ECSTASY OR STEPS TO SAINTHOOD

By

SEQUENCE—ONE—TEACHINGS

SCENE I

At the Movies

Andrés—Esteban

(*Leaning against the wall at the back of the theatre, Esteban chews a lozenge, snatches of “The Last Days of Pompeii”, or something similar, can be heard from offstage.*)

ESTEBAN: Not this again, Andrés. We’ve already seen it.

ANDRES: You never finish seeing them, Esteban.

ESTEBAN: Did you see? . . . She turned around, she wants me, let’s go sit down.

ANDRES: We’re good here. When I see how they carry the martyr, so sure of getting the holy palm leaf, so happy . . . My only desire is to have been there with them, look how their faces glow . . .

ESTEBAN: Take something for your nerves, here’s a mint . . .

ANDRES: There are still Romans, Esteban, there still are . . . (*Andrés tears at his chest, lion claws mark his skin.*)

SCENE II

From the window of their apartment on the sixth floor

Grandmother—María—and Vivaldi the Canary

(*The Grandmother, holding up Vivaldi’s cage, scrutinizes the movements in the other apartments. The canary sings.*)

GRANDMOTHER: Yes, Vivaldi, yes, but what are we going to do? We don’t have any other scenery than the people across the way. Come on, sing, sing to your little old lady . . . There she is, María, that anorexic who spends all day in her pajamas . . .

MARIA: Could she be sick? I’m just asking . . .

GRANDMOTHER: Sick from laziness, with the brute she has to maintain her. María, come here, look, there he is, that brat is playing with himself in the bathtub again.

MARIA: Maybe he’s scratching, he put out the light . . .

GRANDMOTHER: Did you gather the branches? . . . You have to interlace them so the little piece of cloth isn’t too stiff; it has to be a little bit wrinkled. Haven’t you seen how it looks on the religious illustrated cards? There comes that hypocrite, he’s arrived in a taxi for a week now . . .

MARIA: He must be making more now . . .

GRANDMOTHER: He’ll have turned to robbery . . . drugs . . . who knows what. Let’s see, a little bit wrinkled I told you; they’ve got to be real. Isn’t that right, Vivaldi? Come on; let’s go pray to Julia.

 SCENE III

The Show

Andrés—María—Esteban

(*Andrés, nude torso, makes up his wounds in front of the mirror.*)

ANDRES: You know I didn’t ask for this, it was Esteban’s idea. Besides, what we earn from tickets will go to help the poor in the parish. . . . I know that I’ll never be able to equal your passion, and that it would be vain to think that I could look like you, but enlighten me, if the wounds and the nails are false, at least my soul can feel this immense pain of suffering for love . . .

MARIA: The cloth is from an old sheet and I made the other with nothing but branches, I couldn’t find any rosebushes in the plaza . . . I wish I could go see it . . .

ESTEBAN: Here, let me put on lots of lacquer so the curls don’t slip . . .

The Performance

(*He puts on the wig and the crown. Covers himself with the mantle, plays Christ arriving*

*to Jerusalem on an ass. Music from “Jesus Christ Superstar”, Hosanna. In the back.*

*Christians with palm leaves celebrate him. Andrés tears off his costume, interrupting the*

*show.*)

ANDRES: Esteban . . . Esteban . . . take the belt and whip me, I need to really feel it . . .

ESTEBAN: There’s only one person who can take off my belt, come on, relax . . .

ANDRES: No, I can’t disguise myself like this. You know, I’ve always been different, while others read *Little Lulu*, I liked the illustrated lives; instead of collecting photos of soccer players to fill albums with I gathered saints’ medallions. . .

ESTEBAN: I feel different too, but I also want to be like everyone else: when I see someone on a motorcycle, I want his bike. When I go to a friend’s house, I want his house. I even believe that others make love better than I do. When I’m with someone I want to be with the girl he’s got . . . It’s like everything there is to live for slips through your fingers . . .

ANDRES: Esteban, I know why I’m on this earth and what my existence means, but I have to pass earthly trials, which aren’t these . . .

SCENE IV

Grandmother—María

GRANDMOTHER: This shirt is ready to be thrown out. Nobody would ever believe that she was the little shepherd girl, she brought her two little brothers to the grotto and told them the mother of God will appear over there . . .

MARIA: Of course, no one believed her because she was poor . . .

GRANDMOTHER: She went and told her mother that an incredibly beautiful woman dressed in celestial blue asked her to have them build her a church there, but her mother, who was a peasant . . . Look, there she is again, the lazy cow is still in bed. Enough, go to bed, it’s late . . .

(*Andrés. Night, in a vertical bed, without a mattress, wrapped in a sheet.*)

ANDRES: I throw off the sheets, I grasp them firmly, I sweat, I don’t want the souls in pain drawn from her to come, I urinate and I can’t get up because there are vipers nesting beneath my mattress, I can’t look out the window because I see an old man banging on the glass, and I don’t know who he is, I don’t dare open my eyes even though I can’t sleep, because there are silhouettes between the slats of the blinds.

(*A memory. Rain, thunder. The Grandmother behind the window, Andrés downstage.*)

GRANDMOTHER: You’re sleeping, child, it’s raining and when the water falls it’s because the saints are urinating.

ANDRES: Grandmother, you’re awake . . .

GRANDMOTHER: I don’t like your parents’ house, I want to go . . . I want them to come look for me . . .

ANDRES: Go to bed, Grandmother . . .

GRANDMOTHER: I’m not going to sleep; I want death to catch me with my eyes open. It’s time for the end of the world, time for the final judgment. Why continue? Sleep, child, sleep; don’t listen to this crazy old lady . . . Your mother’s crying, they’re beating her again . . .

ANDRES: Why does she let them? I want to go defend her.

GRANDMOTHER: Leave her alone; she’s paying for her sin. The devil tempted them and she gave herself before marriage. Flesh, desire, and that’s how you were born, outside of wedlock. This house is cursed; you can see it in your father’s eyes. That’s why I don’t like to come; they’re paying for their faults here. Tomorrow I’ll begin a vow of poverty so that peace will come to this house, I won’t eat anything other than hazelnuts and I’ll only shower once a week, for three months that will be my offering to Saint Lucy. You’ve got to offer something, I’ll offer poverty. Sleep, Andrés, sleep, dream with the angels. . .

(*Andrés’ dream. An angel with metallic wings and phosphorescent eyes, carrying a bloody shroud. Canticles.*)

ANGEL: He didn’t stop singing the Lord’s praises even when he was drawn and quartered.

ANDRES: Trees bend over and the clay springs from the earth . . .

ANGEL: Close your eyes so the light doesn’t blind you.

ANDRES: They tighten his crown and the saints, and the angels receive him . . . It’s my mother, he killed her, he killed her.

ANGEL: Be happy, be happy, Andrés . . .

MOTHER: They’ve kidnapped my child! They’ve kidnapped my child!

GRANDMOTHER: Your mother keeps having that nightmare. You’ve got to beat the whites well, put in lots of salt, and let your hands soak for half an hour, it’s the only remedy for arthritis, Laura’s gotten very good results . . .

MOTHER: My child! My child!

GRANDMOTHER: Her religious vow lasted three years, from the day she decided to dress up like Lourdes.

ANDRES: That’s what it was for.

GRANDMOTHER: Yes, she suffered a lot, you should have seen how they filled the house, the number of journalists at the grate, it came out in all the papers, she was younger, yes. I was always suspicious of Manuel, you only had to look at the way he raised his eyebrows . . .

(*Through the window a memory dream.*)

MOTHER: (*With a cake and candles, gives Andrés a present.*)

ANDRES: (*Blowing out the candles.*) Lord, show me the path of humility and sacrifice. I won’t eat any cake, mama, give it to the poor.

GRANDMOTHER: They’d put together a party and he planed wood.

*Manuel planes.(Manuel enters with a radio on his shoulder, listens to a soccer game, begins to plane, Andrés enters with his mother’s present.*)

ANDRES: You’ve got strong legs.

MANUEL: Well, I play soccer.

ANDRES: Don’t you get bored?

MANUEL: No, I use the time to think, Friday’s coming and I’ll go out for a beer, about what could happen tomorrow, I have to wash my soccer jersey, about finding someone for my bed . . . I think, I’m fine.

ANDRES: I think too, and I read, I try to be good like them. It amuses me to see how wood becomes clean again, how you shave away the grime, as if you were trying to make it pure again . . . I think about how I could plane my soul, make it shine like a diamond . . .

MANUEL: I find the black floors and then I go and leave them like new, that’s what I like.

ANDRES: My skin could be wood; it would be enough for you to rub the plane on my chest or my face. Would you do it?

MANUEL: You’ve got a lot of imagination; you better go do your chores . . .

ANDRES: Your leg is like a lion’s without down, look at my chest, Manuel, it’s white . . . but unlike the floors, the wax of the years builds up below, the grime sticks to it, spit, vomit, drops of wine, come on, shave it . . .

MANUEL: You awaken bad instincts in me . . . I don’t know, my head’s boiling, I feel the same way I felt when I was fifteen and we trapped this little girl who wore a mini skirt, we took her to the field and the three of us burst her . . . I didn’t want to, but the fever took over, I squeezed her wrists hard and I bit her lips . . . She shivered, but quietly . . .

ANDRES: Did she forgive you?

MANUEL: I was the only one she didn’t denounce . . . Now I like to bite lips and squeeze wrists . . .

ANDRES: Hands turn blue and pain releases your saliva.

MANUEL: And then I get big and I hurt them . . .

ANDRES: It seems like you have to suffer to feel pleasure . . .

MANUEL: Well, I’m going to go now . . . I’ve got enough for an hour’s travel . . .

ANDRES: I’ll go with you; I want to see your house, your furniture . . .

GRANDMOTHER: They gave her three years, three.

ANDRES: He left me in my underwear, up against the wall, hands open, he squeezed my wrists, his eyes shone . . . Then he began to shave my pubic hair.

GRANDMOTHER: The telephone rang and rang, I told your mother: “Manuel’s taken him.”

ANDRES: But when I was up against the wall and he began to nail me six pins in the shape of the cross, I could make out an illustration of the Last Supper on the wall, and while he bit my testicles I thought he was a pagan lion, and I discovered that my purpose in life was to be a martyr . . . I’d already offered up my life when I sensed the sirens, the beating at the door and my mother’s screams.

GRANDMOTHER: I went too, but I stayed in the car . . .

ANDRES: I felt greatly deceived. That interruption frustrated my path to eternal glory.

GRANDMOTHER: Sleep, Andrés, and don’t forget about your mother, may she rest in peace.

ANDRES: From that day on my only desire was to come face to face with some pagan who craved my martyrdom. I asked my friends to spray me with paraffin like they did with cats so that the fire would transform this carcass into carbon that only yearns to complete its mission.

 SEQUENCE—TWO—KINDNESSES

SCENE I

In the Church

The Priest—Andrés—Lady--Esteban

(*Church chandeliers lower and a stained glass window appears above the rectangle below, the Priest enters singing “My people, why have you offended me”, then Andrés enters and joins in the song.*)

PRIEST: You sing better every day, Andrés, it’s a heavenly gift, the Lord spoke to us by means of the word, your vocal chords together with your heart are the most sacred parts of the body, without celestial choirs could we even imagine heaven? No, Andrés . . . Song is what guided me to my vocation, and I said to myself I would become a priest. I believe that I reach divine ecstasy in those same cantatas . . .

ANDRES: Squeeze it harder.

PRIEST: Don’t try to destroy it, just conquer it.

ANDRES: We’ve been carrying out this exorcism for more than six months and I still don’t feel purified.

PRIEST: The claws of filth and ignominy are very strong, Andrés, come on, commit yourself . . .

ANDRES: Here I am before you, waiting for you to appear one day as you have done with so many others . . . Lord, consoling the afflicted and those who suffer will I begin the path to holiness . . .

(*A Lady carrying packages enters. Andrés goes to console her.*)

LADY: (*Picking up her handbag.*) I don’t have any coins.

ANDRES: I wasn’t going to ask you for any . . .

LADY: Go on; go on, this church is quite large so if you’re not here to beg, you want another sort of thing . . .

ANDRES: I only want to console you.

LADY: Console me? What group are you from?

ANDRES: None, I’d like to share your pain and combine our prayers . . .

LADY: I come here all the time, after going shopping my feet swell up and I can rest here and make a few requests, it’s a habit of mine . . . You must be pretty bored.

ANDRES: No.

LADY: Look, I don’t pray, I converse with the Lord, sometimes with Saint Anne, or Saint Gemma, depending upon what it’s about, I chat with them and entrust myself to them . . .

ANDRES: And they answer you?

LADY: If they answer they wouldn’t do it here, they’d do it over there, above one of these altars.

ANDRES: I talk to them too, but I want an answer.

LADY: Answers appear by themselves. I asked Saint Francis to get Nelly settled so much, her time was passing, and I didn’t know how I was going to take care of her, and within the year she got married, but the idiot husband is a woman-chaser and the girl comes crying to me, I want her to leave him, but you can’t ask for that, it’s anti-Christian, if it were up to me I’d ask for them to take him away if he’s so wicked, but you can’t ask for that either, it’ll backfire on you. So I prayed that he’d fall in love with someone else and leave, but that he’d leave Nelly with a pension so she could take care of herself . . . The hard part is that Nelly seems to be expecting, the idiot doesn’t tell me anything and that complicates things, because you can’t pray for the child to be taken by the angels, but if Lucho falls in love with someone else and leaves Nelly all alone with a child . . . Then everything’s all the more complicated. I was going to do three penances: give up coffee, stop knitting, something I like a lot, it calms my nerves, and, finally, the biggest sacrifice: no butter on my bread for three months. I’ve got that all clear, but I don’t know how to fix the situation . . . What’s making that sound?

ANDRES: Stones (*He scatters them)*, I don’t know, reading the exemplary lives . . . Have you ever read them?

LADY: Outside of the music I’m not much of a fan of . . .

ANDRES: That’s where I learned that Saint Rose carried a log in order to better comprehend what our Lord suffered beneath the weight of the cross. I carry stones, to remember his presence; I increase the weight every day . . . I’m going to do it for a week until I won’t be able to move.

LADY: Here, you missed one . . .

ESTEBAN: I can show you a trail where there are some gigantic stones . . . laugh . . . Look at these shoes, I’m walking happy, can you tell?

ANDRES: How easy it is for you.

ESTEBAN: The girl from the movies, remember? We talked at the exit, she’s a poet, worried about the seas and the trees, we walked together . . . we held hands and felt a strong heat . . . we rolled in the hay and everything turned around, ahh . . . no neuroses . . . I like her, I think . . .

ANDRES: You’ve given me a sign.

ESTEBAN: Me?

ANDRES: Yes, love, my girlfriends always read the magazine *Susy: Secrets of the Heart*. The covers always showed a girl with tears streaming down her cheeks while behind her you saw best friend kissing the man she loved. It’s clear, in love there is suffering, I’m going to fall in love . . . .

SCENE II

María—Andrés

(*Song and dance, a musical comedy scene, while María cleans.*)

MARIA: Don’t look at me so much, it makes me nervous.

ANDRES: Your name attracts me, María.

MARIA: It’s Rosa María, but I like just María.

ANDRES: I bought you some cream for your hands, the dust . . .

MARIA: Thank you, this will be very useful, the chlorine’s the thing that damages them the most . . .

ANDRES: Would you like to go to the movies, have a drink?

MARIA: That would be great, but what would your grandmother say?

ANDRES: That you work hard and this is very good, you help out around the house, you’re full of kindness.

MARIA: I’m going to finish up now . . .

ANDRES: I want to take care of you, be a good girl, tell me what you need . . .

MARIA: I’m going to take off my apron and put on my shoes, I’m so happy, I never thought you noticed me . . .

ANDRES: We could go to a park, to a party.

MARIA: My fingernails are so ugly . . .

ANDRES: Let me kiss your hands.

MARIA: I’m laughing; you’re making me nervous.

ANDRES: I’m going to touch your face, close your eyes.

MARIA: You’re tickling me; I’m going to put on a bit of perfume.

ANDRES: You are resplendent, you don’t need anything . . . You are so pure . . .

MARIA: Please, get up . . .

ANDRES: You are unique.

MARIA: They all say the same thing. Yaa, they can see us over there . . .

SCENE III

(*All alone. The first temptation takes hold of his body. He begins to masturbate wildly.*)

ANDRES: No, I don’t want to, stop my hand, please stop my hand . . . Vile raspings . . . (*Finishes*). Inoffensive liquid that looks like mother’s milk, but doesn’t nurture anything other than the pleasure of a piece of flesh. The claws of evil ferment inside of me. I will conquer you; I won’t let this body made for praising the Lord become fodder for his destruction.

 SCENE IV

Andrés—Esteban

(*In the gym, Esteban takes a shower.*)

ESTEBAN: Pass me the towel, I want you to meet her, we’ll all go out like we used to . . .

ANDRES: I can’t, Esteban, I have another mission and only so much time in which to do it, it’s irrecoverable . . .

ESTEBAN: I’d like to feel your passion, something that fills me with energy, that would make me detest sleep and get me out of bed, I don’t know, I can’t find that, maybe with her.

ANDRES: When you find it you’ll find the beginning of an infinite thread.

ESTEBAN: I doubt it. I detest doubt, because I don’t know if what I feel today will be what I feel tomorrow. What will happen after we kiss, after we see each other every day? I don’t know, I doubt.

ANDRES: To doubt faith is to fall into the abyss of nothing, there’s nothing to hold on to, nobody to stop your fall. Temptations are great and sacrifices so insignificant . . . Let me go, I have to be with Him and think about those who suffer.

ESTEBAN: Andrés, look at me, I suffer.

ANDRES: I see you, I’ll think about you and everyone. Let me go . . .

(*Andrés in his room, reading the Bible, he sleeps.*)

ANDRES: I know He is here inside this room, I sit still for hours waiting to see his reflection, waiting for the moment He appears and gives me orders, I know He’s watching me, punishing my curiosity. It will be when I least expect it, perhaps sitting on a branch like a kid or turning my face towards the cross. It will be during an instant of carelessness precisely when I’m not expecting it. That’s when He’ll come to bless me and reveal himself to me. (*He sleeps.*)

 SCENE V

Andrés—María

MARIA: I brought your breakfast, you read so much.

ANDRES: I have to learn, María, learn how to love you. What’s love have to be like in order to be pure white? I don’t know how to do it.

MARIA: Here’s a little present, it’s been such a long time since anyone said pretty things to me . . .

ANDRES: To be an example of love, a blessed pair, surrounded by angels. You are pure but I am stained, there are thoughts in my head unworthy of you.

MARIA: You are the best that has ever touched me.

(*María begins to stroke him.*)

ANDRES: Avaunt, thief, you are temptation; you want to steal the only thing I have, my chastity, withdraw!

MARIA: I don’t understand, you invited me to the movies, you look at me with desire, I only wanted to do the same and this is the way you treat me . . .

ANDRES: Pardon me, I know that you didn’t want to do it, you were only possessed, it wasn’t you who I shouted at, but at that wretched angel who wants to destroy His kingdom.

MARIA: Damn it, I always make a mess out of everything.

SEQUENCE—THREE—MORTIFICATIONS

SCENE I

Desire

(*Andrés rends his vestments.*)

ANDRES: I can’t put my hands together without feeling this malign heat, I try to concentrate my sight on His image but obscene bodies appear calling me from their rooms, my back feels the heat of fingers running up and down and penetrating my buttocks, my lips are opened by tongues that bath my gums with liquids. My cock hardens, vulvas squeeze it and I can’t prevent the bile from oozing. Let them come, let them satiate my body, absorb my testicles and nibble away my flesh. They want to stop me from praising You and make me ferment in my own original sin . . . I will subject this flesh contaminated with the cells of desire.

(*Andrés prepares his cell. He ties his hands to cords hanging from the walls, as a conductor he puts on metallic underwear.*)

SCENE II

Grandmother—María

GRANDMOTHER: Prip, prip, prip . . . Vivaldi, it can’t be, this child is still in the

bath. Let’s show him something. Look, you degenerate, do you see these breasts, you don’t want to see this, look at them and calm yourself down . . .

(*María enters with bundles of spikes.*)

GRANDMOTHER: Ay, this pain in my breasts won’t stop.

MARIA: Señora, everyone’s looking out their windows, there must have been an accident.

GRANDMOTHER: Nothing, lazy people. Beat me more whites and take these sacks to Andrés, he’s just like Julia, trying to get rid of his sins.

SCENE III

Andrés—María

MARIA: Are you sure you don’t want anything to eat? . . . Did you like the mattress? I filled it with spikes.

ANDRES: I have to purify myself, María.

MARIA: If you could only guess, the first time I went out with Julio I wouldn’t have done my hair, or put on blue socks. How was I to know that he didn’t like blue or buns? . . . Have some of this broth, here . . .

ANDRES: I can’t María. Men soap themselves, rub on deodorant, smooth their skin with creams, and prepare their bodies for desire. I prepare mine to receive divine aura.

MARIA: If you could only guess . . . How was I to know that I’d meet him, that we understand each other so well? When they took me to the Sisters of Perpetual Aid, at first I mopped the halls, and I saw them go by all in a line, so silent. I didn’t dare, I could have been a nun and you a priest, and we would have met there in the convent, I would have told you my sins, you would have given me communion, then we would have prayed together. You would have squeezed my body to draw out temptation and I would have made your bed of thorns . . . If you could only predict.

SCENE IV

Hallucinations

The Saints’ Visit

(*Andrés delirious. He sees Saint Rose of Lima and Saint Martin of Porres who smile at him, then his mother enters.*)

SCENE V

With Mother

MOTHER: Don’t stay inside, Andrés, go out, go out and play . . . (*She realizes that he sees the bruise on her forehead.*) It’s nothing, a blow, a blow . . . on the table . . .

ANDRES: Wait for me, mama, I’ll be there soon with a golden aura, and I will lift you up in my arms and present you to my Lord . . . You’ll be so proud, I see the tears in your eyes and your grimaces to avoid them, but your tears will be the dew of a wintry morning. You’ll see, I’m close, I can feel it . . .

SCENE VI

Andrés—Esteban

ESTEBAN: You look content, thin, happy. On the other hand I’m wandering around bored of the newspapers, the printed letters, the pictures of smiling people with full cups. I’m bored of the smiles on the screens, of having to iron my pants, of so many brilliant cars and tin buses. I could begin to believe in you, become your disciple, have a passion.

ANDRES: I’ve got a fever and can’t hear you too well, it seems the bells are ringing, Esteban, cover my sight and bind my fingers . . .

ESTEBAN: She came every day, we made love well, she smiled and kissed me softly, she left me feeling light, happy, I could get up early and greet the light of day, now when she calls me she doesn’t say a thing, we’re both silent, she gets tired of listening to me, no longer smiles, I don’t feel her kisses, it’s lost.

ANDRES: We need them to persecute us again, so that we build catacombs where, in the midst of the humidity and the darkness, our faith revives, without knowing whether it’s day or night, only listening to the martyrs while they are flayed in glorious agony . . . We need to be afraid of our faith, afraid of being recognized and sacrificed. Esteban, you have to be dismembered to see the divine light . . .

ESTEBAN: To be dismembered I’d need to see how others squeeze her breasts and she repeats the same phrases, surrenders the same sighs, at least I could calm down, I’d realize that it was nothing more than part of a prerecorded video. Andrés, if we have to construct catacombs it’s not to give us fear, but to give us strength.

ANDRES: Esteban, I’ve realized that this isn’t the path I should follow, the nails have infected me and if the vehemence of the flesh is so strong it’s because He is pointing the way. He wants me to confront evil . . . I should conquer the demon flooding our earth; I should clean these floors and prepare for His coming.

ESTEBAN: Let me cut you down.

SEQUENCE—FOUR—EVIL ACTS

SCENE I

ANDRES: I will carry Archangel Gabriel’s sword into the depths of evil, and I will battle the anti-Christ who is already here, I know now that I have found the mission you have selected for me, I will not fear, because I am your soldier and celestial armies support me, I will be ferocious . . . I will find and open the pass to the Final Judgment. I will go into the street, I will confront wickedness, the vices that have taken over your kingdom, and I will be the first crusader of this new conquest. I will feel your glory flowing through me, I float, angels lay their hands on my forehead, and I’ll be worthy of that golden aura you granted my predecessors . . . The heavens open, the earth moves to sing praises, blessed be the universe, the stars, everything you have created bows down before you . . . Praised be you. Gloria . . . Gloria . . . Gloria . . .

SCENE II

Farewell

(*María irons.*)

MARIA: You’re preparing to leave, you started eating, got up, as if you weren’t here already.

ANDRES: Yes, it’s true.

MARIA: It was just the same when my dad left the house, he moved differently, as if he didn’t want to touch things. Are you going to come back?

ANDRES: My body won’t be here, María, but everyday at 8PM pray your rosary looking at the Virgen. I’ll do the same and that way we’ll be together . . .

MARIA: A secret between us.

ANDRES: A secret between the three of us.

MARIA: Now I’m calmer, I took a picture of the plaza . . . here . . . I’m going to punish temptations too . . .

SCENE III

Night-Park

(*A man passes, urinates, the Assailant observes him. Andrés enters.*)

ASSAILANT: Hey, got any matches?

ANDRES: A light?

(*The Assailant takes out a knife, puts it to his neck.*)

ASSAILANT: That’s it, calmly, give me your money and don’t move.

ANDRES: I understand you, you’re poor, maybe you sleep two or four to a mattress, you’ve had to listen to your mother’s moans when she sinned, or feel the mattress rock when your brother masturbated and I’m sure that scared you, because you didn’t know what they were doing. You got up in winter, in the damp, and pissed in an old pot, I know, I imagine it, I try to see your mother, obese from bread, always washing the same plate, but she’s blessed because she resisted the temptation to sell your flesh, and accepted her humility like a gift, but you fell into greed for possessions and terrestrial pleasure . . .

ASSAILANT: Yes, I shared my bed but with my sister, and during cold nights I took advantage of her, she was younger, and I liked it, you’re rich, they must have brought you breakfast on a tray with warm bread and melted cheese, you wore pretty pajamas and went out in the car when you were bored or to the movies, whatever you wanted. When I’m bored I play with my shoelace and that’s where I am, stuck.

ANDRES: It’s dark and in the darkness our feelings flourish, the night is for angels and the devil but during the day everyone pairs off, we forget about ourselves.

ASSAILANT: The day I forget about myself I’m lost, understand?

ANDRES: The knife is no longer ice, your hand relaxes, someone stops you and impedes you from cutting me . . .

ASSAILANT: I haven’t buried you because you talked to me and you got deep, I like the feel of your hair and your clean smell, but it’s the same thing that makes me want to put you in the ground.

ANDRES: Before I would have begged you to cut off my head little by little, so that I felt the pain and the anguish and could agree to martyrdom that way, but I believe that an angel is guiding you and that this is a test, I forgive you, wound me.

ASSAILANT: Don’t think I can’t, I’ve buried this in women’s teats and old men’s kidneys, but I don’t know what you’re bringing.

ANDRES: The only thing that’s mine you will never have, take my money, my watch, do you like my shirt? And then let me share with you, I want the most malign furies and hatreds to possess me, I need to confront them . .

ASSAILANT: Let’s see if you can do it, here, use it . . . What are you waiting for?

ANDRES: I could take out your eyes, I’d be doing you a favor, you’d no longer desire metals, plastics, fibers, you’d be left looking inside yourself and there you’d find the light, but I still can’t.

ASSAILANT: What did you take, give me some . . .

ANDRES: Nothing.

ASSAILANT: And what are you doing here at this hour?

ANDRES: I have to reach the doors of darkness and come face to face with him; maybe you’re one of his angels and will take me . . .

MAN: Cold night, got a match? . . . Thanks, the park’s boring today, nothing much happening.

ASSAILANT: Depends, what you do you want to happen?

MAN: Your friend’s nice. Armando, pleased to meet you.

ASSAILANT: He likes good whiskey.

MAN: I’ve got a bottle at home, come on, I live over there . . .

ASSAILANT: That’s where we’re from . . . come on then . . .

(*Andrés looks at his watch, takes out his rosary and follows them.*)

SCENE IV

In the Apartment

MAN: It’s more pleasant with a little light. You’re both so quiet.

ASSAILANT: No, just waiting for a drink.

ANDRES: The walls are damp, the rug’s dusty.

ASSAILANT: This is a good apartment, things are going well for us, did you see the ring, and what do you think he’s got in his wallet, huh?

MAN: Ice? . . . Johnny Walker Black.

ASSAILANT: It’s hot . . .

ANDRES: And these toys . . .

MAN: The kids, they only come on weekends, I’m separated, free . . . Don’t think that I always invite whoever, the thing is I’m a special person, people interest me, their problems. When you spend the whole day seated in front of a desk you get isolated from the world. You live in this artificiality of telephone calls, business meetings. I’ve always been adventurous, whenever I travel I go right to the heart of the city, the sex shops, the dangerous neighborhoods, that’s where the food is, life’s brief, so you have to try everything. You understand me, you’re also adventurers, you’re born that way and there’s no way to stop being so . . .

ASSAILANT: It’s uncomfortable here . . . let’s take off our clothes . . .

MAN: You’re better than I thought.

ASSAILANT: Hospitality pays.

MAN: Do you want to see some movies? But don’t get scandalized . . .

(*With the remote control he plays a porn video, the screen is offstage, we hear the audio.*)

MAN: You’re so far away, come here.

ANDRES: What do I do?

MAN: The same thing as on the screen, nothing out of the ordinary, I’m in the middle, and you’re the grey-haired guy taking off his shirt, come on, do it, put it there, around your neck, and continue.

ASSAILANT: You never played Simon Says? It’s the same thing . . .

(*While they watch the video the Man strokes Andrés, the Assailant interferes and that*

*excites him.*)

ASSAILANT: Why don’t we take a shower, huh?

MAN: Not a bad idea, let’s go.

ASSAILANT: It’s great under the water . . .

ANDRES: No, water, no . . .

(*They go to the bathroom; you can feel the noise of the shower. Andrés falls to his*

*knees.*)

MAN: Tell your friend to come . . .

ASSAILANT: Hey man, hurry up . . .

ANDRES: It’s the flood, it inundates the apartment, the walls break, and my body turns to salt.

(*A fight is heard, blows, a heartrending scream, Andrés levitates, the naked Assailant*

*enters, bathed in water and blood, waving the shining ring.*)

ASSAILANT: See? It’s gold.

ANDRES: And him?

ASSAILANT: Him? He’s asleep, his problems are over . . . take a look around, whatever you find is yours.

ANDRES: Nothing here is of any use to me, just you . . .

(*Andrés launches himself at the Assailant, they roll around.*)

ASSAILANT: Are you crazy? Let me go.

ANDRES: Come out, I know you’re here, why don’t you appear? I’m ready to confront you, show yourself, spew forth.

ASSAILANT: Shhh, calm down, I don’t want to hurt you, come with me and I’ll take you to my den of iniquity.

SCENE V

María—Grandmother

(*María is waiting for the clock to toll eight, she sits in front of the window and begins to pray the rosary, but then she gets excited and throws ice cubes on her vulva.*)

GRANDMOTHER: They’re having tea again, all they do is drink and eat.

MARIA: They must be hungry, señora.

GRANDMOTHER: Gluttons, María, they’re pigs . . . Ay, Lord, what has your kingdom come to? . . . What are you hiding there?

MARIA: A rosary.

GRANDMOTHER: What have you gotten yourself into that you’re going around praying at this hour? Take off those hairclips and wash your face, penance is for Holy Week. They’ve got the television on all day long, no wonder they’re dazed . . . When will you come for me, Lord, when?

MARIA: Maybe they’re watching the Passion? They said they were going to broadcast it from Rome with the Pope.

GRANDMOTHER: You suffer the Passion, you don’t watch it. Come on, take off your shoes and I’m going to wash your feet, you don’t know how terrible it is to do this with my arthritis . . .

MARIA: I don’t like to take off my shoes . . .

GRANDMOTHER: Where did these ice cubes come from?

MARIA: They fell, there; I’ve taken off my shoes . . .

(*Grandmother washes Maria’s feet.*)

GRANDMOTHER: Humility isn’t easy; tomorrow we’ll keep silent. We have to purify this house, María, listen . . .

MARIA: Are there mice?

GRANDMOTHER: It’s Julia.

(*They pray, María says good-bye to the Virgin.*)

SCENE VI

In the Transvestite’s House

(*The Transvestite is practicing a voice-over for his next show.*)

ASSAILANT: I live with him or her, that’s why I like it. If he were a woman we’d have problems, if she were a man she’d be a faggot. He isn’t anything, she isn’t anybody, or better said, I don’t want to be with anyone. She thinks she’s a chick, but when he showers and he gets a hard on he can’t be. I don’t like to touch her. Yes, he’s useful, washes my socks, talks to me like a friend, how he gets in fights and gets cut up, tricks them and robs them like I trick them and rob them.

SHE: You’re sick; you always kill them in the tub.

ASSAILANT: At least I don’t stain my clothes that way.

ANDRES: Why under the water?

SHE: So he doesn’t leave fingerprints, you crazy little thing.

ANDRES: He let you do it like he accepted it, resigned himself to be beaten for . . .

ASSAILANT: I was quick nothing more, I slipped a tender wave through his neck and then I turned him around, smashed his head against the side of the tub and drowned him in the water, what could be easier?

ANDRES: A baptism from hell, and his angel, his guardian angel who should have defend him . . .

ASSAILANT: The angels are gone, they got bored over time . . .

SHE: They got fed up with me fast, when I was born, I think.

ANDRES: They’re winning, the Lord is weak.

ASSAILANT: What are you so worried about? Don’t you read the papers? Ahh, why do some have rights and others not, when the soldiers opened up the commies’ guts or drowned them in shit, did anybody say anything? Who told you that guy was good? Maybe it was up to me to punish him. Let’s stop talking nonsense, no one here is good or bad, we just are, nothing more.

SHE: I couldn’t do it, and you, what are you looking at?

ANDRES: Your eyes.

SHE: Everyone fixates on the same thing, and this is what I am, nothing more . . . Listen, we could get a lit bit of money from this guy, you want to?

ASSAILANT: Why don’t you get me a little bit of juice instead? I’m nervous.

SHE: You’re always the same, I get excited, but I never find pleasure.

ASSAILANT: And you, crazy little one, what do you want?

SHE: Business, business, I know a rich lady, kind of strange yes, but she pays well, and I’ve got another, the only thing you have to do is go tell them stories, good money. Do you think I’m ugly that you look at me so much?

ANDRES: You’re black.

SHE: Ay, my son, and I washed yesterday. Take a bit, so we can trust you (*passes him cocaine*) like this . . .

ANDRES: But if I have a child it will come out contaminated, it will be a lost soul, I will procreate for the armies of evil.

SHE: Ayy, you’ve it all wrong. Listen, the old lady can’t have kids by now and if it does happen she’ll have an abortion, Christ you’re complicated. We do everything cooperatively here; if you want to stay we share everything, got it?

ANDRES: My body is for punishing and humiliating, do what you will . . .

SHE: Listen to that, I like it, you’re poetic, I can see you pretty as a woman you. I’ve also got one who likes guys but dressed as women, with us you can be rich.

SCENE VII

María—Esteban

(*María finishes praying her rosary.*)

ESTEBAN: Andrés left good teachings in this house.

MARIA: I prayed before.

ESTEBAN: He hasn’t returned?

MARIA: He’s preaching, I think he’s preaching, every time I go out I look through the churches, perhaps he went to the country. The Señora went out to sell aprons, so she could feel poor . . .

ESTEBAN: He could leave some sort of sign; I need to talk to him.

MARIA: Can I serve you tea? . . . On the fourth floor they’re having their snack, they never miss it . . .

ESTEBAN: Some of us want to be heroes, others saints, it seems that we all need to die with some halo on our head.

MARIA: I want to have a house and someone who loves me, nothing more.

ESTEBAN: I’m going to sell my soul to the devil . . .

MARIA: Don’t do that, for god’s sake, don’t’ even joke about it.

ESTEBAN: You have to write a letter in blood, then burn it on a moonless night and shout Lucifer . . . Lucifer . . . I’m HIV positive, María, a doctor told me and it’s the same as being possessed, but no one can cure me, let me serve you, sit down like the Señora.

(*María illuminated, seated in front of the window, while Esteban serves her and waits on*

*her.*)

MARIA: Such beautiful things are happening to me, I think I’m going to die.

GRANDMOTHER: They can hear your screams from the elevator, how dare you? And when I’m doing penance? Go look for your friend Andrés who was so good here. He fed Vivaldi and then he went to his meditations. Do you want an apron?

SCENE VIII

Andrés and The Client

THE CLIENT: Sit down, here’s a little cup of tea, how young you are.

ANDRES: Not so much, I’m 26.

THE CLIENT: 26 years old, the same age as my Marcel, if it hadn’t been for the accident.

ANDRES: Your son.

THE CLIENT: He liked music so much, he’d play the radio loud, and he was going to form a band with his friends. Do you like music too?

ANDRES: I sing sometimes.

THE CLIENT: He was going to be a doctor, he would have treated my hypertension, and he’d be taking care of me. You look sad, tell me what’s going on.

ANDRES: My mother died and . . .

THE CLIENT: No, she’s alive, it was your father who died abandoned and suffering. You like my neck? Touch it. Careful, you’re choking me. Let go!

ANDRES: I wanted him to feel me.

THE CLIENT: Well, come here, put your little head here, poor child, I would have given you everything, you’d have your furnished room, full of records, we would have traveled, to the best hotels . . .

ANDRES: Cars, drinks, cigarettes, everything . . .

THE CLIENT: And love, lots of love, now I walk alone through the shops, I make meals and invite my friends, we always talk about the same thing, sicknesses, betrayals, but you, Marcelo, you fill my life, you know, I’m going to buy you a guitar, the black one. How you’ve grown, child, soon you’re surely going to get married, tell me, are you still going out with Macarena . . . ?

ANDRES: No, I’m not going out with anyone.

THE CLIENT: Why, Marcelo? You’re a good boy, more than one girl would like to have you at her side. Ay, what a difficult life, you can help me.

ANDRES: That’s what I’m here for.

THE CLIENT: You were always so good, Marcelito. I want to give you everything, lie down on the bed.

ANDRES: Is this good, or should I turn around?

(*The Client lifts her skirts and urinates on Andrés’ face.*)

THE CLIENT: Turn around, open your mouth . . . Feel how it burns, Marcelo, Marcelito, why did you leave me? The only thing that comes out now is urine, never another child. Why? Why?

ANDRES: Wake up; I’m here in front of you . . . How many have you possessed?

THE CLIENT: What’s going on with you? Keep calm, Ayyy.

ANDRES: Leave this body, free her.

THE CLIENT: Let go of me, you’re crazy, who sent you? Don’t come back . . .

ANDRES: I’m in the middle of Lucifer’s kingdom, I get lost in his labyrinths and he hides himself behind the possessed, his realm widens and you don’t help me stop it. What more can I do . . .

SHE: We’re going to lose this client if you go on this way.

ANDRES: I have to find your master, the one you don’t even know, because you don’t yet realize . . .

SHE: Ay, you made me break a nail; you’re making me shiver. You’re giving me crazy thoughts, kid, here, take this and behave yourself . . .

SCENE IX

The Apparition

María—Andrés

(*María covers herself with ashes, looks at her watch, it’s eight o’clock. Begins to pray.*)

MARIA: It’s just turned eight, God save you María, full . . . (*María sees Andrés*) Andresito, Andresito, how are you? Nothing much has happened since you left, the Señora has us on a vow of poverty. I put the cream on that you gave me every morning, but just a little, so that it lasts, the lady in front left with the little guy and the gentleman arrived with a blond who waited for him in the taxi.

ANDRES: María, I have confronted the angels of evil but they escaped, I will continue my battle. The Lord has given me signs, when I invoke Him I rise several centimeters off the ground, I know now that I am achieving the yearned for halo.

MARIA: See you later, take care . . . Now and in the hour of our death, Amen.

SCENE X

Grandmother—María

(*María finishes her rosary, the Grandmother enters furious, carrying menstrual pads and Vivaldi.*)

GRANDMOTHER: You whore, you whore, look what I found, how many knitting needle abortions have you carried out, you wretch, and in my own house . . .

MARIA: Don’t hit me, señora, I didn’t want to stop up the toilet so I threw my menstrual pads out with the ground meat. How could you think I’d do such a thing, with a fetus?

GRANDMOTHER: Ay, the arthritis is cramping my whole body. Hurry, break me some eggs, what pain, my god. More, María, more.

(*María breaks eggs over the Grandmother’s body.*)

GRANDMOTHER: Let’s go out front, we have to purify this neighborhood. Come on, María, and make sure you bring the aprons.

SEQUENCE—FIVE—HOMECOMING

SCENE I

In the Church

Andrés—Lady—Esteban

(*The Lady approaches the coffin, takes a candle from her bag, lights it. Andrés enters.*)

LADY: Nobody’s come to see him. Did you know him?

ANDRES: No, but now he isn’t alone.

LADY: I light candles when they can’t see me, I don’t believe these electric bulbs are up to the task. Like the word says: you have to mourn them with candles, take one and don’t steal it . . .

ANDRES: I help them with their farewells, I look into their faces and I can relive their final moments. He was a postman, his fondest hope was to buy himself a bicycle, when he got one he was happy, because he got home earlier, but he wasn’t greeted with joy, a little while later she left him, and he, when he finished delivering in Independencia, went to bars and dedicated himself to alcohol, this brought him further torments and nightmares accompanied his drunkenness, little by little he decided to leave, until he was run over yesterday. But he will be redeemed because while the carabineros tried to revive him, the only thing he worried about was whether the letters were stained with blood.

LADY: Halleluia, praised be . . . Halleluia . . .

ANDRES: Esteban, how good to see you. (*They embrace.*)

ESTEBAN: Yes, she called me on the phone, I heard her distinctly, pure, I was happy, she asked me how I was, I wanted to run to her . . . she told me that she felt a debt to me, that no one was to blame . . . everything lit up, I told myself that she’d realized where her love lay, she told me that she’d called Cristián as well and that she hoped I’d understand . . . And then she dumped me. That’s how I knew that at least, if we couldn’t have shared love, the plague united us . . .

ANDRES: (*Hugging him*) It’s a cross, a marvelous cross . . . The Lord has placed you in my path, to be found. I will infect myself like you, we will cure the sick and together we will cross the heavenly threshold.

ESTEBAN: We’re not in the Middle Ages, telling you about it was enough for me, I’m going to live it all, enjoy every day . . .

ANDRES: This is my obligation, that’s what I’m here for, to console the afflicted . . .

ESTEBAN: When I’m afflicted I’ll call you . . .

ANDRES: Admirable and glorious Saint Rocco, special protector of the afflicted and those infected with the plague . . . The magnanimous multitude acclaims you, full of joy, free us, pious Rocco, from the contagious plague. The sick and infected implore your protection, plead for your healing, the more they prostrate themselves you free them from dangerous sickness. Wondrous saint, have pity on us.

SCENE II

The Miracle of the Canary

María—Andrés—The Grandmother

(*María, desperate, runs from one side to the other, begins to fill some bags in a disorderly fashion.*)

MARIA: You came back! And I have to leave, before she catches me.

ANDRES: Where are you going?!

MARIA: She’s going to kill me, he’s gone, and I couldn’t do a thing . . .

ANDRES: Take it easy . . .

MARIA: I did it to make things better; I wanted to give her a surprise.

ANDRES: María, María.

MARIA: I went to clean the cage, to brighten up her day, and the canary flew away.

ANDRES: Come, Saint Francis will help us . . . (*They kneel, pray.*)

(*The Grandmother enters singing, with the cage and Vivaldi inside.*)

GRANDMOTHER: María, pick up the birdseed that’s scattered all over the kitchen.

MARIA: It’s a miracle, you are truly a saint.

GRANDMOTHER: You’re back, Andrés, your room’s clean, the bed’s made. But we’ve taken a vow of silence and poverty here . . .

ANDRES: I’m enlisting in the army, Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER: Pilots, sailors, salt of the earth, your mother didn’t like them, obey, be a man like the best of men, and don’t forget to confess to the chaplain and go to company mass, they’re so beautiful, make your helmet shine, wash your underwear and always pray to the Virgin so she protects you from bullets and sabers. Our Lady of Montserrat protected Saint Ignatius. She’ll do the same for you.

SCENE III

Andrés—Captain

(*The Captain brings a folded uniform, Andrés undresses and dresses himself like a soldier.*)

CAPTAIN: You, get dressed, ten seconds: one, two, three, four . . .

ANDRES: I’m finally a Roman, I will persecute the Christians. I will have to violate the fifth commandment, destroy the lives of the sons of God, I will be the best soldier in this army and even if I have to drive my lance through the King of the Jews himself I will do my duty, I only hope that in that instant, Lord, you will give me a sign and stop my hand as you did with Saint Paul.

CAPTAIN: (*Bringing a prisoner.*) Guard him and make sure he doesn’t move. (*The prisoner makes a gesture, asking for a cigarette, Andrés hits him with his rifle butt.*)

ANDRES: It’s a tooth, he lost a tooth.

CAPTAIN: You hit them with the rifle butt by the ear, to stun them, not in the jaw.

ANDRES: I made a mistake, he moved just when . . .

CAPTAIN: There are no excuses here, only victories or defeats . . . I like the way you look; you can see you’re a soldier. He’s a sure thing, dry; he hides civilians’ weaknesses and wears a carcass of steel. With an army of men like you, this country would be great. Discreetly, sure . . . Remember, this isn’t a hand, it’s a talon . . . and a heart doesn’t beat here but a drum that resounds and marks time to march, I hear it and know who you are, I recognize a man at arms . . . You will come with me tonight.

ANDRES: I will obey, my captain.

CAPTAIN: In the darkness bats and rats are trapped. Firm, discreet, think on this . . . They’re not made like us, they cover themselves in stolen carcasses, if you open their skulls you’ll find nothing but worms.

ANDRES: I’ll try to . . .

CAPTAIN: In battle there are no words.

(*Truck headlights light up a point; mark a red cross on the ground.*)

ANDRES: I feel my feet sink in the mud, my hands sweat and turn into black claws, I see my Captain with a hunchback and his mouth has no lips, from his gums emerges a bifurcated tongue that wipes his forehead, his gigantic eyes shine like headlights. I have finally arrived at the center of darkness . . .

(*A Woman enters, she wears a white tunic, song rises to heaven and an aura surrounds her body.*)

ANDRES: My nostrils are filled with a heavenly fragrance, it’s the odor of sainthood, and an aura illuminates her body. Martyrdom is reserved for her and I will have to be the one to strike her, I wait for the signal, your light blinds me. The ray that will destroy this living center of Hell . . . You stopped the hand of Abraham, and Paul’s sword, now show your divine power.

CAPTAIN: Present arms, aim . . .

ANDRES: She has been crowned; her pupils contemplate the heavenly choir of angels that will receive her. Gabriel brings her a purple cloak; one second more and she will be on the right hand of God the Father.

(*The rumble of shots is heard, celestial music fills the space, Andrés throws down his rifle and kneels in front of it. Two angels take her in their arms and carry her to heaven.*)

ANDRES: blessed are you among women.

CAPTAIN: Halt . . . halt . . . halt . . .

(*Andrés escapes.*)

SEQUENCE—SIX

SCENE I

(*Grandmother and María purify the street with holy water.*)

MARIA: Should I scrub the sidewalk too? . . .

GRANDMOTHER: Everywhere, María, everything needs to be purified . . . Most holy prince of glory and powerful Archangel Saint Raphael, prince of doctors, health to the sick, light to the blind, joy to the afflicted, custodian of travelers, guide to pilgrims, master of perfection, protector of virtue, exalter of alms, fasting and praying, I beg you most pious prince to help me with sicknesses, to accompany me on the roads and to defend me from the devil, I also plead with you to grant me what I ask for as well . . . consider my petition. Give salvation to this neighborhood, its people and its animals. All for the greater glory of God and my soul, amen. Repeat, María . . .

SCENE II

Andrés’ Ritual

Andrés—Esteban—María--Grandmother

(*Anointing him with oil and ashes.*)

ANDRES: They’ve begun to pursue me; I’ve begun to conquer them. They will come looking for me.

ESTEBAN: For me too.

ANDRES: Believe in him and you will be healed.

ESTEBAN: The only thing I believe in is the virus growing in my blood.

ANDRES: I will be with you and I will care for you, accept these holy oils.

ESTEBAN: I always thought your fifties was a good age to die, I didn’t want to see myself old and wrinkled, now I’d like to live to eighty and contemplate life, I look through the window and love the sun’s rays, I’m fascinated by the way my body moves, I see people run to their jobs and distressed before shop windows, and it makes me envious.

ANDRES: I know you are He: among the sick, those who suffer, you will find me.

ESTEBAN: I lack energy, my lungs burn me, I’m tired, and you’re bothering me.

ANDRES: Offer up your pain.

MARIA: They’re going to come, they’ve been to the house twice, but don’t worry, everyone’s talking about you, they know about the miracle of Vivaldi, and they say they’ve seen you float and that you communicate with the dead . . . and I, who tried to abuse you. Several wait for you outside.

ANDRES: I killed a saint; I’m not worthy of anything. I’ll go towards them as so many others have done for their faith.

(*María takes out some scissors and cuts off a piece of his shirt.*)

MARIA: Let me cut off a little piece. Don’t worry; I’ll take care of it.

ANDRES: María, there’s Esteban. Esteban, there’s María.

(*The Grandmother, half-naked, enters. Egg whites slip down over her body.*)

GRANDMOTHER: The arthritis has taken over my entire body, I can’t go on, Lord, I won’t move from here until you come to look for me, bring the hammer, María, and strike hard. Strike hard, María.

SCENE III

Testimonials

1ST TESTIMONIAL: He brought me these clothes, they were new, he sat down beside my sick mother and prayed, he put his hands on her forehead and mother smiled, it was the only time she talked again. She felt his purity and that relieved her burden. Blessed be he.

2ND TESTIMONIAL: I lived in egoism, envying my neighbors because they could buy more than me, jealous of Jaime because he could keep sinning with another woman, resenting the TV spots where others had yachts and perfumes. That’s how I lived, bitter, forgetting that this isn’t my mansion or my kingdom. Now I’m at peace because Andresito laid his hands on my forehead and I found the spirit. He was sent, yes, he was.

 SCENE IV

(*Andrés sits on a metallic seat, like the electric chair, with electrodes attached to his skull. María, Esteban, the Grandmother nailed to the wall, and the Witnesses, are all in scene.*)

ANDRES: (*Singing*) The Lord will care for me, I have nothing to fear . . . (*Rifle fire*) The Lord is my shepherd, I have nothing to fear . . . (*Rifle fire*) The Lor . . . Bring the Holy Father, the commission of the saints; let them testify to the miracles. I want to see the bishop, let them bring the bishop from his seat . . . On this site will you build His Church . . . (*Rifle fire*).

DOCTOR SANTOS: Andrés, speak, Andrés . . .

ANDRES: They have me seated in the dock like Christ, they nail on the crown of thorns and cover me with this ridiculous cloak, I can do no more than give my thanks to the Lord for bringing me to the threshold of martyrdom. Continue, continue so that I will see the eternal light. Write, pagan, write what I have to tell you, from these words will be born a legend, and from this tongue bathed in saintly gold will be born the story of the path to sainthood. Today I am reborn and from today on thousands will follow me, the hour has come to retake the road to eternal glory. Glorious angels, sing.

(*Esteban dies and while canticles fill the space, Andrés’ mother enters with a cake and three candles.*)

MOTHER: Blow out the candles, Andrés, and make three wishes.

THE END

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