

ACT ONE

The OVERTURE ends. The stage is dark and seemingly vacant. A SPOTLIGHT rises on a regal-looking woman aged about 40. SHE is dressed in a black dress of mourning and a black veil. Her name is LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA. With a friendly smile, SHE speaks to us:

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA

Señores and señoras - and señoritas, if you are so unlucky - please do me the honor of coming with me to the beautiful land of Paraguay. Do not worry, because you do not have to leave your seats for this trip. Instead of your going to Paraguay, Paraguay will come to you. All I ask is that you open your mind to the wonders you will see there.

**1) COME WITH ME**

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA

COME WITH ME  
TO A LAND  
TOUCHED SO BARELY BY GOD'S HAND  
WHERE A HUMAN FOOT  
IS SO SELDOM PUT  
ON GROUND.

COME WITH ME  
TO A PLACE  
TOUCHED SO BARELY BY GOD'S GRACE  
WHERE A HUMAN THOUGHT  
IS SO SELDOM SOUGHT  
OR FOUND.

YET THIS VERY SPOT  
UPON GOD'S EARTH  
THOUGH JUST A DOT  
AND SMALL IN WORTH  
IS A HEAVEN BY-AND-BY  
I BEG YOU TO COME AND SPY.

FOR, YOU SEE,  
IN THAT SCENE  
ALL YOU'LL SPY IS RIPE AND GREEN  
AND THE SONGS YOU SING  
FILL UP EVERYTHING  
AROUND.

## LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA (CONT)

COME WITH ME TODAY.  
 COME WITH ME AND PLAY.  
 COME WITH ME AND STRAY  
 WHERE LOST DREAMS ARE FOUND.

WHAT YOU'LL SEE THERE  
 ONCE YOU FLEE THERE  
 WILL ASTOUND.

The LIGHTS rise on the Yard of Señor Gruñón. A primitive cottage and a large pear tree dominate the scene. Cast members wheel in remaining flourishes (palm trees - etc.).

Meanwhile, as the MUSIC continues:

## LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA

Here we have the house of a man who could live in this or any age. However, for our purposes, it is the middle of the Eighteenth Century. The place you know already, the people you do not - not yet.

The CAST has begun to wander onstage from the wings as if townspeople entering the city square at high noon.

## LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA

My name is Maravilla - La Señora Maravilla - and I have heard in town about the man who lives in that house. I have my own mission in life and I have come today to meet this man and fulfill it. Will you join me?

By now, the CAST has come to the front of the stage and, with LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA, THEY sing:

ALL

(Singing.)  
 COME WITH ME TODAY.  
 COME WITH ME AND PLAY.  
 COME WITH ME AND STRAY  
 WHERE JAILED DREAMS ARE UNBOUND.

SOON WHAT YOU'LL FIND THERE  
 WILL TUG YOUR MIND THERE  
 AND CONFOUND.

COME AND SEE.  
 COME WITH ME.  
 COME WITH ME.

The set is now complete before our eyes. The CAST depart from the stage in mimed conversation. LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA circles around the stage to enter it on the side opposite the house, when...

Chirpingly, musically, LAUGHTER and GIGGLING rise in the near distance. TWO YOUNG LOVERS of some 20 years (PEPE and ANA) run onstage chasing each other. LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA ducks out of sight to escape the love-struck horde and watches, as: Happily, joyously, PEPE and ANA chase each other, until, exhausted, THEY collapse on the ground, under the pear tree. It takes THEM a moment to catch their breath after their energetic chase. Playful MUSIC rises. ANA and PEPE exchange a loving glance and sing:

**2) LEAVE ME ALONE**  
**2A) A HARMLESS, COZY AFTERNOON**

ANA

A HARMLESS, COZY AFTERNOON  
 BEFORE A BRIGHT AND SHINY MOON  
 IS GOLDEN TIME TO DREAM IN AND TO HOPE IN.

PEPE

A HARMLESS, COZY AFTERNOON  
 MEANS THAT THE NIGHT IS COMING SOON  
 SO RIPE AND FULL WITH PRESENTS YET TO OPEN.

ANA, PEPE

UNTIL THAT TIME, WE'LL BOTH ADORE  
 THE WIND, THE GRASS, THE FLOWERS' SMELL...  
 AND AFTER THAT - WHAT THEN? WHAT MORE?  
 YOU NEVER KNOW, BUT TIME WILL TELL...

ANA

A HARMLESS, COZY AFTERNOON  
 IS SUCH A SWEET AND GIVING BOON  
 TO EVERY DREAM YOU EVER HOPED TO DREAM.

ANA, PEPE

AND WHEN WE SAY "ADIEU"  
 BECAUSE THE DAY IS THROUGH  
 IT'S ONLY THEN  
 TO MEET AGAIN  
 WITHIN A SOFT MOONBEAM.

ANA rests HER head on PEPE's chest, looks up, and spies the pears. A mile-long smile lights up HER face. ANA playfully pokes PEPE.

ANA

Hey, Pepe. Pepe.

PEPE

(Mocking HER.)  
Hey, Ana. Ana.

ANA slaps PEPE with appreciable, if good-natured, force.

ANA

You are stupid. You are stupid like a big brown ox. I am clever like a slim gray monkey.

(Pointing at the pears.)  
Look at what we have above us.

PEPE looks up, sees the pears, and licks HIS lips.

ANA

Well? What are you waiting for?

PEPE

Ah. You expect me to climb?

ANA nods at the pears.

ANA

Go on. You're no Newton. They won't fall.

PEPE

Ox sits. Monkey climbs.  
(Pointing to the pears.)  
Monkey, climb.

ANA indicates with her eyes that climbing for her is not an option. PEPE realizes this and broadcasts a disgruntled face. HE then huffs (very audibly), rises, goes to the tree, and slowly, shakily, but surely, starts to climb... and climb... and climb... and climb... HE soon reaches a grand spot for picking a pear... slowly reaches to pick one... but then...

The door of the House of Señor Gruñón flies open. A 70-year-old

man stands in the doorway with consternation carved into his features. HE is dressed in simple peasant attire and brandishes the scowliest of scowls. HE is SEÑOR RODRIGO GRUÑÓN.

Upon seeing SEÑOR GRUÑÓN, ANA and PEPE freeze in terror.

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

What? What? What are you doing here? That is my ground. That is my tree. You have your dirty feet on both. Get out. Get out. Get out!

Scared to bits, PEPE points wildly at the old man.

PEPE

Look, look, Ana!

ANA

(Amused - not frightened.)  
Old Señor Gruñón!

PEPE

I thought he was dead.

ANA

I think he still is. That must be his ghost.

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

I will make some ghosts out of the two of you.

PEPE shrieks and runs to hide behind a laughing ANA.

PEPE

Oh, no, Ana! He is still alive.

ANA

Yes - but for how much longer?

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

I warn you, you little pests!

**2) LEAVE ME ALONE**  
**2B) LEAVE ME ALONE (1)**

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

LEAVE ME ALONE.  
LEAVE ME ALONE.  
LEAVE ME WITH FATE HERE

## SEÑOR GRUÑÓN (CONT)

ON MY OWN.  
GO AND GET UP.  
I AM FED UP.  
LEAVE ME ALONE!

LEAVE ME ALONE.  
LEAVE ME ALONE.  
GO ABDICATE HERE  
FROM MY THRONE.  
WIPE THAT SMILE OFF.  
RUN A MILE OFF.  
LEAVE ME ALONE!

BEGONE, GIT, GO  
AND NEVER EVER SHOW  
YOUR FACE AGAIN...  
AMEN, AMEN!

LEAVE ME ALONE.  
LEAVE ME ALONE.  
DON'T HIBERNATE HERE  
LIKE A STONE.  
LEAVE ME BE NOW.  
RISE AND FLEE NOW.  
ALL THE HAPPY BIRDS HAVE FLOWN...  
AND YOU?  
YOU, TOO.  
LEAVE ME ALONE!  
LEAVE ME ALONE!  
LEAVE ME ALONE!

ANA, still laughing, grabs PEPE by the hand and runs offstage. SEÑOR GRUÑÓN yells after the children in irate fury:

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

You children. You brats. You rats. You always come and take my pears. You... you...

Exhausted, hurt in soul, SEÑOR GRUÑÓN is out of breath and needs a moment to regain his composure.

Touched from afar, LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA spies the old man from her hiding place and is drawn to go to HIM - but just as SHE prepares to do so...

Briskly, matter-of-factly, a middle-aged MAN enters holding some paper and a quill in hand. HE is

SECRETARY MORÍÑIGO of the CABILDO of ASUNCIÓN - a Soviet-style apparatchik. SEÑOR GRUÑÓN spies HIM and immediately curdles with displeasure.

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA freezes and watches, as:

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

Yes? May I help you, Señor?

MORÍÑIGO

(Slimy as an eel.)

Ah! Señor. I am so very glad you asked. I have come from the Cabildo of the great city of Asunción to assess you for taxes.

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN scoffs.

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

Assess? Assess! You can kiss my assess.

MORÍÑIGO

Now, Señor, everyone has a duty to give.

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

Fine, then; I will give you two fingers, one on each hand.

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN prepares to enter his house, but MORÍÑIGO stops HIM.

MORÍÑIGO

I am not leaving here, nor are you, Señor, until I assess you for taxes. You live in that house, on this land, courtesy of the government. Who is it that cleared the land of the savages? Who is it that builds the roads and secures their trade? Who, who, who?

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

What now? Are you an owl?

MORÍÑIGO

What now? Are you a traitor?

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

To what? To your beloved taxes?

MORÍÑIGO

(Almost gleefully.)

Yes! Taxes... taxes... and more taxes.

**2) LEAVE ME ALONE**  
**2C) TAXES**

MORÍÑIGO

A TAX ON EVERY TALE YOU TELL.  
 A TAX ON EVERY SMELL YOU SMELL.  
 A TAX UPON THE VERY BRAIN YOU THINK WITH.

A TAX ON EVERY WORD YOU SAY.  
 A TAX ON EVERY POUND YOU WEIGH.  
 A TAX UPON EACH GLASS YOU CHOOSE TO DRINK WITH.

A TAX ON EVERYTHING YOU WEAR...  
 ON HILLS, ON STARS, ON FLEAS, ON HAIR...  
 AND AFTER THAT - WHAT THEN? WHAT MORE?  
 A TAX ON EVERYTHING IN STORE!

A TAX ON EVERY TEAR YOU WEEP.  
 A TAX ON SHEEP YOU COUNT TO SLEEP.  
 A TAX ON EVERY TAX YOU'RE FORCED TO PAY..  
 AND WHEN YOU FIN'LLY DIE  
 WE'LL TAX THE TIME GONE BY  
 AND ALSO, TOO,  
 THE COFFIN YOU  
 WILL COME IN, D.O.A..

MORÍÑIGO turns to SEÑOR GRUÑÓN with a grand smile. SEÑOR GRUÑÓN smiles back, then, fast as a fox, grabs the Secretary's paper and tears it up. MORÍÑIGO sputters in fury like a rickety speedboat:

MORÍÑIGO

Señor! Señor! That is government property.

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

If so, it's the only thing around here that is. This is my land you're on. My grass. My trees. My house. My air. My life.

MORÍÑIGO

You protest the government?

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

Yes.

MORÍÑIGO

You protest all taxes?

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

Yes.

MORÍÑIGO

(Horrified at the very thought.)  
 You protest the tithe?

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

Especially the tithe! I will give to God when God gives to me. The same goes for land tax and wealth tax and estate tax and stupid government official tax.

MORÍÑIGO

We do not have any such tax, Señor.

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

You should! I have so little of everything else and yet your Crapildo has so much of that. So you go and tax yourself and leave me here alone.

MORÍÑIGO turns and notices the pears.

MORÍÑIGO

What about those, Señor? Surely they will fetch a good price on the market.

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN turns ashen and moves to protect his tree.

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

Those there are my pears and that there is my tree. I have raised it with my own loving hands.

MORÍÑIGO

Courtesy of the government.

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

Courtesy of me and my hands.

MORÍÑIGO laughs dismissively and moves towards the pears, but SEÑOR GRUÑÓN angrily blocks his way.

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

You bloodsucker. You pear-picker. Why do you and your kind always come to curse me?

**2) LEAVE ME ALONE**  
**2D) LEAVE ME ALONE (2)**

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

LEAVE ME ALONE.  
 LEAVE ME ALONE.  
 YOU'RE A DEAD WEIGHT OF  
 SKIN AND BONE.  
 YOU'VE NO HOME HERE.  
 DON'T RE-ROAM HERE.  
 LEAVE ME ALONE!

## SEÑOR GRUÑÓN (CONT)

LEAVE ME ALONE.  
 LEAVE ME ALONE.  
 FLEE MY SAD STATE OF  
 MOAN AND GROAN.  
 RAISE NO FLAGS UP.  
 PACK YOUR BAGS UP.  
 LEAVE ME ALONE!

BEGONE, FLEE, FLY  
 AND NEVER EVER PRY  
 BACK HERE ANEW...  
 NOT YOU, NOT YOU!

LEAVE ME ALONE.  
 LEAVE ME ALONE.  
 DISH ME NO PLATE OF  
 MINDLESS DRONE.  
 MOVE YOUR FEET NOW.  
 GO RETREAT NOW.  
 FIND A SOUL WITH TIME TO LOAN...  
 BUT ME?  
 FLEE, FLEE!  
 LEAVE ME ALONE!  
 LEAVE ME ALONE!  
 LEAVE ME ALONE!

By now, SEÑOR GRUÑÓN is standing in front of the pear tree like a stalwart soldier. MORÍÑIGO, defeated, denied his pears, stares at SEÑOR GRUÑÓN angrily.

MORÍÑIGO

Very well, Señor. Keep your pears. We will take your house instead.

Enraged, MORÍÑIGO stomps off. SEÑOR GRUÑÓN is left alone in his solitude. A sad expression passes over his wrinkled old face. HE forlornly turns and protectively pats the pear tree.

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

Oh, Adrianna... How I miss you so...

The LIGHTS rise softly on the Past. A pretty young girl - ADRIANNA - is visible in the light. SHE appears to be located in some sort of forest glen. The lights are low and pendulous, so as to represent the fading memory of SEÑOR GRUÑÓN.

However, despite the dim lighting,  
ADRIANNA is alive as ever and sings  
- to us, to God, to everyone:

### 3) GO ON

ADRIANNA

EACH MORNING WHEN I WAKE UP  
I SIMPLY CANNOT MAKE UP  
THE WONDERS THAT I SPY  
BENEATH A SILV'RY SKY.

EACH NIGHT BEFORE I DREAM ON  
I WAIT FOR SUN TO GLEAM ON  
THE WONDERS ONCE AGAIN  
WITH SHIMMERING 'AMEN.'

SO FINE ARE THEY,  
DIVINE ARE THEY,  
I TAKE THIS TIME TO SAY  
"OH, GOD, KEEP DOING  
WHAT YOU'RE DOING  
AND IN THE SAME OLD WAY."

A LAUGH ON A BREEZE  
THAT SITS IN THE TREES.  
I ASK YOU, GOD, PLEASE -  
GO ON.

BLUE SKIES THAT ADJUST  
TO ORANGE-ISH RUST.  
I BEG YOU, GOD, JUST  
GO ON.

I CURTSY AND BOW  
AT THE RIDDLE OF IT  
TO KNOW I'M THERE NOW  
IN THE MIDDLE OF IT.

THIS WORLD YOU HAVE MADE  
IS SO WELL DISPLAYED.  
PLEASE LET THE PARADE  
GO ON.  
PLEASE LET THE PARADE  
GO ON.

A STAR IN THE SKY  
THAT FILLS EVERY EYE.  
NO WHEN, WHERE, OR WHY -  
GO ON.

THE SEASONS THAT FLOW  
FROM SUNRAYS TO SNOW.  
I TELL YOU, GOD, GO,

ADRIANNA (CONT)

GO ON.

I MARVEL AND STARE  
AT THE MYST'RY OF IT  
TO KNOW I'LL BE THERE  
IN THE HIST'RY OF IT.

THIS WORLD YOU HAVE MADE  
IS SO WELL ARRAYED.  
PLEASE LET THE PARADE  
GO ON.  
PLEASE LET THE PARADE  
GO ON.

A handsome young man (YOUNG SEÑOR GRUÑÓN - "RIGO") appears next to ADRIANNA. SHE looks up at the sudden figure and, startled, rises in fright - but before SHE can flee:

RIGO

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to startle you.

ADRIANNA

Who... who are you?

RIGO

I am... no one.

ADRIANNA

No one? But that's silly. We all of us must be at least someone.

RIGO

You are the Captain's daughter. I am a shoemaker's son. I am no one.

ADRIANNA

Well, for someone who is no one, you look very much like a someone.

RIGO

What sort of a someone?

ADRIANNA

A someone I'd like to know.

RIGO

I don't believe there's a better someone to be.

ADRIANNA, charmed, smiles lightly.

ADRIANNA  
What is your name?

RIGO  
Rodrigo.

ADRIANNA  
And your last name?

RIGO  
Gruñón.

ADRIANNA  
I've never heard of it.

RIGO  
Most people haven't.

ADRIANNA  
I am Adrianna Cristina Maria de Santavíl.

RIGO  
I've heard of all of those.

ADRIANNA  
Most people have.

RIGO and ADRIANNA exchange an understanding smile.

ADRIANNA  
So tell me, Rodrigo...

RIGO  
Rigo. People call me Rigo.

ADRIANNA  
Am I "people," then?

RIGO  
You are more than people. You are an angel. I have been watching you every day for three weeks now. I always wanted to say something to you, but...

ADRIANNA  
But why? Why me? The only thing special about me is my name.

RIGO  
No. No, Señorita. There's much, much more...

(Singing.)  
A VOICE LIKE A LARK  
THAT LIGHTS UP A SPARK  
IN WORLDS GRAY AND DARK...

(Amused.)  
GO ON. ADRIANNA

RIGO  
A FACE LIKE A SAINT  
OR MAIDENS YOU'D PAINT  
IN REALMS GREEN AND QUAIN...T...

GO ON. ADRIANNA

RIGO  
YOU MESMERIZE ME  
WITH THE BEAUTY OF YOU.

ADRIANNA  
TO SAY WHAT YOU SEE  
IS THE DUTY OF YOU.

RIGO, ADRIANNA  
WE WALTZ NOW ON AIR  
SO, GOD, MAKE THIS RARE,  
SWEET MOMENT WE SHARE  
GO ON.  
YES, GOD, MAKE IT DARE  
GO ON...  
AND ON...  
AND ON...  
AND ON.

Then, suddenly, like a knife  
cutting the moment:

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA  
Señor?

The LIGHTS fall abruptly on the  
Past and rise on the Yard of Señor  
Gruñón. SEÑOR GRUÑÓN, dazed, as if  
woken from a dream, blinks and  
looks up from his daydream. LA  
SEÑORA MARAVILLA is (finally)  
standing before HIM with a kind  
smile. SEÑOR GRUÑÓN, focused and  
recovered, frowns with anger and  
frustration. LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA  
tentatively, tepidly begins to  
speak to HIM:

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA  
Excuse this intrusion, Señor. I have only come to speak with  
you and pray you will hear me out. I am a widow of some four

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA (CONT)

meager weeks. I know your loneliness and I feel your pain. I only want to...

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

(Turning on HER like a volcano.)

Ah! So I suppose I owed your late husband money and you have come here to collect. Or maybe you have a daughter you claim is mine and needing my support. Or maybe still you have come to play on my heart and to take all my pears so as to feed your filthy, lying mouth.

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA

But Señor...

SEÑOR GRUÑÓN

Stay away from my pears. Stay away from my heart. You are welcome with neither. Go away like all the others and leave me alone!

Craving solitude, SEÑOR GRUÑÓN grunts angrily, rushes into the house, and slams the door behind HIM. Left behind, astounded, LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA looks after HIM with a mouthful of words to say. Instead, left alone, SHE lowers HER head in resignation and calmly starts to exit, as...

Commandingly, a feisty and self-important MARCH sounds. The LIGHTS rise on the Cabildo of Asunción. Three gentlemen enter: LARRÁZABAL, Governor of Paraguay - a fair civil servant, very conscious of his role; FONTES, Alcalde of Asunción - a bobble-headed sycophant; and BURIOS, Alcalde of Asunción - an enjoyable buffoon.<sup>1</sup>

As THEY enter, LARRÁZABAL, FONTES, and BURIOS sing:

#### **4) MARCH OF THE CABILDO**

LARRÁZABAL, FONTES, BURIOS

WE'RE HERE IN THE CITY OF ASUNCIÓN  
WHICH MAPS ONLY CLASSIFY AS "SOUTH OF SCONE."

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<sup>1</sup> Alcaldes were governing magistrates of municipalities in the Spanish New World. They were elected by town councilors for one-year terms.

LARRÁZABAL, FONTES, BURIOS (CONT)  
 THIS PLACE IS THE CAPITAL OF PARAGUAY  
 SINCE MUCH NICER CITIES ARE TOO FARAWAY.

WE FORM THE CABILDO OF ASUNCIÓN  
 TO GOVERN AND BABBLE AND DISCUSS AND DRONE.  
 WE'RE BOTH LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL, TOO,  
 SO, WHILE WE DEBATE A BILL, WE'LL SENTENCE YOU.

LARRÁZABAL

I AM THE GOV'NOR,  
 THE DELEGATED GOV'NOR,  
 APPOINTED BY THE KING OF SPAIN  
 TO RULE THIS CRUMB IN HIS DOMAIN.

FONTES, BURIOS

WE'RE THE ALCALDES,  
 THE DUTIFUL ALCALDES,  
 WHO OVERSEE THE CITY HERE  
 TEN-POINT-ONE-FIVE MONTHS OF THE YEAR.

LARRÁZABAL, FONTES, BURIOS  
 TOGETHER, WE RULE WITH GREAT SOBRIETY  
 THIS SLOW, SENSELESS, SLEEPY, SEMI-SOCIETY.

LARRÁZABAL

YES, WE'RE THE CABILDO OF ASUNCIÓN.

FONTES

THERE'S ONLY THE THREE OF US, BUT HOW WE'VE GROWN.

BURIOS

WHO CARES IF THE TABLES, CHAIRS, AND QUILL'S ON LOAN?

LARRÁZABAL, FONTES, BURIOS

YES, WE'RE THE CABILDO  
 YES, WE'RE THE CABILDO  
 THE GRAND CABILDO OF ASUNCIÓN.

LARRÁZABAL, FONTES, and BURIOS have  
 now taken their places at the  
 bench. LARRÁZABAL rises and bangs a  
 gavel.

LARRÁZABAL

Greetings, greetings, Señores. The Cabildo of Asunción is  
 now called to order. What business do we have today for our  
 most august body?

BURIOS and FONTES look uncertainly  
 at EACH OTHER. An empty pause hangs  
 pendulously over the stage. FONTES  
 timidly raises HIS hand. LARRÁZABAL  
 smiles gratefully and points at

HIM. FONTES rises and grandly announces:

FONTES

Nothing, Your Excellency.

FONTES sits again with great self-contentment. BURIOS pats FONTES on the back ("good speech!"). LARRÁZABAL considers the non-news with shock.

LARRÁZABAL

You mean we have nothing to discuss?

FONTES looks at BURIOS. BURIOS looks at FONTES. Together, THEY look at LARRÁZABAL and nod.

LARRÁZABAL

Yes, but... but... Nothing? At all?

FONTES looks at BURIOS. BURIOS looks at FONTES. Again, THEY look at LARRÁZABAL and nod.

FONTES

(Shrugging.)  
I'm sorry.

BURIOS

(Patting HIS stomach.)  
I'm hungry.

LARRÁZABAL sighs disappointedly.

LARRÁZABAL

Well, Señores, what, then, are we supposed to do?

BURIOS

With what?

FONTES

With ourselves.

BURIOS

(Rising.)  
Eat! Let us eat.

LARRÁZABAL

(Forcing BURIOS down again.)  
No, Señor. No eat. We are government. We must find something to do. Now think.

BURIOS

We'd do less damage if we ate.

BURIOS plops down in his chair with petulant frustration. A pause follows as EVERYONE thinks. The pause grows... and grows... and grows... and grows... No sign yet of an idea... MUSIC rises:

### **5) THINGS TO DO**

LARRÁZABAL

SCHEDULES DESERTED...  
TOO MUCH TIME TO CHAT...  
TRAGEDIES AVERTED...  
WHAT'S THE FUN IN THAT?  
PLEASE, GOD, SEND A CAN SO WE CAN KICK IT.  
I CANNOT STAND TO HEAR ANOTHER CRICKET.

OH, IF ONLY WE HAD A WAR  
AND A CANNON OR TWO TO ROAR  
AND A MIGHTY ARMED FORCE  
AND AN ALPS-CROSSING COURSE  
AND A FIELD FIT TO FIGHT ON  
ALL DAY AND ALL NIGHT ON  
WITH CROWDS TO CHEER "RIGHT ON! HOORAY!"  
YES, FRIENDS, IF WE HAD A WAR  
A WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL WAR,  
OUR LIVES WOULD BE A GRAND HOLIDAY.

LARRÁZABAL, FONTES

WE'D HAVE THINGS TO DO.  
YES, YES, THINGS TO DO.

FONTES

SOME TARGETS TO BEAT.

LARRÁZABAL

SOME TASKS TO ACCRUE.

LARRÁZABAL, FONTES

HOW GAILY WE'D TEND A  
SEAM-BURSTING AGENDA  
OF THIS, THAT, AND OTHER THINGS, TOO  
FOR THEN WE'D HAVE THINGS  
YES, THEN WE'D HAVE THINGS  
MY FRIENDS, WE'D HAVE THINGS  
TO DO.

FONTES

OH, I TELL YOU, I'D SURELY BEG  
FOR THE LORD TO SEND US A PLAGUE  
THAT MAKES SKIN PURPLE-DYED

FONTES (CONT\_)

AND BURSTS SCARS OPEN-WIDE  
 AND MEANS EACH PLACE YOU'VE SAT IS  
 OR EVEN LOOKED AT IS  
 A PLACE WHERE A RAT IS OR WAS.  
 YES, FRIENDS, IF WE HAD A PLAGUE,  
 A WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL PLAGUE,  
 OUR LIVES WOULD BE LESS USELESS, BECAUSE...

LARRÁZABAL, FONTES

WE'D HAVE THINGS TO DO.  
 YES, YES, THINGS TO DO.

FONTES

SOME DEADLINES TO MEET.

LARRÁZABAL

SOME PLANS TO PURSUE.

LARRÁZABAL, FONTES

JUST ONE JOB PROPOSAL  
 AND OUR BANAL WOES'LL  
 BE FINALLY FINISHED AND THROUGH  
 FOR THEN WE'D HAVE THINGS  
 YES, THEN WE'D HAVE THINGS  
 MY FRIENDS, WE'D HAVE THINGS  
 TO DO.

The MUSIC stops. LARRÁZABAL and  
 FONTES turn to BURIOS.

LARRÁZABAL

Well, now, Señor Burios?

FONTES

What is it you wish for?

BURIOS thinks... and thinks... and  
 thinks. LARRÁZABAL and FONTES watch  
 HIM intently. BURIOS opens his  
 mouth to speak - then closes it. HE  
 thinks some more and opens his  
 mouth again - but no luck. More  
 thinking. More thinking.

By this time, LARRÁZABAL and FONTES  
 have given up and sit back down -  
 but, just then, BURIOS suddenly  
 slams HIS hands down on the table,  
 scaring THEM out of their wits, and  
 sings:

BURIOS

I CONFESS WHAT WOULD TICKLE ME  
IS A NAT'RAL CATASTROPHE  
THAT WOULD KNOCK MOUNTAINS DOWN  
AND SUBMERGE EV'RY TOWN  
AND FORCE MEN TO ABANDON  
EACH SQUARE FOOT OF LAND IN  
SUCH FEAR YOU CAN'T STAND IN THEIR WAY.

LARRÁZABAL, FONTES, BURIOS

LONG LIVE A CATASTROPHE,  
A WONDERFUL CATASTROPHE,  
SO WE WOULD THEN BE ABLE TO SAY...  
WE'D HAVE THINGS TO DO.  
YES, YES, THINGS TO DO.

BURIOS

MORE FOOD I COULD EAT...

LARRÁZABAL, FONTES

MORE FACTS WE'D REVIEW...

LARRÁZABAL, FONTES, BURIOS

WE BADLY NEED SOMETHING,  
A SMALL, LITTLE, CRUMB THING  
OR WE'LL HOLD OUR BREATHS TILL WE'RE BLUE  
UNTIL WE'D HAVE THINGS,  
UNTIL WE'D HAVE THINGS,  
UNTIL WE'D HAVE THINGS  
TO DO.  
PLEASE, GOD, GIVE US THINGS  
TO DO.

MORÍNIGO enters like an impatient  
thunderclap.

MORÍNIGO

Your Excellency! Señores! You will not believe what tragic  
and dangerous pestilence I encountered today.

LARRÁZABAL

(Hopefully.)  
War?

FONTES

(Ditto.)  
Plague?

BURIOS

Food?

LARRÁZABAL and FONTES silence  
BURIOS with their glares.

MORÍNIGO

An old man outside the city who refuses to pay his taxes.

LARRÁZABAL

Ah, yes, finally we have a reason to keep the jail opened.

FONTES

All we have to do is convert it back from being the library.

BURIOS

No, no, Señor. The library is closed.

FONTES

Why is it closed?

BURIOS

I lost the books.

FONTES

What, both of them?

LARRÁZABAL

So then we are prepared to arrest this man, this...

Looking offstage, LARRÁZABAL spies someone and quickly rises. A second later, LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA enters. FONTES and BURIOS rise, too, in respect.

LARRÁZABAL

La Señora Maravilla! It is indeed an honor. How may we assist our most beloved Señora?

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA

Good day, Your Excellency. I hope you will excuse this most rude intrusion. I come on the heels of Señor Secretary to plead leniency for the old man he accosted today.

MORÍNIGO

(Outraged, to LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA.)  
Accosted, Señora?  
 (To LARRÁZABAL.)  
 But... Your Excellency...

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA

Señor Gruñón is not a lawbreaker. He is a good and honest man. I know him and I will vouch for him.

MORÍNIGO

You know him?

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA

And will vouch for him.

MORÍÑIGO

(Flabbergasted.)  
But... but...

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA

(To LARRÁZABAL, FONTES, and BURIOS.)  
I appeal to you gentlemen.

MORÍÑIGO

I do not understand, Señora. You are the most respected woman in this city. How could you know this vulgar and criminal man? The world would be a much better place if he were never in it.

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA considers  
MORÍÑIGO grimly.

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA

No; I cannot agree to that, Señor.

### **6) BECAUSE A MAN IS THERE**

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA

ONE LESS MAN IN THE WORLD...  
COULD THAT EVER BE A CHARM?  
ONE LESS MAN IN THE WORLD...  
JUST ONE LESS COULD DO NO HARM?  
SO YOU SAY, SO YOU THINK,  
BUT DON'T WRITE IT YET IN INK,  
BECAUSE YOU'RE WRONG,  
BECAUSE YOU'RE WRONG.  
LOSE A MAN, ANY MAN...  
YOU'LL LOSE MORE THAN JUST A LOT.  
LOSE A MAN, ANY MAN...  
TELL ME - WHAT THEN HAVE YOU GOT?

ONE LESS HAND  
THAT YOU CAN HOLD  
SO YOU'RE NEVER LEFT OR LOST.  
ONE LESS BREATH  
THAT WARMS THE COLD  
WHEN YOU'RE SHIV'RING IN ITS FROST.  
EVERY VIEW  
THAT WE VIEW  
IS ONLY WORTH THE STARE  
BECAUSE A MAN IS THERE,  
BECAUSE A MAN IS THERE.

ONE LESS PATH  
YOU CAN EXPLORE  
THAT WON'T END WITH YOU ALONE.  
ONE LESS KNOCK  
UPON YOUR DOOR  
TO REMIND YOU THAT YOU'RE KNOWN.

## LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA (CONT)

EVERY DREAM  
 THAT WE DREAM  
 WE'LL ONLY COME TO SHARE  
 BECAUSE A MAN IS THERE,  
 BECAUSE A MAN IS THERE.

ONE LESS FIELD THAT WILL BE SOWN.  
 ONE LESS PERSON YOU MIGHT LOVE.  
 ONE LESS MEM'RY THAT YOU'LL OWN.  
 ONE LESS SOUL YOU'LL MEET ABOVE.  
 EVERY PERSON IN YOUR LIFE  
 IS A REASON YOU SHOULD LIVE.  
 ONE LESS PERSON IN YOUR LIFE  
 IS ONE LESS DAMN YOU HAVE TO GIVE.

ONE LESS SPOT  
 WITHOUT A WEED  
 WHERE A MAN IS MEANT TO STAND.  
 ONE LESS EAR  
 TO HEAR AND HEED  
 WHEN YOU'RE KNEE-DEEP IN QUICKSAND.  
 YOU MAY CRY  
 WHY, WHY, WHY...  
 WHATEVER DOES SHE CARE?  
 I ANSWER CLEAR AS AIR:  
 BECAUSE A MAN IS THERE.

A meaningful pause. LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA has clearly made an impression. LARRÁZABAL exchanges a glance with FONTES and BURIOS and then grandly announces a verdict:

LARRÁZABAL

La Señora Maravilla, your husband was a great and noble member of this community and you yourself follow him in those footsteps. Your words have moved us. We promise to proceed kindly with the old man. You need not fear about his safety in our hands.

LA SEÑORA MARAVILLA nods to LARRÁZABAL respectfully. LARRÁZABAL, FONTES, and BURIOS rise and exit. An annoyed MORÍÑIGO scoffs and follows THEM.

The LIGHTS fall completely on the Cabildo and rise in full on the House of Señor Gruñón.