINA AND ANDRÉS.) What are you doing here? The fields have been made for running!

ANDRÉS

(RUNNING UP AND OUT DOOR USC.) To run!

DORINA

(SIMULTANEOUSLY, FOLLOWING ANDRÉS OUT DOOR.) To run!

FALÍN

(WHO HAS PAUSED INSIDE DOOR AND TO L OF IT WHILE DORINA AND ANDRÉS EXIT, TURNS BACK TO ADELA.) Can I throw stones at the trees?

ADELA

Why not?

FALÍN

The other day I threw one at the fig tree of the priest and everybody scolded me.

ADELA

The figs must have been green.

FALÍN

(KNOWS HE HAS A JOKE LINE.) No, but the priest was under it. (EXITS LAUGHING. ADELA LAUGHS. TELVA ENTERS FROM KITCHEN UL AND XS DOWN TO R END OF TABLE.)

TELVA

Thank God that somebody laughs in this house.

ADELA

(RETURNING TO HER STOOL US OF TABLE AND RESUMING HER WORK ON EMBROIDERY.) They are glorious children.

TELVA

(SEATS HERSELF ON STOOL R OF TABLE AND DURING THE FOLLOWING SCENE GRADUALLY CLEARS TABLE OF BUTTONS AND THREADS WHICH SHE PLACES IN SEWING BASKET ON BENCH. THE PIECES OF LACE ARE LEFT ON THE TABLE.) Now they are, since they go to school and can run at their will, they have better color and better dreaming at night. But neither is too much softness fitting.

ADELA

They give no reason for anything else.

TELVA

Like all behaviour, kisses and games are good, but a spanking at times is also salutary. Vinegar and honey tastes bad, but it makes good medicine.

ADELA

They are already warned about vinegar. Yesterday Andrés walked into a fight and returned home black and blue from the clash.

TELVA

(THE KNOWING ADVICE OF AN OLD ONE.) While he's with others of his same age, let them alone so they're made strong. Those who do not fight when they are young have to when they are older--which is worse. He's like a tadpole that wiggles his tail, (DEMONSTRATES.) wiggle-waggle until he rids himself from its top. Do you see?

ADELA

I still have so much to learn!

## TELVA

Not so much. What you have done here in a few months, I have not accomplished in years. Here was nothing! A house that was living in darkness! And a gust of wind suddenly opened all the windows. You have been that wind.

## ADELA

(LOOKING AT HER SINCERELY AND LOVINGLY.) However much I may do it will not be enough to repay you all for the good I owe you.

## TELVA

(PATS ADELA'S HAND.) What more could you do? Since the time that Angélica was not with us, misfortune plunged into this house as a knife through bread. The children quiet in the corner, the yard full of dust, and the Señora with her eyes fixed and her rosary in her hand. The whole house seemed like a clock that had stopped. Now it has come back to normal and there is a bird that sings the new hours.

## ADELA

They have been more so for me. To think that I used to have nothing, not even hope. And when I wanted to die, Heaven gave it me in one swoop--Grandfather, two brothers and a sister! A whole life begun by another thing I had pursued. (A HINT OF WORRY IN HER VOICE.) At times I think that it's too good to be true and that suddenly I am going to wake up with nothing again by the bank of the river.

## TELVA

(BLESSING HERSELF RAPIDLY.) Be silent, naughty one! Such ideas for the fiesta! (LOOKS AT ADELA FIXEDLY.) Why have you become sad so suddenly?

ADELA

Sad, no. I was thinking that there is always something lacking in order to be truly happy.

TELVA

Aha! (LEANS TOWARD ADELA, VOICE KNOWING AND CONFIDENTIAL.)  
And this something? He has dark eyes and spurs on his boots?

ADELA

("YES.") Martín.

TELVA

I imagined it.

ADELA

All the rest of the family like me well. Why does it have to be so distinctly Martín, the one who brought me to this house, who looks at me like a stranger. He has never said a kind word to me.

TELVA

It's his nature. Vigorous men a like well-kneaded bread: as much as the crust is crispy, the more soft the bread inside.

ADELA

If we are left alone at any time, he finds an excuse to leave, or he remains silent with his eyes cast down without ever looking at me.

TELVA

Is that so? Bad, bad, bad! When men look at us very much,

nothing may happen. But when they don't dare to look at us, anything can happen!

ADELA

What do you wish to say?

TELVA

That which you are keeping in silence. Look, Adela, if you want us to confide in each other, do not come to me with evasions. Difficult words you must grasp without fear, as hot coals in your fingers. What is it that you feel for Martín?

ADELA

The anxiety of repaying him in some way for what he has done for me. I would like him to need me sometime--to kindle the fire for him when he's cold, or to be silent together when he is sad, like a sister and brother.

TELVA

And nothing more?

ADELA

What more can I expect?

TELVA

Hasn't it occurred to you to think that he is too young to live alone? At his age, he doesn't need a sister, he needs a wife!

ADELA

(RISES ASTONISHED.) Telva! But how can you imagine such a thing!

TELVA

(VERY PRACTICAL.) There would be no one to prevent you, I tell you.

ADELA

(FORCIBLY.) It would be worse: a betrayal. Until now I have gone occupying one by one all the places of Angélica without doing harm to her memory. But the last remains, the most sacred. That continues to be his and nobody ought to intrude on him. (PAUSE AT WHICH TIME MARTIN ENTERS UC DOORWAY. ON SEEING THE TWO TOGETHER, HE PAUSES A MOMENT. THEN HE SPEAKS TO TELVA.)

MARTIN

Do you have a bandage around here?

TELVA

What for?

MARTÍN

(INDICATING LEFT WRIST.) I dislocated this wrist yesterday. It has to be bound.

TELVA

(POINTEDLY.) He is speaking to you, Adela. (ADELA RIPS A STRIP FROM A PIECE OF CLOTH ON THE TABLE. MARTÍN MOVES TO LC. ADELA COMES TO HIM AND WRAPS CLOTH AROUND HIS WRIST.)

ADELA

Why didn't you say this yesterday?

MARTÍN

It didn't trouble me. It must have been when I unloaded the wagon.

TELVA

Yesterday? How odd! I don't recall that the wagon went out the whole day.

MARTÍN

(SHARPLY.) Then, it would be on pruning the walnut tree, or yoking the oxen. Do I have to remember how it was?

TELVA

(SHRUGGING, IMPUDENT.) That's your lookout. It's your hand.

ADELA

(BANDAGING THE WRIST CAREFULLY.) Does it hurt you?

MARTÍN

Tighten it strongly. More. (HE LOOKS AT HER WHILE SHE TEARS AND TIES ON THE BANDAGE.) Why have you put on this dress?

ADELA

(SURPRISED.) It wasn't my idea. But if you are displeased--

MARTÍN

(ROUGHLY.) You don't need to put on another one. You can take charge of anything you wish. Isn't it your house? (TURNS AND STARTS UP THE STAIRS, STOPS ON LANDING, SOFTENS

HIS TONE AND SPEAKS WITHOUT LOOKING AT HER.) Gracias.  
(CONTINUES UP THE STAIRS AND EXITS.)

TELVA

(RISING, CALLING AFTER HIM.) Less bad! You only lacked biting the hand that cures you! (SHAKES HER HEAD.) Pity  
the twig of the hazelnut tree.

V

ADELA

(PICKS UP HER EMBROIDERY, SPEAKS THOUGHTFULLY.) When he looks at the wheat fields he's not like this. Nor when he caresses his horse. It's only with me--(MADRE ENTERS DL FROM AREA OF MAIN DOOR OF HOUSE. SHE IS RELAXED, HAPPY LOOKING, ENERGETIC, AND DRESSED BEAUTIFULLY IN A PINK SATIN DRESS FOR THE FIESTA. ADELA PUTS DOWN THE EMBROIDERY.) I was just going out to look for you. (XS TO MADRE. THEY MEET L OF LC.) You took a long walk, didn't you?

MADRE

(IT'S DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THIS CHARMING CREATURE IS THE PENT-UP, SHORT-SPOKEN PERSON OF THE FIRST ACT.) To the vineyards. The afternoon was beautiful and already the whole country smells of summer.

TELVA

(TIDYING UP ODDS AND ENDS ON TABLE INTO SEWING BASKET.) Did you walk through the village?

MADRE

I walked there. So much has changed! The vine by the forge reaches as far as the porch roof; there are new trees in the parish garden; and the children grow so quickly. Some didn't even recognize me.

TELVA

What then? Did you think the whole town was asleep all this time?

MADRE

(PAYS NO ATTENTION TO TELVA.) Even the ordinary things seem most fair. The houses appear more white. And the rose bushes on the footpath to the mill have grown hardy.

ADELA

Were you in the mill, too?

MADRE

(OMINOUSLY.) I was. Certainly I expected to find it better taken care of. Where is Quico?

TELVA

(XS TO UC DOOR.) Quico! (SHE CALLS IN LOUD VOICE.)

QUICO

(DISTANT, OFFSTAGE UC.) I'm coming!

MADRE

Come closer so that I might see you, child. Are my eyes failing or is it getting dark already?

ADELA

(STEPPING CLOSER TO MADRE.) It's getting Dark. (TELVA XS UPSTAGE OF MADRE AND ADELA AND LIGHTS LAMP HANGING ON WALL L. L TO LC IS ILLUMINATED.)

## MADRE

Let your hair down a litt'le more. So. (SHE DOES IT HERSELF, CARESSING ADELA'S HAIR AND DRESS.) Let's see now. (MADRE CONTEMPLATES ADELA, TURNING HER HEAD AND EYES TO SURVEY THE GIRL.) Yes, it was this way. Her eyes a little brighter, but the same look. (SHE KISSES ADELE'S EYES. QUICO ENTERS USC WITH A FLORAL ARRANGEMENT IN THE SHAPE OF A CROWN, A BRANCH DECORATED WITH MULTI-COLORED FLOWERS. HE REMAINS JUST INSIDE THE DOOR, REMOVES HIS HAT AND SPEAKS TO MADRE.)

## QUICO

(WITH A LITTLE BOW.) Command me, Señora.

## MADRE

(XS TO HIM AND SPEAKS COMMANDINGLY. ADELA DRIFTS TO DSL. THROUGHOUT THIS SCENE, QUICO STARES OVER AT ADELA, ONLY REVERTING TO MADRE WHEN SHE INSISTS. HIS STARE, HE THINKS, IS FULL OF LOVE FOR ADELA. ADELA IS AWARE OF HIM, AMUSED, BUT DOES NOT RETURN HIS STARE, ONLY A MOMENTARY GLANCE WHEN MADRE SCOLDS ABOUT HIS LACK OF ATTENTION.) The mill dam drips water as a basket and the tile-works and rollers are eaten with mildew. There is a good rattrap in the apple-orchard quarry. Do you hear me?

## QUICO

Eh? (QUICKLY ATTENTIVE BUT FOR ONLY A MOMENT.) Yes, Señora.

## MADRE

For the rollers of the wheel, there is no better wood than the ash trees. And if you can do it tomorrow, it's better done. (NOTING HIS LACK OF ATTENTION.) Do you hear me or not?

## QUICO

(SAME BUSINESS AS BEFORE.) Eh? Oh, yes, Señora. It will be done.

MADRE

(STARTING X TO STAIRS.) Now I'm going to finish dressing for the fiesta. The cape with its hood and my silver earrings, as in the happy times.

TELVA

(SURPRISED.) Are you going to the dance?

MADRE

(STOPPING ON LANDING.) I haven't seen the bonfire lighted for years. Does it seem bad to you?

TELVA

(ENTHUSIASTICALLY.) On the contrary. My blood is also stirring me, and if these legs answer me, this young one (INDICATING ADELA.) is going to see me dancing the perlindando! (SHE LIFTS HER SKIRTS AND SWAYS, BANGS HER HEELS AND SWIRLS AROUND. EVERYONE ON STAGE ENJOYS IT.)

ADELA

(XS TO BOTTOM OF STAIRS AND SPEAKS TO MADRE.) Are you tired? Lean on my arm. (XS UPSTAIRS TO MADRE.)

MADRE

(TAKING HER ARM AND CONTINUING UPSTAIRS.) Gracias . . . Daughter. (MADRE AND ADELA EXIT UPSTAIRS.)

TELVA

(IN STATE OF WONDER.) The vineyards, the mill, and even the dance tonight around the bonfire! Who would have thought it! (HER TONE CHANGES AS SHE SEES QUICO STRAINING HIS NECK FOLLOWING ADELA UP THE STAIRS AND STARING EVEN AFTER SHE HAD EXITED.) Be careful with those eyes, rapacious one, they are going to escape from you up the staircase.

QUICO

(LOOKS AT HER IMPUDENTLY.) Is there any harm in looking?

TELVA

Outside the time you are losing, no. (SHE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR WHAT GOES ON OUTSIDE THE HOUSE.) Would you like some refreshment?

QUICO

And strong! (XING TO US OF TABLE, PUTTING HAT ON TABLE, AND STUDYING CROWN OF FLOWERS HE CARRIES.) No matter what, there always remains a corner for a drink! Does this branch please you? Oak, olive, and laurel. (HE SITS.)

TELVA

(HAVING XD TO FIREPLACE MANTEL FOR BOTTLE OF WINE AND TWO GLASSES, RETURNS TO STOOL R OF TABLE, POURS TWO GLASSES OF WINE, SITS.) It's not bad, but why only one? The mayor has three daughters. (Figure 4)

QUICO

(LIFTING HIS GLASS.) And let him!

TELVA

It's clear that the others can hope! (THEY SIP THE WINE.) All the holy ones have eight, and here there are two. (SHE TAKES ANOTHER DRINK. RECITES PLAYFULLY.)

The night of Saint Peter  
I put out a branch for you,  
The night of Saint John  
I couldn't because  
I had been bad.



Figure 4. Telva and Quico

QUICO

(PLACING CROWN CAREFULLY ON TABLE.) It's not for them. I'm over that.

TELVA

There is someone new?

QUICO

It's not absolutely necessary. To place a branch is not to make love. (THE WINE WILL BE SIPPED BY BOTH AT APPROPRIATE SPOTS IN THE DIALOGUE.)

TELVA

(SHAKING A FINGER AT HIM.) You're not thinking of dangling it in Adela's window?

QUICO

(INSINUATINGLY.) Many young men would like to, but no one dares.

TELVA

They don't dare! Why not?

QUICO

(HERE'S A GENTLE TRUTH.) Because of Martín.

TELVA

(A SLIGHT SENSE OF OUTRAGE.) And who has to see Martín?  
Is he her husband or her sweetheart?

QUICO

(SHRUG.) I know he's not. But there are things that people don't understand.

TELVA

(OMINOUSLY.) For example?

QUICO

(SHRUGS AGAIN.) For example: that one young man and one young woman who are not a family live under the same roof.

TELVA

(RISING IN WRATH.) It was that I was wanting to hear! (XS TO LAVABO AND PICKS UP EARTHEN PITCHER. XS BACK TO R OF TABLE AND RAISES PITCHER AS IF TO STRIKE QUICO ON HEAD.) And you, who know them and eat bread of this house, you were the one who dared to think that. (WAVING PITCHER IN AIR.) Repeat it if you are a man!

QUICO

(DUCKING WITH HANDS RAISED FOR HIS PROTECTION.) Gently, gently. I'm not thinking anything! You blast me with your tongue and I am only saying what they are saying over there. (GESTURES WIDE ARC L.)

TELVA

(DOWNS PITCHER FROM ON HIGH TO HER WAIST. SUSPICIOUSLY.) Where is "over there?"

QUICO

(BOTH HANDS GESTURE SPACE.) Well . . . over there . . . in the country houses . . . in the tavern.

TELVA

(ANGRILY AND SELF-RIGHTEOUSLY PLACES PITCHER ON TABLE.)  
The tavern! A good parish for saying Mass. And a good  
roof the tavern has for throwing stones at the inhabitants.  
(SITS ON HER STOOL, SERVES QUICO ANOTHER GLASS OF WINE.  
BOSSILY.) Come on! Talk! What is it that the bold preacher  
says in that pulpit?

QUICO

Things. This and that . . . and if the other . . . and  
of it is something else and so on. You know yourself: the  
tongue is a woman's razor.

TELVA

You make, rascal, a plain point. And that is all. Besides  
in that stew any slice would be in the sermon. (VIGOROUSLY.)  
Talk!

QUICO

(IS ENJOYING HIMSELF WITH THE GOSSIP.) What if Adela ar-  
rived without knowing where to kill herself and now she is  
the mistress of the house. What if she is robbing everyone  
of that which was Angélica's. What if she began by occupy-  
ing the household lines: does she have to end up occupying  
the sheets? Last night there was great laughter gossiping  
about it with the shepherd when Martín arrived.

TELVA

(CROSSING HERSELF RAPIDLY.) Ay, Dios mio! Martín heard it?

QUICO

No one was able to avoid it. He entered suddenly, white as  
wax. He upset the shepherd over the table and then he wanted

to oblige the shepherd to get on his knees for saying the name of Adela. Then the men attempted to interfere between them . . . and they had some words.

## TELVA

(NODDING GRIMLY.) They had to be strong words because he has had to bandage his hand. And then?

## QUICO

(RISING.) Then, nothing. Each one went out wherever he could. Martin remained there, drinking. (PAUSE. SHRUG. PICKS UP HAT AND FLOWER CROWN, XS TO DOOR. TURNS BACK.) Well, buenos noches. (EXITS UC.)

## TELVA

(RISES. TALKS AS SHE REPLACES PITCHER ON SHELF OF LAVABO, REPLACES WINE BOTTLE ON MANTEL ALONG WITH THE GLASSES.) Well, buenos noches, gay blade. (SPEAKING LOUDLY.) Learn your lesson from this case. And tell the barmaid for me to leave another's honor in peace and take care of her own. As far as men are concerned, with half of her past, they would have great reputations to make a future for her! (XING TO UC DOOR.) Go now from here, blackguard! Ay! And in passing you can tell her also to put a little more wine in the water she sells. (TURNING FRONT, SHE NOW SLOWLY XS TO STAIRS, STOPPING OCCASIONALLY IN HER MONOLOGUE TO DRIVE HOME A POINT.) Naturally! From where does one go to throw a stone? The wicked eye sees harm in everything! And how is this happy house going to sustain itself without plunging into damnation! (SHE STARTS UP THE STAIRS GRUMBLING. GRANDFATHER ENTERS UC DOOR AND WATCHES HER.) Hatchet tongue! Anne Boleyn! Dried up lizard!

## GRANDFATHER

(AMUSED.) Why do you walk grumbling?

TELVA

(TURNS TO HIM ON LANDING. WITH ILL HUMOR.) Does it matter so much to you? And what horse-fly has stung you who do nothing more than come in and go out and watch the roads? Are you expecting anyone?

GRANDFATHER

No one. And where is Adela?

TELVA

(LISTENS A MOMENT TO UPSTAIRS.) And now I tell you she's coming down. And inspire her a little. Recently dark mists are running through her head. (TURNS, EXITS, GRUMBLING.) Sorceress of disorder! Old hag! May a thunderbolt strike her! Amen! (GRANDFATHER, UNEASY, TURNS TO STUDY THE ROADS AND THE SKY FROM DOOR UC.)

ADELA

(COMING DOWNSTAIRS.) You wanted me, Grandfather?

GRANDFATHER

(TURNING TO HER.) It's nothing. I only wanted to see you. To know that you are well.

ADELA

(XS TO HIM AT DOOR.) What could happen to me? It's only a moment since we have seen each other.

GRANDFATHER

(GENTLY.) Telva was telling me that unhappy thoughts are running through your head.

ADELA

Oh, nonsense! Little things that become big ones because at times I have to cry without knowing why.

GRANDFATHER

Do you have a reason for complaint?

ADELA

(HONESTLY.) I? That would be tempting heaven. I have more than I could ever dream of. Madre is dressing for the fiesta to take me to the dance. And it's the loveliest night of the year. (TURNS IN DOORWAY TO LOOK UP AT THE SKY.) Look, Grandfather, the whole sky is quivering with stars! (TURNING TO HIM.) And the moon is completely round.

GRANDFATHER

(WHO HAS LOOKED OUT, NOW TURNS FRONT.) Completely full! (LOOKS AT ADELA WORRIED.) It is the seventh time since you arrived.

ADELA

Already so long? How short are the days here!

GRANDFATHER

(PLACING A HAND ON EACH OF ADELA'S ARMS, LOOKING AT HER FIXEDLY.) Tell me the truth. What do you want the most? Are you truly happy?

ADELA

(SINCERELY.) As happy as one can be in life.

GRANDFATHER

(MORE FORCIBLY.) You're not hiding anything from me?

ADELA

(SURPRISED.) Why would I have to lie?

GRANDFATHER

(DROPS HIS HANDS TO HIS SIDES, TURNS FRONT, SHAKES HEAD DESPAIRINGLY.) It cannot be . . . (XS R TO FIREPLACE AS HE TALKS.) I have to know something. Something which, perhaps, you don't see clearly yourself yet. (TURNS TO HER AT FIREPLACE.) What is developing within you like those clouds of pain that suddenly break out and which would be so easy to destroy if we had a good friend to tell it to in time.

ADELA

(UNEASY AT HIS TONE.) I don't understand you, Grandfather. But it seems to me that I'm not the one who's being silent about something here. What is happening today?

GRANDFATHER

(TRIES VAINLY TO SHAKE OFF HIS WORRIES.) They will be imaginings. If I could believe that I dreamed that day! (BUT WORRY WILL NOT LEAVE HIM.) But, no. It was the same night that you arrived. It is seven moons. And you are here in flesh and blood.

ADELA

(PUZZLED, XS FROM PLATFORMS TO L OF C.) What dream do you speak of?

## GRANDFATHER

(AGAIN TRYING TO DISREGARD HIS THOUGHTS.) Let's not consider it. I don't know what I'm talking about. (BUT HE CAN'T DO IT. HIS OBSESSION WILL NOT YIELD.) But I have the feeling that a great danger surrounds us, that it is going to leap on us suddenly from above, that we can't defend ourselves against it, nor even know where it's coming from. (LOOKS AT HER.) Have you ever been alone in the mountain at any time when a storm broke out?

## ADELA

Never.

## GRANDFATHER

It's the worst of my anxieties. You feel that a thunderbolt is rising in the air like a whip. If you remain quiet, you have it above. If you start to run, it is a signal that pursues you. You can do nothing more than await the invisible, holding your breath. And an animal fear excites your flesh, cold and trembling . . . like a horse responds when hit with a pebble.

## ADELA

(ALARMED, XS TO STAIRS AND CALLS IN A LOUD VOICE.) Madre!

## GRANDFATHER

(XS QUICKLY TO HER AT LC.) Be quiet! Don't be frightened, child. Why call her?

## ADELA

For you. Everything you are saying is so strange.

## GRANDFATHER

(REASSURING.) I've stopped already. Calm yourself. Repeat to me that you have not even one unhappy thought, that you are completely happy, so that I can remain calm.

## ADELA

(TRIES HARD TO CONVINCE HIM.) I swear it. (XS TO HIM.) Is it that you don't believe me? I am so happy that I wouldn't exchange a single minute in this house for all the years I have lived before.

## GRANDFATHER

(TAKES HER HAND.) Thank you, Adela. Now I want to ask you one thing. Tonight at the dance, do not separate yourself from me. If you hear a strange voice call you, hold my hand very hard and don't move from my side. Do you promise?

## ADELA

I promise. (GRANDFATHER TIGHTENS HIS HAND ON HERS SUDDENLY, LISTENING ATTENTIVELY TO SOMETHING DISTANT.)

## GRANDFATHER

Do you hear anything?

## ADELA

Nothing.

## GRANDFATHER

Someone is approaching by the garden road.

ADELA

The serenaders, perhaps. They are going around putting the branch of courtship on the windows.

GRANDFATHER

Would that it's true. (EXITS THROUGH ARCH L TO FRONT DOOR.  
ADELA WATCHES HIM GO. SHE IS TROUBLED BY HIS MANNER. THEN  
SHE TURNS AND XS USC TO DOOR. PEREGRINA APPEARS IN THE DOOR.  
ADELA STOPS, SURPRISED.)

PEREGRINA

Good evening, child.

ADELA

(POLITELY.) God protect you, Señora. Are you looking for  
one of the family?

PEREGRINA

(XS DOWN FROM DOOR TO L END OF TABLE.) The grandfather will  
be expecting me. We are good friends and I have an appoint-  
ment here tonight. (TURNS TO ADELA.) Do you remember me?

ADELA

(REMAINS L OF DOOR. STARES AT PEREGRINA, TRYING TO REMEMBER.)  
Slightly . . . as from very far away.

PEREGRINA

We saw each other only a moment (XS R TO FIREPLACE.) near  
the fireplace when Martín brought you from the river. (ADELA,  
WITH PAINED EXPRESSION, CLOSES HER EYES.) Why do you close  
your eyes?

ADELA

(TORMENTED.) I don't want to remember that dreadful moment.  
My life began the following morning.

PEREGRINA

(REASONABLY.) You were not talking so that night. On the contrary, I heard you say that everything in the water was so beautiful and so easy.

ADELA

I was desperate. I didn't know what I was saying.

PEREGRINA

I understand. Each hour has its truth. Today you have other eyes and a dress for the fiesta. It is natural that your words are joyful too. But take care that you don't change them as you change a dress. (PLACES HER STAFF AGAINST THE FIREPLACE MANTEL. DORINA, FALÍN AND ANDRÉS ENTER UC RUNNING AND LAUGHING.)

DORINA

(STOPS, SEES PEREGRINA, SAYS TO BOYS OVER HER SHOULDER.) It's the wanderer of the white hands! (XS R JOYFULLY TO PEREGRINA.)

FALÍN

(FOLLOWING DORINA AND STOPPING AT HER LEFT.) We've thought about you so much. Have you come for the fiesta?

ANDRÉS

(FOLLOWS DORINA AND FALÍN, BUT STOPS USC OF TABLE.) I'm going to jump over the bonfire. Will you come with me? (THE CHILDREN'S LINES HAVE COME OUT IN A RUSH, HAPPY TO SEE PEREGRINA.)

PEREGRINA

(XING DSR.) No! When the children are leaping over the fire, I would not want to be there, ever. (TURNS TO ADELA WHO HAS REMAINED L OF DOOR.) These are my best friends. (INDICATING THE CHILDREN.) They will keep me company.

ADELA

(UNCERTAIN.) Do you need anything from me?

PEREGRINA

(CLEAR AND SLOW.) Not yet. Are you going to the dance later?

ADELA

At midnight, when the bonfires are lighted.

PEREGRINA

(AGAIN, CLEAR AND SLOW.) The bonfires are kindled at the edge of the river, aren't they?

ADELA

(NODS ASSENT.) Near the dam.

PEREGRINA

(LOOKS AT ADELA FIXEDLY.) That's good. We shall return to see each other . . . at the dam. (ADELA LOWERS HER EYES SOMEHOW MOVED BY PEREGRINA'S WORDS AND STARE. SHE TURNS AND EXITS UC DOOR.)

FALÍN

(SITS ON STOOL R OF TABLE FACING PEREGRINA.) Why were you so long in coming back?

ANDRÉS

(KNEELING ON STOOL US OF TABLE AND LEANING ON TABLE.) We  
were thinking that you were never coming!

DORINA

(REMAINS US OF PEREGRINA BY THE FIREPLACE.) Have you  
travelled far in that time?

PEREGRINA

Much. I have been in the mountains of snow, in the deserts  
of sand, and on the stormy sea. A hundred different  
countries . . . thousands of roads . . . and only one point  
of arrival for all.

DORINA

Such a wonderful trip!

FALÍN

Do you ever get tired?

PEREGRINA

Never. I slept only once . . . here.

ANDRÉS

But today isn't a time for sleeping! It's the fiesta of  
Saint John!

DORINA

Are they building bonfires in the other towns?

PEREGRINA

In all of them.

FALÍN

Why?

PEREGRINA

In honor of the sun. It is the longest day of the year  
and the shortest night.

FALÍN

And the water? Isn't it the same every day?

PEREGRINA

It may seem so, but it is not the same.

ANDRÉS

They say that bathing the sheep at midnight saves them from  
the wolves.

DORINA

And the young girl who catches a flower from the water at  
daybreak is married within the year.

FALÍN

Why is the water full of miracles this night?

PEREGRINA

Because it's the feast of Saint John the Baptist. On this  
day he baptized Christ.

DORINA

(EAGER TO IMPART HER KNOWLEDGE.) I've seen it in a book.  
Saint John wore a deer-skin around his body and the Lord  
was put in the ocean up to his knees.

ANDRÉS

(STRONGLY.) In the river!

DORINA

It's the same.

ANDRÉS

(SUPERIOR KNOWLEDGE.) It's not the same. The ocean is  
when there is one shore; the river when there are two shores.

FALÍN

(STILL WORKING ON THE WATER PROBLEM. TO PEREGRINA.) But  
that was a long time ago and far away. He was not in the  
water here.

PEREGRINA

(XING UP BETWEEN DORINA AND FALÍN, SHE PUTS HER HAND ON FALÍN'S  
HEAD AND HER ARM AROUND DORINA. SHE SMILES LOVINGLY AT THEM.)  
It doesn't matter. (SLOWLY.) This night all the rivers of  
the world carry a drop from the Jordan. For that is the  
miraculous water. (DORINA, FALÍN AND ANDRÉS STARE AT HER  
FASCINATED. GRANDFATHER ENTERS L FROM FRONT DOOR, FREEZES  
INSIDE ARCH L AS HE SEES PEREGRINA WITH HER HANDS ON THE  
CHILDREN.)

GRANDFATHER

(ALMOST A CRY OF ALARM.) Let the children go! I don't want  
to see your hands on their heads. (OFFSTAGE UL THE MUSIC OF

THE BARREL-ORGAN AND FLUTES IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE. DORINA, FALÍN AND ANDRÉS REACT TO THE MUSIC WITH GLEE.)

ANDRÉS

(STRAIGHTENING UP FROM STOOL US TABLE AND STARTING FOR UC DOOR.) Do you hear? The barrel-organ, Grandfather. (EXITS UC.)

DORINA AND FALÍN

(SHOUTING AS THEY FOLLOW ANDRES THROUGH THE DOOR AND OFF.) The music! The music is coming already. (THE CHILDREN ARE GONE.)

GRANDFATHER

(AFTER THE SCENE IS QUIET FOLLOWING THE CHILDREN'S EXIT. XS TO LC GRIMLY.) You have finally returned.

PEREGRINA

(CALMLY QUIZZICAL.) Weren't you waiting for me?

GRANDFATHER

I had the hope that you would have forgotten about us.

PEREGRINA

(GENTLY.) I never fail my promises. Though, at times, it pains me very much.

GRANDFATHER

(RIGHTEOUSLY.) I don't believe in your sorrow. If you had felt it, you would not have chosen the most beautiful night of the year to come here.

PEREGRINA

(SIMPLY.) I cannot choose. I am doomed to obey.

GRANDFATHER

(ANGRILY.) Liar! (XS TO L OF C.) Why did you deceive me that day? You told me that if you did not come, I would call you myself. Have I called you, by chance? Has she called you?

PEREGRINA

(XS TO BENCH DS OF TABLE, SITS ON R END OF BENCH.) Still it's true. The night has no more than just begun and so many things can happen!

GRANDFATHER

(XS C TO HER.) Go far away, I beg you on my knees. (HE DOES NOT KNEEL, BUT INDICATES KNEELING BY FLEXING KNEES SLIGHTLY, ALMOST A BOW. STRAIGHTENS UP.) Enough hurt has been done already to this family. (HIS VOICE IS NOW PLEADING SINCERELY.)

PEREGRINA

(GENTLY BUT ADAMANT.) I cannot return alone.

GRANDFATHER

(XS TO L END OF BENCH. PLEADING WITH MORE FORCE.) Take me if you want. Take my cattle, my crops, all that I have. But don't leave my house empty again as when you took Angélica. (HE IS CLOSE TO TEARS.)

PEREGRINA

(TRYING TO REMEMBER.) Angélica . . . . (LOOKS UP AT HIM AND SPEAKS SLOWLY.) Who is Angélica that you all talk about?

GRANDFATHER

(SCORNFULLY.) Are you the one to ask that question? You who robbed her from us!

PEREGRINA

(SURPRISED.) I?

GRANDFATHER

(FORCEFULLY.) Don't you recall a night in December . . . at the dam . . . four years ago? (TAKES A MEDALLION FROM HIS BREAST POCKET, SITS BESIDE PEREGRINA ON L END OF BENCH AND SHOWS HER THE PORTRAIT ON IT.) Look at her here. She was still carrying in her ears the wedding songs and the joy of first love on her lips. What have you done with her?

PEREGRINA

(STUDYING THE PICTURE.) A beautiful girl. Was she Martín's wife?

GRANDFATHER

(BITTERLY.) For three days she was! (AGAIN WITH FORCE.) Don't you know? Why do you pretend not to remember her now?

PEREGRINA

(SHAKING HER HEAD, EARNESTLY.) I am not lying to you, Grandfather. I tell you that I do not recognize her. I have never seen her. (RETURNS MEDALLION TO HIM.)

GRANDFATHER

(STARES AT HER, NOT DARING TO BELIEVE.) You have not seen her?

PEREGRINA

Never.

GRANDFATHER

(ASTOUNDED.) But . . . then . . . where is she? (TURNS TO PEREGRINA, GRASPS HER ARMS AND SPEAKS WITH GREAT EMOTION.) Speak!

PEREGRINA

(THOUGHTFULLY.) Did you look for her in the river?

GRANDFATHER

(RELEASES HER.) And the whole town with us. (RESIGNEDLY.) But we found only her scarf that she wore on her shoulders.

PEREGRINA

Did Martin search for her also?

GRANDFATHER

(AN UNHAPPY MEMORY.) He did not. He shut himself in his room clenching his fists. (LOOKS AT PEREGRINA, UNEASY.) Why do you ask that?

PEREGRINA

I don't know. (VERY THOUGHTFULLY, FRONT.) There's something obscure here that we two must find out.

GRANDFATHER

(DEPRESSED.) If you don't know it, who can?

PEREGRINA

(THOUGHTFULLY.) The one who would have been closest to her.

GRANDFATHER

(DOWNWARD INFLECTION.) Who?

PEREGRINA

(REASONING.) Perhaps Martín himself . . .

GRANDFATHER

(SHARPLY AND QUICKLY.) That's impossible! Why would he have to deceive us?

PEREGRINA

That's his secret. (RAPIDLY, LOWERING HER VOICE.) Silence, Grandfather. He's coming. Leave me alone.

GRANDFATHER

(RISING.) What do you propose to do?

PEREGRINA

(RISING.) To know! Leave me. (GRANDFATHER EXITS QUICKLY L TO FRONT DOOR., PEREGRINA XS TO USC DOOR AND CALLS LOUDLY.) Adela! (AS MARTÍN APPEARS AT THE HEAD OF THE STAIRS, PEREGRINA SLIPS FURTIVELY INTO KITCHEN UR. MARTÍN COMES DOWN THE STAIRS. AS HE REACHES THE STAGE FLOOR, ADELA APPEARS IN THE UC DOORWAY.)

ADELA

(AS SHE STEPS INTO ROOM AND SEES MARTÍN.) Did you call me?

MARTÍN

(STOPS LC, SURPRISED.) I? No.

ADELA

That's strange. I seemed to hear a voice.

MARTÍN

(LOOKING AT HER, GENTLY.) It went looking for you. (LOOKING FRONT TO L STIFFLY.) I have something to say to you.

ADELA

(APPROACHING HIM LC TEASINGLY.) It has to be very important for you to look for me. Until now you have fled from me.

MARTÍN

(NOT LOOKING AT HER.) I'm not a man of many words. And I have to tell you this is my last night here. (TURNS TO HER, LOOKS INTO HER EYES.) Adios.

ADELA

(SURPRISED.) Adios? Are you going on a trip?

MARTÍN

(TURNING FRONT.) Tomorrow. With the mule-drivers. To Castile.

ADELA

So far? (XS R TO TABLE.) Do the others know this?

MARTÍN

Not yet. I had to tell you first of all.

ADELA

(KNOWING FROM HIS MANNER THAT THERE IS MORE TO HIS SPEECHES THAN APPEARS ON THE SURFACE. QUESTIONS HIM WITH A SENSE OF FOREBODING.) Will you be gone long? (SHE DOES NOT FACE HIM.)

MARTÍN

(HIS ANSWERS ARE SHORT AND TO THE POINT.) As long as necessary. It doesn't depend on me.

ADELA

(TURNS RAPIDLY TOWARD HIM. ALMOST A CRY.) I don't understand you. A long trip cannot be decided so suddenly and secretly as a flight. What do you have to do in Castile?

MARTÍN

(MOVES COUPLE STEPS L.) What matters! I will buy cattle or new shoots for the vineyard. It's necessary to be far away. (SLOWER.) It's better for the two of us.

ADELA

(XING TO R OF C.) The two of us? Are you saying that I'm the reason for your going?

MARTÍN

(TURNS TOWARD HER. A BIT FIERCELY.) You, no! The whole town! We are living under the same roof and I don't want your name to be gossiped about!

ADELA

(XS C.) What can they say about me? Like a sister I admired you from the first day, and if there is anything sacred for me, it is the memory of Angélica. (XS TO HIM.) No, Martín!

You are not a coward to flee from the dogs that are barking.  
There has to be a deeper reason. (HE HAS TURNED HIS FACE AWAY.) Look me in the eyes! Is there something more?

MARTÍN

(EVASIVE, MOVES COUPLE STEPS L.) Go away from me . . . .

ADELA

(STARTS FOR USC DOOR, ANGRILY, ALMOT SHOUTING.) If it's no more than the malice of the people, I'll go out to the statue for the two of us. I can shout in their faces that it's a lie!

MARTÍN

(WITH SUDDEN FURY, XS UP TO HER USC.) And what purpose would your shouting serve if I can't shout it? If I fled when we were alone, if I didn't dare to talk or look you in the face, it's because I was determined to defend myself against the impossible . . . against that which others have known before I did myself. (MOVES COUPLE STEPS DS.) What's the sense of biting my lips and writhing between the sheets saying "No" if my whole rebellious being cries out "Yes!"

ADELA

(XING TO HIM, REALIZING, SOFTLY.) Martín!

MARTÍN

(XS TO LC, CONTROLLING HIMSELF WITH AN EFFORT.) I had not wanted to tell you, but it has been stronger than I. (TURNS TO HER.) Forgive me.

ADELA

(STARES AT HIM, SLOW TO REACT, LIKE ONE AWAKENING.) Forgive?  
How strange that sounds to me now. (XS TO HIM.) I am the one

who must ask pardon and I don't know to whom or for what.  
(TURNS AWAY, LOOKS DOWN AT HER BODY, HER ARMS SPREAD OUT APPROXIMATELY A FOOT FROM HER BODY.) What is happening to me? I should burst out crying, but my blood is singing through my veins! I was afraid that some day (TURNING TO HIM.) you would say these words to me and now that I hear them, I don't ever want to hear anything else.

MARTÍN

(TAKING HER IN HIS ARMS.) Adela . . .

ADELA

(SURRENDERING HERSELF.) Nothing more! (MARTÍN KISSES HER IN A VIOLENT SILENCE. PAUSE.)

MARTÍN

(DESPERATELY.) What's going to become of us now?

ADELA

(SO CONFIDENTLY HAPPY.) What does it matter now? You have said that you love me, and although it might be impossible, having heard you say that once is worth my whole life.  
(SHORT PAUSE. STEPS BACK FROM HIS EMBRACE.) Now, if anyone has to leave this house, it will be I who must go.

MARTÍN

(ABRUPTLY AND QUICKLY XS R TO DSR END OF BENCH.) Not that!

ADELA

(XS TO DSL END OF BENCH.) It's necessary. Do you believe that Madre would accept any other way? Our love would be for the worst betrayal of Angélica's memory.

MARTÍN

(TURNS TO HER. THESE NEXT EIGHT SPEECHES ARE PLAYED DS OF BENCH R.) Do you believe that if Angélica were only a memory that would be strong enough to separate us? The dead do not command.

ADELA

(MOVES CLOSER TO HIM TO HER POSITION DS OF BENCH.) She does. Her spirit continues living here and I will be the first to obey.

MARTÍN

(RESOLUTE, ALMOST IN A HOARSE VOICE, WITH STRONG EMOTION.) Listen to me, Adela. I can't take any more. I have to impart this truth to someone--the truth that has been consuming me within. Angélica was not that beautiful image that you heard about. All this enchantment that today surrounds her with reflections of water, all is a false remembrance!

ADELA

(A SHOCKED CRY.) No! Be quiet! How can you say this about a woman you have loved!

MARTÍN

(TURNS FRONT.) Too much! Would that I had not loved so much! (TURNS BACK TO ADELA, STRONGLY.) But I will not deceive you. You have to know that her whole life was a lie. As was also her death.

ADELA

(WIDE-EYES, UNBELIEVING.) What are you saying?

MARTÍN

(ALMOST EXASPERATED.) Haven't you understood anything yet?  
(SLOWLY, RELENTLESSLY.) Angélica is alive. That's why she  
is separating us.

ADELA

(ALMOST A MOAN.) It's not possible . . . (SINKS TO SIT  
ON L END OF BENCH, REPEATING THE IDEA WITHOUT FEELING.)  
It's not possible . . . (WITH HER FACE LOWERED INTO HER  
HANDS, SHE LISTENS TO MARTÍN'S STORY.)

MARTÍN

(MOVES R AS HE STARTS TO SPEAK.) While we were sweethearts  
she was like everyone remembers: a true softness, a  
countenance without a shadow, a happy laugh that permeated  
from afar like the fragrance of harvest grass. Until she  
took the trip to buy her wedding trousseau. (XS UP TO FIRE-  
PLACE.) With some it would take only a day, but she delayed  
several weeks. (FACING FIREPLACE.) When she came back she  
was not the same. Her eyes had a furtive look and something  
as the sand in water crept into her voice. (TURNS FRONT.)  
When we said our vows in the church, she almost fainted and  
as I put the ring on her finger, her hands trembled so much  
that my pride as a man was gratified. (BITTERLY.) Nor did  
I see the stranger who was witnessing the ceremony from a  
distance, severely beating the dust from his boots with his  
whip. (XS TO R SIDE OF TABLE, HIS FISTS CLENCHED ON THE  
TABLE.) For three days she had a fever and, while she  
thought I was asleep, I heard her crying in silence, gripping  
her pillow. On the third night, when I saw her go out toward  
the river, I followed after her. I was too late. She herself  
untied the boat and crossed to the other bank where that man  
was waiting for her with two horses . . .

ADELA

(LIFTING HER HEAD, INTERRUPTING, WITH JEALOUS ANGER.) And  
you let them go? You, the best horseman of the mountain . . .  
crying among the rushes!

MARTÍN

(XS DOWN JUST BELOW R END OF BENCH.) I galloped the whole night uselessly, with my shotgun on my shoulder and my spurs dripping blood. Until the sun hit me like a stone in my eyes.

ADELA

(THE QUESTIONS OF ONE WHO CANNOT FULLY BELIEVE.) Why did you keep silent when you came back?

MARTÍN

(SITS BESIDE HER ON BENCH.) What else could I do?  
(REASONABLY.) In the first moment, I didn't even think of it. But when they found her scarf at the dam and began to spread the news that she had drowned, I knew I had to be silent. It was best.

ADELA

(ALMOST SARCASTICALLY.) Were you thinking of Madre and the family?

MARTÍN

(SIMPLY.) No.

ADELA

(MORE SARCASM.) For you yourself? For protecting your honour?

MARTÍN

(GENTLY AND REASONABLY.) No, Adela. Do not judge me so small. I did it only for her. A love is not lost so suddenly. And to tell the truth would be like baring one's

self before the whole town. (RISES, TURNS TO HER.) Do you understand now why I am going? (WITH GREAT SINCERITY.) Because I love you and I cannot tell it to you honorably. You could be all for me that she never was. And I can't tolerate this house where everyone praises her while I must curse her twice: for the love which she did not give me then, and for that she now prevents me from afar. (ADELA HAS LOWERED HER HEAD AGAIN. PAUSE. HE LOOKS AT HER BOWED HEAD. REACHES OUT AS IF TO CARESS HER HAIR. STOPS ABRUPTLY. XS RAPIDLY TO UC DOOR, SPEAKING ON HIS CROSS.) Adiós, Adela. (EXITS UC DOOR. ADELA, ALONE, BEGINS TO SOB. PEREGRINA ENTERS USR FROM KITCHEN, CONTEMPLATING ADELA IN SILENCE, THEN TURNS HER HEAD TOWARD DOOR AS MUSIC OF FIESTA IS HEARD. ADELA, IN TEARS, RUNS ACROSS STAGE. DORINA, FALÍN AND ANDRÉS ARE HEARD COMING DOWNSTAIRS. ADELA STOPS LC, COVERS HER FACE WITH HER HANDS TURNING FRONT. THE CHILDREN TALK AS THEY COME DOWN THE STAIRS AND SEEING ADELA SURROUND HER.)

FALÍN

(COMING DOWNSTAIRS AND CIRCLING TO R OF ADELA.) They're going to light the first bonfire. (THE CHILDREN ARE GREATLY EXCITED.)

DORINA

(XING TO L OF ADELA.) They are decorating with reeds the boat for crossing the river!

ANDRÉS

(XING TO USR SHOULDER OF ADELA.) And the girls are going singing crowned with shamrocks!

DORINA

The dancing is going to begin! Aren't you taking us? (ADELA RUSHES UP THE STAIRS AND OUT. THE CHILDREN WATCH SURPRISED AND SILENT. AS DORINA TURNS BACK TO FACE FALÍN AND ANDRÉS, SHE SEES PEREGRINA USR AT KITCHEN DOOR. DORINA XS TO PEREGRINA.) Why is Adela crying?

## PEREGRINA

(XING DOWN R TO FIREPLACE.) Because she is twenty years old . . . and the night is beautiful. (PEREGRINA SPEAKS CONTENTEDLY. THERE IS A RADIANCE ABOUT HER NOW. SHE IS VERY WISE ABOUT SOMETHING.)

## ANDRÉS

(ANDRÉS AND FALÍN TURNED TO WATCH DORINA APPROACH PEREGRINA. ANDRES NOW XS TO R OF C. DORINA FOLLOWS PEREGRINA DS AND STOPS BY FIREPLACE.) In exchange, you seem very content. Your eyes are so shining.

## PEREGRINA

(XING DSR TO LOVESEAT.) It's that I have just now understood the mission that has brought me to your house. And now, suddenly, I see it all very clearly!

## FALÍN

(XS TO DSL END OF TABLE.) What do you see so clearly?

## PEREGRINA

(TURNS TOWARD THEM. ANDRÉS IS BEHIND TABLE NOW.) A very old story that seems fictitious. Some day, when you are as old as I am, you will recount it to your grandchildren. Do you want to hear it?

## THE CHILDREN

(PEREGRINA SITS LOVESEAT R AS SHE FINISHES HER SPEECH. DORINA, FALÍN AND ANDRÉS MOVE TOWARD HER. OVERLAPPING SPEECH.) The story! The story! (DORINA SITS ON FLOOR CLOSE TO PEREGRINA'S US FOOT. FALÍN SITS ON FLOOR NEAR R END OF BENCH. ANDRES SITS ON FLOOR JUST BEHIND DORINA AND FALÍN FORMING THE APEX OF A TRIANGLE FORMED BY THE CHILDREN'S POSITIONS.)

## PEREGRINA

(TELLS HER STORY WITH VIVID IMAGERY, SLOWLY AND PLEASANTLY. IT IS APPARENT THAT SHE LIKES HER STORY AND LIKES BEING A STORYTELLER FOR THE CHILDREN WHO ARE MOST ATTENTIVE.) Once there was a small town with cows the color of honey and apple orchards in white flower among fields of corn. A village, peaceful as a flock of sheep by the bank of the river.

## FALÍN

Like this one?

## PEREGRINA

(NODDING.) Like this one. In the river was a deep whirlpool of dry leaves to where they did not allow the children go near. It was the monster of the village. And they said that at the bottom was another village submerged with its green church choked with roots and with its miraculous bells that are heard at times on the night of Saint John.

## ANDRÉS

Like our mill-dam?

## PEREGRINA

Like the mill-dam. In that village was living a girl of soul so wonderous that she didn't seem to be of this world. Everyone imitated her hair-style and her clothes; the old ones re-discovered their youthful stride, and the mothers brought their sick children to her to touch them with her hands.

## DORINA

Like Angélica?

## PEREGRINA

Like Angelica. One day the girl disappeared in the water. She had gone to the houses deep down where the fish stroked the windows like cold birds, and it was futile for the whole town to call her from above. She was asleep in a dream of mists, walking through gardens of moss, her hair floating and the softness of her hands lingering without weight. So the days and years went by and all began to forget her. Only her mother, with her eyes fixed, awaited her still. And, finally, a miracle happened. One night of bonfires and songs, the beautiful sleeping one of the river was found-- more beautiful than ever before. Loved by the water and the fish, her hair was lovely, her hands were still lukewarm and a smile of peace was on her lips . . . as if the years in the deep had been only an instant. (SHE STOPS, GLANCES AT EACH CHILD. THE CHILDREN ARE SILENT A MOMENT, IMPRESSED.)

## DORINA

(ALMOST A SIGH.) What a strange story! (FIXING HER EYES ON PEREGRINA, ASKS CLEARLY.) When did this happen?

## PEREGRINA

(SMILES SWEETLY. CURTAIN LINE.) It hasn't happened yet. But it's near. (LEANS BACK AND LIFTS HER HEAD.) Don't you remember? This is the night all the rivers of the world carry a drop of water from the Jordan!

(CURTAIN CLOSES ON TABLEAU. A FIVE MINUTE INTERMISSION FOLLOWS. HOUSELIGHTS UP.)

ACT IV

AFTER A FIVE MINUTE INTERMISSION, HOUSE LIGHTS DOWN. FOR TWO MINUTES BEFORE THE CURTAIN OPENS A RECORDED CHORUS SINGING A SPANISH FOLKSONG IS HEARD. THIS CONTINUES THROUGH THE OPENING OF THE CURTAIN AND FOR THIRTY SECONDS AFTER IT OPENS. THE SCENE IS THE SAME AS IN THE PREVIOUS ACTS, BUT NOW THE TABLE IS SPREAD LENGTHWISE PARALLEL TO THE FIREPLACE FROM UR TO DR. SPACE IS LEFT FOR THE CHARACTERS TO MOVE BETWEEN THE TABLE AND THE FIREPLACE.

ON THE TABLE ARE BOTTLES OF WINE AND GLASSES, MADRE'S MANTILLA, AND A FEW OTHER PIECES OF LACE HEADDRESSES. THE SEWING BASKET WITH THE EMBROIDERY IN THE HOOP IS ON THE LOVSEAT DSR. GRANDFATHER'S CHAIR HAS BEEN PLACED UL WHERE THE TABLE WAS PLACED IN ACT I. FLANKING THE CHAIR TO ITS L ARE THE TWO WICKER STOOLS. THE LARGE POT OF GERANIUMS REMAINS R OF THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS. THE STAGE IS COMPLETELY LIT. THE DOOR USC IS OPEN AND FLICKERING RED LIGHT FROM THE BONFIRES OFFSTAGE L IS OCCASIONALLY SEEN ON THE MOONLIGHT BLUE OF THE CYCLORAMA. THE TIME IS SEVERAL HOURS LATER THE SAME NIGHT. AS THE SINGING FADES OUT, SHOUTS ARE HEARD OFF UL.

MAN #1

(OFFSTAGE UL.) To the house of Narcés!

GIRL #1

It's the only one left!

MAN #4

That's good!

GIRL #2

There's more than enough!

MAN #2

Wood for the saint and girls for the dance! (WITH THIS,  
THROUGH THE USC DOOR COME THE REVELERS.)

MAN #1

(XING TO C OF PLATFORM AND CALLING OUT.) Ah, lady of the  
house! Is the family asleep? (HE XS DOWN TO CHAIR USLC.  
HE CARRIES A GUITAR WHICH HE TUNES AND STRUMS QUIETLY DURING  
THE FOLLOWING.)

## GIRLS

(GIRL #1 XS TO KITCHEN DOOR. GIRL #2 XS AND CLIMBS STAIRS TO LANDING L. GIRL #3 XS TO WITHIN ARCH L AND CALLS TOWARDS FRONT DOOR AREA. THE MOVEMENT AND THE SHOUTS ARE SIMULTANEOUS WITH THE ENTRANCES AND MOVEMENT INTO PLACE.) Adela! Adela! Adela! (MAN #2 MOVES TO STAGE R ON THE PLATFORM TO L END OF WINDOW. MAN #3 MOVES TO LEFT OF UC DOOR ON PLATFORM.)

## QUICO

(ENTERING IISC DOOR.) Less shouting when we are under a roof!  
What do you go searching for! (TH GIRLS TURN TOWARD HIM, REMAINING IN POSITIONS ACQUIRED ON THE SEARCH FOR ADELA. MAN #1 SITS IN GRANDFATHER'S CHAIR L AND TUNES GUITAR.)

## MAN #3

Where is Adela?

## GIRL #1

You are not going to keep her locked up tonight as one of  
the prizes of the Moor?

## MAN #3

Let her go, Man. We are not going to steal her from you.  
(ALL THESE SPEECHES ARE RAPID AND GAY AND TEASING.)

## QUICO

Am I the one who commands in this house? If Adela wants to  
go to the dance, she doesn't lack one to accompany her.

## GIRL #2

(INSINUATING.) Martín?

GIRL #3

(MOCKINGLY.) I don't think so. For he is walking there alone, looking at the fire from far off as the wolves in winter.

MAN #1

(TO QUICO.) Why don't you take her down?

GIRL #1

(XING DOWN R BETWEEN FIREPLACE AND TABLE.) (SPEECH IS DIRECTED TO QUICO.) You ought to be ashamed! One girl like the sun in May, two young men in the house, and only one window that does not have a branch.

QUICO

(REMAINS US IN DOORWAY AREA.) I haven't asked anyone for advice. So if there are words that you come searching for, I can give you better ones.

MAN #2

It's firewood that we want.

MAN #3

It's lacking at the bonfire.

GIRL #1

(DSR, GLOWING.) The one this year must be remembered! It has to be higher than the trees until the river is warm and they think in the mountain that it is daybreak.

QUICO

You don't pledge fire to the mountain!

MAN #1

A little less. The Mayorazga family gave us two carts of dry vineshoots.

GIRL #2

The mayor gave all the prunings from his chestnut grove.

MAN #2

The miners tore up the trees with roots and all.

GIRL #1

Now they are carrying it on their shoulders amid shouts and sparks as the hunters when they carry a bear.

GIRL #3

The family of Narcés never lags behind. What do you have for the fiesta?

QUICO

(VERY DEFINITELY.) The Señora will say that.

GIRLS

(GIRL #1 XS TO FOOT OF STAIRS. GIRL #2 TURNS TOWARD UPSTAIRS L. GIRL #3 JOINS GIRL #1 AT FOOT OF STAIRS.) (SHOUTING.) Telva! Telva! Telva - -a! (TELVA APPEARS AT HEAD OF STAIRS, ADORNED AND DRESSED FOR THE FIESTA. AS SHE COMES DOWNSTAIRS SHE IS ARRANGING HER MANTLE OVER HER SHOULDERS. GIRL #2 COMES DOWN THE STAIRS AS TELVA APPEARS AND STOPS ON FLOOR L OF STAIRS. GIRL #3 DRIFTS DOWN L ENOUGH TO ALLOW GIRL #2 TO GET IN HER POSITION. GIRL #1 DRIFTS BACK R ENOUGH TO ALLOW GROUPING AT FOOT OF STAIRS AS TELVA REACHES THE STAGE FLOOR. THE MEN REMAIN IN THEIR POSITIONS.)

TELVA

(AS SHE COMES DOWNSTAIRS.) What shouts are these?

GIRL #1

Is there something for the Saint?

TELVA

(STOPS ON LANDING.) Much softer, greedy one! I have very delicate ears and if you speak loudly, I do not hear. (TELVA'S MANNER THROUGHOUT THIS AND THE NEXT SCENE IS GRUFF AND SARCASTIC, BUT WE KNOW SHE IS THOROUGHLY ENJOYING HERSELF.)

QUICO

(TO TELVA, INDICATING THE THREE GIRLS.) These are maidens of Saint John who go searching for wood from house to house.

TELVA

(MOVING DOWNSTAIRS TO FLOOR AT FOOT OF STAIRS.) That's good. There is no law that says they must beg by shouting!

MAN //1

What may we take?

TELVA

In the corral there's a wagon-load of furze and a pair of good oxen waiting to be yoked. Go with them, Quico. (QUICO GESTURES "COME ON" TO THE MEN AND EXITS USC DOOR FOLLOWED BY MAN //3, MAN #2, AND MAN #1.)

GIRL #2

(ROMANTICALLY.) Furze makes the best fire. It gives a red blaze and crackles like castanets aflame!

## GIRL #3

(RHAPSODIZING.) I prefer heather with its purple bells.  
It burns more gently and smells like a summer siesta.

## GIRL #2

(NOT TO BE OUTDONE IN IMAGERY.) On the other hand, the  
broomflower sets off sparks and twists itself in the bonfire  
like a green witch.

## TELVA

(WHO HAS BEEN LISTENING TO ALL THIS WITH A WORLDLY-WISE  
DISDAIN.) How talkative you are! (SHE LOOKS THEM OVER  
ONE BY ONE FROM HEAD TO FOOT.) And fair ones, God spare  
me!

## GIRL #1

(WHO THROUGHOUT THE SCENE HOLDS HER OWN WITH TELVA.) Well,  
neither have you ever been very brief! What a daring old  
gossip you are!

## TELVA

(COMPLACENTLY.) Where there is fire, hot coals remain! (XS  
DOWNSTAGE OF GIRL #1 TO L OF C. TURNS AND REGARDS THEM.)  
Let's see! Let's see! Long live luxury and those who bring  
it! Did anything remain in the chest? Or are you wearing  
all the frippery on top?

## GIRL #1

(XING R TO DSR BY LOVESEAT, WALKS VERY INDEPENDENTLY.) A  
day is a day! Not everything is going to be shirts of dimity  
and yellow underskirts!

## TELVA

I see! I see! Shoes of goatskin, skirt and overskirt,  
embroidered jacket and beaded cloak! Spinning all the year  
to shine one night!

## GIRL #3

(SIGHING AND SITTING IN CHAIR DL.) What a pity it's the shortest night of the year!

## GIRL #2

(XING TO GRANDFATHER'S CHAIR ULC. SHE DANCES TO HER POETRY AS SHE GOES.) The song said it well:

Thus came green Saint John,  
Thus he came and thus he returns . . .

(SHE SITS CHAIR ULC.)

## GIRL #1

(LIFTING HER FACE YEARNINGLY TO HEAVEN FRONT.) But while he is coming and going, each hour can bring a miracle!

## TELVA

(XING C TO R OF C, TO GIRL #1) Be careful. Some the devil makes and one has to cry afterwards.

## GIRL #3

(DISTAINING) Who think of crying on a day like this?  
(IMPUDENTLY TO TELVA.) Were you never young?

## TELVA

(THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE SPEAKS.) Because I was, I say it. The fire enflames the senses, the music enlivens within as strong wine. And then it's dangerous to lose ones self in the warm cornfields in the moonlight.

## GIRL #1

(SMUGLY AS SHE SITS ON LOVESEAT R.) Happiness is what I ask of the Saint. To her who does not sing this night, no eyes will see.

## GIRL #2

(GLEEFULLY PRACTICAL.) I've already put out the salt for the cows while it is evening. Giving the salt at dawn always makes us girls get up too early.

## GIRL #3

(SHE IS THE SOFTLY ROMANTIC OF THE THREE. SHE INDICATES HER SKIRT HEM WITH A SWEEPING DS GESTURE.) I've had my skirt in the dew so that it will bring me loves and deliver me from evil.

## GIRL #1

(TOPPING WITH A SWEEPING TOSSING GESTURE.) And I will throw away all my brooches to the water at the first streak of dawn. For each one that floats there will be a year of happiness!

## TELVA

(XING TO BENCH L OF TABLE WHERE SHE SITS.) (SHAKING HER HEAD.) Too many miracles for one night! (SEATED SHE TAKES THEM ALL IN WITH A GLANCE.) This year, in March, there were four baptisms in the village!

## GIRL #1

(SHE HAS NOT GOT THE POINT, BUT TONE INDICATES THERE IS SOMETHING BEHIND TELVA'S SPEECH.) And what do you mean by that?

## TELVA

(SLOWLY AND TO THE POINT.) Saint John falls in June. Don't you know how to count, girl?

## GIRL #2

(THE BLUSHING KIND WITH AN EMBARRASSED LOOK.) Look at the old gossip with that which comes out. (GIRL #2 REACTED ON TELVA'S SPEECH WITH A BURST OF LAUGHTER WHICH SHE SMOTHERED BY PUTTING HER HANDS TO HER FACE AND OVER HER MOUTH.

## GIRL #1

(A KIND OF TRIUMPHANT WORLDLY SUPERIORITY.) Her conscience will not be very tranquil when she thinks this about the others. Each one carries a tongue to where the tooth gives pain.

## TELVA

I say nothing about teeth because mine do not remain with me! But my conscience! It looks as if I shall have it clear: that I need only go to confession once a year--the time of Easter--and with three "Hail Marys." On the other hand, (INDICATING, POINTING TO GIRL #1 ON HER RIGHT.) You cannot pay off with forty "Credos." (POINTING TO GIRL #3 DSL.) And you, faded bird, what evil did you confess that you had to go up barefoot to the Virgin of Acebo?

## GIRL #3

(QUICKLY RATIONALIZING.) It was not penance. It was a promise. (FRONT, CONFIDENTLY AND SLOWLY.) I was ill from foul air.

## TELVA

(A BURST OF MALEVOLENT LAUGHTER.) God help me: Now it's called foul air!

## GIRL #1

(AGAIN, SELF-RIGHTEOUS.) Don't make a case of it! Don't you see that which you want is that which they regale you

with. The proverb says it well: The old ones and the oven are heated through the mouth! (LOUD LAUGHTER BY ALL THREE GIRLS. MAN #1 ENTERS USC DOOR.)

MAN #1

(TO EDGE OF PLATFORM. ANNOUNCES TO ALL.) The cart is already going out. (TURNS TO GIRL #2.) Do you want to ride?

GIRL #2

(RISES, TURNS SHYLY AWAY, HER EYES DOWNCAST.) Together . . . ?

TELVA

(RISES, DRYLY.) Go along. You are not going to be frightened. Neither will the Saint. The poor one is accustomed to it. And it is not his fault if the Fiesta comes with the first whiplash of summer. (SHOOING THEM OFF LIKE CHICKENS TO USC DOOR.) Outside! To kindle the bonfire and to catch the shamrock (clover).

MAN #1

Everybody! You too, old gossip! (HE EXITS AS GIRLS GRASP TELVA BY THE ARMS AND RUSH HER OUT USC DOOR LAUGHING. WE HEAR SINGING OUTSIDE.)

MEN AND GIRLS

(OFFSTAGE UL) To gather the clover,  
The clover, the clover,  
To catch the clover,  
The night of Saint John!

To gather the clover,  
The clover, the clover,  
To gather the clover,  
Those my loves remove!

(THE VOICES ARE FADING AWAY ON THE SECOND STANZA. MARTÍN ENTERS USC DOOR AND LOOKS BACK SMILING AT THE MERRymAKERS.

ADELA

(ENTERS FROM UPSTAIRS L AND COMES DOWNSTAIRS, CALLING.)  
Telva! Telva!

MARTÍN

(HOLDS POSITION IN DOORWAY, LOOKING ALTERNATELY AT ADELA AND THEN OFF UL.) The revelers have taken her. They are getting her into the wagon by force. (LAUGHING. HE XS TO LC.) Did you want her for anything?

ADELA

(COME TO HIM AT LC.) Only a question. But, perhaps, you can answer it better. When I opened my window I found it all decorated with white flowers.

MARTÍN

(GENTLY AND LOVINGLY.) From the hawthorn and the cherry-tree. Those who see the branch will know who has placed it there and what the white color wishes to say.

ADELA

Gracias, Martín. I like what you've done, but it wasn't necessary.

MARTÍN

(GENTLY CHIDING.) Were you going to allow your window to be the only bare one?

ADELA

(LOOKING UP AT HIM WITH GREAT SINCERITY.) With what you told me before, you've given me more than I could hope for. The cherry blossoms will go tomorrow in the wind; your words--no.

MARTÍN

I shall continue thinking of you all the time and with so much desire, that if I close my eyes, I'll be able to hear you from far off.

ADELA

When are you going?

MARTÍN

Tomorrow at daybreak.

ADELA

(TENSELY.) Let's forget this is the last night. Perhaps tomorrow you won't have to go.

MARTÍN

(WITH TENSE EMOTION.) Why? Can anyone erase this dark shade that is between us? Or do you want to see me dying of thirst close to the fountain?

ADELA

I only have asked that you forget this night.

MARTIN

(POSITIVELY.) We shall forget it dancing together before the whole town. Although it may be the only time, I want everybody to see you clearly in my arms; that they may see my eyes attached to yours as my branch is attached to your window.

ADELA

I know it and it's enough for me. (QUICKLY, TURNING GAZE TO STAIRS AND BACK TO HIM.) Hush! Someone is coming down.

MARTIN

(LOW VOICE, TAKING HER HANDS AND RAISING THEM TO HIS LIPS.) I'll wait for you at the dance?

ADELA

I shall go.

MARTIN

Until then, Adela. (KISSES HER HANDS.)

ADELA

Until always, Martin. (MARTIN EXITS USC DOOR. ADELA MOVES SLOWLY UP AFTER HIM. MADRE APPEARS ON THE STAIRS. SHE CARRIES A VOTIVE CANDLE AND A SHAWL OVER HER ARM.)

MADRE

(COMING DOWN THE STAIRS AND TO ULC IN FRONT OF GRANDFATHER'S CHAIR.) Where is my mantilla? I can't find it in my bureau.

ADELA

(XS QUICKLY TO TABLE R AND PICKS UP BLACK MANTILLA.) I have it here. (XING BACK TO MADRE WITH MANTILLA.) Are you going to wear it to go down to the dance?

MADRE

Before I have to walk to the chapel. (PLACING CANDLE ON STOOL L OF CHAIR.) I owe this candle to the Saint. And I have to thank God for so many things. (SHE SITS IN GRANDFATHER'S CHAIR.)

ADELA

(SITS ON PLATFORM STEPS R OF MADRE. GIVES HER THE MANTILLA WHICH MADRE PUTS OVER HER SHOULDERS AS THEY TALK.) Have you asked him for anything?

MADRE

Many things that, perhaps, never can be. But the best of all He gave me without my asking for it the day He brought you. And to think that I couldn't acknowledge it gratefully, that I was at the point of closing that door!

ADELA

I didn't recall that, Madre.

MADRE

(TAKES ADELA'S HAND.) Now that it's passed, I want to tell you so that you will forgive me those days during which I looked at you with rancor as an intruder. You understand it, don't you? The first time that you sat at the table in front of me--you didn't know that chair was hers--where nobody had returned to sit down. I was living only to remember and your every word was a silence of her whom you took away from me. Each kiss that the children gave you seemed to me a kiss that you were stealing from her--

ADELA

(RISES, XS QUICKLY TO L END OF TABLE R. SHE IS VISIBLY UPSET BY THIS CONVERSATION.) Don't tell me this story until later. For this reason, I wanted to go away.

## MADRE

Then I can't let you go. I have already understood a great lesson: that the same river which took away my daughter left me another so that my love would not be an empty folly. (PAUSES. LOOKS LOVINGLY AT ADELA. RISES AND CROSSES TO HER. HOLDS UP SCARF SHE HAS BEEN CARRYING.) Do you recognize this scarf? It's the one Angélica was wearing on her shoulders the last night. Martín himself had presented it to her. (SHE DRAPES IT AROUND ADELA'S SHOULDERS.) Now it has a place also.

## ADELA

(DISTURBED, HARDLY ABLE TO VOICE THE WORDS.) Gracias.  
Gracias . . . (SHE HAS STILL NOT TURNED TO LOOK AT MADRE.)

## MADRE

(FIRMLY.) Now, answer me, candidly, as woman to woman, what is Martín to you?

## ADELA

(A QUICK FEARFUL LOOK AT MADRE AND AWAY.) Why do you ask this?

## MADRE

(FIRM BUT KIND.) Answer me. What is Martín to you?

## ADELA

(TURNING AWAY. ALMOST A CRY.) Nothing! I swear it!

## MADRE

Then why are you trembling? Why don't you look me in the face?

ADELA

(TURNS, LOOKS HER IN THE EYE.) I swear it, Madre. Neither Martin nor I would be capable of betraying that memory!

MADRE

I betray it when I call you daughter, don't I? (PLACES HER HANDS ON ADELA'S SHOULDERS, CALMING HER AND SPEAKING DIRECTLY TO HER.) Listen Adela. I thought many times that this moment would arrive. And I don't want you to suffer needlessly for me. Do you know that Martín loves you?

ADELA

(TORTURED, TURNS AWAY, THE "NO" COMES OUT LIKE A LONG SIGH.) No!

MADRE

(RELEASES HER HOLD ON ADELA. TAKES A STEP OR TWO L.) It's so. I have known it a long time. The first day that I saw it in his eyes, I felt like a cold shiver was shaking me, all over and was freezing my fingers. It was as if Angélica were rising jealous within my blood! I delayed getting used to the idea . . . but that has already passed.

ADELA

(TURNING R. LOWERING HER HEAD, ANGUISHED.) For me, no!  
For me it is just beginning.

MADRE

(LOOKS AT HER A MOMENT, THEN XS TO USL TO RETRIEVE CANDLE, AND THEN XING TO DLC.) If you don't feel the same, forget what I have said. But if you love him, don't try to smother

this love thinking that it has to grieve me. (SHE IS NOW IN LC POSITION FACING ADELA.) I'm resigned now.

ADELA

(XING TO MADRE AT LC. RESTRAINING TEARS.) For what I want most, I must be silent. You can't imagine the hurt you are making by saying these words to be today--especially today.

MADRE

(ARRANGING HER MANTILLA OVER THE TALL COMB IN HER HAIR. REASONABLY AND LOVINGLY AS SHE HAS BEEN ALL THROUGH THIS SCENE.) I'm not trying to point out the way for you. I only want to say, that if you choose that, I will not be a hindrance. (THOUGHTFULLY AND FINALLY.) It is the way of life. (TURNS, EXITS THROUGH L ARCH TO FRONT DOOR. V ADELA LOOKS AFTER HER A MOMENT, SLOWLY XS TO DSL CHAIR, GREATLY DISTURBED, SHE SITS IN CHAIR AND THINKS OBSESSIVELY FRONT. PEREGRINA APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY UC, OBSERVES HER AS IF SHE UNDERSTOOD WHAT ADELA WAS THINKING. SHE QUIETLY COMES DOWN TO US END OF BENCH R WHERE SHE LEAVES HER STAFF, THEN XS QUIETLY TO US OF ADELA AS ADELA SPEAKS.)

ADELA

To choose a way .... Why did they take me from that I had already chosen if they can't give me a better one? (WITH ANGUISH, PULLING ON THE SCARF AROUND HER NECK.) And this scarf that encircles my neck as a memory of water! (SUDDENLY SHE SEEMS TO MAKE A DECISION, RELEASES THE SCARF AND STARTS TO RISE. PEREGRINA DETAINS HER, SERENELY PLACING AN IMPERATIVE HAND ON HER SHOULDER.)

PEREGRINA

No, Adela! Not that! Do you think the river will be a solution?

ADELA

(IN UTTER DESPAIR.) If I knew myself what I want! Yesterday everything seemed so easy. Today there is nothing more than a wall of shadows that overwhelms me.

PEREGRINA

(SOFTLY.) Yesterday you didn't know that you were loved.

ADELA

(LOOKS UP AT HER.) Is this love?

PEREGRINA

No, this is the fear of losing it. It's the love which you feel without knowing it until now--that uneasy mystery that fills the blood with pins and the voice with birds.

ADELA

Why do they describe it happy if it causes so much pain?  
Have you ever felt it?

PEREGRINA

(XING R TO TABLE.) Never. But almost always we are together. And how I envy you who can feel the sorrow that envelops the flesh like a broad belt of nails that no one would want to draw out.

ADELA

(RISING. A STEP ULC.) Mine is the worst! It's like a firebrand burning at the roots, like a buried cry that cannot find an outlet.

## PEREGRINA

Perhaps, I know no more of love than the words it has around it and not even all those. I know that in the afternoons, under the chestnut trees, it has soft hands and a sweet voice. But it touches me to hear despairing and last words. The abandoned girls who are thinking with staring eyes when they see the bridges of mist . . . those which speak with two bitter mouths upon the same pillow when the dwelling begins to fill with the smell of gas . . . those that you were thinking in a deep voice a moment ago.

## ADELA

(RESOLUTELY.) Why don't you let me go? (STARTS UC TOWARDS DOOR.) There's still time.

## PEREGRINA

(XING, DETAINING HER.) Be quiet!

## ADELA

(TO PEREGRINA.) It's the only way that's left me! (XS TO DOOR, STOPS, LOOKING OUT. THE RADIANCE OF THE BONFIRE IS SEEN AND DISTANT VOICES LAUGHING AND SHOUTING, MUSIC AT THE FIESTA.)

## PEREGRINA

(FOLLOWING HER TO DOOR.) No! That way is not yours. Look! The night is made with songs and fires. (SLOWLY.) And Martín is waiting for you at the dance.

## ADELA

(TURNING TO HER.) And tomorrow?

## PEREGRINA

(TURNS, XS DSR TO LOWER END OF BENCH.) Tomorrow your road will be free. Have faith, child. And I promise you, you will be happy and that this night will be the loveliest that we two have ever seen.

## ANDRÉS

(COMING DOWNSTAIRS L, TALKING TO EVERYONE IN GENERAL.) They've already kindled the huge bonfire and the whole town is dancing around it! (XS EXCITEDLY UP TO ADELA ON PLATFORM AT DOOR, TO HER L.)

## DORINA

(FOLLOWING ANDRÉS DOWN THE STAIRS TO UL OF C WHERE SHE STAYS ON THE STAGE FLOOR DS OF ANDRES.) Let's go, Grandfather! We are late!

## FALÍN

(XING TO PEREGRINA AT DS END OF BENCH EXTENDING TO HER A CROWN OF FLOWERS WHICH HE CARRIES. GRANDFATHER, FOLLOWING THE CHILDREN DOWNSTAIRS REMAINS LC.) Take it. I made it for you.

## PEREGRINA

(SMILING, SURPRISED.) For me?

## FALÍN

Tonight all the women are crowned like this. (PEREGRINA TAKES THE CROWN OF FLOWERS.)

## DORINA

(TO PEREGRINA) Aren't you coming to the dance?

## PEREGRINA

I have to follow the road till daybreak. Adela will go with you. And she won't be separated from you for a moment. (LOOKS AT ADELA WHO LOOKS BACK INTO HER EYES. IMPERATIVELY.) Understand?

## ADELA

(LOWERS HER HEAD.) Yes. (THEN A LITTLE GLANCE AT HER.) Adios, Señora . . . and gracias.

## ANDRÉS

(XING INTO DOORWAY.) She we come back to see you soon?

## PEREGRINA

Don't hurry. Before, many stalks have to ripen. Adíos, little ones.

## ANDRÉS, DORINA, FALÍN

(XING TO DOOR, WAVE GOODBYE TO PEREGRINA, AND EXIT FOLLOWED BY ADELA.) Adíos, Peregrina. (PEREGRINA PLACES CROWN OF FLOWERS ON TABLE.)

## GRANDFATHER

(AFTER THE CHILDREN'S VOICES HAVE QUIETED, HE TAKES A STEP R TO PEREGRINA.) Why did Adela thank you! Does she know who you are?

## PEREGRINA

(SERENE AND CONFIDENT.) She will take many years to know me.

GRANDFATHER

(TROUBLED, YET BELIEVING.) You weren't looking for her tonight?

PEREGRINA

I thought so, too, but now I've seen clearly my confusion.

GRANDFATHER

(MORE TROUBLED AND DEMANDING.) Then, why do you stay here? Whom do you expect?

PEREGRINA

I can't go back alone. I told you already that this night a woman of your house, crowned with flowers, will be my companion through the river. But don't be afraid; you will not have to cry--not even one tear that you have not already shed.

GRANDFATHER

(LOOKING AT HER WITH THE OLD SUSPICION.) I don't believe you. It is the children that you are circling about. Admit it!

PEREGRINA

(HEALTHILY SECURE.) Don't be afraid, Grandfather! Your children will have grandchildren. (WITH AUTHORITY.) Go with them. (SHE TAKES HER STAFF FROM ITS LEANING PLACE ON THE UPPER END OF THE BENCH, XS TO UC DOOR AND PLACES IT IN THE DOOR JAMB.)

GRANDFATHER

(XING UP TOWARDS HER, SUSPICIOUSLY.) What are you doing?

## PEREGRINA

(XING DOWN TO L OF TABLE.) To leave my staff at the door as a sign for a despairing one. When you return from the dance, my mission will have ended. (WITH SUDDEN AUTHORITY IN HER VOICE, FINALIZED AND COLD, SHE REMAINS FACING FRONT.) Now leave me. It is my final word of this night. (GRANDFATHER STARES AT HER A MOMENT, THEN EXITS UC DOOR. PEREGRINA PICKS UP THE CORWN OF FLOWERS, LOOKS AT IT A MOMENT AS WITH GREAT SADNESS. THEN HER EYES LIGHT UP. SHE PLACES THE CROWN ON HER HEAD, XS TO LAVABO DR, PICKS UP LITTLE HAND MIRROR THAT IS ON THE SHELF, AND CONTEMPLATES HERSELF WITH FEMININE CURIOSITY. HER SMILE VANISHES; SHE REPLACES THE MIRROR, TAKES OFF THE CROWN AND COMMENCES TO STRIP THE LEAVES OFF. CASONA BRINGS IN A SONG HERE IN HIS SCRIPT WHICH WE DID NOT USE BUT WHICH IS INCLUDED FOR TRUTHFULNESS TO CASONA'S PLAY. AS PEREGRINA MOVES THROUGH HER PANTOMIME ABOVE, SONGS AND MUSIC OF SAINT JOHN'S FEAST DAY ARE HEARD IN DISTANCE OFFSTAGE.)

## MAN'S VOICE

Dear Saint John,  
The flower of the stalk  
Already wants to mature.  
Long live the dance  
And those who dance it.

## CHORUS OF VOICES

Dear Saint John.

## WOMAN'S VOICE

Dear Saint John,  
With fruits of the rain  
I come to sing.  
Long live the dance  
And those who dance it.

## CHORUS

Dear Saint John.

(WE DID NOT USE ANY MUSIC AT THIS POINT, BUT AS PEREGRINA STARTED TO TEAR AT THE LEAVES OF THE CROWN, SHE MOVED R TO TABLE, PUT CROWN OF FLOWERS ON TABLE, XD TABLE TO SIT ON DS OF BENCH L OF TABLE WITH HER BACK TO STAGE L. THERE IS A PAUSE. THEN, THROUGH THE ARCH L, A GIRL APPEARS. SHE MOVES STEALTHILY. PAUSES AT THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS AND LOOKS UP, THEN, TURNS AND MOVES A STEP INTO THE ROOM. SHE SEES THE FIGURE OF PEREGRINA SITTING WITH HER BACK TO HER AND SHE TAKES ONE MORE TIMID STEP TOWARD PEREGRINA.

PEREGRINA

(CALLING LOUDLY WITHOUT TURNING.) *Angélica!*

ANGÉLICA

(STEPS BACK, DISCONCERTED.) Who has called my name?  
(PEREGRINA RISES AND TURNS TOWARD HER.) I have never seen you before.

PEREGRINA

Nor I you. But I knew that you would come and I didn't want you to be alone in your house. Did anyone see you arrive?

ANGÉLICA

(EXCEPT AT MOMENTS, ANGÉLICA'S VOICE CARRIES THE SOUND OF A BROKEN, BEAT, DESPAIRING, AND EMBITTERED WOMAN. IT HAS WHAT MARTÍN ONCE DESCRIBED AS "SAND IN HER VOICE." SHE IS A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN BUT CLOSE TO TEARS THAT WILL NOT COME, REPENTANT AND SCARED.) No one. For that I waited until night to hide me from everyone. (LOOKS TOWARDS UPSTAIRS AND TOWARDS KITCHEN.) Where are my mother and my family?

PEREGRINA

It's better that they don't see you. Would you have the courage to look at them face to face? What words will you say to them?

ANGÉLICA

Words will not fail me. I shall cry on my knees and they will understand.

PEREGRINA

Martín also?

ANGÉLICA

(XING TO PEREGRINA, WITH INSTINCTIVE FEAR.) Is he here?

PEREGRINA

(INDICATES USC.) At the Fiesta. Dancing with everybody around the fire.

ANGÉLICA

(SURPRISED.) With everybody? No! (XS PEREGRINA TO DSR XING TABLE TO R OF TABLE.) Liar! (TURNS TO PEREGRINA. THE PAST FEW YEARS HAVE SHARPENED A TEMPER FOR SURVIVAL.) Martín may have forgotten me, but not my mother! I'm sure she will expect me every day of her life without counting the hours. (XS STAGE TO L RAPIDLY CALLING UP THE STAIRS.) Mother! Mother!

PEREGRINA

(XING TO LC.) It's useless to call. I have told you that she is at the Fiesta.

ANGÉLICA

(XS PEREGRINA TO R OF C.) I need to see her at once. I know that this is the worst moment of my life and I don't have the strength to wait much longer.

PEREGRINA

(TURNING TOWARDS HER.) What are you coming to search for in this house?

ANGÉLICA

(XING TO BENCH L OF TABLE.) What was mine.

PEREGRINA

Nobody took it from you. You yourself abandoned it.

ANGÉLICA

(ALMOST A CRY.) I don't pretend to find a love that is impossible now, but pardon, yes. Or at least a place where I can die in peace. I have repaid my crime with four bitter years which are worth a whole life.

PEREGRINA

(HER WHOLE MANNER THROUGHOUT IS COOL AND DELIBERATE, BUT RATIONAL AND KINDLY.) A great deal has changed for you in that time. Have you thought how much the others might have changed?

ANGÉLICA

(DOGGEDLY.) Above all else, this is my home and my people. They can't close the only door I have left.

PEREGRINA

(GENTLY AND SYMPATHETICALLY.) Have you returned so hopeless?

## ANGÉLICA

(SITS ON BENCH WITH BODY FACING TABLE AND BACK TO PEREGRINA. SHE IS READY TO BREAK DOWN.) I can do no more. I have suffered the worst that any woman can suffer. I have known abandonment and loneliness, the humiliating wait at the foot of marble staircases, and the sad fatigue of the dawns without a roof. I have seen myself tossed about from one hand to another as a filthy coin. Only pride sustained me on foot. But now I have lost that too. I am beaten and not ashamed to shout it. Now I don't feel more than an anguished animal, to rest in a warm corner!

## PEREGRINA

(XING TO R OF C.) Life has tortured you very much. When one has had the courage to give up everything for a passion, one can't go back then as a dog with cold or a beggar to the scraps of his own table. (BRIEF PAUSE.) Do you believe that Martín can open his arms to you again?

## ANGÉLICA

(HER ARMS REST ON THE TABLE, HER HEAD WAS BOWED. NOW, SHE LIFTS HER HEAD AND TURNS IT TO FRONT. THERE IS DESPAIR BUT FIGHT IN HER VOICE WHICH STARTS LOW AND CRESCENDOS TO THE END OF THIS SPEECH.) After all that I have suffered? What can Martín do to me? Lash my face with ships? Good! At least the suffering will be clean. Throw my bread upon the floor? I will eat it on my knees, blessing him for being himself and for this land where I was born? No! There's no human force to tear me out of here! (PICKS UP THE PIECES OF LACE WITH BOTH HANDS.) These mantles, I have embroidered them! I am in my home! Mine! Mine! Mine! (SHE SOBS CONVULSIVELY, HER HEAD BENT OVER THE TABLE, KISSING DESPERATELY THE LACE PIECES. WE CUT THE FOLLOWING SONG, BUT CASONA'S DIRECTIONS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING STANZA OF THE SONG OF SAINT JOHN.)

## MAN'S VOICE

(OFFSTAGE)

Dear Saint John,  
Now the stars  
Are going down.  
Long live the dance  
And those who dance it.

## CHORUS OF VOICES

(OFFSTAGE)

Dear Saint John.

(PEREGRINA APPROACHES ANGÉLICA MERCIFULLY, STANDING BEHIND HER, CARESSING HER HAIR. INTIMATE VOICE.)

## PEREGRINA

Tell me, Angélica, in those dark days out there, have you never thought that you could take another way?

## ANGÉLICA

(KEEPING HER RIGHT ARM STILL ON TABLE, ANGELICA TURNS HER BODY ON BENCH SO THAT SHE IS PLAYING MORE TO FRONT. PEREGRINA SHIFTS HER BODY SO THAT SHE IS STILL PLAYING BEHIND HER OFF HER LEFT SHOULDER. PEREGRINA STILL TOUCHES HER HAIR.) Everything was closed for me. The cities are too large and, there, no one knows anyone.

## PEREGRINA

(THE SLOW, GENTLE, PERSUASIVE VOICE.) A soft road of silence that you could make your way--you alone . . .

## ANGÉLICA

I haven't the strength for anything. (CONCENTRATES.) But, nevertheless, the night he deserted me . . .

PEREGRINA

(A VOICE OF PROFOUND SUGGESTION AS IF SHE WERE FOLLOWING ANGÉLICA'S THINKING.) That night, you thought that higher up, on the other side of fear, there is a land of final forgiveness, with a coolness white and tranquil, where there is a smile of peace on all lips, an infinite serenity for all eyes, and where it is beautiful to sleep, without sorrow and without end.

ANGÉLICA

(TURNS HER HEAD UP TO PEREGRINA WITH A LOOK OF FEAR.) Who are you that you read my inmost thoughts?

PEREGRINA

(HER HANDS ON ANGÉLICA'S SHOULDERS.) A good friend. The only one you have now.

ANGÉLICA

(DRAWING BACK INSTINCTIVELY.) I have not asked for your friendship or your advice. Leave me! Don't look at me like that!

PEREGRINA

(ONE STEP BACK TO L.) Would you prefer that your mother and your family learn the truth?

ANGÉLICA

(SURPRISED?) Don't they know it already?

PEREGRINA

No. They imagine you more perfect than ever. But asleep in the bottom of the river.

ANGELICA

(TURNING FRONT. UNBELIEVING. THIS THOUGHT HAD NEVER ENTERED HER HEAD BEFORE.) It's not possible! Martín followed me to the shore. Hidden in the chestnut grove, we saw him gallop by with his gun on his shoulder and death in his eyes.

PEREGRINA

But he knew how to control himself and remain silent.

ANGELICA

(UNBELIEVING.) Why?

PEREGRINA

For you. Because he loved you still. And that silence was his last gift of love he was able to make to you.

ANGELICA

(WIDE-EYED.) Martín has done this . . . for me? (RISING, SEIZING UPON HOPE.) But then, he loves me . . . he loves me still!

PEREGRINA

(NOW A LITTLE CURTLY. THESE ARE THE FACTS.) Now it's too late. Your place is occupied. Don't you feel another woman's presence in this house?

ANGELICA

(STIFFENS HER BACK.) She will not rob me of what is mine without a struggle. (TURNS TO PEREGRINA, SHARPLY.) Where is this woman?

PEREGRINA

(MORE FACTS.) It's futile for you to try to struggle with her. You are defeated beforehand. Your chair at the table, your place near the fire, and the love of your own, you have lost it all.

ANGÉLICA

(SWINGING AROUND TO R OF TABLE FACING PEREGRINA.) I can recover it!

PEREGRINA

(MOVES IN TO TABLE ACROSS FROM ANGELICA AND LOOKS HER RIGHT IN THE EYE.) It's much too late. Your mother already has another daughter; your brothers have another sister.

ANGÉLICA

(IN PEREGRINA'S FACE. A DESPERATE SHOUT.) You're lying!

PEREGRINA

(STRAIGHTENS, INDICATES SEWING BASKET ON US END OF LOVESEAT R.) Do you know this work?

ANGÉLICA

(XS OVER TO LOVESEAT, PICKS UP EMBROIDERY IN HOOP.) It's mine. I left it only begun.

PEREGRINA

But now it has new stitching. Someone has finished for you. (SHE TURNS AND POINTS TO DOOR USC.) Look out the door there. Do you see anything of the bonfire's radiance?

ANGÉLICA

(AFTER A QUICK LOOK AT PEREGRINA XS UP BETWEEN TABLE AND FIREPLACE TO PLATFORM AND OVER L TO STAND IN DOOR LOOKING OUT.)  
I see the whole town dancing with linked hands.

PEREGRINA

(REMAINS IN HER POSITION BY L OF BENCH FACING FRONT.) Can you distinguish Martín? (A TOUCH OF MOCKERY IN HER SPEECHES NOW.)

ANGÉLICA

(RECOGNITION.) He's passing in front of the flame.

PEREGRINA

And the girl who is dancing with him? If you could see nearer, you would recognize your dress and the scarf she is wearing about her neck.

ANGÉLICA

(XING DOWN TO LC. SULKILY.) I don't recognize her. She's not from here.

PEREGRINA

(TOUCHE.) She soon will be.

ANGÉLICA

(TURNING AND STARING AT PEREGRINA. A BITTER NOTE.) No! It's too cruel! It can't be that I'm robbed of everything. Something has to be left for me. Can anyone take my mother from me?

PEREGRINA

She doesn't need you now. She has your memory which she values more than you.

ANGÉLICA

And my brothers? The first word my youngest brother learned was my name. (SOFTLY.) I still see him asleep in my arms with that little smile that curled gently around his lips like a drop of honey in the mellow figs.

PEREGRINA

For your brothers you are no more than a word. Do you believe that they will even recognize you? Four years are long in a child's life. (COMES CLOSE TO ANGÉLICA USING THE INTIMATE TONE AGAIN.) Think, Angelica. Once you destroyed your home when you left it. Do you want to destroy it again by returning?

ANGÉLICA

(CONFUSED, DEFEATED.) Where can I go if not here . . . ?

PEREGRINA

To save valiently the only thing left to you: your remembrance.

ANGÉLICA

For what if it is a false image?

PEREGRINA

What matters if it is beautiful. Beauty is the other form of truth.

ANGÉLICA

(LOOKING FOR TRUTH.) How can I preserve it?

PEREGRINA

(APPROACHING ANGÉLICA.) I will show you the way. (XING HER TO L.) Come with me and tomorrow the town will have its legend. (TAKES ANGELICA'S LEFT HAND IN HER RIGHT HAND.) Shall we go?

ANGÉLICA

(WITHDRAWS HER HAND AND STEPS BACK FEARFULLY.) Let me go! There's something about you that makes me afraid!

PEREGRINA

(TURNS TO HER. GENTLY.) Still? Look at me! How do you see me now? (SHE STANDS MOTIONLESS WITH HER HANDS CROSSED ON HER BOSOM. SHE APPEARS TO GROW IN RADIANCE AND BEAUTY AND WARMTH BEFORE OUR EYES.)

ANGÉLICA

(CONTEMPLATING PEREGRINA WITH FASCINATION. THE WORDS COME OUT HALTINGLY.) Like a grand dream without closing my eyes . . . each time more beautiful . . .

PEREGRINA

(SMILING, XS TO TABLE R WITH ENERGY.) The whole secret is here. (REACHING USL END OF TABLE SHE PAUSES AND LOOKS FRONT.) First, to live passionately, and then to die with beauty. (SHE PLICKS UP THE CROWN OF FLOWERS FROM THE TABLE. XS BACK TO ANGELICA, XS DS OF HER AS SHE PLACES THE CROWN OF FLOWERS ON ANGELICA'S HEAD. SHE ENDS UP ON ANGELICA'S LEFT LOOKING AT HER.) So, as if you were going to a wedding. Take heart, Angélica. A moment of courage and your memory will remain

planted in the town like an oak tree full of birds' nests.  
(GESTURES L.) Let us go?

ANGÉLICA

(HER EYES CLOSED.) Let us go. (SHE APPEARS TO SINK A LITTLE. SHE HESITATES TO WALK.)

PEREGRINA

You are still afraid?

ANGÉLICA

Not now. It is my knees that are collapsing without my wanting them to.

PEREGRINA

(LOVINGLY, KINDLY.) Lean on me. And put on your best smile for the journey. (WITH HER RIGHT HAND SHE PICKS UP THE EDGE OF HER CLOAK AND ENCIRCLES ANGÉLICA'S SHOULDERS WITH IT. GUIDES HER SLOWLY L TOWARDS ARCH L.) I shall convey your boat to the other shore. (PEREGRINA AND ANGÉLICA EXIT L. OFF USL A MAN'S VOICE IS HEARD SINGING IN THE DISTANCE A, HAUNTING, PLAINTIVE MELODY. WE USED LA VIOLATERA BY JOSE PADILLA RECORDED BY A LOCAL PROFESSIONAL SINGER. CASONA HAS USED ANOTHER STANZA OF THE SONG USED EARLIER IN ACT IV. FOR THE SAKE OF THE SCRIPT ACCORDING TO CASONA, HIS SONG IS AS FOLLOWS.)

MAN'S VOICE

Dear Saint John,  
In the bonfire  
There's no more fire to burn.  
Long live the dance  
And those who dance it!

## CHORUS OF VOICES

Dear Saint John.

(AT THE END OF THE SONG, HAPPY SHOUTS, LAUGHTER, AND NOISE OF PEOPLE APPROACHING THE USC DOOR ARE HEARD. GIRL #1 ENTERS RUNNING XING TO DSR CLOSE TO TABLE R. SHE IS FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY GIRL #2 WHO FOLLOWS HER DSR. GIRL #3 RACES AROUND TABLE R BETWEEN FIREPLACE AND TABLE TO MEET GIRL #1 AT DS OF TABLE. THE LINES GO ON WITH THE MOVEMENT. MAN #1 AND MAN #3 FOLLOW THE GIRLS IN MORE LEISURELY AND X DR BEHIND THE TABLE--BETWEEN THE TABLE AND THE FIREPLACE WHERE THEY REMAIN ENJOYING THE GIRLS' ACTIVITIES. THE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FOLLOWED BY ADELA AND MARTÍN WHO TAKE POSITIONS L OF DOOR. THESE ENTRANCES AND MOVES TO POSITION ARE SIMULTANEOUS WITH THE LINES OF THE PLAY. EVERYONE IS HAPPY AND RELAXED.)

GIRL #1

(XING TO DSR.) Don't touch me! I saw it first!

GIRL #2

(FOLLOWING GIRL #1 DSR, PLEADING.) Toss it to me!

GIRL #3

(RACING AROUND TABLE TO HEAD OFF GIRL #1.) To me! I have no sweetheart!

GIRL #1

(PULLING AWAY. HER HANDS ARE CLASPED GENTLY TO HER CHEST PROTECTING WHAT SMALL ITEM SHE CARRIES IN THEM.) It's mine! I found it on the river-bank!

ADELA

(NOW IN POSITION L OF MARTÍN AND USC DOOR.) What have you found?

GIRL #1

(TURNING TOWARD HER.) A four-leaf clover!

MAN #3

But it won't do you any good. The luck is not for the one who finds it, only for the one who receives it!

GIRL #2

(ALMOST JUMPING UP AND DOWN. SPREADS HER SKIRTS.) Close your eyes and toss it in the air!

GIRL #1

(XING US A STEP, DISREGARDING GIRL #2'S FLUTTERINGS.) Take it, Adela! It was in your garden! (SHE TOSSES THE CLOVER TO ADELA.)

ADELA

(LAUGHING CATCHES THE CLOVER IN HER SKIRT.) Gracias.

MARTÍN

(SALUTING GIRL #1 WITH A GESTURE AND A BLESSING.) Much luck surround you this year! In the fountain, the water-lily, and in the corn--red ears! (GIRL #1 RETURNS TO POSITION DR BY TABLE BELOW GIRL #2. MADRE ENTERS USC DOOR, FOLLOWED BY TELVA, FALÍN, DORINA, ANDRÉS AND GRANDFATHER.) V

MADRE

(PAUSING BRIEFLY INSIDE DOORWAY, SURVEYING THE GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE. HAPPY MOCKING TONE.) What? Are you all tired from dancing? (XS DSL.)

## TELVA

(ENTERS, PUFFING A BIT AND WAVING HER HAND LIKE A FAN BEFORE HER FACE.) Although the bonfire has been put out, the hot ashes remain until daybreak. (XS DLC.)

## GIRL #1

(SIGHING AND SITTING ON BENCH, DS END, BY TABLE.) If I don't rest a minute, I can't go on!

## TELVA

(TURNING TOWARDS HER, GESTURE OF DISGUST.) Bah? Blood of marshmallow! (TO GRANDFATHER WHO IS R OF USC DOOR AND TO MADRE DL.) It seems that they are going to eat the world, but when the tambourine tinkles, it gives them no inspiration, nor do they know how to shake their hips or the leather to the sound on high! (SHE DEMONSTRATES AS SHE SAYS "SHAKES THEIR HIPS," AND STOMPS HER HEELS ON "LEATHER.") Oh, for my days! (FALIN ON ENTERING HAS XD L TO SEAT HIMSELF ON STOOL FAR L. DORINA FOLLOWS AND SEATS HERSELF ON STOOL R OF FALIN. ANDRÉS HAS SEATED HIMSELF IN GRANDFATHER'S CHAIR R OF BOTH STOOLS. THEY ACT LIKE TIRED CHILDREN. MADRE XS TO STAIRS AND STARTS UP. AS MADRE MOVES, TELVA XS TO SIT IN CHAIR DL OF ARCH.)

## ADELA

(TURNING TOWARD MADRE AS MADRE CLIMBS STAIRS.) Are you going to bed, Madre? I'll go with you.

## MADRE

(STOPPING ON LANDING.) Don't concern yourself about me. I know being alone. Return to the dance with her, Martin. (LOOKING DOWN AT TELVA.) And Telva, see to the men if they want refreshment. (SHAKING A FINGER AT THE GIRLS R.) As for the women, stay by the cupboard of berry wine.

(CONTINUES UPSTAIRS AND EXITS. TELVA, ON INSTRUCTIONS XS TO HEAD OF TABLE R, ANDRÉS AND DORINA X ABOVE HER TO US OF TABLE AND R OF IT. FALÍN XS TO STAND BESIDE TELVA ON HER L US OF TABLE. THE MEN #1 AND #3 REMAIN IN THEIR POSITIONS BETWEEN TABLE AND FIREPLACE BUT MOVE CLOSER TO TABLE. GIRL #1 AND GIRL #2 TURN AT TABLE AND PUSH BENCH UNDER TABLE TO GET CLOSER TO TABLE ON L SIDE OF TABLE. GIRL #3 TURNS IN AT DS END OF TABLE AND GROUP BEGINS TO HANDLE GLASSES AS TELVA POURS FROM ONE BOTTLE AND MAN #1 POURS FROM ANOTHER BOTTLE. GRANDFATHER REMAINS IN PLACE ENJOYING AND WATCHING. MARTÍN LOOKS AT ADELA AS GROUP MOVEMENT BEGINS AND SHE AT HIM. WHEN GROUP IN PLACE AROUND TABLE, MARTÍN STARTS TO GO OUT DOOR UC FOLLOWED BY ADELA.)

## MARTÍN

(STOPS AND TURNS BACK TO GRANDFATHER AS HE NOTICES THE STAFF OF PEREGRINA RESTING AGAINST DOOR JAMB.) Whose staff is this?

## GRANDFATHER

(LOOKS AT STAFF AND AROUND ROOM QUICKLY. HE PUTS FORTH HIS HAND TO ADELA WHO HAS STARTED INTO DOORWAY WITH MARTÍN. THE WORRIED TONE AGAIN.) Wait! Did they see anyone here upon entering?

## ADELA

No one. Why?

## GRANDFATHER

(SHAKING HIS HEAD DESPAIRINGLY.) I don't know. It will be true that this is the shortest night of the year, but never have I wanted so much to see the sun!

## TELVA

(TURNING TOWARDS HIM, A GLASS IN HER HAND.) You don't have long to wait. It's already getting daylight. (OFF UL IS HEARD QUICO'S VOICE SHOUTING AS HE APPROACHES THE UC DOOR.)

QUICO

(SHOUTING AND APPROACHING.) Señora . . . Señora . . . !  
 (THE GROUP AT THE TABLE FOCUS ON QUICO AS HE ENTERS RAPIDLY  
 AND WITH GREAT EMOTION. HE SAYS ONCE MORE "SEÑORA" AS HE  
 STOPS ON LANDING INSIDE DOOR AND LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM.  
 MARTÍN SIGNIFIES WITH A GESTURE THAT MADRE IS UPSTAIRS.  
 QUICO XS DOWN L TO LC AND CALLS UPSTAIRS "SEÑORA". MADRE  
 APPEARS ON THE STAIRS AND COMES TO LANDING AS QUICO CON-  
 TINUES WITH TREMLING VOICE AND GREAT EMOTION.) My Señora!  
 My Señora! Finally, what you were waiting for has happened!  
 They have found Angélica in the river.

MARTÍN

(WITH FORCE.) What are you saying?

QUICO

(DISREGARDS MARTÍN, TALKS DIRECTLY TO MADRE WHO IS ON LAND-  
 ING LOOKING AT HIM WITH GREAT WONDER.) Nobody wants to  
 believe it, but everybody has seen it!

MADRE

(RUNS DOWN REST OF STAIRS AND MEETS QUICO AT LC.) Have you  
 seen her? Speak! (HER EYES ARE SHINING.)

QUICO

(GESTURING WITH DS HAND TOWARD DOOR UC.) There! They are  
 bringing her, more beautiful than ever! Venerated four  
 years in the water, crowned with roses, and a holy smile . . .  
 as if she were about to die! (QUICO EXITS UC.)

MEN AND GIRLS

(REPEATING AND OVERLAPPING.) A miracle! A miracle! A  
 miracle! (GIRLS #1, #2, #3 AND ADELA FALL ON THEIR KNEES  
 AND THEIR HANDS ASSUME A PRAYING POSITION. ALL THE MEN  
 PRESENT UNCOVER THEIR HEADS AND STAND WITH HEADS LOWERED.

MARTÍN REMAINS BY ADELA USL OF DOOR. DORINA XS TO GRANDFATHER WHO HUGS HER TO HIM. ANDRÉS TIGHTENS IN TO DORINA, HIS HAND ON HER ARM. MADRE FALLS TO HER KNEES LC. TELVA PUSHES FALIN ACROSS STAGE TO L AND A LITTLE UP OF MADRE WHERE TELVA AND FALIN KNEEL. TELVA'S ARM AROUND FALIN'S SHOULDERS.)

MADRE

(ON HER KNEES, KISSING THE GROUND.) God has listened to me!  
At last, earth returns to earth! (SHE SPREADS HER ARMS AND RAISES THEM TO HEAVEN.) My beloved Angélica! Angélica santa!  
(SHE LOWERS HER HANDS TO A PRAYING POSITION AT HER BREAST.)

GIRLS #1, #2, #3

(REPEAT AFTER HER SLOWLY AND IN A MONOTONE.) Santa . . .  
Santa . . . Santa . . . (EVERYONE ON STAGE REMAINS WITH HEADS LOWERED, A TABLEAU. FAR OFF, THE BELLS OF SAINT JOHN ARE HEARD, SUBMERGED BELLS. PEREGRINA APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY, TAKES UP HER STAFF, SURVEYS THE PEOPLE IN THE ROOM WITH A SWEET YET COLD SMILE AND THEN SHE EXITS FROM SIGHT. FOOTSTEPS ARE HEARD OF THE LITTER BEARERS OFF UL. AS MADRE LIFTS HER HEAD, ADELA, FOLLOWED BY MARTIN, XS DOWN TO HER. ADELA HELPS HER TO RISE. THE GIRLS KNEELING REMAIN KNEELING, BUT THE LOOKS OF ALL ON STAGE NOW FOLLOW MADRE. ADELA AND MARTÍN REMAIN AT LC.) (Figure 5)

MADRE

(AS THE LITTER-BEARERS CARRYING A LITTER OF FIR BOUGHS APPEAR IN THE DOORWAY, MADRE, WITH HER ARMS EXTENDED, XS UP TO DOOR UC, CRYING OUT IN A MIXTURE OF SORROW AND JOY.) Daughter!

(THE CURTAIN CLOSES. THERE IS NO MOVEMENT ON STAGE FOLLOWING MADRE'S REACHING THE DOOR AND HER CRY. THE SOUND OF THE SUBMERGED BELLS INCREASES IN VOLUME AS THE CURTAIN CLOSES, STOPPING WHEN THE CURTAIN HAS FINISHED CLOSING. HOUSELIGHTS UP.)

Figure 5. The Final Tableau



## CHAPTER III

### CRITICAL EVALUATION

Four areas will be discussed in this chapter. They are: (1) Achievement of Interpretation for the Production, (2) Actor-Director Relationships, (3) Audience Reaction, and (4) Personal Observations. A summary concludes the chapter.

#### Achievement of Interpretation for the Production

One performance of La dama del alba was presented in the Cultural and Educational Center Auditorium in Chatham, Virginia, on May 3, 1973. It was preceded the night before by a paid dress rehearsal. After viewing these, the director feels that her interpretation of La dama del alba was achieved and was true to the intent of the playwright.

The director conceived her idea of the play as a serious comedy in which the playwright, Casona, had as his object the depiction of realistic characters in a realistic setting solving their problems which were created by the suicide of one of its members whose body had never been found. The solution of the problem was accomplished by the realistic figure of Death whose solution provided the family

with a happy future. The super-objective of the playwright was thought by the director to be the humanization of Death in order to gain a perspective of Death as a friend and companion on the road of life.

The illusion of reality was obtained, first, by the use of the box set, a setting which did not change throughout the play. Spanish architectural details were researched in order to give the play the environment of a realistic Spanish dwelling. The use of Roman arches, the evidences of stone work, the wood work on the door, and the twisted iron supports of the stair railing were all elements found in Spanish homes.

The furniture, also, contributed a great deal to the illusion of reality. Grandfather's chair, which dominated the right stage in Act I and Act II, was a big, fan-back wicker chair. The stools were made of wicker. The bench was covered with cloth which dropped down over the legs about eight inches and boxed in the top. It was very much like the woodwork on Spanish benches and chairs. So was the loveseat permanently placed downstage of the fireplace. This piece was made of wood with back and arm supports just like seating devices for two seen in the pictures of Spanish furniture.

The table was a particularly happy find. It was a

drop-leaf table with grooved woodwork on the legs. The grooved woodwork was an authentic detail of Spanish furniture. It was thought at first that it would be necessary to twine rope down the legs of a table to get this effect, but one of the cast found the table that was used so happily in the play.

The table was important to the director because she had plotted the position of the table as the main device in varying the appearance of the stage throughout the play. In Act I, the curtain opened on the family gathered around the table on stage right finishing the evening meal. After the table was cleared and the children had removed their stools, Telva and Grandfather, in complete harmony with the lines and action, carried the table with its leaves down to upstage left, its position for the end of Act I and throughout Act II. The director wanted the table out of the way for the movement necessary in these two acts. In Act III, the table was placed exactly as it was in the beginning of Act I, but the bench, which had been upstage of it in Act I, was now downstage of it. In Act IV, the table was turned so its length paralleled the line of the right stage wall and the bench was placed on the left side of the table.

The director was pleased with the use of pottery and

wicker baskets in the furnishing of the set. The cross, however, was made of thicker pieces of wood than desired and could not be hung centrally in the back wall left of the center door for lack of supports. But it served its purpose in setting the scene and helping in the characterization of Madre, who frequently turned upstage to the cross to pray.

Second, the illusion of reality was maintained by the convincing performance of the actors. Casting was most fortuitous. The age groups of the characters in the play were practically the same as the actors who played them. As the rehearsals progressed, it became clear that the personalities of the actors differed little from the type of character each was playing. The characterizations were discussed in detail during the readings of the play and before the blocking rehearsals. The characters were not deeply psychological characters, but well within the understanding of the cast. With the exception of Peregrina, Death, played by an older woman when the director wanted a younger one, more radiantly beautiful and capable of exuding more warmth on stage, and Quico, from whom the director wanted a more lusty performance, the cast seemed made for the parts they assumed. However, Peregrina performed competently in the audience's mind, but her accomplishments were not what

the director saw in her idea of perfection in the role.

Character relationships were well defined and maintained by strict adherence to ensemble playing. The family picture, therefore, was sincere and convincing. The relationships of those outside the family circle were also convincing. These characters seemed at home in the house and with its inhabitants.

The illusion of reality was realized, thirdly, by the realistic style of acting. Of course, the actors were rehearsed so that the audience could hear the lines of the play and blocked so that the audience could see the faces and expressions of the actors as much as possible within the bounds of good acting behind the proscenium frame. Lines important to the plot which the audience must not miss were directed into the "black curtain" out front. But, no direct contact or appeal to the audience was made and the audience was expected to view the happenings on stage through the removed fourth wall.

Thus, by use of a realistic box set, by "real-life" characterizations by the actors, and by maintaining the proper balance between empathy and aesthetic distance, Casona's intent of a realistic, serious comedy was achieved in this production.

Lighting was the greatest problem of the physical production in achieving the director's interpretation of an illusion of reality. A row of fresnels on the front border just behind the proscenium curtain were of no use in lighting the downstage areas close to the curtain line. There were no lights for illuminating the stage from out front nor any place to mount lighting. The crew was finally able to erect two tall stepladders to the right and left of the stage about twenty-five feet out in the auditorium and to hang an ellipsoidal spot and a fresnel spotlight on each ladder. This served to do a fair job of lighting the downstage areas of the stage, but was far from satisfactory. The auditorium, also, had limited electrical facilities which could be used and a number of compromises had to be made, particularly in order to light the cyclorama and to have a fireplace light throughout the first two acts. The overall illumination of the stage was good, but the crew could not handle subtle changes in lighting to represent the various times of day that occur in the different acts. For instance, Act I begins on a cool November evening and progresses to night. Act II is later that night. Act III begins in the late afternoon of a June day. Later in the act, it becomes a little dark inside the house. Act IV begins at twilight the same day and progresses to late at night. The director received no outside criticism for the

Lack of lighting effects, but she would have had the lighting otherwise had it been possible.

The set had two items which disappointed the director. The arch on left stage was supposed to have suggestions of being made of large blocks of stone. On Sunday before the performance, it was discovered that there was no one in the crew who could handle this painting. On Monday, in Danville, the director was able to obtain the services of the Technical Director of the Stratford College Drama Department. He arrived somewhat late that evening and when the rehearsal was over was left working with the stage crew. The following evening, the director arrived to discover that the arch had been marblized with a shade of green. The marbling extended about six or seven inches all around the arch on its stage side. Not only had the arch been marblized, but the fireplace also. The hood of the fireplace (which, incidentally, was smaller than had been foreseen) was painted green. It was originally intended to be the same white shade as the walls. For the director, the marblizing and the green hood made the set lose some of the austerity which would have added to the Spanish atmosphere.

The other item which was disappointing was the hanging of the red curtain at the kitchen door. The carpenters had

worked long and hard cutting out and mounting the Roman arch entrance to the kitchen up right. The red drape was to be hung offstage behind the arch. When the director arrived on Wednesday night, the night of the paid dress rehearsal, the drape was mounted and hanging on the stage side of the flat. When she complained to the Stage Manager, she was told that it would take too long at that time to make the change because of the difficulties in arranging a rod behind the arch, etc. She had to live that night with the complete obliteration of the arch and too much red in the upstage corner. However, the director does not rant and rave at the well-meant efforts of amateurs in a community theatre.

No particular element of blocking was emphasized for this production, except to make certain that all the playing areas of the stage were used at one time or another and that movement was creating the illusion of reality on the part of the actors. The fundamentals of composition and picturalization were used to the best of the director's ability. Levels flanking the back diagonal wall and the stairs with its landing provided many opportunities for attractive arrangements of the actors. The director has no doubts that the blocking, composition with special

attention to emphasis, arrangements of large groups on stage, and picturalization created a smooth-flowing and beautiful production, one that would have pleased Casona.

#### Actor-Director Relationships

Tryouts were held at the Cultural and Educational Center in Chatham, Virginia, on Sunday, March 11, 1973. Nine people came. The director was able to cast the parts of Grandfather, Madre, Telva, Andrés, Dorina, and Peregrina. The roles of Martín, Falín, Quico, Adela, and Angélica were not cast. Two young ladies and one very tall young man were asked to return for a second tryout when more young people might be present. The director was assured that there would be no difficulty in getting young people from the community for the next tryout. The next Sunday was suggested for the second tryout. This would give those present time to contact others. Scripts were given to those who had been cast.

On the next Sunday, Falín was cast, Girl #1, and Man #1 were cast. The tall young man and one of the young ladies of the week before did not return. There were no other new people except those who were cast that day. However, it was necessary to begin the work on the play, even though it was not completely cast, since the date had been set and the auditorium log had been cleared for the group to have the

use of the auditorium exclusively for a week before the production and for as many rehearsals as could be scheduled among the Center's other commitments. The reading of Act I and Act II was accomplished that day.

Prior to the reading the cast was shown the stage design so that they could start to visualize the setting in which the action was to take place. The cast found this most helpful and the picture was brought to later blocking rehearsals so that they could see where they were in relation to doors, platforms, stairs, etc.

After the discussion of the set for the play, the cast was informed of the director's goals in producing this play and of her ideas of Casona's intent. The literal translation of the lines from Spanish was next explained as being necessary in order to add to the Spanish atmosphere. The reading followed with the cast completely consulted on whether they could handle the lines.

The cast was most helpful during the analysis phase of the rehearsal period. Two who had lived for some time in Spain and one who had made one visit to Spain contributed much concerning the customs, habits, clothing, and ways of the Spanish people. Minor changes were made in the lines for understanding or rhythm. The cast not only helped make these changes but agreed that they were improvements, except

the actress playing Peregrina who was also the translator. The director made some revisions in the translation which appeared to her more true to the Casona text, but these changes were made only under protest by the translator. The director was prepared to investigate any questionable lines by bringing with her the copy of the play in Spanish and a Spanish dictionary. The director won these skirmishes, but a distinctly hostile atmosphere existed between the director and the translator. The director characterized this situation as being like having the author on hand to argue his points throughout the readings and the early rehearsals.

No proper rehearsal schedule could be arranged at first until the play was completely cast. It was agreed to meet from night to night as far as possible. On Monday night, a person who promised to come to try out for Quico, did not appear. A script was borrowed to give to another man who was supposedly interested, but on Tuesday, he returned the script saying that he had been recently so much away from his family on another community project that his wife wouldn't let him participate in this one. A third man supposed to be coming at the end of the week did not show up. In desperation, the next week, the director asked a young man who had come only to work backstage if he would play the role. He assented. On Tuesday night of the first

week of rehearsals, a faculty member and two students from Chatham Hall, who had just returned from Spring vacation and who had heard that we were looking for people to cast, came to try out. The roles of Martín, Adela and Angélica were cast. A fourth girl was never found, so her lines were divided among the three who were finally cast. By the end of the second week of rehearsals, Girl #2, Girl #3, Man #2, and Man #3 were cast. Private meetings were held with the newcomers to the cast for a discussion of the director's goals, interpretation, and design for the production, and for the reading of the parts.

There were never any disputes with anyone in the cast over the blocking. The only problem here was the avidness of the mature members of the cast to learn the lines before the blocking and during the blocking. The director had to explain the importance of movement to the play and her conviction that lines were learned more easily and steadfastly when learned after blocking and then connected with movement and position on stage. The creation of the appearance of being a family was stressed along with the explanation of the principle of attention and the importance of ensemble playing. However, as is usual in amateur groups, the director spent about ninety percent of her time as a dramatic coach. The children, particularly, needed a great deal of work on diction

and enunciation. Crosses properly timed and motivated by the emotional values of the lines, turns on stage, and gestures with timing and meaning were some of the coaching items that required a great deal of time. But the cast was intelligent, good-humored, and persevering. They worked valiantly to improve themselves theatrically.

The director never achieved the characterization she wanted from Quico, but the actor playing the role developed measurably. The actress playing Telva turned out to be the actress of the production, especially after she found out what it meant to be working with an audience. The performer assigned the role of Madre was, at the beginning, perfectly type-cast. The characterization never progressed during the rehearsals. Moreover, she was unable to handle the ending of the play where, with a cry of mingled sorrow and joy, she runs to the door as the litter-bearers are bringing the body of her daughter to the house. The actress playing Peregrina was the most difficult member of the cast with whom to work. She accepted all blocking without ever changing it or arguing over it. But, after that, she refused to respond to any help, any criticism, or any praise from the director concerning the characterization she was developing. This was a case where, under other circumstances, the director would have relieved an actor from his part explaining that they could

not work together in harmony. But, because the actress as translator felt like the author of the play, because the actress was putting forth great efforts to bring a community theatre into reality, and because the actress is an intelligent, competent player, the director endured the hostility which she could not handle. The director is grateful to the translator for providing her with the play and the opportunity to produce it. The director feels that the actress was terribly afraid of not getting her lines down perfectly and of not doing the part well.

This does not mean that the actress playing Peregrina did not work harmoniously during rehearsals with the cast. She did. The overall memory of that cast is that they were a happy group who loved the play, loved their roles, liked each other, were responsible about rehearsals, worked well with the director, and were very well pleased with themselves when the final curtain closed on the play.

#### Audience Reaction

The director's goal for audience response as stated in Chapter I was to create the illusion of reality of a Spanish family to be accomplished by a realistic setting and through convincing characterization. If done successfully, the audience would be entertained in the highest sense

of the word, deriving pleasure from identification with the family and its problems and being satisfied at the ending of the play.

Favorable response was noted throughout the play by the fact that the audience was individually and happily attentive to the play. The vigorous and enthusiastic applause at the end was gratifying to the director. Comments and congratulations afterwards centered around what a beautiful production it was, what an attractive set, what a good performance the actors had given, and what a delightful play. The members of the audience had every appearance of being pleased and satisfied with the evening.

A comprehension of the audience response was evident in the review of the play. The reviewer, known to the director only by her reputation as a sophisticated, cultured writer in the community, wrote:

The evening . . . proved rare from the outset. It presented serious theater which was (contrary to all contemporary drama) comprehensible. It was rooted in scholarship, for the play was translated from the Spanish especially for this performance. It featured a production of professional calibre with the kind of splendid literal stage setting (by Charles Blaker) to gladden the heart of audiences weary of making out with scrim and a spot.

As if these things were not strange enough, there was the final strangeness of the gravity and poetry of this Spanish family's encounter with Death, whereas most modern drama accords it all the dignity of a cockroach. As befitted the universal theme, the translation never assayed the colloquial, but maintained a cadenced apartness in order to have equal meaning in all seasons to all men . . .

Interestingly--and to the great credit of its director . . . the audience received the play as it was offered: gravely, and with as much absorption as Death arouses in most mortals, which (contemporary playwrights notwithstanding) is considerable.<sup>20</sup>

Still wishing to elicit a comment on the super-objective of the playwright, the director telephoned a member of the Danville Little Theatre who had attended the play with three other members. It was felt that this person was knowledgeable about theatre, both as an actress and as a spectator, and dependably critical. After the opening remarks in which this person praised the performance as a whole, she was asked whether there had been any discussion of the humanization of Death as a friend and a companion in this play. She said, "No. I did not find Peregrina warm and friendly on stage. . . . People do not get entangled in philosophical discussions about death following a pleasant evening." The director reasoned that she had failed to project the intent of the playwright in this area, that many of the lines spoken by Grandfather were similar to those made by her elderly father, and that the thoughts of a suicide must reflect much of what

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<sup>20</sup> Hurt, Frances Hallam, "La Dama del Alba--Play of Distinction," Danville Register (Danville, Virginia), May 4, 1973, sec. 2, p. 1.

was said between Peregrina and Angélica. "You saw the play many times," the person replied, "and you had time to realize meanings that an audience could not grasp fully on seeing the play for the first time. Anyway, people do not sit around discussing personal details about the death thoughts that occur to them, and you know it." The review of the play remained the director's consolation on this goal for the production.

The final way of estimating audience response relates to the director's fourth goal: To create a foundation for the organizing of a community theatre in Chatham, Virginia. Each member of the audience upon entering the auditorium was given a "Theatre Interest Questionnaire" to be filled out and returned at the end of the evening. Out of an audience numbering approximately four hundred, seventy-seven returned the questionnaire, indicating their interest in forming a community theatre and their willingness to work with it. Since then, these people have held a meeting and have elected their officers and a board of directors. At this writing, this new community theatre has gone into rehearsal with Life with Father as its first offering. This play is scheduled to be performed near the end of July, 1973.

Personal Observations

There is no glory in being the director of a play. There is satisfaction and pleasure in the attainments of a cast and technicians who are happy and proud of their work. There is an intense humility in the recognition that an audience has derived pleasure and satisfaction--an aesthetic experience--from the production. But glory properly belongs to the playwright. Glory and this director's gratitude belong to Alejandro Casona.

This director feels that La dama del alba is a masterpiece of dramaturgy. A fresh, new story is told with a beginning, a middle, and an end. There is no sub-plot. As a challenge to the unity of action, the director investigated what could or should be cut. She found no scenes or lines that did not contribute to the effecting of the action. The opening of the play brings one into immediate knowledge of the conflict. The exposition necessary to the first act is woven in, as the act proceeds, without apparent effort. The final exposition is withheld until the third act where it is interlaced with highly emotional values which assist in the forwarding of the play. The grand climax and the resolution of the conflict comes shortly before the end of the play. The characters are imitations of human, life-feeling people.

The moral and social order upheld in the play are desired, this director believes, in communities all over the world: the wish for wholesome and harmonious family relationships, love with honor, hope for a happy future, punishment of adultery, and a reckoning with death. Finally, the elements of tempo and rhythm are so inherent in the playwright's script that only the most obtuse of directors could fail to develop them.

Goal number three, which was to produce a premiere performance of La Dama del Alba in the United States, has been achieved. That there is no other English translation on record seems proven by the fact that the translator has been approached by the Sociedad General de Autores de España concerning the publication of her translation.

It is the hope of this director that this thesis will interest others in Casona's plays. It is also her hope that those interested in theatrical research will provide material for future directors relating to Casona's place in the modern theatre and by challenging ideas regarding Casona's work, especially when compared to that of Lorca or to that of other playwrights who have dealt with the presentation of the real and the unreal in the real world and with the fantastic. The director has in mind, particularly, Pirandello of Italy and Giraudoux of France. It seems certain that a whole, new,

stimulating branch of theatre can be obtained by more knowledge of Casona. This director is delighted to have made his acquaintance.

#### SUMMARY

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the script, to produce the play, and to evaluate the production of Alejandro Casona's La dama del alba.

Chapter I shows the results of research into the playwright's background and into that of the play. A list of Casona's other plays is included. La dama del alba is discussed concerning its form, the style of this production, the characters, the plot, and the reasons for the choice of this play for production. A director's note containing the goals the director set for herself ends this chapter.

Chapter II is the prompt book of the play showing in detail the movement, business, picturalization, and composition of the performance, plus the directions given for tempo, lighting, and sound. Four production photographs aid in viewing the set, the characters, and some arrangements.

Chapter III is the critical analysis of the performance. The director's opinion of the performance is followed by her discussion of the reaction of the audiences. The director is convinced that her goals for this production

were achieved and that the audiences derived great pleasure from the performance. The director ends this chapter expressing her hope that this thesis may encourage further studies into the work and the place in modern theatre of Alejandro Casona.

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APPENDIX

## THE PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY COMMUNITY THEATRE

**presents**

**LA DAMA DEL ALBA**  
by

Alejandro Casona

Our deep appreciation  
Schools & Friends  
ing we received

EDUCATIONAL & CULTURAL CENTER  
Wednesday, May 2 & 3, 1973  
8:00 p.m.  
Admission: \$1.00

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Distinguida señorita:

Nos complace contestar a su carta de fecha 10 del mes actual, en la que solicita autorización para representar en una escuela la obra de D. Alejandro Casona titulada:

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Del contenido de su carta hemos dado traslado a los herederos del Sr. Casona, quienes nos informan que autorizan sin carácter de exclusiva las representaciones de la referida obra, con una tarifa de \$100,—USA por cada representación.

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## 'La Dama del Alba' Play Of Distinction

Death brought life to the Pittsylvania County Community Theater Thursday night.

A strange, haunting, beautifully produced play about death, "La Dama del Alba," gave breath and substance to a goal long-cherished in Pittsylvania—an amateur theater drawing together the public schools, the private schools, and people. Together, they midwived a first-born of singular distinction.

The evening at the Pittsylvania County Cultural Center proved rare from the outset. It presented serious theater which was (contrary to all contemporary drama) comprehensible. It was rooted in scholarship, for the play was translated from the Spanish especially for this performance. It featured a production of professional calibre with the kind of splendid, literal stage setting (by Charles Blaker) to gladden the heart of audiences weary of making out with scrim and a spot.

As if these things were not strange enough, there was the final strangeness of the gravity and poetry of this Spanish

family's encounter with Death, whereas most modern drama accords it all of the dignity of a cockroach. As befitting the universal theme, the translation never assayed the colloquial, but maintained a cadenced apartness in order to have equal meaning in all seasons to all men. This is, in essence, a morality play cloaked in the story of a troubled family, with the sinner paying the ultimate price.

Interestingly—and to the great credit of its director, Isabell Reynolds—the audience received the play as it was offered: gravely, and with as much absorption as Death arouses in most mortals, which (contemporary playwrights notwithstanding) is considerable. The fluidity of action was swift and smooth, although there seemed to be a sag in the tension in the final moments.

Brightened and buoyed by a houseful of first-rate youngsters and a tart housekeeper, played boucily by Deanie Martin, the somber theme, as with life, was interwoven dark-and-light. Outstanding was Katie Elliott as the mother frozen in grief for her daughter, and who eventually re-accepts the joyousness of life. As the mysteriojus, weary pilgrim, Joan Boyle gave the vague, indefinable feeling of differentness that such a one should have. Richard Arey's grandfather, heart-sick with dread of the visitor but holding steady, conveyed the anguish. Kenneth Whittington, Kerry Cogburn, and Genie Russo made attractive figures in the shadowed romance. Miss Russo, however, emerged from the dregs of the great city fresh as a daisy and with every hair in place, which reflects on the quality of the dregs.

Production values — lighting, staging, costuming, make-up, sound — were excellent, testifying not only to the ability in the county but to the fact that all hands knocked themselves out doing it right.

Not all plays about death have a happy ending. This one not only has a happy ending, it provides a happy beginning, too. Barring anything so grim as infant mortality, the Pittsylvania County Community Theater is on its way.

F.H.M.