

**TIRADOR NG TINAGO: THE ARTURO PELIGROSO STORY**

*A Full-Length Play*

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

ARTURO PELIGROSO, male, late-thirties, carpenter/hitman

GORING PELIGROSO, female, early-thirties, housewife, Arturo's wife

VALDERAMA, male, late-forties, re-electionist mayor

ALVARADO, male, mid-forties, mayoralty candidate

AUTHOR, a young person

ASIONG, male, late-twenties, slacker on the street

SALONGA, male, late-twenties, slacker on the street

The action occurs sometime 2016 in Tinago, Dumaguete City.

## FULL-LENGTH PLAY

Mid-March

### ACT 1

SETTING: The first act is set outside the PELIGROSO residence in Tinago. There is a big, rusting maroon gate in the middle of the stage, and a long concrete wall topped with broken bottles crossing same. The action takes place in front of the gate. No house is behind it, only darkness. A tree stands at one side of the gate. Props such as patches of grass or large rocks may be scattered around the stage, empty softdrink or beer bottles may be lined up along the gate. Cigarette butts on the ground, as well. In all, the stage should be made to look like a typical inner-barangay side street. Lighting should suggest early morning.

### ACT 2

SETTING: The second act is set inside a beerhouse. In the middle of the stage are arranged a small round table and a couch circling it. A couple of beer bottles, plus ashtray and a little tissue rack, sit on the table. There is a disco ball hanging above the table. Lighting should be dimmed just enough to convey the sultriness of a gentleman's club. To that effect, the lights could also come in different striking colors. The lights should also fall upon the character speaking in the dimness. Smoke effects hanging in the air could also be applied, if possible. Speakers should also be arranged, and hidden, onstage so music or sound effects could be piped in.

### ACT 3

SETTING: The third act is set outside the ALVARADO mansion, poolside. Specifically, the action takes place around an Olympic-sized swimming pool. Around the pool are deck chairs and tables, some of which tables have filled glasses on top of them. There is also a well-manicured lawn of carabao grass surrounding the pool. In back of the pool runs a high wall. On the wall are campaign posters, stickers with his face. Well-trimmed hedges are arranged along the wall. The mansion's second-floor verandah is also visible. The set should suggest an abundance of wealth but a shortage of class. Lighting should suggest midday.

(Scene opens to ASIONG and SALONGA sitting on a couple large - outside the gate. They are smoking. They are wearing loud-colored T-shirts of politicians, denim shorts, slippers.)

ASIONG

'Long are you sure they will give us the jobs this time?

SALONGA

Of course 'Siong! I am very sure, do not worry about it.

ASIONG

How are you so sure? We've been looking for panday-panday jobs for a long time but no one will give us.

SALONGA

(Gestures towards gate.) Well why do you think we are here waiting?

ASIONG

(Turns to look.) Here, at Arturo's house?

SALONGA

Yes, think about it, 'Siong. Why are we here since early in the morning? Waiting in the heat of the sun?

(ASIONG thinks.)

ASIONG

Because he is the main character and he should not appear in the story right away?

SALONGA

(Puts palm on face.) No, don't tell anybody that! (Shakes head.) Yes yes, you are correct but I am talking about another something else!

ASIONG

Ah I don't know, 'Long!

SALONGA

(Leans in.) 'Siong, you heard the news some days ago, right?

ASIONG

I heard Budoy's grandson turned turtle in his motorcycle. Suddenly, going to Sibulan.

SALONGA

(Thinks.) Ah bitaw no? That happened also. I almost forgot.

ASIONG

Then the police looked at him and saw he did not have any license.

SALONGA

Yes, very sad.

ASIONG

Then the police looked and saw he did not have a side mirror and a helmet.

SALONGA

I feel bad for Budoy.

ASIONG

Then the police could not get him out of his big shell. They could not lift him, he was so heavy. And the wheels.

SALONGA

He was so young.

ASIONG

Yes. It was very sad. Poor Budoy.

(ASIONG and SALONGA think.)

SALONGA

(Starts.) But that's not what I was talking about, 'Siong!

ASIONG

Ah! What is it then 'Long?

SALONGA

Well, first, go and look at Arturo's house.

(ASIONG stands up from the punso and looks at the gate. He tries to notice what SALONGA is talking about.)

Well, 'Siong?

ASIONG

(Scratches head, looks back at SALONGA.) I don't understand, 'Long. It's just a house.

SALONGA

You did not notice anything?

ASIONG

(Scratches head.) No.

SALONGA

(Softly smacks back of head.) Oh come on, it's right there!

ASIONG

(Looks at house.) What? It's just a house.

(SALONGA stands up and goes to ASIONG. He puts a hand on his shoulder, points to the house.)

SALONGA

Don't you think that house is a little too big for Arturo?

ASIONG

What do you mean?

SALONGA

Do you think just a carpenter can afford a house like that?

ASIONG

(Thinks.) It depends.

SALONGA

Right. It depends on what?

ASIONG

Uh. Kuan. On who he is carpentering for?

SALONGA

(Turns to audience.) That's right! Our friend Arturo is not just a small-time carpenter my friend. He is a carpenter to the big shit in our city. (Points.) Look he has even an easy-ride!

ASIONG

Ah yes I understand it now, 'Long!

SALONGA

So now do you know why we are waiting here in the heat of the sun?

ASIONG

(Thinks.) We're going to borrow money from Arturo? We don't have drinking money today.

SALONGA

(Shakes head.) No no no, that's not it! (Looks at left wrist.) It is still 8 o'clock in the morning and you already think about drinking!

ASIONG

We did not drink yesterday, so.

SALONGA

That's because we lost at the tabo!

ASIONG

That's because your cock was bad.

SALONGA

No it wasn't! Its bulang was not sharp enough.

ASIONG

Whatever. We lost money and now we aren't drinking. The Tanduary is not going to be drinking itself you know!

SALONGA

Ay peste, why are you so complaining so much when you didn't even help me with my cock?

ASIONG

What do you mean I didn't help? We used our motorcycle to go to the tabo! You know how far Valencia is? I shouldn't have bought the gasoline if you are going to act like that to me.

SALONGA

(Shakes head.) Whatever, that's not what I was talking about!

ASIONG

Well what is it?

SALONGA

(Moves to ASIONG, leans in, whispers.) I heard something.

ASIONG

Something?

SALONGA

Yes, something.

ASIONG

What is that something?

(SALONGA walks to the gate, leans against the wall, folds his arms. ASIONG exits. He comes back with a monobloc chair. He places it somewhere on the stage and then sits on it.)

SALONGA

Wait a minute, where did you get that chair?

ASIONG

(Points.) Over there.

SALONGA

I didn't know that. You should have told me they kept chairs over there. My butt hurts sitting on that punso all day.

(SALONGA exits. He comes back with his own monobloc chair. He sets it beside ASIONG, facing the audience, and sits on it. ASIONG does the same.)

(Crossing legs.) Anyway this is what I heard. (Recalls.) Our friend Arturo is carpentering the house of a mayor candidate!

ASIONG

Wow! Who is the one?

SALONGA

The man Valderama is the one!

ASIONG

Wow, the rich guy?

SALONGA

Yes, the guy with a lot of cars! The mestizo guy we see all the time on the TV.

ASIONG

And Arturo is carpentering for the guy! Sosyal!

SALONGA

Of course yes! Now what do you think will happen if we carpenter for a guy like that?

ASIONG

(Thinks.) We can get a lot of money also, like Arturo! We can drink all day every day!

SALONGA

(Sighs.) Yes, 'Siong, we will have all the money we could want! Think about it.

(ASIONG thinks about it.)

That's right, think about it.

(ASIONG thinks about it.)

Yes, keep thinking.

(ASIONG thinks about it.)

Yes yes yes that is enough now.

(ASIONG thinks about it.)

Hoy, come on, I said that's enough.

(ASIONG thinks about it.)

Hoy!

ASIONG

(Snaps out of it.) Yes!

SALONGA

Now anyway do you understand what I'm saying to you here?

ASIONG

(Raises finger.) Yes, we will stay here and wait for Arturo and we will ask him to let us carpenter for that man Valderama. And then we will drink all day and buy easy-rides.

SALONGA

That's right!

(A car horn bleats from offstage. It repeats, and then stops. Pause for a beat or two, and then enters VALDERAMA, drinking a Coke and carrying a briefcase. He is dripping with gold. He is dressed in a plaid short-sleeved shirt, brown slacks, and white sneakers. He checks his watch. He sees the two men.)

VALDERAMA

(Hides briefcase behind him.) Who are you? What are you doing here?

ASIONG

Uh, we're just standbys here.

SALONGA

(Looks VALDERAMA over.) Yes, we're just standbys here. What do *you* want?

VALDERAMA

(Ignores him.) What's your names?

ASIONG

Asiong.

SALONGA

Salonga.

VALDERAMA

Huh, interesting.

ASIONG

(Raises voice a little.) You're making fun of us?

VALDERAMA

No. (Looks the two men over.) You watch a lot of TV?

SALONGA

Of course yes, what do you think?

VALDERAMA

(Pauses.) Wait, no, I meant what kind of TV do you watch?

SALONGA

We have a flat-screen.

ASIONG

Yes that's right. The one that looks like a movie theater!

VALDERAMA

Interesting, even though that's not what I meant. Well, Asiong and Salonga, do you know what's going to happen here in two weeks?

ASIONG

Uh – the fight of Pacquiao? I have 1000 on him.

SALONGA

No, the 12-cock derby?

VALDERAMA

(Smirks.) No. The election. Are you registered?

ASIONG

(Thinks.) Yes. I think so.

SALONGA

Yes I registered many years ago.

VALDERAMA

Very good. Wait here then, I have something for you.

(VALDERAMA exits. He comes back with a big, full plastic bag. The bag is filled with yellow shirts.)

Here you are, boys.

(ASIONG and SALONGA stand from their chairs and go to VALDERAMA. He gives them a couple of shirts. The shirts have VALDERAMA's grinning face and his name on the front, and IBOTO MAYOR 2016 on the back.)

SALONGA

(Tries a shirt on.) Do you have any medium?

ASIONG

(Looks at his shirt.) Mine is large, do you have any large?

VALDERAMA

(Smirks.) Don't worry boys, I have everything. Take all you want, that's free.

(ASIONG and SALONGA look at each other, shit-eating grins on their faces. They rummage through the plastic bag and really do take all they want. The bag is emptied. VALDERAMA tosses it to the audience.)

ASIONG

(Tries to speak through all the shirts.) Hey, can we keep all of this?

SALONGA

Yeah, this is free, right?

VALDERAMA

Sure, take all you want. (Smirks at them.) And as a matter of fact, you can also look inside those shirts. Go ahead. There's a surprise in there for you.

(ASIONG and SALONGA drop their shirts. Once again they look at each other, shit-eating grins and all that. They take a shirt each and look. They see envelopes stapled on them. They rip them off, open them, and see cash. Cash to the tune of Php1000.)

ASIONG

(Lifts his money to the light.) Wow! Is this real?

SALONGA

(Starts ripping more envelopes open.) Wow, there's still a lot of them over here!

VALDERAMA

That's all yours.

(ASIONG and SALONGA open all the envelopes. They pocket all the bills.)  
(ASIONG and SALONGA rush to shake VALDERAMA's hand. VALDERAMA is visibly reluctant, but accepts them anyway. They shake his hand so hard they almost wrench his arm off his shoulder.)

SALONGA

Thanks a lot for this gift very much, Mr. Valderama! You're a very nice man!

ASIONG

Yes, you are a very nice man!

(They let go of his hand. VALDERAMA massages his shoulder and wrist.)

VALDERAMA

(Rubs his arm.) That is no problem, boys. Just don't forget who gave you those gifts today.

ASIONG

Yes sir of course sir we won't forget sir!

VALDERAMA

Bitaw, don't forget: May 9, number 5 on the ballot.

SALONGA

Wait sir mayor, there are 5 of you?

VALDERAMA

(Piqued.) Yes, 5, why?

SALONGA

Oh, nothing. I just did not know. Thank you so very much, MayorValderama, we won't forget this!

ASIONG

Yeah, you helped us a lot!

VALDERAMA

That's no problem, boys. (Checks watch.) Now, you do have something else to do today, right?

ASIONG

No, we're just standbys here. We can be here all day. Today, tomorrow, and the day after that...

(SALONGA thinks about it.  
VALDERAMA purses his lips.)

SALONGA

(Nudges ASIONG.) No, actually, sir, we have something to ask you.

VALDERAMA

What is it? If it's anything I can do.

SALONGA

Well, sir, uh, we were wanting to know, you know, Asiong and me, we were wanting to know if you were needing carpenters for your house. You know, panday-panday. But if not if not if not that, then we can also be plumbers. We can clean your cars for you. I mean if you like.

VALDERAMA

You want to work for me?

SALONGA

Yes sir! (Nods.) Isn't that true, 'Siong?

ASIONG

(Remembers.) Yes, that's true! We want to be your panday, Mayor!

(VALDERAMA thinks about it.)

VALDERAMA

(Sighs.) Sorry boys, but no. I already finished renovating the house last month. I also already have people who clean my cars and my house.

SALONGA

Ay nge, how are we supposed to vote for you if you don't give us work?

VALDERAMA

Hoy, don't talk like that to me, I gave you money! And free T-shirts!

ASIONG

He's right, 'Long, we already have drinking money. Leave him alone.

SALONGA

OK fine, we will still vote for you but you promise that you will give us jobs when you win.

VALDERAMA

(Makes a face.) All right, all right. Give me your résumés and I will give you jobs.

ASIONG

Résumé? What is that?

SALONGA

(To ASIONG.) It's like a bio-data.

VALDERAMA

Close enough. (Gestures.) Give them to me and I will see what I can do.

SALONGA

Don't just see.

VALDERAMA

(Makes a face.) Fine, give your résumés to me and I'll place them on top of the pile.

SALONGA

That's better.

VALDERAMA

Now, do I have your vote?

SALONGA

Sure.

(VALDERAMA smiles at them, and then he goes to shake their hands.)

VALDERAMA

Do you have anything else you want?

ASIONG

Yes, we want a car – no, two cars, a motorbike, and a –

SALONGA

(Elbows ASIONG.) No, that's all, Mr. Valderama, that's all. We are also going now.

ASIONG

Where are we going?

SALONGA

(To ASIONG.) To Manang Soling's!

ASIONG

Oh yes, that's right! I think I need a cold beer right about now!

SALONGA

Yes, yes, so. Thank you very much, Mr. Valderama. We're going now.

VALDERAMA

(Waves.) Take care of yourselves, boys.

(ASIONG and SALONGA bow to VALDERAMA, and then exit. They bring their monobloc chairs offstage with them. VALDERAMA walks to the gate, ponders. Then enters ARTURO. He is wearing a faded Dutch Boy T-shirt and carrying plastic bags of fish and vegetables. There is also a Good Morning towel draped around ARTURO's neck.)

ARTURO

Good morning! You have any business?

(ARTURO talks as though he wants other people to hear him. VALDERAMA follows suit.)

VALDERAMA

Yes, is Art at home?

ARTURO

(Thinks.) Hmmm, he just went marketing. Hours ago, to buy fish and vegetables. What do you want?

VALDERAMA

Well, nothing really. I just wanted to talk to him. We have something to talk about.

ARTURO

Oh OK – well it is very hot outside today, so do you like to come inside?

VALDERAMA

(Wipes face.) Oh no no, I'm fine here. I think I'll just wait for him here. I won't be long anyway. Do you know what time he'll be back?

ARTURO

(Turns to audience.) I think he will be back soon. He is the one cooking the lunch of his family, you know.

VALDERAMA

Really? He is married, isn't he?

ARTURO

Yes, but you know women. Talk too much about Arturo not helping with the house, you know.

VALDERAMA

(Thinks.) Well, I'll just wait here for him then.

ARTURO

You sure you don't like to come inside?

VALDERAMA

I'm fine, I'm fine. Thank you.

ARTURO

OK, your life. (Raises groceries.) I'll just put this down in the house and then I'll give you juice. For your trouble.

VALDERAMA

(Chuckles, wipes face.) I guess I can't refuse that.

ARTURO

Oh sir you don't know this but the wife of Arturo makes the greatest juice in the world! Like the juice up in heaven you know?

(VALDERAMA smiles at ARTURO. He exits. He passes by his own house as he does so, and even peers into his own gate. VALDERAMA sits down at a punso and wipes his face. He lights a cigarette.)

VALDERAMA

(Fans himself.) Should have brought an umbrella...

(ARTURO reenters stage. He has a cigarette hanging from his lips. He sits down beside VALDERAMA.)

ARTURO

Sorry about that. (Shrugs.) You know what it is.

VALDERAMA

Don't worry. I had a wife once too.

ARTURO

Very hard life, marrying.

VALDERAMA

(Tosses cigarette.) Even now?

ARTURO

(Smiles.) Well, not so hard anymore.

VALDERAMA

(Pats ARTURO's shoulder.) You know me, Art, I always pay back those who do good for me.

(Pause from ARTURO.)

ARTURO

But sometimes, the news, they worry me.

VALDERAMA

Don't worry about it. Let the press talk. Let them do their jobs. (Pause.) Everybody has a price. The police chief here, in this city? I knew him a very long time ago.

ARTURO

There were a lot of them.

VALDERAMA

And was there ever any investigation?

ARTURO

(Shrugs.) Very hard life. (Pauses.) But I guess it's the only thing I can do.

VALDERAMA

It's useless to let great talent go to waste. It's what I always say when people ask about my education platform.

ARTURO

(Drops cigarette.) How is your campaign?

VALDERAMA

(Winks at ARTURO.) Sureball.

ARTURO

How much do you give?

VALDERAMA

Oh, not so much, you know, a little 500 here, a little 500 there – drinking money. Keep the boys happy. T-shirts for the wives. Ballers for the kids. All party money.

ARTURO

Alvarado's giving away 1000 though. My wife received her money yesterday morning. White envelope.

(VALDERAMA falls silent.  
Something comes over him.)

VALDERAMA

(Clears throat.) Well, Art, about that.

(ARTURO looks at him. There is a pause. Then he stands up, goes to stage-middle, then he starts warming up, stretching his limbs.)

ARTURO

(Snickers.) You're a very busy man, Valderama. I just had a job two days ago.

VALDERAMA

(Grins.) Patience, Art. You know it's the only time people like us actually work.

ARTURO

Well who do you want?

VALDERAMA

That thorn in my side, pricking me day after day after day. Always talking bad nonsense about me on the radio every morning. Calling me names on the newspaper. Says I haven't done anything for this city. (Shakes head.) You see that new restaurant complex at the Boulevard? Who do you think built that? Who do you think talked to the contractors of that? (Pause.)

(ARTURO starts doing jumping jacks.)

And that bastard goes on the radio talking about how I never give jobs to people. What do you call the construction workers renovating city hall? Renovating my house? Cleaning my cars?

ARTURO

(Stops, huffs.) This is Alvarado?

VALDERAMA

He thinks just because he's under a much bigger party and he has a lot more money than me he can buy everybody else in this city. He is very proud of himself.

(ARTURO starts doing pushups.)

Doesn't he know I bought those radio DJs first? He just paid them more money, that's all. That bastard DJ Jhonz, he should be next.

ARTURO

(Stops, huffs.) I don't know, boss, I did a lot of people before, but I never did someone like this.

(ARTURO starts doing cool-down exercises.)

VALDERAMA

I'm still the mayor. He's still just running.

ARTURO

They'll come back after me.

VALDERAMA

(Gestures.) No, Art, believe me, their party couldn't give any less of a damn about him. They just want to remove me they'll pick anybody. (Snickers.) The bastards think they can spend more money than me.

ARTURO

So spend more money. Give us 2000 and you win.

VALDERAMA

No, Art, it's not really the amount you spend. It's what you do with it.

ARTURO

So go on the radio, boss, talk about him. Challenge him to a fight. Or I could just do his boys on the radio or newspaper. Alvarado's too big, boss.

VALDERAMA

No, too messy. My way is better. Just arrange him and everything will be handled.

ARTURO

Arrange?

VALDERAMA

*Iligpit. Hipuson.*

ARTURO

Ah.

(ARTURO sits down beside VALDERAMA. Wipes his face with his Good Morning towel. He lights another cigarette.)

VALDERAMA slouches toward him.)

He can pay people to catch me. It's not like those small-time fools you can just drive by on your motorcycle and you can shoot in the head.

VALDERAMA

I'll pay the people who'd catch you not to.

ARTURO

(Thinks.) 25 and I'll think about it.

VALDERAMA

How much to make you do it?

ARTURO

50?

VALDERAMA

Oh, you're really not joking, Art. You are really scared?

ARTURO

Scared of jail, yes. What will happen to my wife and children if they bring me to prison?

VALDERAMA

(Pauses.) 50 and you'll do it?

ARTURO

50 and I'll *think* about thinking about doing it.

VALDERAMA

Fine, make that 100.

ARTURO

(Perks up.) We can talk about that.

VALDERAMA

All right, all right, great. Absolutely great. (Pauses.) How much time do I give you?

ARTURO

I will need maybe a week. I still have to look around, check where the man is weak. And he may not be.

VALDERAMA

My spies in his camp can help you.

ARTURO

(Shakes head.) I can do it myself, Valderama. If you do anything you can be traced.

VALDERAMA

I'll be careful.

ARTURO

(Tosses cigarette.) Don't trust on your money so much.

VALDERAMA

(Pauses.) So I just check the news next week?

ARTURO

Yes, just look for a person with a bullet in the head.

(VALDERAMA chuckles, and then rises, dusting himself off. ARTURO follows him up. VALDERAMA offers a hand.)

VALDERAMA

It is always nice to do business with you, Art.

ARTURO

And also with you.

VALDERAMA

Payment is the same. Expect me here same time next week.

ARTURO

(Nods.) Don't worry. The sun will not rise on Alvarado anymore.

(VALDERAMA nods back, and then he exits. ARTURO watches him leave. And then he goes toward the opposite exit. Once he reaches stage-middle, though, GORING enters behind him. She is carrying a gun. She is wearing a batik duster and a pair of bakya.)

GORING

Arturo!

ARTURO

Yes! (Turns.) Oh it's just you, my wife! What's going on?

(ARTURO notices the gun in her hands. He steps back. He wipes his forehead.)

(Smiles.) Darling, what is that? In your hand?

GORING

(Points gun.) What do you mean what is this? What do you think is this?

ARTURO

Uh, a pellet gun? I remember we bought our son Sonoy a pellet gun for Christmas last year –

GORING

Shut up, Arturo! Your secret is revealed now so stop lying!

(VALDERAMA's voice is heard from offstage.)

VALDERAMA

Oh my God!

(GORING flings her slipper at the voice's direction. She turns to her husband. He is avoiding looking at her, and is doing things with his fingers.)

GORING

(Points gun.) You, Arturo, I already know your secret!

ARTURO

(Sings.) Listen, do you want to know a secret...

(ASIONG & SALONGA's voices are heard from offstage.)

ASIONG & SALONGA

(Singing.) Ooh – ah – ooh...

(GORING slaps ARTURO in the face. He comes awake. He straightens up.)

ARTURO

Ah, well, darling, you know how it is with men sometimes...sometimes they own a gun, sometimes they don't. You know? That's just life, you know?

GORING

What are you talking about?

ARTURO

I mean sometimes they own a gun, even if it's not real, because they just sometimes they own a gun. You know?

GORING

Shut up, Arturo, this gun is real! Look how heavy it is!

ARTURO

So why can you carry it in one hand only?

GORING

Are you calling me fat?

ARTURO

(Raises hands in front of him.) Oh no no no darling, I did not mean like that at all!

GORING

No, you are calling me fat! In a not obvious way!

(GORING starts chasing ARTURO all around the stage. They circle the stage until GORING stops, out of breath. She bends down. She clutches her chest. ARTURO approaches.)

ARTURO

(Helps her up.) Now darling look at you, I told you not to be excited so much! You have a bad heart!

GORING

Shut up you...

ARTURO

(Sighs.) Well OK, why don't we just sit down over there and we talk about this?

(GORING is quiet. ARTURO leads her toward the punso. He helps her sit down. He sits down beside her. He waits for her to recover.)

Where did you find that?

GORING

In your drawer. While I was cleaning our room.

ARTURO

(Looks away, scratches head.) Did you find anything else?

GORING

No, nothing.

ARTURO

That's funny. I remember I kept money in that drawer. Not a gun.

GORING

(Looks away.) I did not see any money.

(ARTURO leans forward and squints at her. She flinches, bends. He relents. He lights another cigarette.)

ARTURO

(Points to gun.) Did Sonoy see that? Any of the others?

GORING

No, of course not. I hid it under my duster and I looked for you right away. (Points.) You – you're always keeping secrets from me. Like I'm not your wife.

(ARTURO stands up.)

ARTURO

Listen, darling.

GORING

What?

ARTURO

Don't let anybody see that. Don't also tell anybody.

GORING

Are you a criminal?

ARTURO

You want to know how we afforded a flat-screen TV? An oven for you, toys for the kids, cementing the house? That easyride?

GORING

(Puts hand on mouth.) Oh my God, don't tell me –

ARTURO

(Addresses audience.) Yes, darling, you are right, I am. I never told you about this because I was scared. But I had to do it. What can I, a mere carpenter, do to support you and the children? This country is poor. We are poor. What can I do?

GORING

Jesus ko Maria!

ARTURO

(Gestures.) I am just a simple man. I am just a humble man. I did not finish school because I was poor. I was pushed by society to do wrong. This society does not give the humble man anything. This government does not care about me, about us. They only want our vote. Who will put food on our table? What do you want me to do, get a job? You're going to give me a job?

GORING

(Clasps hands before face.) Santisima! Arturo, what did you do?

ARTURO

(Turns.) I am a hold-upper, Goring!

(GORING gasps. She bursts into tears. ARTURO tosses his cigarette. He stays where he is.)

GORING

Oh Jesus koGinooko! You are really a criminal, Arturo!

ARTURO

Yes, but the crime I was doing was helping you buy food and all the things you like! Send the kids to school!

GORING

(Cries.) I did not need a hair-dryer, Arturo!

ARTURO

No, don't lie, Goring! You kept bothering me about getting a hair-dryer so I held up a college student to buy you one!

GORING

Ginooko!

ARTURO

I grabbed his cell phone, his laptop, and his money! I sold his cell phone and laptop and also bought you an oven toaster!

(GORING hunches up, her face in her hands. She drops the gun. ARTURO picks up the gun. He tucks it in his waistband.)

GORING

(Raises face slightly.) I trusted you Arturo!

ARTURO

I'm sorry darling.

GORING

You snake!

ARTURO

I was just not careful enough.

GORING

This is terrible! (Stomps.) Go away, Arturo! Leave this house and never come back!

(ARTURO lights another cigarette.)

ARTURO

OK fine, but you say that like I have another woman.

GORING

(Sobs.) You have another woman?

ARTURO

Just kidding.

(ARTURO drops his cigarette, stamps it out. He takes one last look at his crying wife, and then he exits.)

END OF ACT I

## ACT II

(Scene opens to GORING sitting alone at a round table, in a beerhouse. There is sultry pop music playing. She is wearing her Sunday best. Beside her are

ASIONG and SALONGA. They are wearing the same things as in Act I. The two men are drinking. There are about five empty bottles between them. She is not. The ashtray between the two men is halfway full.)

GORING

Ginooko, why did you bring me to this place?

ASIONG

(Takes a drink.) Well, you said you wanted to see Arturo, right?

GORING

Yes, and?

SALONGA

(Takes a drink.) So we brought you here! Every single one of our friends comes to this place!

GORING

Jesus koGinoo, you men are so dirty!

ASIONG

Oh come on, don't be so strict, this is the only way we can have fun here!

SALONGA

'Siong, 'Siong, look, look! That girl has got a Tweety-bird tattoo on her stomach!

ASIONG

(Turns.) What, I can't see!

SALONGA

There! On her belly button.

ASIONG

Oh, right, right! That's very wonderful!

(ASIONG and SALONGA laugh to each other. GORING groans and plants a palm on her face.)

GORING

(Shakes head.) God save you men.

SALONGA

(Turns.) Listen lady, do you want to see Arturo again or not?

GORING

If I don't see him in ten minutes I'm going home.

ASIONG

Oh no, ma'am, just please let this next dancer finish?

SALONGA

Or just buy us two more Red Horse?

(GORING pulls out a purse. She pulls out money and hands it to SALONGA. He calls to a waitress and makes an order.)

GORING

Are you really sure that my husband is coming here often?

ASIONG

Yes, we told you ma'am, every one of our friends comes here!

SALONGA

Do you wonder sometimes why he comes home late?

(GORING nods.)

Well, you can stop wondering now!

(ASIONG claps hard for the dancer onstage. He also starts hooting. And then he lifts his lighter in the air, lights it. GORING looks at him with disgust.)

Ma'am, if you do not mind me asking...

GORING

Ugh— (Turns to SALONGA.) What?

SALONGA

Why did Arturo leave your house?

GORING

Why, what is it to you?

SALONGA

Nothing, you just came to us and asked us to help you look for him, so.

GORING

It is none of your business. Just help me. I will pay you.

SALONGA

(Pauses, shrugs.) OK fine. We are helping.

GORING

You are old friends?

SALONGA

No, ma'am, we are not old. I am only 28, and Asiong is 25.

GORING

I mean you know Arturo for very long?

SALONGA

Aw! Yes ma'am, we know Arturo since we went out of school.

GORING

What did you do together?

ASIONG

(Turns.) Drink! Play cards! Watch women! Drink!

SALONGA

(Puts palm to face.) Just watch the dancers, 'Siong.

GORING

You really did all that?

SALONGA

Yes ma'am. He always sees us at Manang Soling's, so he made friends with us. We had nothing to do also. He always goes there to buy Cobra you know, after carpentering.

GORING

And that is all you were doing? Nothing illegal?

SALONGA

Illegal?

(ASIONG swings himself to face the two. He puffs up his chest, addresses GORING.)

ASIONG

Hey what are you calling illegal? We are not doing anything wrong! Is it wrong to enjoy?

GORING

(Covers mouth with napkin.) Sorry. I was asking only.

ASIONG

(Points.) No, you are all the same! Just because we do not have a job, drink all day, and watchwomen dancing, does not mean we are doing illegal things! Does not mean we are useless! We are just trying!

SALONGA

(To GORING.) You know ma'am, that guy Asiong is the one doing illegal things. In fact he was arrested once already.

ASIONG

(To SALONGA.) What, what are you saying there, 'Long?

GORING

(Whispers.) What did he do? Is he selling drugs? Is he doing drugs right now?

SALONGA

No ma'am, nothing as bad as that.

GORING

What is it?

SALONGA

The police arrested him for illegal possession of deadly face.

(GORING chuckles. SALONGA sighs, and then looks at ASIONG. He looks away and drinks his beer. SALONGA stands up and looks at ASIONG. He stands up.)

Ma'am, you mind if we go CR for a while?

GORING

Ah, no, but don't leave me here very long.

(SALONGA makes a saluting gesture. ASIONG nods. They exit. GORING looks around. There is a pause.)

Maybe I should go also...

(And then there enters ARTURO, VALDERAMA, and AUTHOR. They sit down at the next table. GORING hides under the table, covering her face with her bag.)

AUTHOR

(Pulls out cigars, matches.) Gentlemen.

(VALDERAMA and ARTURO take cigars. They light up. AUTHOR lights up, too.)

Would you like to order something?

ARTURO

Red Horse.

VALDERAMA

Whiskey, straight.

AUTHOR

All right. (Looks around.) Well, Valdy, you're the mayor of this city, can't you do something about the absolute dearth of waitresses in this place?

VALDERAMA

What do you want me to do, hire people?

AUTHOR

No, that wasn't a very good retort. We'll have to work on that. (Looks around.) Anyway, it looks like there are really no waitresses here, so we might as well just get on with it.

ARTURO

What did you expect boss, we're in a play. We three are the only people here.

(GORING gasps. ARTURO starts. AUTHOR and VALDERAMA turn to him.)

AUTHOR

What's with you?

ARTURO

(Clears throat.) Nothing, I just thought I heard my wife.

VALDERAMA

(Snickers.) Come on Art, you're just gone for a day and you're hearing your wife everywhere?

AUTHOR

(Sneers.) Well, he is whipped.

ARTURO

Hoy, I just heard a sound and I thought it came from my wife, OK?

AUTHOR

Yes, you must be used to your wife making sounds by now.

VALDERAMA

Those sounds might not be very good sounds, too.

ARTURO

(Sighs.) OK OK, can we just start already?

AUTHOR

Sure, whatever. (Lays cigar on ashtray.) Anyway, I've seen what you were doing in Act 1 and I sure as hell am not happy with it. Your performances, I mean.

VALDERAMA

(Starts.) What do you mean? We didn't write the words, you did.

ARTURO

And we're not going to actually say those things, you will have actors for that, right? Judge them.

VALDERAMA

(To ARTURO.) A better question would be if this play is going to be produced at all.

ARTURO

Yeah, maybe you're just wasting everybody's time here.

(AUTHOR taps the table with his fingers. He puts the cigar back in his mouth.)

AUTHOR

Is that it? Your complaints?

ARTURO

(Lays cigar on ashtray.) We're not complaining, we just don't know why you feel bad about Act 1.

AUTHOR

The jokes weren't funny. I mean I was trying for a funny play, but you guys weren't cooperating. Always so serious. I'm not writing drama here!

VALDERAMA

(Lays cigar on ashtray.) Well the vibe was so serious we can't help it!

ARTURO

Yeah, I'm really not sure what you want us to be going for here.

AUTHOR

Can't you just make something out of it? Like don't say your lines so seriously? I saw you and you were scowling all the time.

ARTURO

You're not giving us enough stage directions!

AUTHOR

That's because I want the director and the actors to improvise!

VALDERAMA

And where's the parody? Where's the joy and the laughs? You're not using us properly.

ARTURO

Yes. You should have just retained the first draft.

AUTHOR

(Shakes head.) Come on, you guys! What can I do when those workshop people want me to insert gravitas into the story? You can't have both, you know?

VALDERAMA

What the hell is gravitas?

ARTURO

Is that the plural of gravity?

AUTHOR

Ha ha.

ARTURO

No really what is it?

AUTHOR

It's seriousness. Like your chest getting heavy when you watch a dramatic scene in a movie. That thing makes you cry. It's also the thing that makes your stuff win awards.

VALDERAMA

And there was none of that in the first draft?

AUTHOR

No! It was all just jokes. I killed you and Arturo for no reason, really.

ARTURO

Isn't humor heavy?

AUTHOR

No, it's not. And it doesn't have social relevance.

VALDERAMA

So what are you going for here?

AUTHOR

I want to try balancing humor and gravitas. Also I want to add in social relevance. Because that's what they told me and I want to get some recognition for my work, finally.

ARTURO

Recognition? I thought you were an artist?

VALDERAMA

(To ARTURO.) He's poor and he wants money. That's what they all say.

AUTHOR

Listen guys I'm not selling out, OK? I just want to try something else, for once.

ARTURO

We know you're not having fun.

AUTHOR

It's not supposed to be.

VALDERAMA

Then what the hell are we even still doing here?

AUTHOR

Just work with me here, guys.

ARTURO

Give us something to work with, then.

VALDERAMA

I agree. (Puts cigar back in his mouth.) To be honest, the way things are going, you're just going to end up writing the same thing those other hacks write. Basic drama stuff with crying and screaming.

ARTURO

Yeah, and we don't want to be part of that.

AUTHOR

Well, what do you propose?

(ARTURO and VALDERAMA smoke and think. The pause is palpable. Meanwhile, GORING is still under the table. She has fallen asleep.)

ARTURO

Maybe—just maybe, you know, maybe you should just add something dramatic at the end of this act and you'll be fine.

VALDERAMA

Yeah, maybe like that. Just get that out of the way. That's the only thing they want anyway. They won't care what you do afterwards.

(AUTHOR thinks. He crushes his cigar on the ashtray.)

AUTHOR

How about social relevance?

ARTURO

What do you have?

AUTHOR

It's election season, so vote-buying, cheating, mudslinging, etc., etc.

VALDERAMA

That scene in act 1 was kind of thin.

ARTURO

Lots of other stuff did that already. You got anything else?

VALDERAMA

Something with a little more kick.

AUTHOR

Well, I did go for election violence. Like Arturo killing Alvarado under Valderama's orders.

VALDERAMA

(Remembers.) Wait, by the way, where is Alvarado? He isn't coming?

AUTHOR

I didn't call him. Better not spoil the play for him.

ARTURO

(Crushes cigar on ashtray.) OK, so I kill Alvarado. What does that say?

AUTHOR

About what?

ARTURO

About your topic, election violence.

AUTHOR

It says things like those just happen.

ARTURO

That's it?

AUTHOR

Yeah, what else should be there?

ARTURO

That's thin. Really really thin. You don't even say if it's a good thing or a bad thing.

AUTHOR

Shooting people to death is a bad thing, obviously!

ARTURO

OK, but you don't comment on why those things happen. In election season.

VALDERAMA

(Crushes cigar on ashtray.) Ever heard those killings in the city lately?

AUTHOR

What about it?

ARTURO

(To VALDERAMA.) Isn't that what I'm doing in this play?

VALDERAMA

(To ARTURO.) No, these are something else.

ARTURO

Well, what happened?

AUTHOR

(To ARTURO.) Actually that's what I based your character on.

ARTURO

(To AUTHOR.) I didn't know that. (Thinks.) Well, what happened, Valderama?

VALDERAMA

People were getting killed in the middle of the street late at night. It happened for a couple weeks, then stopped. Then happened again. Bullets to the head by a riding-in-tandem.

AUTHOR

Rumors were that these people were getting killed because of drugs.

ARTURO

Huh. (Thinks.) So what does that have to do with this play? It's election violence.

AUTHOR

It's still murder, but it's murder for money.

VALDERAMA

(To AUTHOR.) If you wanted social relevance you should have just gone with that angle instead.

AUTHOR

But it's the election! It's topical.

ARTURO

So, a hit.

AUTHOR

It'd be relevant.

ARTURO

(Sighs.) Jesus Christ don't you know that elections only happen once in 6 years? What do you think people will say about this play a day after the elections?

VALDERAMA

Old news.

ARTURO

Exactly.

AUTHOR

But it would always be timely because the same thing always happens every elections!

ARTURO

So for 5 years you're just going to talk about elections? When the people don't care about them? You even put in a date!

AUTHOR

Well...

VALDERAMA

You keep trying to sell out, but you don't even know how to do it properly.

(AUTHOR grabs the ashtray and tries to hit VALDERAMA with it, but ARTURO holds him back.)

What the hell? I'm the mayor! I can have you arrested, gaddemmet!

ARTURO

(Holds back AUTHOR.) Calm down, both of you!

AUTHOR

(Tries to break out.) I'm not a sellout!

VALDERAMA

Sit him back down, Arturo! (Sits down.) These artists are all oh-so sensitive!

(ARTURO sits AUTHOR back down. He grabs the ashtray and hides it. He sits down. AUTHOR sulks in his chair. VALDERAMA shakes his head. There is a pause.)

ARTURO

So what's your commentary on the killings on the streets?

AUTHOR

That people are killing other people, just like that, and that it's bad?

ARTURO

Is that it?

AUTHOR

Yeah—I mean no, I mean that's what people would want me to say.

VALDERAMA

(Folds his arms.) What do you want to say?

AUTHOR

(Bows head.) That I think it's all a joke. I mean it's bad, killing people is bad, but by now we've all seen so much it's all just absurd, it's like we can all just die suddenly one day and that it will all just end and nothing has any meaning.

ARTURO

Well, there you go.

VALDERAMA

(Nods.) That's it.

AUTHOR

What are you talking about?

ARTURO

Just run with that.

VALDERAMA

Yes, that's fine.

AUTHOR

But people won't like it, they'll say I'm making fun of murder.

(ARTURO and VALDERAMA  
shrug.)

ARTURO

Just run with that and we'll be fine with what you do.

AUTHOR

You sure?

VALDERAMA

Yeah, don't worry. We'll stick with you.

AUTHOR

(Sighs.) Well, all right, all right. Whatever you say.

ARTURO

But, like I said, you'd do well if you put in something dramatic to end this act. Just to let people know you're serious.

AUTHOR

I can't do that, my prof said we should end acts with just simple things, falling action, no explosions.

ARTURO

Well, fuck him.

VALDERAMA

(Nods.) Don't you got your balls anymore? Don't tell me you're just a little punk, after all?

(AUTHOR scowls, thinking. He cups his head with a hand. He shakes his head.)

AUTHOR

(To ARTURO.) What do you think should I do?

ARTURO

Well...

(ARTURO stands up, pulls out the gun in his waistband, and shoots VALDERAMA to death. His limp body falls back on his chair. AUTHOR steps back, dumbfounded. ARTURO keeps the gun pointed at VALDERAMA, the muzzle smoking.)

AUTHOR

(Covers mouth with hands.) Jesus Christ!

ARTURO

(Returns gun to waistband.) Now you're serious.

(Screams, stock female screams, are piped in through the speakers arranged onstage. Next come sounds of running. Nobody is actually seen running onstage, only the sounds are heard. GORING is still sleeping under the table.)

Let's get out of here.

(AUTHOR says nothing, but follows ARTURO as he exits. The screams and the sounds stop once they disappear. There then enter ASIONG and SALONGA.)

ASIONG

'Long, what do you think was that screaming all about?

SALONGA

I don't know, maybe an actor came here.

ASIONG

Really? Who do you think it was?

SALONGA

I don't know. Robin Padilla?

ASIONG

Really? You think he comes to a place like this anymore?

SALONGA

(Scratches head.) That guy has 4 wives, right? You think he still comes to a place like this?

ASIONG

OK OK! I'm sorry! I was just asking!

(SALONGA notices that their table is empty. ASIONG steps back, afraid.)

SALONGA

'Siong! Help me look for ma'am!

ASIONG

OK!

(ASIONG and SALONGA look around the stage. They literally turn over the other tables, throw out the chairs. Somehow they do not notice VALDERAMA's corpse sitting there. They do the same to their own table and find GORING sleeping underneath, clutching her bag.)

SALONGA

(Prods GORING awake.) Ma'am, ma'am! Wake up! There is a fire!

ASIONG

What! Where?

SALONGA

(Still prodding.) Not you, idiot!

GORING

(Opens eyes.) Oh, hi Arturo, good morning, you want breakfast?

SALONGA

No ma'am, no ma'am, this is Salonga. You were sleeping here.

GORING

(Wakes up.) Ay GinookoSantisiyam, what was I doing?

SALONGA

You fell asleep under the table.

GORING

(Remembers.) Oh, oh, right! I hid under the table, I hid under the table because —

SALONGA

Because?

GORING

Because I saw Arturo with two other men! One of them was the city mayor.

SALONGA

The city mayor? Mayor Valderama?

ASIONG

(Looks around.) Ah there he is!

(GORING and SALONGA look. Their jaws drop, seeing VALDERAMA's corpse drowned in his own blood. They approach.)

GORING

(Crossing herself.) Ginooko, this must be Arturo!

SALONGA

How can you say that, ma'am? Arturo is not a killer.

GORING

(Stares at SALONGA.) You don't know what I know! I must find him!

SALONGA

What do you know, ma'am?

GORING

Nothing! I must find Arturo!

(ASIONG and SALONGA look at each other. They nod. They turn to GORING.)

SALONGA

We'll help you ma'am. You don't even need to pay us.

GORING

(Cries.) Really?

ASIONG

Yes! We want to know what is happening to Arturo also. This is not how our friend is like.

GORING

(Breaks down.) Arturo!

(ASIONG and SALONGA stand there looking at VALDERAMA's body.)

ASIONG

Where do we start looking, 'Long?

SALONGA

Don't worry, 'Siong. If Arturo did this to Mayor Valderama, then...

ASIONG

Then?

SALONGA

We ask Fernando Poe about it.

END OF ACT II

ACT III

(Scene opens to ALVARADO sitting on a deck chair, reading a newspaper. He is dressed in a bathrobe. Beside him is a small round table holding a tall glass. Also on the table is an ashtray. There is a lit cigarette on it. Finally there is also a cell phone on the table, which starts ringing. ALVARADO picks it up.)

ALVARADO

Yes, I'm going...answer your questions? About – oh, yes, OK, sure...I'll be there. Bye.

(ALVARADO returns the phone to the table, resumes his reading. Then enters ARTURO, still wearing the same thing, though

now he has shades on.  
ALVARADO sees him.)

(Starts.) Hey, what – ? Who are you? What are you doing here?

ARTURO

(Removes shades.) Good morning, Mr. Alvarado. I'm Arturo Peligroso, your plumber. I was referred by –

ALVARADO

(Squints, remembers.) Ah – oh, yes, the plumber. Mely talked to me about you. (Offers an empty chair.) Why don't you sit down?

ARTURO

(Sits down.) Thank you ser.

ALVARADO

How long have you been a plumber?

ARTURO

(Clips shades on his collar.) Three years only, ser.

ALVARADO

Hmmm. But you've fixed many types of plumbing problems?

ARTURO

Yesser, I did them all. I saw already many clogged pipes in my life I almost never want to see one again.

ALVARADO

Ah, very good! (Thinks.) Let me ask you another question.

ARTURO

OK ser.

ALVARADO

Who are you voting mayor in the elections?

ARTURO

Ah, ser, I— (Thinks.) I don't know yet, ser.

ALVARADO

I see, I see.

ARTURO

Is this connected to my job, ser?

ALVARADO

No, it's not. But I am the type of employer that values loyalty among my employees.

ARTURO

Loyalty, ser?

ALVARADO

Yes— simply speaking, I won't hire anyone who won't vote for me.

ARTURO

(Pauses.) Is the wage Mely talked to me about true, ser?

ALVARADO

The 500 per day wage?

ARTURO

Yes ser.

ALVARADO

Oh yes, that is true. Also I give 200 as bonus if you do a good job.

(ARTURO thinks about it.)

ARTURO

I think ser you can make a good leader in this government ser, if you will win ser.

ALVARADO

(Sneers.) All right, Mr. Peligroso, you are hired.

(ALVARADO rises from his deck chair and offers a hand. ARTURO takes it and shakes it. They sit back down.)

ARTURO

When will I start the work ser?

ALVARADO

Well, I don't have any plumbing issue now – do you have a cell phone?

ARTURO

No ser.

ALVARADO

(Frowns.) Oh, well, do you know how to do anything else?

ARTURO

I can drive ser.

ALVARADO

OK then, you can replace my driver. I just fired him last week.

ARTURO

What did he do ser?

ALVARADO

He was wearing a baller band of another candidate.

(ARTURO says nothing. He scratches his head. ALVARADO snickers.)

No, I was kidding. He was wearing a T-shirt of another candidate.

(ARTURO chuckles. ALVARADO straight-up guffaws at his own joke. He laughs so hard he chokes, and he reaches for the drink on his table to relieve himself. ARTURO tries to help, is rebuffed.)

ARTURO

I can start the driving work today ser.

ALVARADO

(Recovers.) Well, great. Actually I have somewhere to go today.

ARTURO

Where, ser?

ALVARADO

I didn't hire you to ask questions. (Pauses.) I have to go to the radio station today, I have to give a message of condolence for Mayor Valderama. Did you hear? Somebody killed him last week. Shot to death in a beerhouse.

ARTURO

I think I heard that in the radio ser.

ALVARADO

Yeah – and those bastards even have the guts to blame me!

ARTURO

Blame you, ser?

ALVARADO

Yes! Since I've been attacking him on the radio all the time, those morons thought I somehow hired someone to kill him! (Shakes head.) What do they think of me? Do they think I have money to do that? Look at this place! Do you think this place is owned by a rich man?

ARTURO

(Looks around.) No, ser. It looks like the house of a clerk at the capitol.

ALVARADO

(Stares at ARTURO.) Wait, what – what are you calling the house of a capitol clerk?

ARTURO

Aw! Sorry ser.

ALVARADO

More like the city administrator's, but yes, the point is that I don't have much money! I'm poor! Don't those idiots know how much it costs to have a guy killed? Especially these days with the inflation rate? (Shakes head.) You, do you know?

ARTURO

(Shakes head.) No ser, I don't know ser, I don't like killing ser.

ALVARADO

Of course you don't. I don't. (Thinks.) But anyway the point is I'm just an ordinary citizen. What money I got all came from my businesses.

ARTURO

Yes ser.

ALVARADO

You know I own Healthy Libing Funeral Homes, right? Up there in Batinguel?

ARTURO

No ser. I didn't know ser.

ALVARADO

Well now you do.

ARTURO

Yes ser.

ALVARADO

The only reason I have money is that I was bright enough to choose the best type of business to run. You know why a funeral parlor is the best type of business to run, Mr. Peligroso?

ARTURO

No I don't know that ser.

ALVARADO

Well, that's because people die all the time! Every day!

(ARTURO scratches his head, chuckles. ALVARADO laughs so hard he has to take a drink. He recovers himself. He clears his throat.)

Anyway, which is why I have to talk to the radio station and give the condolence. So the issue will die. I hate that guy Valderama's guts, but I can always say the sweet words.

ARTURO

Yes ser.

ALVARADO

You know Mr. Peligroso, I think we can work well together.

ARTURO

Why is that ser?

ALVARADO

I like a person who always says yes to me.

ARTURO

Aw, yes ser.

ALVARADO

See?

ARTURO

(Scratches head.) Thank you ser.

ALVARADO

(Folds up newspaper.) Well, shall we go?

ARTURO

Yes ser.

(ALVARADO rises from his chair, and then exits to change clothes. ARTURO remains seated. ALVARADO reenters, dressed as if going to a funeral. He looks ready to be in one.)

ALVARADO

Let's go. I'll take you to the garage. We'll be taking the Adventure.

ARTURO

Yes ser.

ALVARADO

That's a good car to take to a funeral.

(ALVARADO makes his way to the exit, ARTURO following. The latter waits for a couple of beats to slowly pull out the gun in his waistband. He pulls it out and is about to shoot ALVARADO in the back of the head when GORING suddenly runs onto the stage. She is armed with a steel pipe—a construction cable.)

GORING

Arturo! Hoy, Arturo!

(ARTURO stops in his tracks. Both he and ALVARADO turn—ARTURO sees his wife, ALVARADO sees the gun. ALVARADO jumps back.)

ALVARADO

Jesus Christ! What are you doing?

ARTURO

(Turns to ALVARADO.) Oh ser, I did not tell you this but I can also be a bodyguard.

ALVARADO

Bodyguard? I don't need a bodyguard!

ARTURO

I know.

(ARTURO aims the gun at ALVARADO. ALVARADO cowers, pisses himself in fear. GORING sees this and is frozen, too.)

ALVARADO

Wh— who p-paid you? Who? Who!

ARTURO

Someone who would like it if you told him your condolences yourself.

ALVARADO

Wha-what? This can't be! The man is dead!

ARTURO

Yeah, and you're next.

ALVARADO

Don't shoot me! I didn't do anything to you!

ARTURO

Yesser, you did not.

ALVARADO

And the man who paid you is already dead!

ARTURO

Yesser, and I feel bad about that.

ALVARADO

So why are you doing this? You must be crazy!

ARTURO

Who says I'm not doing this just because I want to do it? I can do whatever the hell I want here. I'm free.

ALVARADO

You really are crazy!

ARTURO

Maybe—or maybe I'm just tired of being bought. My vote is being bought, then lives are being bought. I'm just tired of it. The mayor bought your life from me. You tried to buy my vote. You are all the same.

ALVARADO

You idiot! That's just how things work in this country! You're going to jail for something you can't change!

ARTURO

(Shrugs.) All I see right now is a dead man.

ALVARADO

No!

(ARTURO is about to pull the trigger when GORING flies at him and hits him in the back with the steel pipe. ARTURO falls to the floor with a grunt. GORING is stunned by what she has done.)

GORING

Oh no! What have I done?

ALVARADO

(Sighs—then laughs.) Ha! What can you say to that now, you crazy bastard!

(ALVARADO starts kicking ARTURO. GORING steps back in horror. ALVARADO laughs, kicking.)

You ignorant bastard! I have a lot of great programs for this city! To help this city!

(ALVARADO keeps kicking.)

Who cares if I have to buy some votes? You know nothing!

(ALVARADO picks up the gun. He aims it at ARTURO's head.)

GORING

No!

(GORING flies at ALVARADO with the steel pipe. He sees this and, startled, shoots her twice in the stomach. She falls, limp, dropping her weapon. ALVARADO walks to her.)

ALVARADO

Now why did you do that? I thought you were my supporter.

(GORING just gurgles at him.)

Oh well. Your loss then.

(ALVARADO shoots GORING in the head. Her head bounces off the floor. ALVARADO turns toward ARTURO.)

Now to—

(There enters ASIONG, carrying a steel chair. He sees the carnage on the stage and stops frozen.)

ASIONG

You! What did you do!

ALVARADO

(Turns.) Who the hell are you?

ASIONG

I am ma'am Goring's friend! (Pauses.) Also, Arturo's friend!

ALVARADO

Ah, you're one of them!

ASIONG

You shit, you killed them!

ALVARADO

Yes! Yes I did!

ASIONG

And we were just here helping ma'am Goring find her husband Arturo! He left home suddenly and she just wanted to find him and get him back! She just wanted to find him, you devil!

ALVARADO

That's none of my business!

ASIONG

You devil!

ALVARADO

Well what are you going to do about it!

ASIONG

Nothing!

ALVARADO

Wait – huh, what?

ASIONG

You heard me! Nothing!

ALVARADO

What the hell? You were getting so angry there and you're not going to do anything? What's wrong with you?

ASIONG

Nothing's wrong with me! (Points.) You have a gun and I have a steel chair only! You think that's fair? What do you think of me, thinking of you?

ALVARADO

What? (Laughs.) You're right, you're right. OK, I'll give you a fair fight. Just like I gave to that son of his mother Valderama. (Laughs.) Wait there.

(ALVARADO exits. ASIONG stands there, waiting. There is a long pause. ASIONG whistles the opening bars of the Scorpions' "Wind of Change." ALVARADO reenters with a gun.)

Did you wait long? I had to look for this in my bedroom. You know my bedroom is large, right? Maybe even larger than your house.

ASIONG

I don't care!

(ALVARADO walks to ASIONG to give him the gun. He offers a handshake. ASIONG takes it.)

Then ALVARADO backs away slowly, his eyes on ASIONG's gun.)

ALVARADO

Well, what do you want to do now?

(ASIONG thinks about it for a while, then he drops down to the floor, his back turned to ALVARADO, the gun to his face.)

Oh OK, OK, that's what you want?

(ALVARADO does the same thing.)

ASIONG

You little devil! You killed ma'am Goring and Arturo! They did nothing to you! They just wanted to get back together! Ma'am Goring just wanted to find him!

ALVARADO

Don't be so sure of yourself, you little bastard! That's none of my business! If you're not careful I'm going to turn you into dinuguan!

ASIONG

How did you know that's my favorite food?

ALVARADO

I didn't, you idiot!

ASIONG

You're a very good guesser! But you will not guess who will remain alive today after I kill you!

ALVARADO

You, you idiot!

ASIONG

What me?

ALVARADO

You said "after I kill you"? Who do you think will be alive after that! Stupid!

ASIONG

Who cares if you're so smart? You will die anyway!

ALVARADO

Not if I kill you first!

ASIONG

No, I'll kill you first!

ALVARADO

Listen you, I don't like the cut of your tongue! If you don't discontinue that you will be dead!

ASIONG

Whatever!

