

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

CPMA 2015 - Full-Length Play - 3rd Prize
"Haiyan"
By: Taleon-Sonza, Jorshinelle

HAIYAN

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Synopsis:

The play is a family drama that takes place during the super storm, Haiyan, that devastated the Philippines in 2013. As the play begins, the wealthy patriarch of the Sims family dies under suspicious circumstances, leaving no will. The family gathers as the storm approaches.

The sad occasion of the reunion becomes contentious as the members of the family wrangle about who gets what from the patriarch's will. The event sparks more controversy as they decide on the details: what food to prepare for the guests, which ceremonies to follow and who to invite. As they make the funeral plans, they inadvertently reveal "family secrets". Questions come up like "Why is the matriarch trapped in the hospital?" "Why makes Doy, the son, believe he should get the lion's share of the family estate?" "Who is the real mother of Elli, the adopted daughter?" And the most unsettling of all, "who murdered the patriarch?" Characters come to a head as secrets unfold, complicating family dynamics.

The greed that runs through the gamut of the play is further exemplified by Doy's refusal to pay the ransom for Aqui, the loyal overseer of the farm. Aqui was kidnapped by the bandits because he refused to pay their compulsory taxes. Aqui is later killed; he is shot and his body is thrown into the ravine. He dies protecting the Sims family.

The super storm Haiyan intensifies, wreaking havoc in the eastern seaboard of the Philippines. The Sims family deteriorates but as the storm makes its landfall, they come to terms to what they hold essential and valuable.

ACT 1

At rise. The interior of a huge, palatial bungalow. Tacloban, a prosperous city in the Philippines. Early part of November, 2013. The sound of the steady rain competes with the urgent announcement on the radio. DAY 1.

ANNOUNCER

And now for the latest weather report. Our weather station has spotted a low pressure area developing in the southeastern part of Micronesia. We are keeping close watch on this tropical depression travelling westward. Although it is still early to tell, we are hoping this will not hit the eastern part of Central Philippines.

Scene 1. A fifty-year-old woman, MEDYONG, enters, listening to a transistor radio which she holds close to her ear. She is conservatively dressed and has a rosary hanging around her neck. She looks anxious as she listens to the weather report on the radio.

MEDYONG (making the sign of the cross)

Dyos ko!

LIGHTS DIM as loud explosion from a rifle is heard.

DOY, a burly-looking male, aged forty, enters the stage. In a foul mood, he walks like someone looking for a fight. He is carrying a rifle which he puts down on the dining table.

DOY

Medyong! Medyong! Where is that woman when you need her? Medyong!

(MEDYONG enters, frightened. She turns off radio.)

MEDYONG

Yes, Manong.

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DOY

I want you to watch out for those kids. They come exactly (Looks at watch) at one in the afternoon. Imagine, trespassing on private property!

MEDYONG

Yes, Manong.

DOY (notices her radio)

Why are you carrying that radio with you? Put that away!

(MEDYONG exits stealthily as she continues to hold on to her radio.)

MIRA, about DOY'S age, enters from the foyer, holding a wet umbrella which she puts on a rack. She stomps her feet and puts down her medical bag on a nearby side table. She has her medical gown on which, with her angular shoulders, gives her a rather mannish look.

MIRA

God, that was some rain. If it doesn't stop...(notices rifle on the dining table) You're at it, again?

DOY

I had to scare them off, those parasites!

MIRA

They're just kids scouring for mud crabs. Really, Doy, this is an overkill! Will you put that gun away?

(DOY gets the rifle from the table and props it against the wall.)

DOY (fretting)

But they're on my land. MY LAND.

MIRA

It's not your land. Not yet.

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(DOY looks around if someone's listening. He motions MIRA to come closer. They huddle together.)

DOY

Mahal, we have a problem.

MIRA

I've heard about the storm.

DOY

Not that.

(MIRA looks at him inquisitively.)

DOY

They're coming tonight.

MIRA

Tonight? I thought they're coming this weekend.

DOY

Has to do with the weather or something. (Beat) We better have a plan.

MIRA

I already did...work on a plan, I mean.

DOY

Go on.

MIRA

I've been withdrawing his medications for a week now. You know how fatal that is, at his age.

DOY

Good.

MIRA

What about you?

DOY

Did my part, too. What do you think?

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(MIRA looks at him, doubting his words.)

DOY

You doubt my expertise? I'm a lawyer, for God's sake. Look.

(DOY gets an envelope from the side table and shows a document to MIRA.)

DOY (whispering)

I wrote another will. And better still, I made him sign it.

MIRA

You did?

DOY

Yes, and how easy it was. I just guided his hand to where he could sign it. (Gloating) He was like a child obedient to my every word.

MIRA

Not obedient, just too weak.

DOY

You should have been there, mahal. Finally, I'm the master! (Beat) But you know, I feel sorry for him...reduced to a body with a bloated stomach and ugh...those dark veins...

MIRA (over "dark veins")

What did you do with the original will?

DOY

I can't find it and he never told me where it was. Perhaps it's a secret will, who knows? This new will? (Excited)...I mean, we get the farm, this house and all the other properties...

MIRA (sighs with relief)

Finally, I'm free of this damn job! I don't have to visit sick people in the barrio. (Catches sight of the medical bag) And I don't have to sell those samples.

(DOY approaches her to hug her.)

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DOY

It's payback time, baby.

MIRA (reflects)

But how about Nette and Mama-O?

DOY

Nette will have something. You know, like a consolation prize. She gets the property in San Bernardo Heights. Just that nothing else.

MIRA

And how about Mama-O?

DOY

She's crazy, holed up in the hospital. What does she care?

MIRA

They won't take this sitting down, especially Nette.

DOY

Why should she expect something? I managed this farm all by myself. And where was she all this time? In Manila, making herself beautiful with all those facelifts and botox. (Reflects, pacing the floor) I think I have a strong case. I'll tell them the land and property have cost me my life. All these years, I had to work for my father without any income. Not only that. Think of the humiliation I had to suffer! Imagine, I had to show him the receipts for everything I spent for the farm. (Notices MIRA in deep thought.) What?

MIRA

I'm thinking.

DOY

It better be good.

MIRA

We have to do something drastic.

DOY

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What do you have in mind?

MIRA

If he's just semi-conscious, Nette might take matters into her own hands. We don't want that to happen, do we?

DOY

What do you propose?

MIRA

I'm a doctor. I have ways. (Seeing DOY anxious) Don't worry. I'll do it gently.

DOY

Gently?

MIRA

My dear, haven't you heard of euthanasia?

DOY (suddenly conflicted)

I'm not so sure about this anymore.

MIRA

You're not getting cold feet, are you?

DOY

This thing...this euthanasia sounds like "murder" to me. Don't you have a heart?

MIRA (laughs)

Heart? Just a while ago you were about to massacre those kids.

DOY

This is my father we're talking about.

MIRA

Well, you better make up your mind. This tedious rain is driving me mad and I'm tired from work.

DOY

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Are you sure you can...

MIRA (cuts)

YES! Look, we're almost there. All we have to do is execute the plan.

DOY

Okay. But please, do it gently.

LIGHTS OUT. LIGHTS UP on MEDYONG

MEDYONG

Was it a dream? A bad dream? I couldn't tell. I heard footsteps, scurrying like hungry rats. What was going on? They lock the main house at night but I could see from the servants' quarters that the lights were on, all night! Why, they don't even bother about the weather. I wonder what's keeping them busy. (Pause) I wish I were a thousand miles away from this god-forsaken place. But where would I go?

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE2. DOY and MIRA in the living room, trying to work up an appetite. MEDYONG, attending to the couple, is sobbing rather loudly.

DOY (getting annoyed)

What's wrong with her?

MIRA

She's grieving. Daddy-Bo just died. What do you expect?

DOY

She's spoiling my appetite.

MIRA

Why don't we wait for Nette and Elli? (Looks at watch) They should be here any minute now.

DOY (To MEDYONG)

Why don't you go somewhere? You're driving me crazy!

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MEDYONG

Yes, Manong.

MIRA

Medyong, why don't you cook binakol for Nette and Elli. I remember it's their favorite.

MEDYONG

Yes, Manang.

(MEDYONG about to exit but remembers something.)

MEDYONG

Nang Mira, I heard there's a storm brewing in (Pronouncing each syllable) Mi-cro-nesia.

DOY

I told you to stop listening to that radio. Punyeta!

MIRA(looking sternly at DOY)

Don't worry, Medyong. We're far from Micronesia. The storm might divert somewhere.

MEDYONG

Haay, salamat. Praise the Lord.

(MEDYONG makes the sign of the cross and exits.)

MIRA

Why are you so rude to her?

DOY

I don't trust her.

(MIRA looks at him inquisitively.)

DOY

I caught her on the phone with Nette. She must be telling her what's going on in this house.

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MIRA

You're paranoid. Perhaps Nette called and she answered the phone. No big deal.

DOY

It's a suspicion and usually, my suspicions are true. (Beat) Anyway, I forbade her to use the phone ever since.

MIRA

Have some respect for her. Dignity, that's all you can give her.

DOY

Blast dignity!

MIRA

And speaking of dignity, you've got to protect me from your sister.

DOY

Protect you?

MIRA

You know how she makes all those snide remarks.

DOY

You let her affect you that much?

MIRA

Yes. Never lets me forget where I came from. The daughter of a mere kapatás.

DOY

Oh please, enough of that.

MIRA

First impressions never die, you know. The first time I saw her, she was driving a fancy car and nearly ran me over. That's what she's been doing up to now. Running me over.

DOY

You're now a doctor and she's just a real estate agent.

MIRA

A very successful one at that, though. And look at me.

(DOY does not respond)

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MIRA

That woman could kill you with words. And speaking of killing... (looks around and whispers)
Doy, I didn't do it.

DOY

What do you mean?

MIRA

I found him dead. When I came in, he was already dead.

DOY

You mean he died of natural causes? (Elated) Great! Now they won't suspect us.

MIRA

No. I mean, someone did it.

DOY

Someone, who?

MIRA

I have no idea.

DOY

How can you tell?

MIRA

There were signs.

DOY

Signs?

MIRA

The sheets were in disarray. The pillows were on the floor. (Beat) Like someone suffocated him.

DOY

But the bed looked okay when the undertaker collected the body.

MIRA (shaking her head)

I fixed his bed so he would look alright.

DOY

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Are you sure of this?

(MIRA nods.)

DOY

Who could have done it?

MIRA

I have no idea. I locked the door so nobody could go in.

DOY

Who would have the other key?

MIRA

You tell me.

(Suddenly, the door opens. NETTE enters briskly, used to the fast pace of life in Manila. She's a glamorous, middle-aged woman. Her clothes look expensive and the bag she carries is the name brand "Louis Vitton." Her body is toned suggesting she frequents gym workouts. A taxi driver brings her luggage up to the foyer.)

NETTE

The door was open. (To MIRA) Mira, you look like you've seen a ghost. Take that expression off your face.

MIRA

I...I...

DOY

You surprised us, that's why.

(DOY stands to give a peck on NETTE'S cheek perfunctorily. MIRA is about to stand, too, but NETTE stops her on her tracks.)

NETTE (lies)

My hair, I don't want it messed up. (To DOY) Did I catch you at a bad time?

(DOY does not respond. NETTE sits down.)

NETTE

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Now, explain to me. What happened here?

DOY

You see...

NETTE

I mean, if Daddy was so sick, why didn't you send him to the hospital? That's where he should be, not the morgue.

DOY

We didn't think it was necessary.

NETTE

Not necessary? He was dying, for Christ's sake!

DOY

We have a doctor in the house.

NETTE

No offense meant to Mira but she's a rural doctor. Daddy needed a specialist.

DOY

Mira gave him personal and professional care. We both did.

NETTE (to MIRA)

So what's the official diagnosis, Doctor?

MIRA

Diabetic coma. His organs were failing...kidney especially. His stomach was morbidly bloated...

NETTE

Enough! I can't stand these gory details. (Beat) Where is he now?

DOY

At the Somo funeral home. The owner is a friend and he gave me a discount.

NETTE (sarcastic)

Did he give you a coupon as well?

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

DOY

He'd been ill for quite some time.

NETTE

Why didn't you tell me sooner?

DOY

We didn't want to bother you. We know how busy you are.

NETTE

Bother me? I could have flown here at a moment's notice. (To MIRA) Did you know I was the one who gave them their names? Daddy was so fat so I called him Daddy-Bo. BO for tambok, meaning fat. And Mama-O...well, she only had one front tooth left because she was afraid of dentists. So you see, I might not have been here that often but I (proudly) did the naming. I gave them their names.

DOY (diverting)

Where do you want me to put your luggage? (Stands) The guest room...

NETTE

Guest room? We're not staying in any guest room. (Imperiously) We're taking the master bedroom. Daddy-Bo's room.

(DOY and MIRA exchange furtive glances.)

MIRA

Are you sure you want to stay in Daddy's room? He died only this morning...in that very room

(NETTE squirms in her seat. She resents MIRA calling her father "Daddy".)

NETTE

Why should I be? He's my father and I did him no harm. (Beat) Did you? And anyway, we need space. Elli is with me, remember?

DOY

Where's Elli?

NETTE

With Mama-O

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

DOY

In the hospital? Why didn't she come here first?

NETTE

You know how she adores Mama-O. Calls her the milk of human kindness. And I agree. How could Mama-O be so kind to everyone...people from all walks of life, even beggars. Why she even picks up all the stray dogs in the city, just like Sister Teresa.

DOY

Mother Teresa picked up lepers from the street, not dogs.

NETTE (glaring)

I know. But my dear, I'm talking about kindness, which some people (Looks at DOY and MIRA) are sadly lacking.

(Silence falls on all three like an ill wind.)

MIRA (diverting)

How's Elli?

NETTE

Fine. Fine. She's graduating this June.

MIRA

Daddy and she used to talk all the time...consulting her about the farm, the soil, that sort of thing.

NETTE

Well, she happens to be the favorite of Daddy-bo. And she's a passionate environmentalist, a quality that's an asset to the farm. (Sees Doy standing, not knowing what to do with the luggage) Doy, what are you waiting for? Be a proper gentleman and take my luggage to Daddy's room. (DOY disgruntlingly picks up the luggage and exits. MIRA sees an opportunity to escape, stands.)

MIRA

I'll tell Medyong you're here. She's been looking forward to seeing you.

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(MIRA exits, leaving NETTE alone in the dining room. NETTE gets her cellphone out of her bag and checks her incoming messages. Then she puts it back. She stands to survey the dining room where the family used to share many meals and get-togethers. Sees a tape recorder in the corner, goes through some tapes, picks out one and plays it. The music is “La Golondrina”, the favorite of Daddy-bo. She stares vacantly into space, then breaks down and sobs.)

VOICE (Booming)

ENOUGH! Stop playing that music!

(NETTE turns off the music. MAMA-O enters. About seventy years old, she still shows traces of beauty in her younger years. She’s dressed in a floral lilac dress. She exudes an air of new found superiority, something she feels she has to show now that her husband is dead. ELLI, a young girl of eighteen, is trailing behind her. She has an open, disarming face. The taxi driver helps them with the luggage. He exits.)

MAMA-O

You know how I feel about that music.

NETTE

I’m sorry, Ma. (Hugging her) You look good. (Pulling a chair for her) Come, come, sit by me. (MAMA-O sits by NETTE, taking her in as she looks at her face lovingly. A tender moment between mother and daughter. DOY and MIRA enter. ELLI pays her respect to her uncle and aunt by doing the mano-mano, a Filipino custom.)

DOY

Ma...Elli why didn’t you call? I could have picked you up.

MAMA-O

I can take care of myself. You’ll be surprised at what I can do these days.

ELLI

We took a taxi.

MAMA-O

Where are my dogs? I didn’t see any of them greeting me. They always bark when ...

DOY

Shouldn’t you ask about Daddy-Bo, first?

MAMA-O

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Ah, yes! Why didn't you wait for me before you shipped him off to the morgue?

DOY

He died in the dead of the night.

MAMA-O

So? Phones don't work at night?

DOY

What do you want me to do? Keep a corpse in the house?

MAMA-O

Is that all he was to you? A corpse? What you did was sacrilegious!

NETTE

There's nothing we can do. What's done is done.

ELLI (diverting)

Have you heard? A superstorm is coming. They're expecting landfall here in Tacloban three days from now. It's going to be the strongest storm in the history of the Philippines!

NETTE

Please. Spare Mama the ugly details of the storm. The less we talk about it, the better.

(MEDYONG enters. Upon seeing NETTE and ELLI, gets excited. Puts down the "binakol" dish on the table. Tears well up in her eyes. ELLI stands to hug her.)

ELLI

Oh, Medyong, we miss you.

MEDYONG

Nahidlaw na gid ako sa inyo.

NETTE

I have something for you. Revlon lipstick. I'll give it to you when I unpack.

ELLI (seeing her favorite dish)

Binakol! Nobody could cook it the way you do. What's your secret?

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

DOY (with innuendo)

Yes, tell them your secret. You seem to be good at giving away secrets.

MEDYONG

It's simple. Saute the chicken first in tomatoes, garlic and onions to give it flavor. Then add lemon grass...

ELLI

Oh, dear. I just mix all the ingredients together. No wonder the soup is bland.

DOY (interrupting)

Medyong, prepare the master bedroom for Nette and Elli.

NETTE

And Mama.

MAMA-O

No. I'm staying in the guest room, with my dogs.

(DOY coughs at the mention of the "dogs".)

MAMA-O

What's wrong with you?

DOY

Nothing. Just a touch of cold.

MIRA (to the rescue)

Medyong, please leave my things where they are.

NETTE (surprised)

You have things in Daddy-Bo's room?

MIRA

Oh, just boxes of government drugs.

(DOY becomes uncomfortable with the mention of "government drugs". Gives MIRA a warning look.)

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

DOY

You can leave now, Medyong.

MEDYONG

Yes, Manong.

NETTE

Medyong, I'll see you tonight, okay?

(MEDYONG nods and exits.)

MIRA

Binakol, Ma?

(MAMA-O shakes her head.)

NETTE (surprised)

You don't like binakol? You used to like it.

MAMA-O

Not recently. Do you know what binakol means?

ELLI (curious)

What does it mean?

MAMA-O

Binakol. Beaten to death.

ELLI (horrified)

Awww.

DOY

Since we're on the subject of death, why don't we plan Daddy's funeral?

ELLI

While eating?

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

MAMA-O

Why are you rushing everything? First, you sent your Dad's body to the morgue and now you're planning his funeral while we're eating?

DOY

I'm merely suggesting...

NETTE

And why should you do the planning? Mama is still here. (To MAMA-O) Here, have some apan-apan.

MAMA-O

Thanks, Nette. (Beat) Okay, let's have a plan. We'll have the wake at home.

MIRA

Here?

(MIRA looks at DOY saying "Please, not at home.")

DOY (to the rescue)

Wait a minute. You'll be surprised how convenient it is to have the wake in a funeral home. There's a suite for family members to rest and sleep. There's also a kitchen...why it's almost a home.

MAMA-O

But it's not a home...not his home.

NETTE (firmly)

I agree with Mama. He should be brought home.

ELLI

Me, too. I agree.

(DOY and MIRA look helpless, besieged by the three women.)

MAMA-O

Now that we've agreed, this is the schedule I have in mind. Visitation in the morning, public viewing in the municipal hall in the afternoon...

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MIRA (startled)

Public viewing?

MAMA-O

Yes...to give him the honor he deserves.

DOY (repeats)

Public viewing!

NETTE

Doy, you make it sound as if you have something to hide.

MAMA-O

On the second day, we take his body to the Masonic Lodge in the morning. He was the former lodge master, that won't be a problem. And the rites, I heard are beautiful. In the afternoon, we... (emotional) bury him.

DOY

The municipal hall! Don't we need a permission for that?

NETTE

How can they say no? He was the former governor of this city and the former undersecretary of labor.

ELLI

Two days. That should give us enough time to say our proper goodbye.

NETTE

And to avoid the storm.

MIRA

Why don't we cut short the funeral arrangements so we have time to prepare for the storm?

(The three women look at MIRA inquisitively.)

MIRA

Why do we have to take his body to the masonic lodge? One celebration is enough. Mama-O's church people will take care of that in the morning.

NETTE

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What do you think, Mama? Elli?

ELLI (not meaning it)

Sounds like a good idea.

MIRA

You need all the time to prepare for your flight back home.

NETTE

That's no problem, we've booked our flight. (Boastful) We're seasoned travelers, you see.

MIRA

I wonder how the world's seasoned travelers can withstand this storm. I heard it's projected to be the deadliest...

DOY

It's nothing but media hype. Look at us, suffering from typhoon fatigue...15 storms in a year but we're still here.

MAMA-O

Enough! Enough of this talk.

ELLI (changing the topic)

What about food?

NETTE

I'll take care of that.

DOY

Take care like, paying for it?

NETTE

Yes! I'll pay for it. What do you want? A written pledge?

DOY

I just want to be sure who's paying for what.

NETTE

Good. Now that you're sure, let me add that I want the food catered.

DOY

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Catered? What's the point of incurring additional expenses? What do we have Medyong for?

ELLI

But Medyong isn't ready to cook for so many people. Why, it's like preparing food for an entire barrio.

MAMA-O

Has it occurred to you she needs time to grieve?

DOY

Grieve? She's not a member of this family.

ELLI

But she's extended family.

MAMA-O (loud)

Don't you realize how long she's been with the family? Twenty years! It was Daddy-Bo who introduced her to Aqui. We even arranged for their wedding.

NETTE

If you ask me, I insist on its being catered. I love seeing those flowers sprucing up the occasion, those napkins folded in the shape of small bouquets, and fine china displayed so exquisitely...

DOY (over "exquisitely")

This is a funeral, not a wedding. You make it sound like...I know you've always wanted to get married but...

NETTE (furious)

I am not! I'm happy where I am now.

DOY

Okay, if you say so.

NETTE (strident)

I say so!

(MIRA touches DOY's arm lightly.)

MIRA

Doy, they're right. We should have it catered.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

DOY

Well...okay. Anyway, I'm not the one paying.

NETTE

Right. So what's the fuss?

MIRA (diverting)

Your guests, I'm sure will be (mispronouncing) crème de la crème.

NETTE (correcting her)

Yes, crème de la crème.

MIRA (hitting back)

Mahal, don't forget to have (showing off, pronouncing the word correctly, this time) soufflé on the menu.

NETTE

Souffle served during a funeral? (Snickers and laughs) I never heard...

DOY

Really, Nette. This is no time to be laughing. (Beat) There's one thing we should be thinking of.

(THEY all look at him.)

DOY

A mausoleum. A grand mausoleum. Daddy-Bo was very specific about it. He wanted to be interred in...

NETTE

I don't understand you, Doy. You want to save on the celebration but you're willing to build a mausoleum which will cost a fortune.

DOY

It's his wish, not mine.

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MIRA (lies, reinforcing)

I remember him mentioning it to me, too.

NETTE

How are we going to pay for it?

DOY

I will, but you have to reimburse me, later.

NETTE

But...

DOY

I'll show you the receipts.

NETTE

I'm not too sure about that arrangement. Let me think about it seriously.

DOY

Anyway, we have no choice. He had it stipulated in the will.

MAMA-O

What will?

NETTE

You mean you have a copy of the will?

(MIRA throws DOY a sharp look which says, "Now, you're fucked up.")

DOY

No, what I mean was, if he mentioned it to us that often, he must have stipulated it in his will.
What I'm trying to say is...

MAMA-O

Yes, what are you exactly trying to say?

DOY

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

What I'm trying to say is, I'm just making an educated guess. (Repeats to reinforce his point) I was just assuming...

(NETTE looks at MAMA-O and ELLI with the expression that says, "You can't trust these two.")

ELLI (to NETTE)

Ma, a family mausoleum is a good idea. Long after we're gone, the edifice is still there to remind everybody of this family's distinction. It's like a monument.

NETTE

Our family is well-known around here, so I guess...

ELLI

Oh please...please.

NETTE

Okay, let's honor Daddy-Bo's last wish. What do you think, Ma?

MAMA-O

Why not?

DOY

Since you're in Manila, I'll take care of everything. I'll just send you the receipts.

NETTE

I suggest that before you buy anything, you must provide us with a "quote" so we have an idea how much we have to spend.

DOY

Why? Don't you trust me?

(NETTE hesitates before she answers DOY.)

NETTE

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

It's not a question of trust. We have to keep it within budget...our budget.

MAMA-O (seeing DOY is peeved)

Since we're more or less agreed on the mausoleum, we can now proceed to other funeral arrangements. Okay, Doy, you can decide on the guest list.

DOY

Thought you'd never ask.

MAMA-O

Who do you have in mind?

DOY (excited)

There are the Layzons. They're old money. And they'll add prestige to the celebration. Then there's the Mallares...they own the land next to our farm. And yes, let's not forget the Santiagos. They're into waste

management. I heard this business is booming. In fact, I might look into that in the future. Might be a good enterprise.

MIRA (at the prospect of meeting rich people)

YES!

NETTE

What kind of a guest list is that? Forbes 100? What about friends and relatives?

DOY

We have to be practical. Let's invite people who can be "useful" to us.

MAMA-O

Let's not forget people who meant something to Daddy-Bo, too. What about the tenants? At least, those close to him.

ELLI

Good idea...an inclusive event, very democratic.

DOY

Whoaa...wait a minute. This is not supposed to be (emphasizes) a very public event.

MAMA-O

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

Of course not. We just want to keep the funeral...(searches for word) meaningful.

DOY

Okay. But I warn you, tenants shouldn't hobnob with our guests.

MAMA-O

Where will you put them, then?

DOY

They can stand outside during the funeral and they can stay in the dirty kitchen during the reception.

MIRA (remembering the status of her father)

The dirty kitchen!

DOY

Why, what's the problem?

MIRA

You mean, if my father were alive, you'd put him in the dirty kitchen?

(DOY does not respond. Everybody is silent. Only the sound of the utensils is heard. NETTE breaks the silence.)

NETTE (reconciliatory)

You know, Mira, Medyong can cook all those rural dishes you're so familiar with. She can cook for the tenants...diningding, lamyang, dinuguan...

ELLI

Why don't we have all those dishes instead of foreign ones?

NETTE

Including the guests?

ELLI

These are native dishes, Ma. Sariling atin. They're not called "rural" anymore. They're known as "authentic" or traditional in many upscale restaurants.

(NETTE does not respond)

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

ELLI

Oh, please, Ma...please, please...for my sake.

NETTE (acquiesces)

Well, ok.

DOY

Now can I go back to the guest list? I was thinking of Mrs. CHU

MAMA-O (alarmed)

Who?

DOY

Mrs. Chu. She's now married to a rich businessman.

MAMA-O

I don't care if she's married to Rockefeller.

DOY

Ma, what happened between the two of you took place many years ago. People have forgotten...

MAMA-O (strident)

Well, not me! That woman almost ruined our family. I can't believe you'd even think of having her in this house. Don't my feelings count?

DOY

She's coming with her husband...

MAMA-O

She can come with the devil for all I care. It's out of the question.

NETTE

Doy, I'm with Mama. Please don't let that woman come. Jesus, I thought we're done with that drama.

DOY (oblivious)

I'm sure Daddy spent a fortune on her. It's payback time.

MAMA-O (getting furious)

No!!

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

DOY

There's no harm...

MAMA-O (rising anger)

No!!!

DOY

I was just thinking, with Daddy gone...

MAMA-O (hysterical)

I said no (hitting the table) and that's that!

LIGHTS OUT. LIGHTS on MEDYONG praying the rosary.

MEDYONG

Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be they name...

LIGHTS DIM as she continues to pray.

(Sound from the BOMBO PATROL is heard.)

ANNOUNCER (from a loudspeaker)

This is your Barangay Tanod. Everybody, listen up. You are ordered to evacuate immediately. We've been tracking the path of typhoon Haiyan and it's expected to intensify until it hits landfall on Friday. We urge everyone to hurry and make the necessary preparations. In the next hours, bring only what you need and go to the nearest shelter. Check your barangay billboard for locations of different shelters. Hurry! Alsa balutan na kayo.

SCENE 3. LIGHTS on DOY and MIRA in their bedroom. DOY paces the floor. MIRA is busy packing her things. She is deeply affected by the coming storm. DOY, in contrast, is not.

DOY

We have to talk.

MIRA

Talk. I'm listening.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

(DOY is annoyed that MIRA is not giving him full attention.)

DOY

Can you stop what you're doing?

MIRA

Didn't you hear the evacuation order? You should be packing, too.

DOY

I've said it and I'll say it again. I don't believe all that hysteria. It's all media hype.

MIRA

No, it's not. Japan and China have reported the same thing. It's not just our own weather center. You've got to get moving.

DOY

Please listen to what I have to say. This is important!

MIRA

I said, talk. I'm listening.

(MIRA opens drawers and closets, choosing the "essentials" she has to bring.)

DOY

It's Mama-O.

(MIRA holds up a sexy, black nightwear, contemplating on bringing it.)

MIRA (to herself)

I guess not.

(MIRA throws away the nightwear.)

DOY

Are you listening?

MIRA

Yes, you were saying something about Mama-O.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

DOY

Didn't she surprise you, coming on to us that strong? Making decisions all of the sudden? She used to be meek as a lamb. Why, when Daddy was alive, she was so quiet...so docile. You'd think she was a piece of furniture stashed in a corner.

MIRA

Well, with Daddy gone, maybe she feels liberated.

DOY

What gave her the idea?

MIRA

She did study law in college, didn't she?

(DOY nods.)

MIRA

Then she knows what she's entitled to.

DOY

But she can't even balance a bankbook. That's why Daddy withdrew her bank account. And I intend to...

MIRA (cuts)

That's a bad strategy. Treating your mother badly.

DOY

Give me a break. I treat her badly? Everybody knows she's mentally unstable.

MIRA

Not everybody.

DOY

God knows I've been patient with her. I drive her everyday...I mean, everyday, to her favorite spot where she can have a breath of sea air.

MIRA

You did it for Daddy-Bo. He was the one who wanted to go to the port every afternoon...to watch the sunset...and like Mama-O, have a whiff of sea air.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

DOY

I'm fed up! (Beat) You know what? I can get a doctor to prove she's incompetent. That will get her out of the way...

MIRA (cuts)

That's a bad strategy. You see, if you do that, they'll gang up against you. You don't want that to happen, do you?

DOY

What do you suggest I do?

MIRA

Pretend to be good to your Mom. I mean, just pretend. Pretend to be kind to her. People take kindly to sons who care about their mothers.

DOY

At the moment, she's not top priority.

MIRA

Don't underestimate her. She's like a storm.

DOY (exasperated)

Jesus!

MIRA

No, listen. She's like this storm...first, she's a harmless low pressure area, then she gathers strength and finally, she intensifies into this incredible power.

DOY (laughs)

What power? She can't even handle her fears.

MIRA

I'll tell you what she has. Moral power. That counts for something.

DOY (sarcastic)

You mean, like money? Like the land? Like anything you can measure?

MIRA

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

Her nieces go to her when they have problems. Church people seek her advice. Hospital people...

DOY

Okay. Okay. (Reflecting) I think I'll give her three hectares more on top of...

MIRA

A monthly allowance. Her hospital bills...

DOY

Her hospital bills? No way! It's draining our budget as of now. No. She should come home. You and Medyong can take care of her.

MIRA

She won't come back. It's as if she has PTSD.

DOY

PTSD?

MIRA

Post-traumatic stress disorder...like a soldier with battle fatigue.

DOY

Really, Mira. You and your metaphors! First, she's like Haiyan. And now she's a soldier with PTSD? I'll make it simple. I won't pay her hospital bills. That's it!

MIRA

I have a suggestion. This will make both of you happy.

DOY

Just don't give me another metaphor.

MIRA

Talk to the owner of the hospital. He's a family friend, right? Negotiate for some adjustments to her bill.

DOY

Adjustments?

MIRA

Yes, instead of a private room, settle for a hospital bed.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

DOY

With the rest of the other patients? That's humiliating!

MIRA

No, just let it be known that she wants to interact with other patients...so she can comfort and counsel them. She enjoys this kind of work, it's therapy for her. (Beat) If you ask me, it's the hospital which should be paying her.

DOY

They've given her a lot of privileges already. She can go in and out of the hospital, I don't think...

MIRA

Ask them. There's no harm trying.

DOY

Ok, I'll try. (Beat) What about her privacy?

MIRA

Put a divider. And if you're worried about humiliating her, put up a divider that suggest she's "class".

DOY

A divider?

MIRA

Yes. Something that suggests she's special...that's she's of a different breed.

DOY

A divider won't be enough to give that impression.

MIRA (over "impression")

Silk. A divider made of pure silk.

(DOY reflects, then his face lights up.)

DOY

Oh, my dear, you're right.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

MIRA

Good.

DOY

What would I do without you?

MIRA

By the way, what's this "mausoleum" all about? I had a hard time keeping a straight face when you mentioned it. You just mentioned it out of nowhere.

DOY

That's my hidden source of income.

MIRA

What do you mean?

DOY

Don't you get it? I'll jack up the price of the construction.

MIRA

You mean, like a "rip off"?

DOY

Yes! I can manufacture a bill that asks her to pay more.

MIRA (with a glint in her eyes)

We can make her spend for everything without her knowing it. Brilliant, Doy, brilliant!

(DOY comes closer and puts his arms around her.)

DOY

This is going to be good.

MIRA

Oh, dear, my stuff. I have to finish packing. Doy, please hand me that pair of white gloves.

DOY (reflects)

When was it?

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

MIRA (hurt)

You don't remember? You honestly don't remember?

DOY

I seem to...

(They are interrupted by a knock on the door.)

MIRA

Who could it be at this time of night?

DOY (loud)

Who is it?

MEDYONG

It's me, Manong.

DOY (softly, to MIRA)

What does she want now? Give us another weather update? God, what should I do with this woman?!

MIRA

If you tell her what you plan to do about Aqui, perhaps she'll stop bothering you.

(DOY opens the door.)

DOY

What is it?! You have any idea what time it is?

MEDYONG

Caloy is here.

DOY

Caloy who?

MEDYONG

Your new kapatas. The overseer.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

DOY

What does he want?

MEDYONG

He asked me to give you this.

(MEDYONG gives him the letter.)

DOY (to himself)

What could this be?

MEDYONG

There's one more thing, Nong.

DOY

Make it fast. I don't have all night.

MEDYONG

He wants to borrow money from you.

DOY

Borrow? (Like, "The nerve of that peasant to borrow money from me.")

MEDYONG

He says, it's urgent. Kailangan nya talaga.

DOY

For what?

MEDYONG

He needs materials...plywood, nails, hammer...to barricade his windows. And extra money so he could send his family to safety in Manila.

DOY (dismissive)

I'll see him in the morning.

MEDYONG

But he'll be leaving before dawn.

DOY

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

You hear me? I'll see him in the morning!

MIRA (overhearing)

Give him some food.

MEDYONG

Manong, I'd like to talk to you about Aqui.

DOY (dismissive)

Good night!

(DOY closes the door.)

MIRA

What was that about?

(DOY does not answer. He opens the letter, reads it and as if weighed down by what he read, slumps on a chair. MIRA gets the letter from him. She reads it and gasps.)

MIRA

Are they crazy? The nerve of sending this ransom note. We don't have this kind of money!

DOY

They must be under the impression that we care much for Aqui.

MIRA

Where in heaven's name did they get that impression?

DOY

Daddy-Bo. He treated Aqui like a son. These peasants begin to have ideas.

MIRA

What are you going to do?

DOY

Ignore it.

MIRA

But what about Medyong?

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

DOY

Her feelings are not top priority now. (Beat) What would you do? What would you do for the sake of dignity?

MIRA

For this amount of money? Fuck dignity!

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 4. Lights on NETTE, ELLI and MEDYONG. NETTE faces the mirror, applying facial mask. ELLI flips through the old album of her grandparents.

NETTE

What's inside those boxes?

MEDYONG

Those samples are for the poor.

NETTE

Why is she storing it here? Shouldn't they be in the barrio clinic?

MEDYONG

She repacks them and sells them to drug stores.

ELLI

What if she gets caught?

MEDYONG

Naku, who's going to tell naman? Drug stores make profit, customers save money, so who's complaining?

ELLI

Don't they have enough money? They've been bleeding the farm dry!

MEDYONG

This year's been bad. Malas talaga. Crops died because of the pests and the typhoons. Not only that. Most of the tenants left, they'd rather work for Don Servillano. You remember the owner of the land next to yours?

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

NETTE

Yes. But why? It can't be all that bad.

MEDYONG

They say, Doy is cruel. Mapintas. And...(stops)

NETTE

And what?

MEDYONG

...doesn't care about the welfare of his tenants. Not like Daddy-Bo.

(She sobs.)

ELLI

What is it, Medyong?

NETTE

What's bothering you? We noticed during dinner, you...

MEDYONG

Aqui disappeared. He's been kidnapped by the bandits.

ELLI

What?!

NETTE

Since when?

MEDYONG

About ten days now.

NETTE

Is Doy doing something about it?

MEDYONG

He doesn't seem to care, at all!

ELLI

After Aqui's thirty years of service? What kind of a monster is he?

NETTE

They should have kidnapped Doy. (Beat) That's why we hate him so much. Walang malasakit! He's so indifferent to other people's problems. If his neighbor's house is on fire, he won't do anything to help. He'll just watch...what apathy!

(Silence)

MEDYONG

Tonight, Doy received a ransom note.

NETTE

How much are they asking?

(MEDYONG approaches NETTE and ELLI and whispers to them. NETTE is stunned. ELLI is taken aback.)

NETTE

That's a lot of money.

ELLI

Ma, we've got to help him.

NETTE

I'll see what I can do. I have to raise the money. It's not something that you could just hand over to them.

ELLI

But we have to act fast! (Comes closer to NETTE) Ma, I hope you understand. A man is about to be killed. Ma, you're the one who always has the answers. Please, we've got to do something.

NETTE

I'll talk to Doy first thing tomorrow.

MEDYONG

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

Please, don't! He'll kill me if he knew I told you.

ELLI

I can give you my savings, Medyong. (Turns to NETTE) What about my trust fund?

(NETTE is moved by ELLI'S generosity.)

NETTE

Okay, Medyong. I'll try my best. I think I know how to raise the money. But you have to wait a bit. This is a bad time, what with the funeral and on top of it all, we have this storm. You understand?

MEDYONG

Yes, Inday. Thank you, thank you so much!

(MEDYONG reaches for the hand of NETTE to kiss it, but she instinctively pulls it away. NETTE hasn't gotten used to close physical contact with people below her class.)

NETTE

Really, Medyong. You don't have to.

(Suddenly, a knock is heard. ELLI hides the photo in a nearby trunk. NETTE opens the door. DOY enters, surprised at the sight of his sister whose face is unrecognizable with the facial mask.)

DOY

God, I thought I saw...

NETTE

A ghost? Why, Doy, you're so jumpy these days.

(DOY sees MEDYONG. Looks displeased.)

DOY

What are you doing here so late?

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

(MEDYONG does not respond. She exits.)

DOY

I just dropped by to see if you're comfortable here.

NETTE

We're fine. In fact, we're just about to turn in. (Dismissing him) Good night.

(DOY exits)

ELLI

Did he hear us?

NETTE

I don't think so. Otherwise, he would have gone on a rampage. You know his temper.

(ELLI sighs with relief.)

ELLI

Ma, you have no idea how good Aqui was to me. He showed me how beautiful and nurturing the land is. That's why I took up environmental science.

NETTE

Oh?

ELLI

I remember when I was nine, Daddy-Bo took me to the farm, gave me a month's provisions and left me with Aqui. (Smiles to herself, remembering something good.) Oh, the things he taught me. He showed me sights I will never forget. The cool lake up in the mountains so unspoiled and so clean. And from a rock, a spring flowed and we drank from it. Nature's faucet, I thought. Aqui also taught me how to cross a river without getting carried away by the strong ripples. He taught me how to grip the stones with one foot and maintain my strong hold with the other. He called it a balancing act, something he said will guide me later in life. I could also tell the names of the birds by their colors...green, red, blue. He said I could have a rainbow if I let one color at a time pass through the prism of life. Just be patient, he said.

NETTE

So you got from him what books can't give you.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

ELLI

Yes. A peasant and yet he taught me life's lessons. Oh, Ma, will you help him? Really, really help him?

(NETTE nods tentatively but ELLI, naïve and idealistic, is reassured. ELLI opens the trunk where she left the photo album and is surprised at the treasure trove of old photographs.)

ELLI

Wow! Look at all these. More pictures. This is like Pandora's box! (Picks one picture) Who is this woman? She's very pretty. (Shows it to NETTE) Is she your cousin? She looks a lot like you.

(NETTE grabs the picture from her.)

NETTE

You should be in bed, young lady.

ELLI (ignores)

Here's Daddy-Bo and Mama-O when they were young. What a handsome couple. (Reads the message behind the photo.)

"Marry me, Andang. I will make you happy."

NETTE

That's your grandpa. Making a good case as usual.

ELLI

A good case?

NETTE

He had to compete with a lot of other suitors. Your grandma was a good catch. Good family. Old money. Rather attractive to a struggling working student like Daddy-Bo.

ELLI

Daddy-Bo was a good catch, too. One of the top ten in the bar exam, despite the fact that he was working as assistant to Dr. Otley Bayer.

NETTE

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

But it was your grandma who made a lot of sacrifices for his career. Not him.

ELLI

What do you mean?

NETTE

Imagine to study law, excel in it but never applied it, at all. Could have been a topnotch lawyer because she could write a good brief. Even defeated Carlos P. Romulo in a national writing contest. But none of this happened. You know why? Because of that promise, "I will make you happy, Andang." He didn't want your grandma to work. As if domestic bliss is everything. What a lot of bull!

(ELLI does not respond. She remains quiet as she takes this all in.)

NETTE (continues)

You know what the favorite story of your grandpa? He had only a hundred pesos in his pocket when he and Mama came to Tacloban. It was the good connections of Mama that helped him build a good practice. He became one of the best prosecutors in the city. In fact, some young lawyers still use his method as their model. (Pause) It was a story that could have had a good ending.

(ELLI looks at her inquisitively.)

ELLI

Why was she so upset when Mrs. Chu was mentioned? And what did she mean when she said the woman ruined her life?

NETTE

This facial mask is thick and dry now. I better...

ELLI

Don't change the topic, Ma. Tell me the story.

(NETTE doesn't answer. She's weighing whether to tell ELLI or not.)

ELLI

Let it out, Ma. Let it out.

NETTE

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

Well, okay. You're a big girl now and I'm sure you can handle the truth. (Takes a deep breath)
After Doy was born, and after thirteen years of marriage, Daddy-Bo fell for a woman fifteen
years his junior.

ELLI

Who can compete with youth?

NETTE

What broke your grandma's heart was...

LIGHTS ON MAMA-O. FADE OUT on NETTE and ELLI.

MAMA-O

What broke my heart was the second house...the house he built for his mistress, right here in
Tacloban. Considering that my family is well-known here, it was humiliating for me. (Pause) But
he built that house, nevertheless, for his own convenience. She lived in Tabon-Tabon where he'd
spend nights. He didn't even care if I knew where he was. Putang ina nya!

LIGHTS ON NETTE and ELLI

ELLI

Tabon-tabon. It means cover-up, right? How (with irony) appropriate.

NETTE

At three in the morning...yes, at three. Mama would wake me up and drag me to the plaza. Of all
plazes! We could have been mugged. But you know what? There was this angel by the fountain
right in the middle of the plaza. I thought she saved us from whatever danger lurked in the empty
streets. Mama and I would go round and round as if she was gasping for breath. The pain must
be that intolerable. Counting the times we did that, I'd say, we could have reached Manila on
foot!

ELLI

What happened next?

NETTE

Daddy-Bo met an accident.

ELLI

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

Talk of karma.

NETTE (continues)

One night, as he was crossing the San Juanico Bridge, his car ran over a boy.

ELLI (eager)

And?

NETTE

The boy died instantly.

ELLI

How dreadful! (Pause) Did the family sue him?

NETTE

No, he paid them off. Settled the case with good money. But the problem was, the trauma stayed with him. After he killed that boy, he could never drive. He absolutely refused to drive!

LIGHTS ON MAMA-O

MAMA-O

So he did the next best thing. He brought the girl from Tabon-Tabon to Tacloban. Got her that house.

(She bows her head in sorrow.)

FADE OUT ON MAMA-O. LIGHTS ON ELLI and NETTE

ELLI

No wonder Grandma refuses to live here, anymore. She has no sentiments whatsoever for this house.

NETTE

This house , what we call our ancestral house, isn't our first...

ELLI (confused)

Huh?

LIGHTS ON MAMA-O

MAMA-O

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

Our first house was very grand. The parquet floors, the imported tiles, the solid walls. We even had a balconaje where we'd take our siesta. It was built to last a lifetime. He could do that, too. He was the Undersecretary of Labor, after all. (Pause) Oh, he'd travel around the world to get ideas on how to build a house. (Wistful) Yes, he wanted it to last a lifetime, but it didn't.

LIGHTS OUT. LIGHTS ON ELLI.

ELLI

What happened to it?

NETTE

An accident. Got burned down. Razed to the ground. All our dreams went down with it. And that was the time when Mama had a nervous breakdown.

LIGHTS OUT. LIGHTS ON MAMA-O.

MAMA-O

They checked me into a hospital. Surprisingly, I felt safe and happy there. I didn't have to wonder endlessly, "He loves me. He loves me not." No more fights. No more sleepless nights. Just peace and quiet. (Pause) That's when I decided to stay in the hospital, for good.

LIGHTS OUT. LIGHTS ON NETTE AND ELLI

NETTE

Daddy had many houses built for Mama to lure her back. But no dice. Underneath it all, she never forgave him.

ELLI

Even after the other woman got married?

NETTE

Yes. In fact that woman asked permission from Daddy to get married. She was getting old and couldn't wait for Daddy to make up his mind. But you know, he had. He will never leave Mama-O for another woman. Strange, huh? Strange are the ways of love, indeed.

ELLI

How did they explain their separate ways?

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

NETTE

They kept up appearances. Mama's bad heart was explanation enough. Then there's the everyday visits of Daddy-Bo. Doy would drive them to the fort to watch the sunset. Everyday! Isn't that weird? The arrangement, I mean.

ELLI

All this going about and around when they could just kiss and make up.

NETTE

Will you please hand me the cold compress? It's time I take off this facial mask.

LIGHTS DIM as NETTE takes off facial mask gradually, wiping it with cold compress, then removing it with warm cleansing towelette.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 2. DAY 2. A scream is heard from Mama's room. NETTE hurries to her room and sees her pacing the floor.

MAMA-O

Oh, my dogs. Where have they all gone?

NETTE

You gave me a scare. I thought something terrible has happened.

MAMA-O

What could be more terrible than this? Doy shipped off the dogs to the farm, right after your father died.

NETTE

How did you know?

MAMA-O

Medyong.

NETTE (to herself)

That woman should know better than tell Mama (Loud) Don't worry, the dogs will be more useful in the farm.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

MAMA-O

I can't believe he'd do this to me. He knows how attached I am to those dogs.

NETTE

Ma, you've got to stop picking up stray dogs in the streets. This house is not a shelter.

MAMA-O

What if Doy shoots them?

NETTE

No, he won't. Probably, he's just worried about the expenses maintaining those dogs.

MAMA-O

Oh, the thought that they will be eaten as pulutan.

NETTE

Nobody's a dog-eater among our farm staff. Now try to relax. Where are your pills?
(Mama-O points to a huge pill bag on the side table.)

NETTE (shocked)

You're taking this many pills now?

(MAMA-O nods. NETTE examines the bag and gets one she recognizes.)

NETTE

Here, take your valium. Let me get you a glass of water.

MAMA-O

You don't have to.

(She pops the pill into her mouth.)

NETTE

Wow! You can do that?

(MAMA-O nods.)

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

NETTE (worried)

Ma, I took the liberty of getting you a plane ticket. Wait, don't say "no". With Daddy gone, you're not safe here. Those two will make it difficult for you.

MAMA-O

I can handle Doy. Did you see how I put him in his place?

NETTE

It's just not Doy. There's the wife, too.

MAMA-O

That cipher? She's no match for me. You don't know what I can do these days.

NETTE

Please come with me. It's time I take care of you. (Pause) At least come for a visit. See if you like living in Manila.

MAMA-O

About Elli. You did a good job.

NETTE

I did my best, Ma. (Pause) Well?

(MAMA-O does not respond.)

NETTE

It's time you get to know Elli better. And there's this storm. You have to come with us. (Suddenly, BOMBO PATROL makes another announcement.)

ANNOUNCER

This is an evacuation order. It's mandatory that you pack your things and go to the nearest shelter. The storm is expected to make its landfall in two days. This is a warning. The storm will hit the entire eastern Visayas. Its strength is unprecedented in the entire history of the Philippines. Nakakaiba ito. You have 24 hours to prepare. Hurry!

MAMA-O (hysterical)

A super typhoon, huh? Just the thing this country needs. A storm to wash away corruption and scandal. Destroy crooked politicians. Have you heard of the pork barrel scam? That's like mass murder. Poor people die of malnutrition, of not having roofs over their heads...dying without hospital care. All these could have been avoided if they had the money that belongs to them.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

These scoundrels posing as senators and congressmen are mass murderers! This country has to be washed and cleansed. Let the supertyphoon come!

LIGHTS OUT

ACT 2

SCENE 1 DAY 3. Late morning. The funeral ceremony. At the center of the stage is a casket. A singer sings "Rock of Ages." A female deacon enters.

DEACON

"Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Let the Pentecost guide you as you surrender your whole being to HIM in the true spirit of repentance. Before we start the ceremony, let me ask those who wish to ask forgiveness from our dearly beloved Nong Celio to come forward."

(MAMA-O approaches the casket. She prays fervently, offering herself to the Holy Spirit. Then she gradually goes into a trance. In a state of catalepsy, she loses control of her body movements. Her eyes look dazed.)

MAMA-O

Forgive me. Forgive me. Forgive me!

(She collapses on the floor. Gasps from the guests are heard.)

DOY (to himself)

Oh my god, she did it. She did it!

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 2. Late evening, after the funeral. MAMA-O, NETTE, ELLI, DOY and MIRA enter. MAMA-O and NETTE look furious, as if they're on a warpath.

MAMA-O

Maintenance funds? That's all I get?

DOY

Your upkeep alone costs a fortune. Don't you know that? Anyway, that's what the will says.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

MAMA-O

I'm the wife! I have the right to claim half of the estate, if not all of it. (Confronting DOY) Why should you get two thirds of the land? Who gave you the idea you deserve all that?

DOY

I worked like a slave, managed this farm while you abandoned...

MAMA-O (cuts)

It's a right, not a privilege. (Pause) Anyway, you've been paid for your work.

DOY

Paid?

MAMA-O

With your upkeep in this house. You and your wife...you've been living under our roof for free. You should get less, you freeloaders!

MIRA (seething with anger)

WE ARE NOT FREELOADERS!

(DOY turns red at the mention of "freeloaders". He raises his hand in an attempt to slap MAMA-O but NETTE steps in.)

NETTE

No, you don't. You're not hitting her just because she's telling the truth. (Beat) That document, that damn will you manufactured from God knows where is suspicious. BOGUS! What do you take us for? Morons? There are proper steps to follow before the land and the properties can be distributed. You have to certify the extent and measurement of the entire estate are correct.

DOY

Are you insinuating...

NETTE (cuts)

I am insinuating! We demand that the will be probated.

ELLI (getting into the fray)

By the court.

MAMA-O

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

And what about Cecilia?

DOY

What about her? She's dead!

MAMA-O

She's the first born so she's entitled to get something.

DOY

Why are you insisting? She's dead. She had no husband and she left no heir.

NETTE

She did.

(DOY and MIRA look at her, confused.)

MAMA-O

She left a child.

DOY

What child? You mean she has a child stashed away somewhere?

NETTE

Ma, tell him.

MAMA-O

Elli is Cecilia's child.

(Silence. DOY and MIRA stare at ELLI as if they're seeing her for the first time.)

MIRA

Wasn't she adopted by Nette?

DOY

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

Is she, was she born out of wedlock?

(No response from Mama-O and NETTE.)

DOY

In that case, she's illegitimate and has no right to inherit.

MAMA-O

But we've acknowledged her. She even has the same surname (glares at DOY) as YOURS!

DOY

But she's legally adopted by Nette. Her share should come from Nette.

MAMA-O

No. She's still Cecilia's child. And we have a certificate to prove she wasn't adopted, at all.

DOY

How come I know nothing about this?

MAMA-O

Why should you? You can turn every bit of information against us. Elli...

(Looks around. Sees ELLI gone.)

MAMA-O

Where is she? Oh, we've hurt the poor child. I'll talk to her.

(MAMA-O exits.)

NETTE (approaches DOY)

Don't you dare hurt Elli.

DOY

Oh, yeh? Watch me. She doesn't get a single cent. I'd rather let the dogs inherit the money.

NETTE

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

Why, you...

(Approaches DOY aggressively, reaches for his penis and crushes it with all her might.)

DOY (in pain)

Ohhhhhhh.

LIGHTS OUT

Scene 3. DOY rushes to the bedroom, MIRA trailing after him.

DOY

I'll kill her, puta!

(DOY goes through the drawers, closets and side tables, searching for his gun.)

MIRA

Please, Doy. Think it over. You don't want to be a murderer!

DOY

Where's my gun?

MIRA

I gave it to Caloy.

DOY

You what?

MIRA

Gave it to Caloy. Remember the night he was here?

DOY

Are you out of your mind?

MIRA

I didn't want a gun in this house. What with your bad temper.

DOY

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

We need a gun, don't you realize that? There's going to be a storm and we're unprotected, Then there's these brownouts. You know how often that happens around here. And how about the looting? With the aftermath of a monster storm, how can we cope...

MIRA

The farm needs protection, too. I thought...

DOY

You thought? Jesus, you gave the gun to a mere peasant. I doubt if he knows how to use it.

MIRA

He says he does.

DOY

And you believe him?

MIRA

These men are tough.

(DOY sits down but because of the pain in his scrotum, suddenly stands.)

DOY (still in pain)

I can't take this sitting down. I'll give that bitch a dose of her won medicine!

(MIRA approaches him to give him comfort.)

MIRA

Tell me, what's this between you and Nette. I have a feeling it's not just about the inheritance.

DOY

She holds a grudge against me...this big (demonstrates with his hands)!

MIRA

I know, but why?

DOY

The property in Caloocan? Daddy-Bo gave it to her as a birthday present. But she lost it and she thinks I was responsible for it.

DOY

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

I convinced Daddy to sell it so he can put up a sugar mill. I also wanted to diversify and plant more citrus. You know, expand the land. Nette thought I manipulated Daddy to deprive her of her share.

MIRA

I see. (Reflects) Perhaps, she can sense you don't like her.

DOY

Of course, it's obvious. I don't like her! (Beat) Now that you've mentioned it, I have no particular affection for the whole lot of them. You know why? Cecilia was Daddy-Bo's favorite. Now that she's dead, he transferred that affection to Elli. Then there's Nette, a favorite of Mama-O. Where does that place me.

(DOY, still holding his scrotum, bows his head.)

MIRA

Oh, you poor dear. Come here.

(She hugs DOY and accidentally touches his genitals.)

DOY (in excruciating pain)

Arayyy.

LIGHTS OUT. LIGHTS on MAMA-O and ELLI. ELLI bends over pictures scattered on the floor. Agitated, she rummages through them, picking out pictures of her biological mother. MAMA-O looks on.

MAMA-O

Elli, my child, what are you doing?

ELLI (cryptic)

Looking for my mother.

(MAMA-O follows up on ELLI's cryptic remark.)

MAMA-O

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

You won't find her there.

ELLI

This is she, right?

(ELLI holds up the picture she showed NETTE earlier. Then she continues to search through the pile more thoroughly.)

MAMA-O

Elli, please stop. You're too angry....

ELLI

I AM angry. I can't believe you and (hesitates) Nette are capable of doing this to me...deluding me into believing what I am not.

MAMA-O

If you're worried what it will do to your share.

ELLI

I'm not interested in the inheritance!

(Glares at MAMA-O)

ELLI

You kept me in the dark about my birth.

MAMA-O

We didn't want to hurt you.

ELLI

So you'd rather feed me with lies? (Laughs) There I was talking about family pride when I'm not a part of it, at all.

MAMA-O

But you are. We loved you the best way we knew how.

(ELLI begins to step on all the pictures.)

MAMA-O

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

Please, Elli, stop it.

(ELLI sobs on MAMA-O's shoulders.)

ELLI

I'm sorry, grandma.

MAMA-O

Was Nette ever bad to you? Was she ever neglectful of her duties? Have you any reason to accuse her of not being a good mother?

(ELLI shakes her head and stops sobbing. Silence.)

MAMA-O

We didn't want you to feel (searches for word)...diminished.

ELLI

Diminished? But how long did you expect to keep this a secret?

(MAMA-O does not respond.)

ELLI

Because the longer you keep it from me, the more I feel less and less of myself. You didn't give me enough knowledge how to respond to this situation...how to prepare myself to this awful revelation. I should have been ready...

MAMA-O

We didn't want people to gossip about you. Anak sa labas, litik sa kawayan, iti...you know how it is in our...

ELLI

I'm not a piece of gossip. I'm a person, a human being who deserves the truth.

MAMA-O

We did the best we could, given the circumstances.

ELLI

What circumstances?

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

MAMA-O

Come here, sit by me.

(ELLI comes closer to MAMA-O and sits on the floor, resting her head on MAMA-O's knee.)

MAMA-O

Your mother was very beautiful. Like a movie star. We always called her, "Barbara Stanwyk". Of course, you were too young to remember that. Yes, that was what we always called Cecilia. The Barbara Stanwyk of the Philippines.

(Enter a young, pretty girl, gradually moving smoothly in a dance move that suggests her homage to youth and life. MAMA-O and ELLI are not aware of her presence as she circles around both of them.)

MAMA-O (continues)

Cecilia was a dutiful daughter that's why she was your Daddy-Bo's favorite. She was the quiet type. Not like Nette who was always contentious. (Beat) He gave her everything she wanted. Materially, I mean. Do you know how many pairs she had to match her wardrobe? Where can you find such pampering?

(The young girl, barefoot when she entered, tries three pairs of shoes. Chooses a pair and continues to dance.)

ELLI

Tell me about her, grandma, not her shoes.

MAMA-O

She was an overprotected child...was never allowed to go out, entertain suitors or have fun. I suppose your grandpa controlled her, afraid what he did to his mistress would happen to Elli. Well, guess what. It happened to her. When your grandpa went to Europe on a long tour, she got the chance to have a good time. Too many shoes and dresses and no place to go. She went partying and it was in one of those dances where she met this man, a young lieutenant who sweet talked her into...

(MAMA-O stops, overwhelmed by the memory. A man in uniform, in his twenties, enters. Dances with the young woman. They dance intimately.)

ELLI

She got pregnant.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

(The dancers stop their performance and exits.)

MAMA-O

We kept her at home at first. But when her pregnancy was beginning to be obvious, we took her to Manila and hid her in a convent.

ELLI

And when Daddy-Bo came back?

MAMA-O

We told him the truth. Of course, it broke his heart.

ELLI

Talk of retribution.

MAMA-O

You know what? You're right. They were both seventeen. That young girl he had an affair with and his own daughter.

ELLI

So you had me adopted by...

(Hesitates calling NETTE "MA")

MAMA-O

Yes. She was the logical choice. Single and successful.

ELLI

What happened to my mother?

MAMA-O

She died. After you were born, your mother seemed to slip away...as if she was willfully wishing to disappear, vanish...

(NETTE suddenly barges in and locks the door behind her.)

NETTE (oblivious of what was taking place)

Give me my bag. Hurry!

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

(ELLI picks up the handbag from the night table. NETTE opens it and reaches for her gun.)

MAMA-O

What's that? A gun? (Horrified) You have a gun?

ELLI

Ma, be careful. That might go off.

NETTE

Hide, the two of you.

(MAMA-O and ELLI hesitate.)

NETTE

I said, hide!

(MAMA-O and ELLI hide behind the headboard of the bed. They wait, then listen . They hear the sound of a car starting.)

NETTE (guarding the door)

Did you hear that? Where is he going?

MAMA-O

To his kumpare. That means he will be out the whole night!

NETTE

Why is he going there?

MAMA-O

That's where he goes when he's upset. That awful squeeze you gave him.

NETTE

Let's not waste time. Elli, help your grandma pack her things.

ELLI (out of the blue, to NETTE)

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

Thank you for everything. I'm very grateful.

MAMA-O

I told her everything about Cecila.

NETTE (to ELLI)

So now you know.

(ELLI approaches NETTE to hug her.)

NETTE

Oh, my baby. (Realizes) We've got to hurry. Go to the next room, Elli, and get your grandma's things.

MAMA-O

But I haven't decided yet.

NETTE

We have no time to wait. The storm surge they're expecting could be a tsunami.

MAMA-O (shudders)

A tsunami!

(Grabs ELLI'S hand.)

ELLI

You go ahead, grandma. I'll join you in a little bit.

(MAMA-O exits.)

ELLI (to NETTE)

What about Medyong?

NETTE

What about her?

ELLI

Shouldn't we tell her we're leaving?

NETTE

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

She's asleep by now. Let her rest. She's been up the whole day.

(She puts back the gun in her bag and starts to fix her cosmetic bag.)

ELLI (insists)

But what if she wakes up in the morning and finds us gone?

NETTE

She will understand.

ELLI (rising anger)

Why do we assume that poor people like her will always understand? Why put that burden on them?

NETTE

Medyong is not one of us. She's not kadugo.

ELLI

You're just like Uncle Doy.

NETTE (furious at the comparison)

I'm not like Doy! I took care of Mama when her marriage was failing and she had no one to lean on. I've been raising you like my child all these years. Now, I even have to follow up what happened to Mama's thirty dogs. I'm burnt out.

(ELLI does not respond.)

NETTE

As I promised her, I will raise the funds for ransom.

ELLI

What will happen to her?

NETTE

She'll go back to the farm to join her folks. She'll be safe up there.

ELLI

Can we, at least, give her some cash?

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

NETTE

Yes, yes. I'll leave her some cash. Hurry and get going. Help your grandma.

(ELLI exits. NETTE continues to pack.)

LIGHTS OUT. LIGHTS UP on MEDYONG.

MEDYONG

They left in the night, without telling me at all. There was no proper goodbye after twenty years of service. I found this money outside my door. Three thousand pesos. Tatlong libong piso. That's all! What about the ransom? They're bound by duty to save Aqui. The bandits took Aqui because he refused to pay the compulsory taxes. He thought he had to protect the family from extortion. He was so bold and so faithful, this beautiful soul. (Pause) What does he get in return? Nothing! (Beat) I'm leaving first thing tomorrow...catch the first bus. The radio says there will be a hurricane in 48 hours. They say the storm will build up into a cyclone. What's a cyclone? Never mind. I'll go hide in the mountains and wait there for Aqui. Oh, Aqui, where are you?

(MEDYONG exits.)

LIGHTS OUT. LIGHTS UP on the ANNOUNCER, DOY and MIRA.

SCENE 4. DAY 4. One day before the storm. DOY enters the room and looks around. He sees boxes and luggage strewn around the room. He watches MIRA who is still in bed. The radio is on. Suddenly, the announcer interrupts the program.

ANNOUNCER

This is a storm alert. You have exactly 24 hours to leave the city. Everyone, especially those living near the coastal area, are to pack up and follow the evacuation route. (DOY turns on the radio to a more soothing music. Then he bends down, kissing MIRA on the forehead.)

DOY

Wake up, mahal.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

MIRA

What time is it?

DOY

Time to wake up. (Beat) They're gone.

MIRA

Who?

DOY

The three witches of Manila.

MIRA

Oh.

DOY

I noticed their door was open so I looked in. They're gone!

MIRA (realizes)

I forgot, I have to continue packing. (Beat) How's kumpare?

DOY

Also busy packing. (Surveys the room). Jesus, you look as if you're relocating. This storm will last, at least, one to two days. Bring with you only what's necessary.

MIRA

Japan and China are now predicting a tsunami.

DOY (corrects)

No, only a storm surge. Wait a minute, have you been listening to Medyong?

MIRA

That's where you're wrong. It's a tsunami. I've been tracking this storm and I tell you, it looks ugly.

(She opens the closet to get his clothes.)

DOY

I'm not going.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

(MIRA does not hear him.)

MIRA (continues)

You should gather all the documents, especially pertaining to the will.

DOY

Are you listening? I'm not going.

MIRA

What are you saying?

DOY

I've got to stay behind...take care of things here.

MIRA

You'll die if you stay here!

DOY

I won't. Don't worry. I've made the necessary preparations...asked some men to bar the windows with wood. You hear the banging outside? I also told them to bring sandbags to protect the walls. That's all we have to do. Stop panicking.

(MIRA glares at him.)

MIRA

You have to go. WE have to go. Those sandbags and wood will not save you. Please, have some sense.

DOY (evasive)

I hope all your boxes and luggage will fit in the truck. Kumpare will be here to pick you up and take you to the airport.

MIRA (loud)

But it's too late to get a ticket. What are you thinking?!

(DOY gets an envelope from his pocket.)

DOY

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

Here, you can see this person. He'll be at the reception desk. Everything is taken care of.

MIRA

Everything? What about me? What about us. Did you think of that, at all?

DOY

You'll be safe. That's what's important.

MIRA

But I need you with me, mahal. I want you with me.

DOY

I'm sorry. I have to stay. Watch over this house. Protect the farm equipment...some valuable spare parts.

MIRA (hysterical)

You mean, their tractor? The second hand equipment in the yard? You and I...our lives are more important than that rusty metal!

DOY

As the owner of this land and as the captain of the ship...

MIRA

It's a sinking ship and you're going down with it. (Pause) AND it's a mixed metaphor!

DOY

Look, you can go to Manila and be with your family. I'll join you later.

MIRA (exasperated)

What's wrong with you? Are you insane?

DOY

I don't know what came over me. All of the sudden, I feel responsible for the house, the land, the property. Perhaps, it's because I've been taking care of them for so long, I just can't let any of it go.

MIRA

That's surprising. Three days ago, you were excited at the prospect of selling them.

DOY

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

It's odd but today, Daddy seems to be with me at all times. I could almost hear him whisper in my ear, "Stay, stay." I can't abandon...

MIRA

If you don't come with me, you'll be joining Daddy soon. Have some sense.

(MIRA approaches DOY to hug him.)

MIRA

Please, come with me.

(DOY pulls away from her embrace.)

DOY

You don't understand it now but someday, you will.

(Silence)

MIRA

If that's what you've decided, what can I do? (Pause) Have kumpare take the rest of my luggage to the airport. (Pause) I just want you to know that if I leave this house, I'm not coming back.

(MIRA opens her bag and takes a pair of white gloves which she carefully drops on the bed.)

DOY

Your gloves.

MIRA

You can have it. They were meant for you.

DOY

For me?

MIRA

That's how I caught your attention.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

(DOY looks puzzled.)

MIRA

Everytime you'd pass by Calbayog...before you'd go to the farm...I would drive around the house where you were staying, wearing these white gloves for you to see. Displaying them so you don't miss noticing my white gloves. (Pause) And when we got married, you told me your impression.

DOY (finishes it for her)

And I'd always ask myself, "Why is that woman driving around with white gloves on...in this hot, hot weather? Doesn't she know this is a tropical country?" (Pause) Oh, Mira...

MIRA

By the way, those medical samples, you can give them away. I don't have any need for them anymore. Goodbye.

(DOY does not respond. MIRA exits. DOY realizes he is alone. He panics.)

DOY

Meedyong! Meedyong!

LIGHTS OUT. LIGHTS ON DOY

SCENE 5. DOY searches for matches and candles. There is another blackout. He opens the drawer of the night table and finds what he needs. He lights the candle, trying three times before he successfully lights it. Then he sees someone at the door. DOY is startled to see a figure in black cape and black hood. He steps back, intimidated by the figure's regal stance. DOY loses his bearings.

DOY

Whooo...are you?

(No response.)

DOY

Tell me who you are.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

(DOY goes back to the night table to get his gun. Remembers he doesn't have it anymore. He moves away from the figure. Then he begins to recognize...)

DOY

Father? Father? Is that you?

(The figure moves away.)

DOY (shaking)

I'm sorry, father. Forgive me, I didn't mean to do it.

(The figure pulls down her hood and laughs hysterically.)

MAMA-O

It's me, you fool!

(DOY brings the candle near her face to get a better look.)

DOY

Why are you still here? And what are you doing in that...

MAMA-O

I'm mourning, have you forgotten?

DOY

You were supposed to go with...

MAMA-O

I changed my mind. Like you, I've decided to stay.

DOY (annoyed)

For what? You will be safer in Manila.

MAMA-O

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

I want to be here...to be with your father. Does that surprise you?

DOY

He's dead, for Christ's sake. And I thought you hated him.

MAMA-O

I hated him for what he had become but not the man I married before. (Loud and incoherent)
He's mine. He belongs to me. Nobody can claim him...not you, not his mistress, nobody! I'm staying put, right here, to be with him. (Dramatic) Oh, lord, spare me from the pain of separation.

(DOY notices that MAMA-O is agitated.)

DOY

Have you taken your medication?

(MAMA-O shakes her head. Then she speaks in a funny sort of way, imitating what DOY said earlier.)

MAMA-O (repeats what DOY said earlier)

"It's odd but today, Daddy seems to be with me at all times. I could almost hear him whisper in my ear. "Stay, stay."

DOY (stunned)

You were eavesdropping, you witch!

MAMA-O

Why are you afraid his land and property will vanish from the face of the earth?

(Attempts to slap MAMA-O but she moves away from him.)

MAMA-O

I know you and Mira were trying to kill your father.

(Long silence)

DOY

But it was you...it was your hands that killed Daddy.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

MAMA-O

My dear boy. I OWN HIM. He's my land, my property everything I could wish for in this life. Only I can end his life. But you...you, pathetic fool, you murdered him for money!

DOY

I did not.

MAMA-O

You did.

DOY

I did...

MAMA-O

Oh, you both did...with premeditation. Motive. It might as well be murder.

DOY

What proof do you have?

MAMA-O

The pills.

DOY

What pills?

MAMA-O

You withdrew the pills that meant his life.

DOY

You're imagining things.

MAMA-O

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

You know what happens to old geezers, pill poppers like us? We become good, really good in counting pills. You see, we make sure we don't run out of medication.

DOY

You still haven't answered my question. What proof have you got?

MAMA-O

The pills have not been touched since my last visit.

DOY

Circumstantial. For all you know, it was a new supply.

MAMA-O

I saw the date on the bottle.

DOY

So?

MAMA-O

That's how we know whether the patient has been taking them or not. Or, in Daddy's case, whether he had been given medication, at all. You see, pharmacies don't dispense pills just like that. They're very strict about the date. That's how they, or anyone, for that matter, can tell the specific time cycle.

DOY

So you're an expert now?

MAMA-O

Not really. I just know how to clean my act when it's required.

DOY

What do you mean?

MAMA-O

You and Mira should have thrown away the bottle. But then it's too much to expect from second-rate mortals like the two of you.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

DOY

Why you...

(He grabs her wrist)

MAMA-O

Arayyy. Let me go.

DOY (loud)

You kept the other key. Except for Mira and me, only you can enter the room. Admit it!

(He twists her arm harder.)

MAMA-O

Let go of my hand!

DOY

Daddy-Bo gave you the key when this house was blessed. It was his way of convincing you to come home.

MAMA-O

How could I come here alone, in the first place.

DOY (imitating MAMA-O)

"I know how to take care of myself these days." (Beat) You slipped in the night when we were all asleep. The dos were not here so you came unannounced. Then you went to his room, and seeing how weak and sick he was...you found it easy to suffocate him with a pillow.

MAMA-O

I said, let go of my wrist!

DOY

I will call the police.

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

MAMA-O (laughs)

Just before the storm? With all the mayhem going on? You must be crazy. (Pause) Anyway, nobody will believe you. They love me here.

DOY (reflects)

On second thought, I will not do anything of the sort.

(MAMA-O looks at him inquisitively.)

DOY

That will be too easy for you, I think. The harder option is to make you suffer with the thought that you killed the person whose body you thought was your property. That perversion will make your brain rot! Your conscience will be tortured...for life!

MAMA-O

or life? I'm seventy. How many more years do I have left? No, it's you who will suffer longer. That suffering, that bad conscience will be your penance!

(A strong gust of wind forces the window to open. Things fly in all directions. MAMA-O and DOY, shocked by the incredible fury of the storm run for cover. They hold on to whatever they think will steady them: posts, tables and chairs. But the storm relentlessly continues its fury, with the fierce wind ripping the roof and flashes of thunder and lightning blasting from the sky. As rising waters flood the house, MAMA-O and DOY are swept away by the force of the wind speed. They disappear as images of men, women and children hit by the deadliest cyclone on record are shown. The devastation of Tacloban is overwhelming, confounding and complete.)

SCENE 5.

ANNOUNCER

6,300 people dead, windspeed at 145 miles per hour and tsunami-like water surge.

ELLI

Numbers don't tell the whole story. What exactly is the measure of one's grief? How does one quantify human loss. One wonders: was it better to have died with them?

ANNOUNCER

HAIYAN, English, full-length play

Bodies are left by the wayside, unidentified and unclaimed. The air reeks of the stench coming from these rotting bodies.

ELLI

We were told the smell of the flesh was so strong, it clung to the clothes of the living. The bodies of Mama-O and Doy must be part of the foul air gripping the city. Who will identify them now? Medyong? Who are now superior--- the once rich people, now dead or the living poor?

ANNOUNCER

Countries have come to offer help: US, Japan, Great Britain, Australia, Switzerland and many more. This coming together, this sharing of wealth and goodwill, we will always remember.

ELLI

We have so many things to attend to: the house, the farm and the masses for our beloved Mama-O, Uncle Doy and Aqui. We were told that Aqui was killed and tortured by the bandits, who realizing there was going to be no ransom, threw his body into the ravine. My dear friend, Aqui. (Pause, controls tears) And Medyong... we have to make amends to her somehow. That's why we're going back to Tacloban in order to find her. Oh, yes, there's Mira, the black hole in our memory. We have to forget her. (Pause) We are now all part of the debris, of the nightmare that Haiyan was...once.

NETTE

Elli, it's getting late. HURRY!

END OF PLAY

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