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**DELMAR**

A one-act play in English and Spanish  
by Julia Jarcho

(excerpt)

SCENE 5. THE CASTLE. REINA SITTING, REY STANDING.

REINA

No entiendo. ¿Le ha raptado?

REY

No, no. Esta niña es amiga de nuestro hormiguito.

REINA

Pues ¿Dónde está Rriairrio/rrié?

REY

Eso le has de preguntar  
A la niña en la antesala.

REINA

¿Y tú?

REY

Mejor que las hembras se cuenten secretos entre ellas.  
Yo prefiero guardar silencio.

REINA

Tráela entonces.

[REY exits. He reenters with MARTHA. MARTHA curtseys to  
REINA and REINA nods. REY exits. Pause.]

REINA (CONT'D)

Por favor, siéntate.

MARTHA

I would rather stand. You are much taller than me already.

[Pause.]

REINA

¿Eres amiga de nuestro hijo?

MARTHA

Yes. We learned those words in class. I am a friend of your son.  
In fact, he's at our house right now.

REINA

¿De verdad? Qué bien. Estábamos muy preocupados.

MARTHA

I'm here to ask you, I'd like to propose you something, OK? Tengo una idea.

REINA

Vale.

MARTHA

Do you know about exchange programs?

REINA

Eschen prograns?

MARTHA

Yes. They're very popular in this provincial area at least, I couldn't really speak for the country at large, but I think it's a pretty common thing. My idea has to do with exchange programs, and how everyone seems to agree that they work very well, it's the immersion principle, but of course you know that already.

REINA

Sigue.

MARTHA

Thank you. So, your son, I've had a little time to get to know him, especially this evening.

REINA

He did not come with you.

MARTHA

At the moment no, no, but that seems like a good opportunity for us to speak honestly about him. I think he's really lovely, your majesty, but he also isn't very good at communicating in our culture, I mean mine, the one you moved into, and he seems isolated. To be honest he didn't really say anything to me or my brother all day today. And at school I've never heard him talk. I don't know how he wound up at our house at all, unless some kind of mutual pity was involved among the higher-ups. But don't let me misspeak, I believe he's not unhappy with us. Just silent. So that's his position. Mine is a little more complicated. Let's just say I need a break and would like to experience something exotic, which it's pretty clear you can provide. So my idea is that we have an exchange.

Pause.

REINA

¡Mi amor!

[REY enters immediately, having obviously been just outside the room. MARTHA curtsseys to him.]

REINA (CONT'D)

¿Qué dice?

REY

Una sugerencia muy interesante.

MARTHA

Gracias.

REY

Quiere que Rr. Rr. Rr. se quede con su familia para acostumbrarse a la cultura nueva, mientras ella viva con nosotros para experimentar algo nuevo.

REINA

Pero ¿por cuánto tiempo?

REY

No dice.

REINA

Pregúntaselo.

REY

For how long do you propose the transposition?

MARTHA

It's up to your graces of course. I'm prepared to stay until I die, but probably Lionel will want to come home sometime. How about a month?

REY

And our son throws his small weight behind this plan?

MARTHA

Yes. Sí.

REINA

Pregúntala si sabe cocinar.

REY

Pero mi vida...

MARTHA

If I can cook? That wasn't exactly what I had in mind, but I'm up for just about anything at this point. I make good scrambled eggs about half the time. Does Lionel cook?

REY

He is busy with books and arrows.

MARTHA

You'd never know it.

REY

We had like a daughter.

REINA

Marido mío,  
Aunque esta chica no sea bonita,  
Aunque sea media idiota  
Y es evidente que nunca ha visitado  
A ningun castillo,  
Aunque no sepa cocinar  
Ni una sardina de lata  
Ni entienda de que se trata  
Una historia como la nuestra,  
Me gusta. Verdad que me gusta.  
Que se quede aquí por mi parte.

REY

My wife says she is enchanted  
and you are welcome in our castle,  
Although we will both suffer somewhat  
The absence of our niño.

REINA

Ya sabes, nuestro niño  
La madrugada es.

REY

We want to know if you know dancing.

MARTHA

We had a dance at school once and I was the only person who really  
danced. Everyone else was just sort of shifting. I hate this  
town. Can I show you?

[MARTHA does a dance. REY and REINA are impressed. Now  
MARTHA addresses the audience.]

Así me permitieron quedarme en el castillo. Escogí como pequeño  
dominio una de las torres, desde la cual se puede ver todo. Para  
llegar a la torre hay que subir por una escalera peligrosa, porque  
el ascensor no funciona. Pero no me resulta tan difícil bajar, por  
ejemplo para ir a la cocina y preparar un montón de huevos  
revueltos, los cuales les encantan al rey y a la reina. Y si me  
aduerdo allí, o en la gran sala después de comer, el rey me lleva  
dormida hasta mi cuarto, tan fuerte es, y me despierto la próxima  
mañana cuando todo está brillando.

SCENE 6. HOOB AND LUNI.

HOOB

What do you mean?

LUNI

Just that I said I think there could be some changes here.

HOOB

Where?

LUNI

I mean, exactly. It's a question of scope.

HOOB

Do you mean, this house?

LUNI

Yes and no. This house would have to be part of it.

HOOB

Part of...

LUNI

I'm sick of the lack of ambition. I don't like to use the word lazy but that's what it is, these people our townsmen are lazy. For example, what is the purpose of that pond?

HOOB

Which pond?

LUNI

The pond in back of the adjunctament.

HOOB

The lake?

LUNI

Sure, we call it that, but who are we trying to kid? It's a pond, why do we call it a lake? It's a pathetic pond. Now, do we want a lake? Because if we do, we can have one. But what I hate is pretending we have a lake when what we have is more like a puddle that even most frogs disdain.

[JOSEPH enters wearing a shower cap.]

JOSEPH

Is she back?

HOOB

No.

JOSEPH

When...

HOOB

Joseph, she was having a hard time living here, and it's best for her to be somewhere else for a while.

JOSEPH

I wanna go too.

HOOB  
I don't think that's true, do you?

JOSEPH  
Lionel wants to go.

HOOB  
When it's time for him to go home, we'll know.

LUNI  
Joseph, let me get your opinion on the pond.

[JOSEPH exits.]

HOOB  
Poor guy.

LUNI  
What?

HOOB  
I never know what to say to them. Their father is better at that.

LUNI  
It makes me uncomfortable when you praise him.

HOOB  
Sorry.

LUNI  
No, no, it's something I have to get beyond. It's my own weakness.  
Hoob, it is possible to overcome weakness.

HOOB  
I hope so.

LUNI  
This is what I'm saying. Step by step. Will you help me draw up a  
plan?

HOOB  
Will it make the frogs come back?

LUNI  
If that's what we decide.

[JOSEPH enters with a box and a clipboard. He brings them to  
HOOB.]

HOOB  
Another one?

JOSEPH

You have to sign here.

(HOOB signs on the clipboard. JOSEPH exits. Pause. JOSEPH reenters, picks up the package, and exits again.)`  
Lionel!

LUNI

What are they sending him?

HOOB

Mostly candy.

LUNI

Every day?

HOOB

It's their culture I guess.

LUNI

That's really nice.

HOOB

Yeah, it is.