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Tide Beyond the Rift

A full-length One Act

By Fred Rohan Vargas

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Francisco a.k.a. Sebastian (62-65) bubbly, gregarious, extravert, fun loving

Liza (38- 42) daughter, wife, mother

Roberts (38-42) husband and father

Kelly Roberts(18) daughter

SETTING

Play takes place on one set: The back of a summer beach house with an open wooden deck, beach chairs (both regular and extended), picnic table and barbecue grill.

Meanings of the Spanish Words & Phrases

Que sin verguenza! [*You have no shame!*]

Pero [*But*]

Verdad [*True*]

Ahora [*Now*]

Espero que encontrar la felicidad en el cielo. [*Hope you find your happiness in heaven.*]

Gracias, Dios [*Thank you, God*]

Dios la bendiga [*God bless her*]

Qué [*What*]

Que [*that*]

Cual es ese? Esta alguien en la puerta? [*Which one is that? Is someone at the door?*]

Como fue...no se decirte...como fue...no se explicarme que paso...pero de ti me enamore. Fue una luz que ilumino...todo mi ser...Tu risa como un manantial...rego mi vida de inquietud. [*As it was ... I don't know you ... how it was ... I don't explain what happened ... but I fell in love with you. It was a light that illuminates ... all my being ... your laugh like a spring ... I take my life of restlessness.*]

Buenos días [*Good morning*]

Sientate [*Sit down*]

Fueron tus ojos o tu boca...fueron tus manos o tu voz...fue a lo major la impaciencia...de tanto esperar...tu llegada mas no se...no se decirte como fue...no se explicarme que paso...pero de ti me enamore... [*They were your eyes or your mouth ... They were your hands or your voice ... the impatience went to the major ... of so much to wait ... your arrival but I do not know ... you do not tell you how it was ... I do not explain what happened ... but I fell in love with you ...*]

Mas o menos. [*More or less*]

Pues, esta bien. Es muy importa que Ud. hablas en dos idiomas. Especialmente, cuando hay mucho latinos viviendo en estos país. [*Well, it's ok. It is very important that you speak in two languages. Especially when there are a lot of Latinos living in these country.*]

From Spanish to English

Mija [*Dear*]

Tío [*Uncle*]

Muñeca [*Doll*]

Pues entonces [*Well then*]

Coño! [*Damn!*]

Dios mío [*My God*]

No hay problema [*No problem*]

Como? [*What?*]

Pues, dígame! [*Well, tell me!*]

Oye, Nieto. [*Listen, Grandson*]

Tu sabes? [*Do you understand?*]

Platanos [*Plantains*]

Café con leche [*Coffee with milk*]

Bolero [*The name given to a type of music danced in Latin America*]

Esta listo? [*Are you ready?*]

Padrino [*Godfather*]

Pendejo [*Jerk, Stupid*]

Paella [*A type of Spanish meal*]

Por favor [*Please*]

ACT 1 SCENE 1

Time: Summer of 2000

At rise: Lights up on an elderly gentleman named Francisco. He is looking down at the ground where there's an imaginary tomb plate for his deceased friend, Sebastian. He takes out a handkerchief and wipes the plate clean before he makes the sign of the cross and stands in silence for a few seconds.

FRANCISCO

Que sin verguenza! Will you let me finish praying for your dead ass while I still remember how?! Sííí, I can feel your presence. I know you're here. And no, I didn't light a candle and rhumba down the church aisle, so I could speak with you. I just have a gift, that's all. It attracts people like you, who wants me to put in a good word to God for them. You, on the other hand, can go to hell! Ha, ha, ha...I was hoping that would get you to rise out of your grave.

Ay, compadre. Where has the time gone? It seemed like yesterday we were sitting by the terrace drinking a nice cold glass of mojito...joking and laughing like two young men who thought we had our whole lives ahead of us. Pero instead, all we could expect was a routine visit to the doctors. Mine told me I look so, so for my age...

(Pensively)

...my age. Y tu? I thought you would outlive me ten times over. And here we are. Me standing and you lying under my bunions.

Francisco pulls out a letter from his pocket.

You're not gonna believe what came in the mail yesterday. A letter from Isabel. Si! She finally wrote back, well at least her husband did.

He holds up the letter.

Ssh! I was able to intercept (it) without anyone suspecting. Let me read it to you. (clears throat) "Dear Sebastian..."(pauses as he struggles to read) Uuuh! I need my glasses. Pues, anyway it's an invitation to spend some time with them. Seriously!

(Chuckles)

God does have a sense of humor, verdad?

Francisco pauses as he thinks about it.

FRANCISCO CONT'D

It would be nice, though to see, after all these years, what she's become. It would be nice...something like a second chance...for all of us, even if it's only the summer. What do you say, compadre? What should I do? Ha, ha...Ah, there was a time I had an answer for everything. Right or wrong, I knew. Pero, ahora... Well, whatever happens, I'm sure you won't be disappointed, only proud.

In the meantime, you rest my friend and listen...thank you for the wonderful years we shared at the Cottage. It'll be tough. But this old burro will find a way to survive. Humph! What choice do I have, huh? Espero que encontrar la felicidad en el cielo.

Takes out a flask from his pocket and holds it up before taking a swig and then pouring some on the tomb plate. Lights go off on him as the sound of a phone rings. Lights up on Bill who reads the phone's screen.

BILL

Cottage Hill?

He picks up.

Hello?

Lights up on Francisco at the Cottage front desk.

FRANCISCO

Richard? Uh, Bill? Bill Roberts?

BILL

Sebastian! Glad you called.

FRANCISCO

So am I.

BILL

I wasn't sure we'd hear from you or if you got our invitation. I hope you'll accept. We have a lot of room out here to relax and enjoy the beach.

FRANCISCO

Sounds wonderful! I've been dying to try out my new speedos.

BILL

Ha, ha... Then you're coming?

FRANCISCO

They'd have to tie me down with a ball and chain to stop me.

BILL

Fantastic! I'll let Liza and our daughter Kelly know you're coming. Liza stepped out for awhile but you'll have plenty of time to get acquainted. What day would you like me to pick you up?

FRANCISCO

Oh, no, no! I'd prefer taking the train.

BILL

Well, at least, let me pick you up at the station and I won't take no for an answer.

FRANCISCO

Ha, ha... That'll be swell. I'll call you back and let you know when. I have a few things to take care of first.

BILL

No problem. Any time is good.

FRANCISCO

Thank you.

BILL

The pleasure's mine.

Bill hears the sound of the front door opening.

Liza!

Lights fade out on both men.

ACT 1 SCENE 2

***Time:** A few weeks later*

***Place:** The back of a beach house with an open deck facing the beach. On the sand are a grill, picnic table with benches, beach chair and trash can.*

***At rise:** Eighteen year old Kelly is on the beach basking in the sun. Her mother Isabel, better known as Liza, comes out of the house and searches for something on the open porch. She holds a few unopened letters.*

LIZA

Have you seen my pocketbook?

KELLY

(still basking)

It's where you always keep it.

LIZA

Yes, but it's not there.

KELLY

Then look in the usual places.

LIZA

Which are?

KELLY

Don't know?

Liza rolls her eyes and continues to search

LIZA

I must be losing my mind. I usually remember where I leave things but somehow –

KELLY

Oh, yeah! I remember now. Dad went to your pocketbook to get your car keys.

LIZA

So where did he put it?

KELLY

I don't know. Try looking in the front door closet?

LIZA

Why would he put it there? (warns her not to give the same answer) Forget it.

KELLY

He always does when he rushes out the house.

LIZA

Aren't we a sight for sore eyes.

KELLY

Relax. Dad won't be back for at least another hour.

LIZA

He's only going to the train station. So please cover your thong and let the sharks out here go out with the tide.

KELLY

In a minute. I need to be even all over.

LIZA

Spending too much time in the sun will only make you age faster not to mention what it does to your health.

KELLY

(gets up)

Ok, you win. But understand the body's a beautiful thing and should be admired.

LIZA

Then join a nudist colony.

KELLY

Too late.

Kelly throws a quick smile and exits. Liza sits at the table and looks at the envelopes. Instead of opening any of them, she walks over to the trash can and throws them inside except for one.

Kelly briefly comes outside causing Liza to put the last one in her pocket. Meantime, we hear a car pulling in.

KELLY CONT'D

(to Liza)

If Sam should call, tell her I'll call her back, right after I shower.

She exits A few seconds later, Bill calls Liza.

BILL

(Off stage)

Liza?!...Liza?!

LIZA

Outside!

Bill enters from the house.

BILL

You're ready to see him?

LIZA

Where is he?

BILL

I'll bring him out.

Bill exits for a few seconds and returns with Sebastian.

Hon?

FRANCISCO

Isabel? Ha, ha...

(Stares at her)

Ah, gracias, Dios. You... You look gorgeous.

LIZA

(Politely)

Thank you. I hope it wasn't too hard for you to get here.

FRANCISCO

Oh, no. I enjoyed every scenic moment. *(Beat)* It was nice of your husband to pick me up.

BILL

You know, it wasn't any bother to go to the Cottage and –

FRANCISCO

Oh, that's alright! It would've spoiled the fun. I can't remember when I last hopped a train and just go. Even if I didn't know where the hell I was going. Ha, ha...

BILL

Well, I'm glad you took us up on our invitation. You just make yourself comfortable and enjoy. We have a whole summer to better get acquainted. I'll go take your luggage to your room.

As he's about to leave, he turns to Francisco.

Is there anything I can get you? Drink? Snack?

FRANCISCO

As a matter of fact there is. In Cuba nothing is better than a good cigar before the day ends. That is ah...if you don't mind me smoking.

BILL

Not at all. But I can't promise you I'll take you to Cuba.

FRANCISCO

Ha, ha...You got a good sense of humor. I like that. *(Beat)* Oh-oh!

(To himself in disgust)

Tu madre! I just remembered I gave up smoking. But then again, so what?! Whenever you get a chance, I'll treat you to a box before the summer's over. You'll enjoy it. It's good for chasing away mosquitoes.

Bill chuckles and leaves.

FRANCISCO

How have you been?

LIZA

Ok... You must be exhausted from the trip.

FRANCISCO

Knowing I'd see you energized me like a bunny. You really got a nice place here.

LIZA

It's our way of spending time together before going back to work.

FRANCISCO

Bill tells me you're a teacher.

LIZA

Middle school.

FRANCISCO

Woe! That must be rough. Hormones kicking, Kids acting out, trying to understand who they are.

LIZA

(Smiles)

Yeah, it's a struggle. *(Beat)* I hope it wasn't a hassle making arrangements with the Cottage to be here.

FRANCISCO

They insisted on it. I'm too much of a grouch up there. They'd rather I took the whole year instead. But don't you worry! I'm not one whose visit turns into a life long stay...

(Looks around)

Somehow, there's a piece missing from this puzzle. Where is she?

LIZA

Taking a shower. She should be down shortly.

FRANCISCO

(Looks out to the ocean)

This reminds me of the beaches in Havana. As a boy, I'd wait for the tide to go out and walk the sea like Moses. My mother, Dios la bendiga had a great fear of sharks. So she would call out to me to stay close to the shore. *(Beat)* No, no. It was me who had a great fear of sharks.

(To himself)

Then why the hell did she call me for? Ahhh! It doesn't matter. *(realizing he's been babbling)* Oh, I'm sorry. Talking with too many old people does that to you.

LIZA

It's ok. It helps me get to know you.

FRANCISCO

So far how am I doing? You don't have to answer that. If I'm putting you in an awkward position, feel free to refrain from the truth. I like being lied to. Oh-oh! I made you smile.

LIZA

You don't seem to be what I pictured.

FRANCISCO

Most people tell me that. How would you like me to be?

LIZA

(Smiles)

Yourself.

FRANCISCO

Alright.

He opens his arms out to her for a hug.

May I? It's been a long time.

Liza politely hugs him briefly while Kelly comes out with Bill. Francisco whispers to her.

Thank you.

He sees Kelly and addresses her.

You must be my other little flower...Kelly?

KELLY

(Smiles)

Yeah.

FRANCISCO

Damn, what a good looking family. You're just as beautiful as your mother.

LIZA

Please, don't tell her that. It'll only make her go back inside and dye her hair again.

BILL

You like fishing?

FRANCISCO

Do I like fishing? I'm the old man in the sea Ernesto Hemingway wrote about.

BILL
(*Smiles*)

I'm sailing out first thing in the morning to catch me that swordfish. My only concern is how to get the girls here to cook it in the pan.

KELLY
(*To Liza*)

I warned you he's been getting these grand delusions.

BILL
(*To Sebastian*)

Would you like to join me?

FRANCISCO
Of course! It'll be like old times. Me and my father, bless his soul, went fishing by the sea's coral. It was the greatest spot for catching all kinds of fish.

BILL
Well, you can rest assure I found a perfect spot, where we'll be swimming in them.

KELLY
And smelling like them too.

FRANCISCO
(*To the women*)
Why don't you come along? It'll be fun.

KELLY
Sorry. No can do. I have plans...sleep.

FRANCISCO
Oh, but that's boring. Fishing early at sea is to experience the depth of one's being.

Kelly and Liza pause and then respond.

KELLY AND LIZA
HATE IT!

FRANCISCO
In that case then, I'll stay.

(*To Bill*)
Perhaps before the summer ends?

LIZA

Oh, don't let us spoil it for you. It's just that Kelly and I have this tremendous fear of the ocean. And worse yet, you wouldn't want to stomach our stomachs.

KELLY

The depths of our being would run all over the deck once a wave hits.

FRANCISCO

Ha, ha. I understand. Pardon me then for being so impulsive and hasty.

BILL

There's always Larry's Lobster House. We can get a bite tomorrow evening.

The sound of a car pulls up and honks in front of the house.

KELLY

That must be Sam.

LIZA

(To Kelly)

No later than 12.

KELLY

(To Francisco)

See you tomorrow. Hope you like what you see so far.

FRANCISCO

I was thinking the same thing of me. Have fun.

KELLY

Thanks.

She exits.

FRANCISCO

Youth...how I miss it. It reminds me of my grandfather seeing me off when I'd go out with my friends. He always gave me a dollar and a stick of gum. I use to think it was for me to chew when I'd meet a pretty senorita. But later I found out from him que somehow I had a thing for pretty senoritas with bad breath.

BILL

(Jokingly)

Breath before beauty.

FRANCISCO

Claro. Who was I to challenge him? I had a bad case of allergies then.

He stretches after he sits down.

When you're young you never appreciate family but as you get older you come to see family's everything, even if they're right or wrong or one of them has bad breath.

He falls asleep while Bill and Liza stay for a moment.

BILL

So...Are you glad I convinced you?

LIZA

(Looking at Sebastian)

I'll give you my answer in August...How advanced is his cancer?

BILL

Well, he said they told him he only had a few months to live.

LIZA

Is there anything we should know, medication, symptoms to look for...anything?

BILL

No. All he insisted was he wouldn't be a burden to us. Remarkable guy, though. Just to look at him you wouldn't think he's dying.

LIZA

I have so many questions...and doubts.

BILL

Yeah, well maybe he'll clear whatever preconceive notion you have of him.

LIZA

Giving me up. What can he possibly say?

BILL

Sorry?

LIZA

(Staring at Sebastian)

He doesn't look much like what I expected.

BILL

What did you think? He'd be an elderly Andy Garcia?

LIZA

Stop. It's not what I mean. I never expected to see him again. No thanks to you.

BILL

All I'm suggesting is to be open. From what I see right now, I'd say today is one of the happiest days of his life...

(Kisses Liza)

Why not try to make it yours too?

Bill exits. Liza gently covers Francisco with a blanket before staring at him and leaves. Francisco begins to mumble in Spanish as he touches his shoulder where Liza placed her hand.

FRANCISCO

Cual es ese? Esta alguien en la puerta? Richard?! Is that you?

He suddenly wakes up and goes inside the house after figuring where's he's at. Kelly enters from around the house with her cell phone to her ear. She looks around a few seconds until she sees a ring that she's looking for.

KELLY

(Relieved)

Ah here it is.

(Still on the phone)

She is? Honk the hone and wave. No, no! I'm kidding! No need to feed her suspicious mind no more than it already is. I'm coming now. What?! Oh come on, Sam. Really? Huh! You so owe me.

Kelly goes to the cooler and takes out a bottle of beer. Liza comes out causing Kelly to stuff the bottle in the back of her shorts.

LIZA

Forgot something?

KELLY

Yeah.

Kelly holds up her ring.

LIZA

Be careful.

Liza goes back to the house after Kelly tries to walk normally with the beer stuffed in her shorts to meet Sam out front.

ACT 1 SCENE 3

At rise: A bolero, from the portable radio, plays. Lights go up, indicating it's morning. The barbecue grill is cooking some eggs and bacon. Francisco comes out of the house carrying plates and eating utensils. Moving back and forth, he sets the table and tends to the grill.

FRANCISCO

(Singing to the music)

Como fue...no se decirte...como fue...no se explicarme que paso...pero de ti me enamore. Fue una luz que ilumino...todo mi ser...Tu risa como un manantial...regó mi vida de inquietud

Liza comes out.

Ahhh, Buenos dias! I hope you don't mind me taking liberty of cooking you breakfast.
No

LIZA.

It's fine.

FRANCISCO

Don't tell me. The aroma of my eggs and bacon woke you up. I know. It happens to me all the time. That's why I've been single most of life. It was my cooking they wanted instead of me, thanks to my mother, Sofia de la Cucu Gutierrez.

LIZA

Cucu?

FRANCISCO

Si, my mother was Cucu.

LIZA

You mean her last name?

FRANCISCO

Sí, that too. Sientate. Sit! I'll fix you a plate.

Liza sits as he continues to sing.

FRANCISCO CONT'D

Fueron tus ojos o tu boca...fueron tus manos o tu voz...fue a lo major la
impaciencia...de tanto esperar...tu llegada mas no se...no se decirte como fue...no se
explicarme que paso...pero de ti me enamore...

LIZA

It's a pretty song.

FRANCISCO

Ernesto Duarte Brito. He was one of Cuba's most prolific composers. When he wrote that
song in 1942, Beny More made it popular 10 years later. Why Beny moved so many
hearts that hundreds of single, as well as married women vowed that if they couldn't have
him, they would become celibate.

LIZA

(Amazed)

Really?

FRANCISCO

Nah, I just made that last part up. But it did sound good, no?

LIZA

(Smiles)

I love the lyrics. They're so warm and compassionate.

FRANCISCO

You remembered your Spanish?

LIZA

(Jokingly)

Mas o menos.

FRANCISCO

Pues, esta bien. Es muy importa que Ud. hablas en dos idiomas. Especialmente, cuando
hay mucho latinos viviendo en estos país.

LIZA

Yeah, whatever.

FRANCISCO

(Smiles)

I'll tell you what. Since your husband destroyed me in poker last night, show me how to
beat him and I'll refresh you in your native tongue.

LIZA

I already know my native tongue.

FRANCISCO

Oh, si? And what is it.

LIZA

English.

FRANCISCO

(Makes a face)

No, mija. It's Spanish. The first words out of your mouth was "Papa, caca."

LIZA

(Smiles)

Well, that was a long time ago. It's not the language I grew up with.

FRANCISCO

Oh, and where was that?

LIZA

California.

FRANCISCO

Ah-ha! And where in California?

LIZA

Sacramento.

FRANCISCO

Ah-ha!

LIZA

Ah-ha?

FRANCISCO

Ah-ha!

LIZA

Uh-uh! I know where you're going with this. And it means nothing.

FRANCISCO

Of course, it does.

LIZA

If you haven't noticed, California is no longer owned by Spain. The language is English. It's been that way for over a 100 years now

FRANCISCO

Sorry, but I beg to differ. How many Mejicanos live in California today? I'll tell you. Mucho! Mucho, mucho, mucho. And what language do they speak?

(He thinks he's got her)

Ah-ha!

LIZA

(Nods head)

Uh-uh! It still belongs to the United States and English is what's spoken.

FRANCISCO

If that's what you want to believe. But if you look at the history of California, Spanish influence has always dominated the state.

LIZA

So what are you saying? We should give it back to the Mexicans?

FRANCISCO

Forget them. This is a new millennium. It's the Chicanos who rule. Mmm?! And what language do they speak?

LIZA

Spanglish!

FRANCISCO

(Surprised)

Spang...? Ha ha, ha...Very clever. Tell me! What other enlightening facts can you give me, Miss Know-it-all?

LIZA

I think your huevos are burning.

FRANCISCO

My eggs?

He looks at the pan.

No, no...*(Chuckles)* You know, in Cuba, huevos has another meaning.

He looks around then whispers.

FRANCISCO CONT'D

It's slang for what a man holds dear.

LIZA

(Looking at his pants)

I know. They're on fire.

*Francisco quickly looks down and jumps back
thinking his pants between his legs are on fire. Liza
Laughs hysterically.*

I'm sorry. I was out of line. I don't know what possessed me to say that.

FRANCISCO

(Chuckles)

Perhaps because the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. When I was young, I loved playing practical jokes on people, especially the adults in our family. Your great uncle Chicho was such a penny pincher that one day I glued a penny to the floor and watched him break his nails trying to pick it up. And then there was another time with a silver dollar. Not only did he break his teeth, why that dollar covered just a fraction of his dental cost. Ha, ha... Tío Chicho was a piece of work.

LIZA

He reminds me a little of my cousin Javier.

FRANCISCO

Javier?

LIZA

He's my adopted cousin. I was raised by Puerto Rican parents.

FRANCISCO

Then you do speak Spanish.

LIZA

Only enough to communicate with my grandmother. She'd watched me while my parents went to work. The only thing she could say in English was "Me no 'peak English." But in hindsight, she knew more than she led on.

FRANCISCO

It's every Latinos defense when their hand is caught in the cookie jar or they don't want to be bothered.

LIZA

(Thinks about her with a smile)

Yeah, she was something else.

FRANCISCO

I see she meant a lot to you.

LIZA

They all did and still do.

FRANCISCO

So you keep in touch?

LIZA

As much as I can.

FRANCISCO

You are lucky.

LIZA

How so?

FRANCISCO

You are surrounded by people who love you, a family that cares about you and misses you when you're not there. Boy, how much I wish I had that in my life

Car is heard pulling off. Liza looks at her watch.

LIZA

Look at the time. Oh, is she gonna hear it from me.

*Kelly steps outside and makes a quick about face
when she sees her mother.*

KELLEEEY!

Kelly turns around and faces Liza.

DO YOU REALIZE WHAT TIME IT IS?

KELLY

I know but I can –

LIZA

I heard it before. You had no intention of coming in on time, did you? Had it ever occurred to you –

KELLY

(Disgusted)

For Christ sake! I'm almost 19, Mom. I happen to be an adult, you know?

LIZA

Good. In that case you can help us with some of the expenses.

KELLY

Are we going there again?

LIZA

(Sarcastically)

Oh, forgive me, if this looks like an instant replay. But you know my rules.

KELLY

Yeah, you decreed them to me at birth.

LIZA

I'm glad you could remember that far back.

KELLY

Huuuuh! I'm moving out. I've already made plans.

LIZA

Plans?

KELLY

Yeah, I think it's time.

LIZA

Well, don't forget to leave us an address.

Before, Kelly gets to respond...

I'm finished talking.

Liza walks back into the house.

FRANCISCO

Hungry?

KELLY
(Disgusted)

Yeah, why not.

Francisco reheats the eggs and bacon quickly and hands her a piping hot plate. Kelly digs in.

FRANCISCO

So, how was your evening?

KELLY

Okay up until now.

FRANCISCO

Good! I say if you're going to be scolded at, then at least make it worth your while.

KELLY

She's just being a pain in the ass! If you knew the things I have to go through with her, you'd go back before it turns fatal.

FRANCISCO

I hear you. But certain family matters, unfortunately, come with the territory.

KELLY

Well, I wish this one would finally end.

FRANCISCO

Don't we all. Look, her discipline may be a pain in the, the...

KELLY

Ass.

FRANCISCO

Sí, sí...But remember when there's ever a time of crisis, she'll be the first to be there for you.

KELLY

That's the problem. She's there all the time. I feel as if I'm about to suffocate with her wanting to know everything I do. It's like living with God in pantyhose. She just doesn't know when or how to stay out of my life.

FRANCISCO

They have a name for that. It's called parenting.

KELLY

My friend Sam and I were talking about getting our own place by the end of this summer. But now, I'm thinking about doing it sooner. I can't believe myself! Why did I ever let them persuade me to spend another summer with them?

FRANCISCO

Perhaps, it's because of all the good-looking fellows out here?

KELLY

Most of them are dogs.

FRANCISCO

Who let the dogs out? Woof! Woof-woof-woof-woof!

Kelly laughs.

I wouldn't be so sure they all are. You may find someone you least expect.

KELLY

(Smirks)

You have no idea...*(Beat)* These eggs are awesome. What's your recipe?

FRANCISCO

Family secret.

KELLY

And what the heck am I?

FRANCISCO

Oh, yeah. Well, it's difficult to explain but when you have some time, I'll be happy to show you. However!!! Once I teach you, you must swear on your ancestors' graves that your lips are sealed.

KELLY

Do you want my blood too?

FRANCISCO

No, no! Noble as that is, I would just faint at the sight of it.

KELLY

Ha, ha, ha... How were you able to find us?

FRANCISCO

Yellow pages?

KELLY

We're unlisted.

FRANCISCO

Would you believe fate?

KELLY

Go on.

FRANCISCO

I believe everything happens for a reason. When I entered Cottage Hill, I found myself empty, wondering about your mother. Finding her became my mission. I always knew someday we'd meet. It was just a matter of when and where.

KELLY

Well, I hope it was worth it. She hardly mentions her family from Cuba.

FRANCISCO

For good reason. It was a frightful experience for little girl to be uprooted and tossed into a foreign land alone.

KELLY

Why was she?

FRANCISCO

Years before your mother was born, your grandmother protested vehemently against the injustices she felt was destroying Cuba. When Fidel Castro arrived, he promised to bring down Batista's corrupt regime. We supported him thinking he would turn Cuba into a true democracy... but that never happened. Instead, he took control of everything, including our children.

KELLY

What do you mean?

FRANCISCO

Rumor got around that he wanted to raise them as Communists. People were afraid he'd send their children to the Soviet Union to be schooled. So we had to pull some strings and send your mother to Miami. When she left was as if the whole world had ended.

KELLY

Does Mom know this?

FRANCISCO

In the letters I sent your mother.

KELLY

She never opened them.

FRANCISCO

I can't blame her. It took me two years to come to this country. I kept on hitting road blocks trying to find your mother. In those days records were sealed. All I had was a passport and in all that confusion between Cuba and arriving here, I somehow lost her photo, so the only image I had of her was in my mind. (*Beat*) But I was determined to find my little girl...my little Muñeca...

KELLY

And you did.

FRANCISCO

Sí... I did.

KELLY

So how'd you find us, fate and all?

FRANCISCO

Actually, a little birdie flew by my window and told me.

KELLY

I suppose it tweeted you.

FRANCISCO

Twee-twee-twee! Nonstop. Every second...Ha, ha...No, it was Francisco my neighbor at the cottage who helped me. We were the best of friends, just like brothers, it so happened we were from the same town in Cuba. Well, to make a long story short, the two of us hired a private investigator and found out where your mother worked, lived and even played.

KELLY

Wow!

FRANCISCO

I know. It's amazing what he got from Google.

KELLY

Ha, ha... you're crazy.

FRANCISCO

So I've been told.

KELLY

Well, I love it. Welcome home.

She embraces him catching Francisco off guard.

FRANCISCO

Gracias. Hope these young hombres are not watching. I wouldn't want them to think you prefer older men.

KELLY

Who cares. Thanks for the breakfast. And I'll make sure our secret recipe's kept in the family. Whatever it is.

FRANCISCO

(Smiles)

I tell you what. If you're free tomorrow afternoon, how about I start you off with the family's basic ingredients?

KELLY

Ok.

FRANCISCO

Pues entonce, lift up one hand and place the other on your chest and repeat after me.
"I SWEAR THAT THE FAMILY'S SECRET RECIPES WILL NEVER, EVER BE IN THE HANDS OF OUTSIDERS."

KELLY

Cool.

FRANCISCO

That's good enough.

KELLY

Now, for some quality sleep. Let's see, Kelly...How can you sneak into bed without crossing Mom's path?

Francisco smiles at Kelly's remark as she surreptitiously returns to the house only to bump into Bill who follows her in pantomiming he's not pleased. Francisco picks up the wireless phone on the table and dials. He leaves a message.

FRANCISCO

Hello, Richard? Thought you'd be home by now. I'll try you again.

Francisco is disappointed. Moments later, Bill comes out with a cup of coffee.

BILL

Sebastian!

Francisco not responding.

Sebastian?

FRANCISCO

Uh? Oh, forgive me, I'm spacing out.

BILL

I hear you've cooked up a good breakfast and didn't bother to wake me up?

FRANCISCO

Come! I'll fix you up a fresh plate.

BILL

I'm just joking, coffee will do.

FRANCISCO

Nonsense. You need breakfast for strength.

BILL

And fish for brains.

FRANCISCO

Ha, ha...How would you like me to treat you to a lobster special tonight?

BILL

No way, Jose, your our guest. It's on us.

FRANCISCO

Who's talking about eating out? You see those rocks stretching out from the shore? That's where our dinner's coming from.

Liza comes out.

BILL

Yeah? Yeah, I'd say I'm open to seaweed as a nutritional item on the menu.

FRANCISCO

Seaweed? Blah! I'm talking about lobsters. Big ones.

BILL

Really? Where?

FRANCISCO

Under the rocks. But we have to wait a couple of hours after sundown. That's where they'll gather.

BILL

How 'bout that? (Beat) You know, Sebastian. How would you like to teach in my school next year? We could use a –

LIZA

(To Francisco)

Don't do it! He's a very tough principal.

BILL

Come again?

FRANCISCO

Oh. I'm sure he's an exceptional principal with an exceptional school.

LIZA

You got that right. He's the only principal who's able to get everyone to come, except the teachers and students.

BILL

Pay her no mind. She's just jealous I wouldn't hire her.

LIZA

His metal detectors didn't impress me.

FRANCISCO

I'm sure both schools serve their community well.

BILL

How'd you sleep last night?

FRANCISCO

Like a lion. In Cuba, we lived not too far from the shore. So last night brought me back to a time when I felt the ocean breeze cooling my face and the sight of crabs, crossing the sand piquing my curiosity as to where they were going. For a moment, it seemed surreal.

BILL

I couldn't imagine how tough it must've been to suddenly uplift your roots and leave to a foreign land.

FRANCISCO

It all depends. Sometimes, it's best to go when you find the world you once enjoyed is no more. But this is my home now. The place that gave me a second chance.

(He suddenly sings)

God bless America. Land that I love. Stand beside her. And guide her. La-la-la! La-la-la!
La-la-laaaa!

*Francisco ups the tempo into a Mambo beat.
Meanwhile, Kelly comes out wondering what's
going on.*

KELLY

WHAT THE...?

FRANCISCO

Through the mountains. Ale lo lai! Through the prairie. Ba rum bum bum! Through the oceans. And the falls. Do, du, di, dada, dat-da! God bless America. My home, sweet home. God bless America. My home, sweeeet, hoooom. Cha-cha-cha!

*After getting everyone to dance, they all applaud
him.*

BILL
Not bad.

KELLY
Dittos to that!

*Suddenly, Francisco buckles a bit and holds his
back. They rush to his aide.*

LIZA

Are you ok?

FRANCISCO

(Chuckles)

Sí, sí... I always knew I was just as good as Desi Arnaz. The only difference between me and him... he had more ba-ba-loo in his steps. I'll be fine.

LIZA

I'm going into town. Is there anything I can get you?

FRANCISCO

I'll need some condiments for dinner tonight.

LIZA

Oh don't bother, we're having –

BILL

What's under those rocks tonight.

LIZA

Rocks?

BILL

See that pile stretching out from the shore?... Bona Appetite!

*Liza and Kelly leave as they assume the guys are
delusional.*

FRANCISCO

Bill! Let me show you where we'll find them

BILL

Absolutely!

They exit to the shore.

ACT 1 SCENE 4

At rise: Stage remains partly lit indicating it's the evening. Liza comes out with some uncooked food to be prepared on the grill. She checks out a large lobster pot down stage center on a gasoline grill to see if the water's boiling. She pours a little salt in it. Moments later, Kelly enters from the water in a swimming suit, flashlight and goggles. Sporadically, we hear thunder in the background throughout this scene.

LIZA

Any luck?

KELLY

We caught three already. Dad's under the rock trying to catch one more.

LIZA

It's pretty late to be eating.

KELLY

Yeah, but look at them. They're like two kids searching for frogs. *(Beat)* Ever had frog legs?

LIZA

Christ, no!

(Slight pause)

You?

KELLY

In a restaurant. Their legs would just wiggle in desperation when you suck them in and chew.

LIZA

(Catches on)

Cute.

KELLY

What do you think of Sebastian?

LIZA

Very sweet man.

KELLY

You know that's not what I meant. How do you feel about him?

LIZA

Like I said –

KELLY

Maaa! Do you still have reservations?

LIZA

(Playing innocent)

About what?

KELLY

(Snapping her fingers)

Ma! Ma! Over here! This is me you're talking to? You're acting like me when I'm under your interrogation. I'm talking about your thoughts, your feelings, now that he's here.

LIZA

I haven't given it much thought.

KELLY

Don't tell me, after all these years, you never once wondered what he was like. What is it? You don't trust him?

LIZA

No, that's not it.

KELLY

You're just being cautious.

LIZA

No.

KELLY

Then what?

LIZA

I don't know. Maybe it's fear,...fear that I'll be disappointed in learning who I really am.

KELLY

We all have disappointments. It doesn't mean we have to dwell on them or allow them to have a tight, controlling grip on us.

LIZA
(Tongue in cheek)

Like me.

KELLY
(Tongue and cheek)

Yeah, something like you. Though not exactly.

LIZA
The only thing I vaguely remembered was that he and my mother weren't there for me. Not at the airport or in my life. It was a stranger who saw me off in Cuba.

KELLY
They must've had a good reason.

LIZA
Whatever it was I'm not interested in finding out anymore.

KELLY
Talk to him, Mom. Just talk... You may be surprised.

BILL
(Off stage)
Make sure that pot is boiling hot.

Bill enters with Francisco.

We got fighters here ready to rumble.

LIZA
(Looks at cage)
Are you sure these things are safe to eat?

KELLY
We're eating your cooking tonight.

Liza throw a towel at Kelly.

LIZA
I'll have you know Sebastian's preparing most of it.

FRANCISCO
Yes and I'll stand by my reputation.

FRANCISCO CONT'D

(To Liza)

Ok, when I take the lobsters out, I want you to open the pot and close it as fast as I throw them in.

LIZA

You're not chopping off their heads first?

BILL, FRANCISCO AND KELLY

WHY?

LIZA

How would you like someone to throw your live butt into boiling water?

FRANCISCO

It's only a matter of seconds before they die.

LIZA

Well, I'm sorry. I can't do it. It's too inhumane.

KELLY

Mom, I think you're overreacting.

LIZA

I have a conscience. I'd like to think you all do too.

They all pause and look at each other until Bill makes the first move.

BILL

Kelly, take over the lid for your mother.

Liza opens her mouth in shock by their reaction. Francisco pulls out a lobster.

FRANCISCO

Oh, this one's a beauty. Good catch, Bill.

BILL

(Beams with pride)

Thanks. Be-be careful there! That one almost took my finger off.

Liza tries to ignore them until she hears the lobster banging inside the pot then suddenly stops.

FRANCISCO

(To Liza)

See? Seconds.

(To Kelly)

Ready for the next one?

KELLY

Go on! Make my day.

Francisco quickly drops the other lobster in. He takes the third one and drops it in as well.

BILL

(to Francisco) Let me try one.

FRANCISCO

Alright. Make sure to drop it in the center.

Bill pulls the last lobster out and drops it in but feels a tight grip from the lobster's claw.

BILL

Ow! The sucker's got my finger.

FRANCISCO

Stay cool! Stay cool! I'll get it off in a second.

LIZA

Oh my God!

Francisco manages to find an object and pry open the lobster's claw. As soon as the lobster falls to the ground, Liza viciously stomps it to death.

KELLY

Mom, I think it's dead.

Liza stops.

LIZA

I'll get some ice.

She scurries into the house as Kelly stares down at the dead lobster.

KELLY

What should we do with it?

Francisco imitates a Chicano gangster.

FRANCISCO

Throw it back. Its family needs to know they can't always hide under a rock.

Kelly exits.

KELLY

Funny.

FRANCISCO

How's the finger?

BILL

Nothing ice won't heal.

FRANCISCO

Take the biggest lobster. You earned it.

BILL

Thanks but I have to cut down on the crustaceans. Doctor's orders. Blood pressure too high.

FRANCISCO

Oh, well in that case, perhaps we should've prepared something else.

BILL

No way. I'm having a ball. Moderate portion my doctor says *(Beat)* That reminds me...I noticed you ran out of your Proscar. I was about to drive to the pharmacy but saw another name on it.

FRANCISCO

Oh, I must've mixed it up with my neighbor's at the Cottage. We always forget which pill is ours whenever we argue politics. I'll be fine.

BILL

You're sure? I wouldn't mind taking you back and getting your prescription. As a matter of fact, I called the Cottage and –

FRANCISCO
(*Surprised*)

You did?!

BILL
Yeah, I hope you don't mind. I thought I'd save you the trip and see if they could get a hold of your doctor and have him call in for a refill at our local pharmacy. Was that ok?

FRANCISCO
(*Upset*)

It would've been better if I had called.

Bill is somewhat embarrassed for not asking Francisco first.

BILL
Ha! Your daughter always said I have a talent for putting my nose where it don't belong. I should've came to you first. I'm sorry.

FRANCISCO
(*Anxiously*)

What did they say?

BILL
I wasn't able to talk to anyone, so I left a message.

FRANCISCO
Message?

BILL
To call back.

FRANCISCO
When was this?

BILL
In the afternoon. Look, I'll call them right now and ...

FRANCISCO
No, no, no! I'll do it myself.

Francisco goes to the house as Liza comes out with ice.

LIZA
Has the swelling gone down?

Bill doesn't hear Liza because his mind's on Francisco.

BILL

Huh?! Oh, I think so.

Liza applies the ice on his finger.

LIZA

Amazing how powerful their claws are.

BILL

I should've been more careful.

LIZA

Serves you right. We should've gone to Larry's Lobster House and leave it up to someone who knows what he's doing.

BILL

(Sarcastically)

Appreciate the vote of confidence.

LIZA

That's what I'm here for, Dear. *(Beat)* Why was Sebastian in a rush?

BILL

Oh, he wanted to reach the Cottage before the office closed.

LIZA

Is everything alright?

BILL

(Unsure)

Yeah, yeah. It's nothing, just checking back. *(Beat)* So! I guess this is it. The last 4th of July as a threesome.

LIZA

Think we should stop renting this place for the summer. After all, next summer we'll be without child?

BILL

Always wanted to see the Himalayas.

LIZA

Send me a postcard. Tomorrow don't forget to pick up tape for the camcorder. You know how you get when we miss these Kodak moments.

BILL

I thought we already bought some.

LIZA

We? Nice try. Tomorrow or else we'll be talking about this summer instead of seeing it.

BILL

I don't know if I can drive with this disabled finger.

LIZA

I see it's not stopping you from lifting a bottle of beer.

BILL

Ooooh, I envy your compassion.

LIZA

It's a gift.

BILL

I think you're confusing that with the word –

Kelly reenters with more first aid.

KELLY

She knows. I've told her countless times in my dreams.

BILL

Be careful with that. You know how we Roberts like to talk in our sleep.

KELLY

(Agreeing with him)

Tell me about it.

LIZA

You can't help it. It's in your DNA.

KELLY

Meaning?

LIZA

You've acquired all the bad genes from your father.

BILL

Is that so?

KELLY

At least, I know where they come from. I...I didn't mean it that --

LIZA

No need to explain! *(Beat)* All this chatter and we haven't eaten yet. How long will the lobsters take to cook?

KELLY

Where's Sebastian?

BILL

I'll go get him.

As Bill's about to walk to the house, Francisco enters from the ocean holding a bag of clams.

FRANCISCO

Forgive me. I completely forgot the lobsters.

BILL

(Referring to the Cottage)

Were you able to...?

FRANCISCO

Yes, yes! Everything's fine. You all must be hungry. As it was in the Bible, when Jesus looked around and saw thousands upon thousands of hungry disciples come to hear him speak. The first thing on His mind was, "Coño! How am I going to feed all these people?" Then the Almighty Father, threw Him a fish and a loaf of bread and the Lord looked up to the Heavens and thought, "You got to be kidding me?" Pero, the day turned out well you see Jesus was able to multiply the fish and the bread. And today, we think of His miracle in the spirit of "Fish and Chips."

They dismiss Francisco's punchline as being a bad one.

BILL, LIZA AND KELLY

AAAAH!

Suddenly, thunder and lightning appear causing a downpour of rain. They quickly try to salvage the food and bolt to the house. Francisco begins to go the opposite way until Bill stops him.

BILL

Sebastian? Where are you going?

FRANCISCO

You must be hungry. Let me find a place to get you all something to eat.

BILL

It's pouring. We'll find something to eat inside. Now, come on in before we're both struck by lightning and lose our appetite.

FRANCISCO

Ha, ha. I'm with you there.

Francisco follows Bill inside.

ACT 1 SCENE 5

At rise: Next day. Lights up on stage indicating it's noon. Liza comes out with a bucket and sponge to clean up what was left last night. Hesitant about opening the pot of lobsters, she slowly opens the lid. Kelly comes out and notices what her mother's doing.

KELLY

(referring to the lobster in the pot)

IT'S ALIVE!!!

Liza quickly slams the lid shut and throws her daughter a dirty look.

LIZA

If you're looking to kill me, it's not working.

KELLY

Me? Kill? Oh, Mommy Dearest. That hurts.

She kisses her mother.

Good morning.

LIZA

More like noon. *(Beat)* It must be laundry day.

KELLY

How'd you guess?

LIZA

You're wearing my shirt.

KELLY

You have to admit it does look better on me. *(Beat)* We ran out of detergent. Where do you keep the spare?

LIZA

Look under the kitchen sink.

Kelly pulls out an envelope and holds it up.

KELLY

Found something.

LIZA

Where was it?

KELLY

In your closet on the floor. I found it when I was looking for a shirt to wear. Open it before I find it again and let my curiosity get the best of me. Besides, now that you know him, shouldn't you, at least, read one letter? Just sayin.'

Kelly goes back inside. Liza puts the envelope in her pocket and continues to clean. She suddenly stops and opens the envelope only to find a picture. Bill comes out singing the chorus of "Oh What a Beautiful Morning" from the musical "Oklahoma."

BILL

"Oh what a beautiful morning. Oh what a beautiful day. I've got a beautiful feeling. Everything's going my way."

He opens his arms and takes in the sun.

Why is it, the sun has an enormous power over us? If only I could feel this alive every day, I'd move mountains instead of mole hills. Shake a redwood tree instead of a martini. I would reach nirvana and become the next Dalai lama.

(To Liza)

Are you taking this in?...Liza?

Bill walks over to Liza to see what's she's staring at.

LIZA

I think it's my mother.

Bill takes a closer look at the picture.

BILL

Certainly resembles you.

LIZA

(still looking at the photo)

I never thought I'd see her face again.

BILL

Good looking woman. Easy to see why your father married her.

LIZA

I'd like to think it was more than that.

BILL

Oh, I'm sure it was.

Bills looks at photo again.

Pretty eyes. She can't be more than twenty .

LIZA

Are you hittin' on my mother?

BILL

Please.

(Sings Sonny Bono's lyric)

I got you, Babe.

Kelly enters.

KELLY

I thought I was your Babe.

BILL

Bay-bee.

KELLY

Hate it when you call me that, especially in public.

Phone inside the house rings. Liza runs to answer it.

BILL

Well, aren't you my Baby?

KELLY

Yeah, seventeen years ago.

BILL

My...how time flies. *(Beat)* Did I ever tell you where you were conceived that – ?

KELLY

Eeeel! Yes! More than I care to know.

BILL

Good! ‘Cause that’s where I want you to meet us. Same spot by the concession stand.

KELLY

Sam and I decided to just vegetate here tonight.

BILL

And miss the fireworks?

KELLY

You can tell us all the gripping details when you get back.

BILL

What about your mother?

KELLY

Oh, don’t use Mom as an excuse. You can’t handle the thought of this summer being our last together.

BILL

What happened to my Baby?

KELLY

She’s all grown and able to walk.

BILL

Never imagine this time would come.

Kelly puts her arm around her father.

KELLY

Would you like a tissue?

BILL

Your mother told me you’re moving. Have you decided a place?

KELLY

Sam and I are still discussing it.

KELLY CONT'D

(She kisses him)

Thanks.

BILL

For what?

KELLY

I know you and Mom would rather I go back to school.

BILL

It's your life. Though in today's world –

KELLY

Daddy.

BILL

Can't blame a doting father for trying.

Bill goes over and open the pot.

Those lobsters must be cursing us for wasting a meal. Think they could be salvaged?

KELLY

Not unless you want food poisoning. *(Beat)* Boy did I put my foot in my mouth last night. I hope Mom didn't take it the wrong way.

BILL

I'm sure she didn't.

KELLY

I like him.

BILL

Yeah, me too.

KELLY

Looks like he's making Mom come out of her shell.

BILL

He's a likable guy. Yet a little mysterious.

KELLY

That's because you don't understand him.

BILL

Oh, and I suppose you do.

KELLY

I'm psychic that way.

Liza comes out on the house's deck.

LIZA

Have you seen Sebastian? He's not in his room.

KELLY

Maybe he went for a walk.

LIZA

I'm gonna report him missing.

Liza exits to the house.

KELLY

(To Bill)

What should we do?

BILL

I'll call the Cottage.

Bill takes out his cell phone while Kelly sees if she can spot Francisco from a distance. Liza reenters.

LIZA

(On the phone)

I understand... Yes... Thank you.

KELLY

(To her mother)

Well?

LIZA

He has to be missing for 48 hours before they could search.

KELLY

(Anxious)

48 hours?!

BILL

Called the Cottage but the line's always busy.

KELLY

You think he went back?

LIZA

His things are still here and he hasn't touched his medication.

BILL

Let's see. He can't be far. He might just be right under our noses. But where?

KELLY

He loves the water.

Liza looks out to the ocean and think she sees something.

LIZA

What's that floating out there? Oh my God. Could that be him?

Kelly runs out to the shore to see if it's Francisco. Francisco enters unnoticed with a cigar in his mouth and a bag of groceries. Liza begins to dial the phone.

BILL

What are you doing?

LIZA

I'm calling the police?

BILL

We should make sure it's Sebastian and not a dead whale.

FRANCISCO

Ay Dios mio, have I gain that much?

Startled, Bill and Liza jump.

LIZA

Christ, you nearly had us going out of our minds.

BILL
(*Relieved*)

Where were you?

FRANCISCO
I was in a nice little, landmark store shopping.

BILL
Pazootos

FRANCISCO
That's the one. Very friendly. Well, I wanted to make up for the disastrous dinner last night, so I got an early start out the house. Would you believe I ran into a vendor selling cigar? He sold me a box for half of what I usually pay.

LIZA
You had us worried.

FRANCISCO
Oh, I'm sorry. I should've left a note or something.

LIZA
(*Slightly annoyed with Francisco*)
It would've helped.

FRANCISCO
Si, it was foolish and inconsiderate.

Kelly comes back from the shore.

KELLY
Sebastian!

Happy to see Francisco, Kelly immediately embraces him.

Where were you? I was afraid something awful had happened...but I see you're in one piece.

FRANCISCO
I could never leave you, Muñeca or else the family recipe will die along with me.

KELLY
Not on my watch.

Kelly grabs groceries from him.

KELLY CONT'D

I'll take these in and get ready.

FRANCISCO

I'll be right there. Uh, oh and Kelly.

Francisco raises his right arm and puts his left hand over his chest. She smiles.

BILL

We're going into town to see the fireworks, after dinner. Care to join us?

FRANCISCO

I 'd love to.

BILL

So be it, then. You'll find it the most exciting thing to happen around here. Not that I'm complaining. I love the solitude of this place. Over the years, this atmosphere has allowed me to get closer to finishing my novel.

FRANCISCO

(Jokingly)

Ernesto Hemingway.

BILL

Ha, ha...Not quite...but give me a few more years and readers will know me as The Old Man and the Beach House.

Both men chuckle except Liza.

KELLY

(From the house)

DAD! PHONE!.

Bill exits to the house while Francisco sees Liza pretty withdrawn. He suddenly notices the picture of her mother on the picnic table and picks it up.

FRANCISCO

(Looking at photo)

You would've loved her. She was filled with lots of passion and spirit. If only...

LIZA

What?

FRANCISCO

If only things were different. If only I wasn't so impulsive. As you've come to notice me by now, I tend to first act instead of thinking what the outcome might be.

Francisco talks to picture as he's thinking of his wife.

Ah, Daniela.

LIZA

Daniela? But I thought my mother's name was Cristina.

Francisco smiles and tries to coverup his mistake.

FRANCISCO

Que sin verguenza! I see my age is getting the best of me. Daniela was a good friend of the family. She and your mother was very close...very

Liza refers to the photo.

LIZA

When was this taken?

Francisco gives a closer look at the photo.

FRANCISCO

Hmmm. I think it was when she found out she was pregnant...with you. You were the love of her life. Every night she'd rub her stomach and sing you lullabies. And when she sang off key? Aya Diablo! You would give her a good hard kick; it always made her smile. (grabs her hand) Oh, Mija. I've dreamed of this day when I could finally see you and get to know you.

Bill comes out and sees Francisco gently placing his hand on Liza. He says nothing and goes back inside looking a little troubled.

LIZA

I'm sorry but for me it's gonna take awhile. I don't remember you...I don't know you.

FRANCISCO

No hay problema. Take all the time you need. I'm not going anywhere.

Lights gradually fade to black.

ACT 1 SCENE 6

At rise: The sound of fireworks are heard. Lights go up indicating that hours have passed. Kelly enters the stage banging things around her. She finally sits looking very distraught. Moments later, Liza, Bill and Francisco enter from the house.

BILL

(To Kelly)

Did you two miss a spectacular light show. The sky was bursting with colors and design, as though Picasso joined Andy Warhol in putting it together. You and Sam would've –

KELLY

Fuck Sam!

LIZA

Whoa! Bring down the attitude and watch your tongue!

KELLY

I... I hate everything about my life!

BILL

(To Sebastian)

Let's go unload the car.

Francisco sees how concerned Kelly is.

FRANCISCO

(To Kelly)

I'm sorry to see you this way, Muñeca.

BILL

Sebastian!

LIZA

(To Sebastian)

I'll take it from here...(Both men exit) Care to talk about it?

KELLY

No!

Ok. LIZA

She's impossible. KELLY

Ok. LIZA

I don't know why we're friends. KELLY

Ok. LIZA

It's not ok! She's just too stubborn to admit she's wrong. KELLY

Could it be Samantha feels you're being inconsiderate of her feelings? LIZA

Who side are you on, anyway? KELLY

Just saying. Have you seriously thought about your relationship? LIZA

What do you mean? KELLY

Aren't you in love with her? LIZA

Say what? KELLY

For the sake of sounding presumptuous, I think you are both in love with each other and are trying to come to terms with it. LIZA

And that doesn't bother you? KELLY

LIZA

It all depends...if it bothers you.

KELLY

All this time and yet you said nothing.

LIZA

See? It just proves I'm not always in your "bid ness" even though you think I am.

KELLY

Didn't know we were that obvious.

LIZA

This may sound cliché ish but a mother knows. It's an intuition we have over men.

KELLY

What do you think Dad will say?

LIZA

Only one way to find out. Tell him.

Francisco comes out.

FRANCISCO

Kelly. Samantha's on the phone.

KELLY

Tell her I'm busy.

FRANCISCO

I would but she can see you from across the dock.

KELLY

(In a disappointing tone)

Great.

LIZA

Go ahead. See what she has to say.

Kelly exits. Liza addresses her.

BUT DON'T SWIM! WALK! TOO MANY RIP TIDES OUT THERE.

FRANCISCO

Hope they work it out.

LIZA

They will.

FRANCISCO

She reminds me when you were a little girl. You were never one to hide your emotions.

LIZA

I have so many questions to ask you. I don't even know where to begin.

FRANCISCO

Well, for starters... You were born in a place called Las Minas, a few miles from Havana and like me you have a mole on your left cheek where people seldom see but admire.

LIZA

(Half smiles)

Why now? Why bother to find me?

FRANCISCO

A father never gives up on his daughter. Had you read the letters you would've known.

LIZA

Somehow, I couldn't pull myself to open them. *(Beat)* So what where in the letters?

FRANCISCO

Well, in one of them, I wrote how you were barely 6 years old when you flew here in 1962. You and 14,000 Cuban children were part of a mission that was run by the CIA. What was it exactly called? Pedro Pan. Operation Peter Pan. Like you many children had to arrive here alone. It wasn't our choice nor was it easy but we believed it wouldn't be long before we'd arrive in the U.S., and be together again or that Castro would be defeated and you'd be sent back home. But it didn't happen, only got worse.

(Thinking to himself)

Aaah, so many families, so many friends ...all of them dead. The only saving grace ...you and thousands of kids were safe.

LIZA

I remember crying at the airport, looking for you behind a glass wall. And then being picked up by strangers in Miami who eventually put me in a home.

FRANCISCO

I know. It was unforgivable.

LIZA

At one point, I thought you were an illusion in my head. What little information I got from the Catholic Welfare Bureau wasn't enough to piece it all together, to find out who I am. All I know is I wouldn't have much of a childhood if it weren't for my adoptive parents.

FRANCISCO

Believe me I understand.

LIZA

Honestly? When I finally came to terms with it. All I wanted, all I wished was to forget you and anything that had to do with my past. That's why getting your letters made me feel more distant. I just wanted to enjoy my new life, not relive the pain I once felt.

FRANCISCO

I'm so sorry what you went through. But now that I'm here and you've gotten to know me a little, can we at least try?

LIZA

Every day's a new day.

FRANCISCO

(Smiles)

Verdad.

Francisco notices Kelly still by the dock.

It looks like Kelly and Samantha have made up.

LIZA

(Looks out toward the girls)

Yeah, it does.

Bill comes out. Liza addresses him.

You emptied everything from the trunk?

BILL

Spacious as the open plain. Any of that cheesecake left in the frig?

LIZA

(As she goes inside the house)

You wanted it?

BILL

Don't tell me you ate it.

LIZA

Ok, I won't.

(To Sebastian)
I'm turning in.

FRANCISCO

Rest well.

Liza exits.

BILL

(Shakes his head)

It's not easy putting up with two decisive women.

FRANCISCO

Ah, but how would we survive without them? *(Beat)* I want to show you something.

Francisco takes out a necklace from his pocket.

BILL

Wow. That's pretty.

FRANCISCO

You think Liza would like it? Yesterday, Kelly reminded me her birthday's this weekend. Had I known her taste, I would've gotten her something more to her liking.

BILL

Liza doesn't like to be fussed over.

FRANCISCO

Ooooh, I'm like that too.

BILL

(Pauses slightly)

I got a call back from the Cottage.

FRANCISCO

Damn those people! I told them not to call here. I'm going to settle this once and for all.

BILL

That won't be necessary!

FRANCISCO

Believe me it will. They've gone too far this time. Of all the...I know what they're doing. They like to vacate my space, so they can charge the next depraved victim more money. Humph! If I had my way, I'd fool those bastards and live another lifetime.

BILL

What do you know of Francisco Gorce?

FRANCISCO

(Flustered)

Francisco Gorce? Why, he's my neighbor at the Cottage. We share many precious times talking about the island. You remember. He's the one I'm always confusing my pills with.

(Chuckles)

Why do you ask?

BILL

Sebastian del Solar is dead.

FRANCISCO

No, no, no. You got it –

BILL

Wrong? I strongly doubt it, Francisco.

FRANCISCO

Francisco?

BILL

Isn't that your name? Look, I don't know what game you're trying to play but it's over. They told me Liza's father has been dead for over six months.

FRANCISCO

But—

BILL

You lied. Not only to us but you have the Cottage believing that you went to live with your son, Richard.

FRANCISCO

I can ex—

BILL

No need to.

FRANCISCO

You must think the worst of me.

BILL

All I'm thinking right now is how devastating my family will be when they find out.

FRANCISCO

Why must they know?

BILL

You can't be serious.

FRANCISCO

Please hear me out. I know what it's like to lose someone and feel a sense of despair, But I promise you it won't happen to Liza. I won't let it. Not any more. Already, I feel we've developed a connection and I can't see letting that go.

BILL

Listen to yourself. How do you think that'll play out when she learns about his death? I simply cannot play at this charade anymore.

FRANCISCO

I, I understand.

BILL

Do you?!

(Bill pauses slightly)

It's over.

FRANCISCO

But it's not what her father would've wanted! He entrusted me to be there for her. Like, like a godfather. To, to give her something she can fondly remember and hold on to. Why can't you at least try to see – ?

BILL

I am her husband! And I won't let anyone, not even me, toy with her heart. She has to be told the truth before it gets worse.

FRANCISCO

Believe me, I never meant to hurt her.

BILL

Then you should have no trouble doing the right thing.

FRANCISCO

I'm not sure I can.

BILL

You owe it to her.

FRANCISCO

(Pauses speechless)

Si... Who did you speak to at the cottage?

BILL

The director, Ms. Gifford.

FRANCISCO

I guess she called my son. What did he say?

BILL

She phoned him several times but never got an answer.

FRANCISCO

(Disappointed)

Probably busy. Away on some project. He's the vice president of a mobile company. Constantly in demand. Constantly.

BILL

That must be it. *(Beat)* Why did you lie about the cancer? Did you think that you would seal Liza's feelings for you?

FRANCISCO

Sometimes, I'm reminded what Sebastian use to say. "There are things that we don't want to happen but have to accept...things we don't know but have to learn...and people we can't live without but have to let go." Humph! If I didn't know any better, I would've believed he and I were separated at birth...that's how much we were alike...I knew this day would come but...We use to have lunch every day...and share our joys...our problems. *(Slight pause)* He loved your wife...talked about her every chance he had...He also gave me his undivided attention when I'd talked about my boy...

BILL

You're full of it!

FRANCISCO

Como?

BILL

He never wrote Liza. You did.

FRANCISCO

That's not true! He didn't know if she'd remember her Spanish, so he asked me to translate some of his letters in English.

BILL

Then how is it Liza received those letters months after he passed away?

FRANCISCO

He wrote her lots of letters, but he was ashamed to send them...afraid that after all these years of not being able to contact her, why bother now when he's ill. If it weren't for you writing back and later inviting me here—

BILL

None of this would've happened.

(Pauses slightly)

And I didn't invite you. I invited him. *(Beat)* I expect you to tell her tomorrow.

FRANCISCO

Your generation think you know so much. That you have the answer to everything that's wrong with the world. What's the motto you use today? "Making it real?" Well, sometimes it doesn't package so nicely that way.

BILL

Goodnight, Francisco.

Bill exits. After he leaves, Francisco sits quietly in thought until Kelly enters from the dock.

KELLY

(To Francisco)

Where did everyone go?

FRANCISCO

Inside.

KELLY

You know, I'm glad I'm finally learning about my Cuban heritage. Never thought about it much. Never had a reason to till you came along.

KELLY CONT'D

Boy, you certainly have changed this family around. This weekend I'm gonna cook you paella. Trust me. You won't be disappointed.

FRANCISCO

I'm sure I won't.

KELLY

Let's see. I'll need some red bell pepper, garlic cloves, diced ham, parsley leaves...how am I doing so far?

FRANCISCO

Your ancestors are smiling.

KELLY

I'll break the news to Mom. Maybe she can learn a thing or two from me in the kitchen.

FRANCISCO

How late do the taxis run here?

KELLY

Usually all night. Why?

FRANCISCO

Oh it's nothing. One woke me up in the middle of the night and I was just wondering.

Kelly goes inside as Francisco contemplates his next move.

ACT 1 SCENE 7

Time: Next day

At rise: Liza finds time to relax and bask in the sun. Kelly comes out from around the house. The portable radio is playing music from a Spanish speaking station.

KELLY

(Sarcastically)

I guess sun cancer and skin aging affects everyone 'cept you. Oh, my God! Oh, my God! What a revelation. Since I'm from the same gene pool, it must mean I'm immune too. Ha, ha! I'm so totally ecstatic!

LIZA

(Not at all impressed)

Me too. Now, run along and let me get acquainted with this chair you and your father seem to claim rights to.

KELLY

I need the keys to the car.

LIZA

You have a designated driver?

KELLY

Funny.

LIZA

It's where I always keep them.

KELLY

What would you like to do this weekend?

LIZA

(Still soaking up the sun)

Why?

KELLY

(In a singing tone)

Cuz it's your birthday. It's your birthday.

LIZA

It's that time already?

KELLY

Yes. And you've been dying to see this one thing for a long time.

LIZA

I've died for a lot of things and I'm still alive ready to die again for what I usually can't have. What is it?

KELLY

(In a singing tone)

Chicago, Chicago!

LIZA

The musical?

KELLY

No, the city. Of course, the musical. I already made reservations for five so you can't back out.

LIZA

Five?

KELLY

I invited Sam. Pues, digame! What would you like for a special gift?

Kelly sees the surprised expression on her mother's face.

Yes! Thanks to Sebastian, I am now learning how to speak in my native tongue.

LIZA

Surprise me.

KELLY

Sure about that?

LIZA

I trust you.

Kelly looks out toward the shore and waves at Francisco.

KELLY

BUENOS DIAS!

LIZA

(Oddly looks at her daughter)

Now you're scaring me.

KELLY

I'll be back in a couple of hours. Ciao.

LIZA

That's Italian.

KELLY

Close enough.

Liza goes back to basking in the sun. Francisco enters from swimming in the water. He takes a towel to dry himself before putting on his robe.

FRANCISCO

Nothing like a good dip in the morning to uplift the spirit.

LIZA

What about the sharks?

FRANCISCO

Didn't see any. Then again, I must've disappointed them since I only swam in three feet of water.

LIZA

How is it a man who grew up near the ocean is so leery of swimming far out?

FRANCISCO

I call it preservation. You see this mark?

LIZA

Shark bite?

FRANCISCO

No. Cat scratch but the experience taught me to respect nature and understand where my place is.

LIZA

Ha, ha...So you never learned how to swim?

FRANCISCO

Oh, sí. When I was a boy, my grandfather use to say “ Oye, Nieto.” We all started life in water. Now go out there and swim your tail off. And for Christ sake try not to drown. Tu sabes?’ So I did.

LIZA

(Smiles)

Talk to me about Cuba, the people, the culture

FRANCISCO

Think of black beans and rice with platanos on the side, cooled by a romantic bolero breeze and washed down by a cup of café con leche and you have Cuba.

LIZA

You’re kidding me.

FRANCISCO

Ha, ha...Ask that question to any Cuban and you’ll get a different answer all the time. I choose to be poetic...until you visit it no one could tell you what it’s like.

LIZA

Sounds like an invitation.

FRANCISCO

(Playing along)

I’ll book a flight.

LIZA

Not since I was a little girl, I dreamt of you and my mother. Last night, you both were in my dream. I could almost smell the scent of my childhood in Cuba. The smoke from the burning sugar canes in the field. The taste of eggs with sausage and hot bread. Then suddenly, I woke up and felt this great sense of displacement.

FRANCISCO

I know the feeling.

LIZA

I’m glad you’re back. I know I have a funny way of showing it, as Kelly would accuse me of, but I do mean what I say.

FRANCISCO

I sincerely thank you for your hospitality. You, Bill and Kelly have been very gracious and a tremendous pleasure...something I haven't had in quite awhile.

LIZA

The feeling's mutual. My only regret is that all this didn't happen sooner.

(Jokingly)

You got style, kid. I like that in a man.

FRANCISCO

Ha, ha, ha...And you...class. Something any parent would be proud of. Bill's very fortunate to have you.

LIZA

Could you repeat that again, only this time much, much louder?

FRANCISCO

Of course...BILL'S VERY FORTUNATE TO HAVE YOU. How was that?

LIZA

BILL? DID YOU HEAR WHAT SEBASTIAN SAID ABOUT ME? ... BILL?...BILL?

Suddenly, we hear the Bill giggling in the bathroom. They both chuckle.

Well, of all the...See what happens after 20 years of marriage?

FRANCISCO

(Referring to his own marriage)

Oh, I know. Mira, Liza ...There's something I must tell you...

Francisco holds Liza's hand.

As you know, I love you as though we were never apart. And to see your face light up since we've gotten closer, leaves me a memory to treasure...I just want to say that whatever...what I mean is...

LIZA

(Very concerned)

I think I know. I'm beginning to feel the same way too. Come dance with me.

Liza turns up the radio as it's playing a nice bolero.

Esta listo?

Francisco obliges and dances with Liza.

LIZA CONT'D

How am I doing?

FRANCISCO

Perfecto!

When the music stops, Liza affectionally embraces Francisco.

LIZA

I missed you, Papa. I missed you.

Francisco gently pushes her away.

FRANCISCO

No, no don't. I'm not worth your affection...Frankly, I'm not worth no one's, not even my son's.

LIZA

(Confused)

Wha-wha-what are you talking about?

FRANCISCO

I'm talking about me...my lies...my deception...my selfish... *(Beat)* Liza ...I'm not your father...it pains me to say that...but the only thing I am to you is an old man who could only wish he had given you life.

LIZA

I-I don't understand. If you're not my father who are you?

FRANCISCO

I got to know your father at the Cottage. Like me, he was a Cuban refugee. We became friends, talked about old times and shared stories.

LIZA

Including mine?

FRANCISCO

Sí.

There's a moment of silence as Liza tries to digest Francisco's confession.

LIZA

Get out!

FRANCISCO

But if you let me –

LIZA

OUT!...NOW! You should be ashamed! What kind of person are you, anyway?

FRANCISCO

One who made a terrible mistake. If I could change what has happened these past few days. I'd be lying. Pero, you deserve to know who your father was. Over the years, all we had was each other's company.

Taking her silence as a cue to leave, Francisco says nothing and starts to walk away again.

LIZA

Then he's dead?

FRANCISCO

Sí.

LIZA

What was he like?

FRANCISCO

He was a kind man...one who'd give you the shirt off his back. He was a man who worked his way from working class to becoming a respected real estate broker.

LIZA

And my mother?

FRANCISCO

I understand she was very much in love with him. But she was also passionate about the conditions of Cuba. She spoke out for those who didn't have a voice and many times risked her safety.

LIZA

I guess that was more important than to seeing me off?

FRANCISCO

She was arrested a week before you left. Your father was trying to get her out but in the meantime he had to see you'd be safe and asked a friend to take you to the airport.

LIZA

What happened to her?

FRANCISCO

Your father said he did all he could but could no longer find where she was kept.

LIZA

Why should I believe you?

FRANCISCO

I have no reason to lie. Not now, not anymore.

Liza pulls out her cell phone from her bag.

LIZA

What number is the Cottage?

FRANCISCO

563-2160

*She dials and waits for someone to pick up.
Someone from the Cottage answers.*

LIZA

Hello? I'm trying to reach Sebastian del Solar? Yes. Thank you. Hello? My name is Liza Roberts. One of your residents, Sebastian del Solar, is my father. I'd like to talk to him.

(She listens)

When? ...No, I haven't spoken to my husband...Yes. Yes, I will.

*Liza hangs up and says nothing as she tries to hold
herself from breaking down and cry. Francisco
tries to get near and comfort her.*

FRANCISCO

Liza

LIZA

STOP! Don't come near me.

FRANCISCO

He did tell me something he wanted you to know that weren't in the letters. Before he died he asked me to be your padrino, your godfather. And I gave him my word that I –

Liza slaps Francisco in the face before he could finish his sentence. She grabs her things from the beach chair and exits to the house. Francisco Stands in place ashamed, hurt and helpless.

FRANCISCO

(Chastising himself)

You stupid-stupid-stupid! Pendejo! What have I done?

ACT 1 SCENE 8

Time: Afternoon

At rise: A couple of days have passed. Liza is looking through her father's things. She picks up a photo album and begins to look inside. Bill comes out with a bottle of water and sits across from her. He offers Liza his bottle.

BILL

Thirsty?

Liza doesn't bother to look up at Bill.

LIZA

No.

BILL

We could go through the day, the week, the entire summer like this, but it isn't gonna amount to anything or go anywhere unless we talk about it.

LIZA

Huh! You're the one to talk. You said nothing to me when you got news about my father?

BILL

I know. I was wrong. I,...what can I say? You and Francisco were so happy...it was as if you both finally found what you were searching for.

LIZA

Searching for what?! I was very content with my life until you interfered.

BILL

Oh, excuse me for trying to put some closure –

LIZA

You don't get it do you?! If I wanted to communicate with my father, I would've open his first letter.

BILL

Then why didn't you throw it away? Why did you keep every letter he sent you?

Kelly enters.

KELLY

I'll cancel our reservation for tomorrow.

LIZA

Why? I'm looking forward to it.

KELLY

You're sure?

LIZA

I'd be crushed if you did.

KELLY

I'm sorry about your father and what Francisco did. Never thought he would do something like that.

LIZA

It's behind me, now.

KELLY

Yeah.

Kelly picks up a ball from the table.

Hey, this is cool! It's signed by Joe DiMaggio, 1947

Referring to her grandmother's things.

What do you plan to do with all this stuff?

LIZA

I don't know. Any suggestions?

KELLY

I'll let you know if I come up with some. But in the meantime, get ready for an awesome meal tonight. Think shrimp, clams, chicken etcetera, etcetera. Cuz this girl is cookin' Paella. Cuban style, Chica. It's my way of saying, "Love means never having to say goodbye."

BILL

It's "sorry."

KELLY
(*Surprised*)

Seriously?

BILL
Love means never having to say you're sorry.

LIZA
Thanks for the sentiment, anyway.

BILL
Where did you learn how to cook paella?

LIZA
(*To Bill*)
Guess.

KELLY
Taught me how to mix rice, broth, wine, and mussels in a large pot. Add salt for flavor and Bijol for color. Stir, turn up the heat till it boils and you got yourself a hell of a treat. All feelings aside, I got to admit, the man's amazing.

LIZA
Yeah, he's full of surprises.

KELLY
Which brings me to mine.

*Kelly hands her mother an envelope. Liza takes it
and opens it..*

LIZA
Hand me my glasses.

KELLY
(*Sarcastically*)
Just the response I wanted to hear.

LIZA
You're really going to college?

KELLY
I think that's what it says in the letter.

BILL
No way. I mean way, way to go. Oh, Kelly this is great!

LIZA

You've made this birthday truly a special one. I had no idea.

Liza's about to tear up.

KELLY

Mom, don't you get sappy on me.

LIZA

Ok, I won't...for now.

BILL

When do you start?

KELLY

In late August. I know it's not the college you want but better late than never.

LIZA

Let's see, you'll need –

KELLY

Mom! I got it covered.

LIZA

But –

KELLY

Mom! Take a deep breath.

LIZA

Ok. What about you and Sam?

KELLY

I didn't tell her yet.

LIZA

My baby's going to college.

BILL

Hey, that's my baby too.

KELLY

No. I'm your adult daughter. If I were truly your baby, you would've saved your money to send me to Harvard which I had to turn down.

Both parents eyes bug out.

KELLY CONT'D

It's a joke!

Suddenly, Liza's cell phone rings. She answers it.

LIZA

Hello?... Speaking... No. No we haven't... I will

KELLY

What's a matter?

LIZA

It's the cottage. Francisco never went back.

KELLY

You don't suppose...?

LIZA

He could drop dead for all I care.

KELLY

(In an admonishing tone)

Mom!

BILL

Your mother really doesn't mean—

LIZA

Yes, I do! I hate it when you do that.

KELLY

Mom, we under-

LIZA

And that goes for you too!

KELLY

Me?! All I'm trying to say –

LIZA

Well, you can stop! We're done!

KELLY

No we're not.

BILL

Kelly!

Liza returns to the house.

KELLY

Grrr! Why does she have to be so difficult? Sometimes, she makes me wanna-

BILL

Have a beer.

KELLY

(Surprised)

Why not. *(Beat)* What ever happened to unconditional love? I mean, so what if Francisco isn't perfect. It's what's in his heart that matters. Maybe Mom should've at least given him a chance. Just the fact that he wanted to be there for her as a parent, no matter what, is what's important. Isn't it?

BILL

Yes, but he's not her father.

KELLY

Well, if he was...would you agree?... Meaning unconditional and all?

BILL

Oh, Baby, you know I would.

KELLY

Dad?...I'm gay.

A car horn beeps.

Oh my God! That must be Sam. Talk to you later.

Kelly scurries off. Bill does some busy work around the grill until Francisco enters.

BILL

Francisco? Where on earth have you been? What the hell are you doing here? We got a call from the cottage saying you never came back.

FRANCISCO

I saw no reason to.

BILL

Then what do you plan to do?

Francisco stands up straight with chest out.

FRANCISCO

Probably, go see my son and his family. Ah, yes. It's been a long time. We've been both busy with our lives that now's a good time to catch up.

BILL

Sounds like a plan.

FRANCISCO

Sí. Sí it is. I've been meaning to pay him a visit but with me getting settled in the cottage back then, somehow...I just hope I haven't miss much in lost time.

BILL

Yeah, it could slip by you, even with the best intentions.

Suddenly, Kelly storms out of the house and heads to the water. Liza enters shortly.

KELLY

GET AWAY! I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT! JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!!!

BILL

What happened?

LIZA

Sam broke up with her.

BILL

Sam?

He interrupts Liza's before she explains their daughter's sexuality.

I know! I'll go talk to her.

Bill exits to the shore.

FRANCISCO

She's young. Things will work out.

Liza ignores him and starts to go back inside.

LIZA! Could you please hear me out for a moment?

LIZA

There's nothing to discuss.

FRANCISCO

Well, at least, accept this birthday gift. It's something your father would've wanted you to have. It's a replica of your mother's bracelet.

LIZA

Why are you playing with my head?! Haven't you done enough? You're like a tide beyond the rift. Calm and peaceful when you go out but like a tsunami when you return. You made me believe in someone that I thought I could trust and love again. I should've seen it coming.

FRANCISCO

Por favor. I just wanted to leave you this gift. It wasn't my intention –

LIZA

The only gift I want is never to see you again.

FRANCISCO

Sebastian would've never talk to me that way.

LIZA

Excuse me?!

FRANCISCO

Maybe it's better que he didn't live long enough to see you.

LIZA

How dare you! You come to my house pretending to be some one you're not and you have the audacity to judge me?

All you know of me is the 6 year old girl he told you about, who he, himself, hardly knew. My advice to you is go see your son and leave us the hell alone.

FRANCISCO

Isabel, please. I-I don't want to leave this way. When I started to help Sebastian look for you, I promised him you would know who your father was. Somehow, with his death and all, things got out of hand. I never imagine our relationship would end up this way. It wasn't suppose to.

LIZA

(Pausing slightly)

Go to your son.

FRANCISCO

He has his own family now. They deserve his time.

LIZA

And you don't? ... Good bye, Francisco.

FRANCISCO

Your father was my best friend. Whether you believe it or not, I would've had his blessing. 'Cause he knew when you have nothing, nothing... you must find another way or else it's over.

LIZA

You'll have to go.

FRANCISCO

You don't understand.

LIZA

I heard enough. Now, go before I call –

FRANCISCO

I HAVE NO WHERE TO GO! No one who cares. My son, he hasn't contacted me in years. The reason you got a call from the cottage is because I left. I couldn't afford to stay. My only alternative was a shelter. I told them I was leaving and staying with family. It seemed to work until your husband called.

Bill reenters from the shore.

BILL

(To Liza)

Is everything ok here?

Bill turns around and looks out to the shore.

BILL CONT'D

What the hell is she doing? She knows better then to go out during the rip tides.

LIZA

(Looking out)

KELLY!

BILL

COME BACK! YOU'RE SWIMMING TOO FAR OUT

LIZA

(To Bill)

She's seems ok.

BILL

No, she's not.

LIZA

Oh, my God! KELLY!!!

*Bill runs out to his daughter as Francisco and Liza
are immediately behind him.*

ACT 1 SCENE 9

At rise: A half hour passes after Francisco helps Bill save his daughter from the rip tides. He is in a bathrobe sitting at the picnic table. Bill comes out with fresh clothes and joins him. Francisco in a bathrobe looks up but says nothing.

BILL

She'll be fine.

FRANCISCO

Good.

BILL

Are you ok? You took a good pounding from the waves.

FRANCISCO

Don't worry I'm just happy I grabbed her in time.

BILL

We can't thank you enough.

FRANCISCO

It's not necessary.

BILL

She could've drowned. I don't know what would've happen without your help.

Liza comes out and joins them.

LIZA

(To Francisco)

Thank you.

FRANCISCO

She's family. *(Beat)* I best be going.

BILL

At least, let me give you a ride.

FRANCISCO

No, no. I prefer to walk.

Francisco exits.

BILL

What do you think?

LIZA

About what?

BILL

You think he'll be alright?

LIZA

Yeah.

BILL

Sam called. It's ok. I told her Kelly was out. I guess Kelly told you –

LIZA

She did.

BILL

Humph! This has proven to be one hell of a summer. I better get back inside and check on her.

He exits to the house. Liza stands alone looking out. She shortly notices the letter Francisco left on the table. She opens it and reads her father's last words before he died. After she reads a few lines, we hear the voice of Francisco continuing the read.

LIZA

Dear Isabel,

Even though you're still a memory to me, I have never stopped thinking that one day we will be together as God had meant it to be. I hope you haven't lost your native tongue.

Liza smiles and continues reading but we hear her father, Francisco's voice instead.

FRANCISCO'S VOICE

I have so much to tell you and so much to share. Forgive me for not being the father you deserve. Please find in your heart to see the good in me and the laughs you may have remembered we shared in Cuba. Love you forever, Papa.

Liza closes the letter and puts it in he pocket and begins to sob.

ACT 1 SCENE 10

At rise: Lights change into nightfall. We hear the waves hitting the shore from a distance. Francisco enters with a dry cleaning bag in one hand and his luggage in the other. He places the bag on the table and sits down on the bench to capture the ocean breeze and smell. Liza enters wearing swim goggles and a snorkel in her mouth.

LIZA

Francisco! You came back.

FRANCISCO

I forgot to give you your birthday gift.

Bill appears with the same gear holding a flashlight.

BILL

Francisco. Care to join us for dinner? We're having Paella tonight. It was Kelly's idea to cook it for Liza's birthday but we're doing it for her.

FRANCISCO

How is she?

LIZA

Resilient. Please join us. I'm sure she'll be happy to see you.

FRANCISCO

I have a train to catch.

LIZA

I would like you to stay... I thought I came to terms with my father's abandonment but I realize how bad it was still festering in me. But you? You gave me something I never had. Hope. You brought me back my identity and closer to who I am and who my father was. No more questions. Well, some...but I feel a lot more whole and positive about learning more of my family's history.

FRANCISCO

Well, I ...I appreciate you having me but I still have to take care of business at the cottage.

BILL

It's done.

FRANCISCO

Done?

BILL

You're not being put out. You're going to stay with family.

FRANCISCO

What?

LIZA

We can get into the details later. But right now, I'm looking to catch me a live lobsters so are you in or not?

Francisco rolls his pants and takes off his shoes.

FRANCISCO

Say no more. This Paella will be the best you've ever eaten. Kelly will be really proud.

Bill hands Francisco his gear.

BILL

Here! Take these while I go back to the house and gear up.

FRANCISCO

Ha, ha...by the time you come back, Liza and I will already have caught one.

BILL

That'll only happen if she screams them out of the water.

LIZA

Shut up!

FRANCISCO

Come on, Liza. We'll show him.

Francisco and Liza go off stage while Bill returns to the house. We hear water splashing and Liza laughing and screaming and having fun. Lights fade to black.

END OF PLAY