

# Or

Perhaps Life is Ridiculous

By Gabriel Calderón

Translated by Simon Breden

Laugh, and the world laughs with you. Weep, and you weep alone.  
Ella Wheeler Wilcox - Solitude

Part I – The Tragedy  
Part II – The Comedy  
Part III – The Tragicomedy

The action in all three parts takes place in Bernardo's house.

Inducted or abducted

Bettina – The Mother  
Bernardo – The Father  
Arnaldo – The Son  
Juan – Army General  
Pedro – The General's son, a soldier  
Anna – The disappeared daughter

# Prologue

Television:

## **NEWSFLASH, “UNDERScoreD”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

Good evening. This is a newsflash from the city of Or, bringing you the headlines in brief that we will be covering in tonight’s broadcast. We are going straight over to Elena Vazquez and our mobile unit who are bringing us this breaking story:

## **MOBILE UNIT**

**Reporter Elena Vazquez**

That’s right Jorge, we are on our way to a location where several army battalions have been dispatched to from various barracks. Approximately an hour ago, infantry units based around the city began to mobilise for reasons as yet unknown. I repeat: there is intense military activity in the city of Or. We do not know the cause for such a high level of activity unseen for many years. Precisely this kind of mobilisation awakes a great deal of curiosity and mistrust since this recalls the army mobilisations of our darker past. The army has not wished to comment, but we are currently following one of their lorries since our responsibility is to society, the truth, and our audience who have consistently placed their trust in us to bring the information on current events into their homes. Jorge, we will reconnect with you in a few moments once we have more information.

## **NEWSFLASH “UNDERScoreD”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

Many thanks, Elena.

We will be back with you and with more information in a few minutes, in tonight’s Underscored programme. Until then, good evening.

# PART I

## The Tragedy

### Stasimon 1

#### **Bernardo**

Here I am. I am a wretched being. Better said, I, this being, one person in this world, on this earth that I stand on and accept, I am One like any other. I have fallen into disgrace. The disgrace that drenches me is not new, it has been with me for a long time. The reasons for my disgrace are foreign to me, external. If my life were defined by the times of fortune or misfortune that I have lived through, we could say without a shadow of a doubt that I have been unfortunate my whole life. Even if this is strictly not the case, that's how I feel. More than half my life has been one misfortune after another and the times yet to come look like they'll only bring me even deeper pains. That's how I put it, the way you would put simple things, because there's not more than one way of telling the truth. Most of the things I used to do then, now only make me feel a profound shame. And I have this deep and real sensation that I still have even more shameful acts to commit. Tonight, the air thickens, everything seems to slow down, and quieten, why is that? Because something is going to happen... My son and I are fighting, it is a fight to the death, it's final, like any fight between a father and a son. He wants to leave, like all children do, he wants to abandon me the way children abandon parents. And I want him to stay, to stay forever and for nothing to change so we can talk a little every day, like families do. I can't lose another child, I can't lose my family. I can't.

#### **Arnaldo**

And so, even though I feel like the most unfortunate being on the surface of the planet, I am not. The feeling that I'm the most unfortunate person ever but at the same time knowing for certain that I'm not is tearing me apart. It makes me feel even more unfortunate. My drama, if it is to take place, will be here, today, tonight, right here. Sometimes you just don't know how to act, and when that happens the best thing is not to act at all, not even behave, do nothing at all and let the storm decide for you, let it spit you out or pull you into its eye. In not acting I am accepting my destiny. It's what I have always done and what has brought me to this point. There are two difficult things in this life: knowing what you want to be and then achieving it. I know what I want to be, I know it the way you know love or hate. Besides that, I know nothing. So, taking hold of what little you know, of what you feel is right, that becomes so

important. So, fighting for what you expect and want from yourself turns into a life or death matter. And I know what I want to be. I want to be a soldier.

## Episode 1

**Bernardo:** Are you fucking joking?

**Arnaldo:** No.

**Bernardo:** Are you fucking joking?

**Arnaldo:** No, dad.

**Bernardo:** Don't call me dad... don't call me dad. Don't call me dad!!!

**Arnaldo:** But da...

**Bernardo:** No! Don't say it! If you felt absolutely anything for that word you're pinning to me, if you could at least respect it and feel the love and effort behind it, if you could at least understand that in building myself as your father I built you as a son and if at least in some selfish corner of your mind you could understand that being a father is also to be a son and that what you want, to be selfish and repulsive, could not be more destructive for this family!

**Arlando:** Dad!

**Bernardo:** I don't recognise your voice, I don't recognise that name you're trying to use against me. Don't say "dad" as if just by being your "dad" I have to understand you. Why does dad have to understand you, and my son doesn't understand nor grasp the fact that in this world of possibilities he has chosen the only route that definitely and knowingly, because don't try to tell me you don't know this, will kill his father, his dad?

**Arnaldo:** That's not what I want to do.

**Bernardo:** Well if you don't want to, then don't and that's that. If you don't want to, don't do it, no one is forcing you, you're the one making yourself want it. So if this is what you want, don't tell me you don't want it, don't be a fucking coward.

**Arnaldo:** It is what I want.

**Bernardo:** You're killing me.

**Arnaldo:** You're killing me by making this all so hard.

**Bernardo:** How can you say that? I'm a monster now? I wasn't the one who kidnapped your sister.

**Arnaldo:** Here we go again with my sister.

**Bernardo:** Yes, here we go again. Here we go again with your sister! Yes! Who the hell do you think you are! They kidnapped your sister, they tortured and killed your sister.

**Arnaldo:** You don't know that, dad.

**Bernardo:** I do know that, I do. Everybody knows, they know it, everybody does! Everybody knows! The TV knows, the newspapers, declassified documents prove it, but you on the other hand insist on trying to prove something, who knows who you're trying to impress, yourself maybe, to prove that they didn't do it and they are the good guys. So what do you want? Tell me what you want! Do you want me to show you to the door? To wave to everyone? Tell the neighbours that my son, my second child – because the first was kidnapped and tortured and killed, but that's just a detail – that my second child has made up his mind what he wants to be. And what does he want to be, they'll ask. Oh, he wants to be a soldier, because he wants to follow in the footsteps of the men who killed his sister. I'm so proud!

**Arnaldo:** You're acting like the entire army did it.

**Bernardo:** Maybe the one who holds open the door didn't do it, maybe the ones who clean the toilets didn't do it, or the one who gives you your orders, or the cook, but I don't care, they're all part of the body who did it. Can't you blame the foot for what the hand did? Of course you can, because I blame the body, but you'll try to tell me it wasn't this body. Well I blame the father of this body – son, I blame the lineage, the generations upon generations of military bodies! I blame them all and spit on them and hate them and if you're part of that body (*he cries*) then I spit on you and hate you, murderer!!!

*The father cries. The son is silent. Pause.*

**Arnaldo:** Dad, back at my battalion they're saying there's a war coming.

**Bernardo:** We're already at war.

**Arnaldo:** There's a war coming that wasn't foreseen. I don't know much about it, but the country is going to need everybody.

**Bernardo:** Don't bring the country into this.

**Arnaldo:** You don't understand now, but you will.

**Bernardo:** I understand all too well.

*Silence.*

**Arnaldo:** I'm going to go now, but I'll be back, I'll come back to look for you when the war begins and you realise that many things were justified. And then you'll understand, because sometimes there are things that have to be done because sometimes there are things that have to be understood.

**Bernardo:** Look! I'm begging you to please be quiet. At least respect the silence. I don't want to hear out of your mouth that things that really happened, that those murders were justified. At least respect something and if you want to believe that, believe it, but don't say it, don't tell me in my own home, to my face, with impunity.

**Arnaldo:** If only there were something I could do to make you understand.

**Bernardo:** You're wrong, you're wrong again. You're the one who has to understand and I'm going to make you understand, I asked someone to come here and make you understand. And I hope you will. She must be about to arrive. I feel she's about to arrive, I can feel it because I know that sooner or later she will arrive. You have to understand. It's not a question of feeling it, it's a question of knowing it.

*A mobile phone in the stalls rings. Bernardo and Arnaldo look at the stalls. After a couple of seconds, Bernardo speaks.*

**Bernardo:** Is it mine or yours?

**Arnaldo:** That's not my ring tone.

**Bernardo:** It must be mine then.

*He goes into the stalls, and goes to a seat where the phone is hidden. He answers.*

**Bernardo:** Hello... yes... you can't do that... well, but you have to do it... I'll help you... I'll go and fetch you... I'll go and fetch you and everything will be ok... tell me where you are... please, tell me where you are..., ... ok, I'm on my way. *(He hangs up)*

**Bernardo:** I'll be right back. *(He exits)*

## Stasimon 2

### **Pedro**

Peace is rare. This peace I find myself in and I mean I really am in a state of peace. This peace in which I find myself and which finds me, may well be strange to me, but it is not at all uncomfortable. Obviously, it's clear that peace is not my natural state, but it is not unknown to me and I even find it pleasant. Of course, this does not mean that I can coexist with it. Just like man can swim and may even enjoy the water but cannot live in it, peace for me is like a good splash on my holidays, perhaps even necessary after a period of war, but I could not swim forever, nor would I want to coexist with it. I seek out war, I move like a fish in water through it and my heart beats normally, I think more clearly and I can even collaborate with the worldwide system of progress. I am a man, my blood seeks the blood of others, just like the blood of all men. I have been in hundreds of wars and I will be in many more. That fulfils me as a person. I know all types of war and all types of peace, I know all kinds of victims and all kinds of victimisers. I am one of those men with a morality forged in war, and my morality has nothing to do with the morality of the rest of mortality. It is foolish to believe that a man who murders people as if he were signing cheques can have the same kind of morality as other mortals. No one told me, no one gave us the rules, these things are like that, just like when someone is going to die, just like you are going to die, today you are going to die.

## Episode 2

*Pedro and Arnaldo.*

**Arnaldo:** Me?

**Pedro:** You.

**Arnaldo:** Why me?

**Pedro:** Because that's the way of the world.

**Arnaldo:** You don't scare me.

**Pedro:** It's not a question of scaring you, it's a question of the way things are. I know war and I know the smell of victims and you smell of victim.

**Arnaldo:** I am not a victim.

**Pedro:** A victim never wants to accept that they're a victim, in fact a victim always wants to be a victimiser, even more than that, with enough time every victim might become a victimiser. All victims want to kill and all victimisers want to be killed.

**Arnaldo:** You talk weird.

**Pedro:** I talk weird because I am weird. In truth, I'm weird to you. Because there are many like me. Hundreds, thousands, millions of weirdoes who are misunderstood by people like you. Because you are normal and normal people can never be weird. This is a war between the normal and the weird, where the weird are destined to win. Why? Because we hate normal people while you fear us. You fear what you don't understand and it's right you fear us, because we want to kill you and we will kill you.

**Arnaldo:** You don't scare me.

**Pedro:** That's because it is not my intention to scare you.

**Arnaldo:** I'm going to be a soldier.



**Pedro:** You'll die.

**Arnaldo:** There's a war coming.

**Pedro:** There's always a war coming.

**Arnaldo:** Enough! Why do you look at me like you know me? You have no idea how dangerous I am, you don't know me, I could kill you right now if I wanted to.

**Pedro:** But you won't.

**Arnaldo:** No, I won't.

**Pedro:** Because you're a coward.

**Arnaldo:** No.

**Pedro:** A cowardly rat.

**Arnaldo:** No, no, no! I am not a coward, don't look at me the way you'd look at a coward. I'm brave. Cowards don't constantly face their fears the way I do. The army terrifies me, soldiers terrify me, I was taught to fear them, but I won't stay away, I won't hide like a rat. I'll go out looking for them, I'll face them.

**Pedro:** You are the enemy, I knew you were the enemy, your family is a family of enemies.

**Arnaldo:** No.

**Pedro:** You're worse than a coward, you're a traitor.

**Arnaldo:** No, no, no! At first, yes, I thought I was. I had so much hate inside me. And I accept that at first I thought of joining you to then attack you from within. Maybe one night when we were all asleep in our bunks in some barracks far from our lands, or in the showers where there is nothing but naked bodies and you can breathe the sex in the steam. But something happened, I realised I don't want to. Not that I can't, I could kill you right now... but I don't want to. Because I love my fellow warriors, at least they have a mission, they know what they want and they do everything to get it. I love exercising at four in the morning, I love men shouting at each other and fights and bullets that occasionally pierce our bodies. I love civilians who look at us with hatred, because I felt that hatred and I prefer to be hated than to be ignored. I am not a coward, I am not.

**Pedro:** You are a victim, and even if you're brave you will die. But I'm not here to tell you that, or to scare you, or to kill you. I've come to study you.

**Arnaldo:** Me?

**Pedro:** Before the day is out, you and I will be enemies.

**Arnaldo:** I don't understand you.

**Pedro:** Don't even try, we're different.

*Pedro exits.*

## Stasimon 3

### Bettina

You might think that life is a tragedy which time turns into a comedy. But this life, my life, has been a constant tragedy. And if I ever laughed and thought that the tragic times had ended, like an unexpected slap life sinks me back into the tragedy. My mother disappeared when I was a little girl. My father went mad and I almost did as well. These things fade with time, childhood is always a tragedy. At the time it felt like a stroke of luck, I met a man and this man would be the father of my first daughter. My daughter who... Years later we had another son. But there is no luck in this life, it's all a sick joke. I fell in love with a friend of my husbands', a soldier, and I couldn't deal with it. I am a coward and I'm not able to tell the truth. So I left, I left him, I left my son, and the soldier. Life is a joke no one laughs at. My ex-husband has found me after all this time, a few years ago we bumped into each other in the supermarket queue. And I don't know why I did it, but while he looked at me like you might look at a murderer, I wrote down my telephone number in the hopes he would never call me. But he has called me and asked me to help him, not to do it for him, but to do it for our son, who needs me. And it all matters so little to me. I can't deal with this. (*She produces a mobile phone and dials*) I am honest with myself and the only person I don't want to betray is myself. I don't know any other kind of loyalty other than that to what I want to be, and I do not want this. (*Into the phone*) Hello Bernardo... yes, this is Bettina... I can't go, I'm sorry... I just can't... I can't, please don't go on... please don't do this... no... I just don't know if I can... I'm on the corner... in a bar. (*Hangs up*) I don't want to do this and yet I'm going to. Life has no meaning and trying to give it one is ridiculous. I am so ridiculous.

## Episode 3

**Bernardo:** (*Entering*) You are not ridiculous.

**Arnaldo:** What?

**Bernardo:** I'm not talking to you.

**Arnaldo:** Who are you talking to then?

**Bernardo:** (*Looking off, making a signal for someone to enter*) To someone I want you to see.

**Arnaldo:** Who's there?

*Bettina appears.*

**Arnaldo:** Mum?

**Bettina:** Hello.

*There is a brief silence, no one moves.*

**Arnaldo:** Mum, is that you?

**Bettina:** Yes.

*No one moves.*

**Bernardo:** Aren't you going to greet your son?

**Bettina:** I said hello.

**Bernardo:** But...

**Bettina:** Bernardo, I said hello! I already said hello.

*No one moves.*

**Arnaldo:** But... mum... I can't believe it.

**Bettina:** Believe it.

**Bernardo:** Your mother has come back because she is very worried.

**Arnaldo:** Worried about what?

**Bettina:** I'm not worried, I'm uncomfortable, I'd rather the earth swallowed me up and spat me out in China, but I'm not worried.

**Bernardo:** You are worried, Bettina.

**Bettina:** No, Bernardo. Why should I be worried?

**Bernardo:** Your son wants to be a soldier.

**Bettina:** No.

**Bernardo:** Yes.

**Bettina:** Why would he want to be soldier?

**Arnaldo:** And why not?

**Bettina:** Because they murdered your sister.

**Arnaldo:** We don't know that.

**Bernardo:** What more proof do you need? A video?

**Bettina:** You don't need to do this.

**Arnaldo:** Do what?

**Bettina:** This.

**Arnaldo:** What's this?

**Bettina:** Deny something that hurts us so much, you want to prove you are not us and that's fine. You want to kill the dreams we had for you like all children do with their parents, and that's fine, but this is not necessary.

**Arnaldo:** What are you saying?

**Bettina:** There are limits, you mustn't do everything in your power to hurt the ones you love.

**Arnaldo:** Says the mother who abandoned me.

- Bettina:** I didn't abandon you.
- Arnaldo:** Yes.
- Bernardo:** Yes, you abandoned us.
- Bettina:** Well, what did I come for? Did you bring me here to have a go at me?
- Arnaldo:** I didn't bring you, you came here.
- Bernardo:** I brought her.
- Bettina:** I came to help my son.
- Arnaldo:** I was your son.
- Bettina:** You are my son even if you don't like it, even if you scrape off your skin and change all the blood in your body and even if you want to be a soldier, you are my son.
- Arnaldo:** I am what I want to be, not how you define me.
- Bettina:** Do you see what you're doing? Your reacting and that's not right. We brought you up to...
- Bernardo:** Mostly I brought him up.
- Bettina:** We brought you up to be a man of action, not of reaction. Don't react to what your mother and father want from you, don't react to what other people expect, never react in favour or in opposition, take your own decisions, act.
- Arnaldo:** What the fuck are you talking about? What moral authority do you have to come here and instruct me on what I have to do? You left, you're one of those mothers who abandons her children and then you come back with the moral authority as if you've come back from making a sacrifice so you can instruct me about who knows what? Please, know your place, you're out of place in this thing that seriously affects my father's life and my own. Because my father, who has the authority to reproach me and make demands, even on my own life, my father is worried and his worry is genuine, because he has fought for me, even if he doesn't love me as much as that daughter you both lost.
- Bernardo:** Your sister.
- Arnaldo:** That daughter you both lost and on whom this whole moral and existential edifice has been built. You don't realise that, you

don't realise how her absence has drained every hope and joyful moment in our lives, how she's become a huge black hole that sucks in and swallows everything we hope for. Nothing makes sense after her. You'll deny this, that life goes on, but life doesn't go on, it's stuck in that death.

**Bernardo:** She's not dead.

**Arnaldo:** It's worse than death, it's an absence that doesn't allow us to be happy but always makes us hope for something more. The story is never over, there is no full stop, no blackout, it's a comma that wakes us up every day with this feeling that something might happen. And when that feeling isn't there, we feel guilty for not feeling it and it tortures us whether it's there or not. She will always be among us and she will always be what divides us from everyone else, from the others, those others who will never understand the pain we are going through. And when I say we are going through it, I should say that you are going through it because I don't feel that pain, this sister I never met doesn't hurt me, it's a war I never fought against enemies I never felt any anger at. All this anger and hate you transmit every day makes me sick and kills me and I don't want to die. I have decided not to die. You won't kill me! No!

*Arnaldo exits.*

**Bettina:** You didn't bring him up well, you've suffocated him.

**Bernardo:** How dare you?

**Bettina:** You've suffocated him the way you did me.

**Bernardo:** What are you talking about?

**Bettina:** I also left, the way he just did.

**Bernardo:** You didn't leave, you ran away, you slid away like a worm.

**Bettina:** I knew I shouldn't have come.

**Bernardo:** You didn't know anything, you don't know anything.

**Bettina:** I know why I left, I know I don't want this, I know what you are and everything around you hurts me.

**Bernardo:** Everything around me is your son and your daughter.

**Bettina:** That's why I am better than you, why I know and accept that our disappeared daughter and present son hurt me, the absence of

one hurts me just as much as the presence of the other. Each one occupies the memory of the other, when I see him I think of her and when I think of her I see him, and that hurts me, it hurts me, and I was in a bad place, I was in a very bad place Bernardo, all of this hurt me and I was hurting you both and that hurt me even more. So I left and do you want to know the truth? Since I left I've been better, I have not been happy but then who is anyway? But at least I'm better, much better, I feel better than before. Slipping away like a worm, fleeing like a rat, but better, much, much better.

**Bernardo:** I don't know if you've noticed, but here things are a lot worse.

**Bettina:** Because you won't let go of things, because you won't let go of her, so everyone around you want to go as far away as possible and everything around you dies or disappears.

**Bernardo:** I won't forget.

**Bettina:** I'm not talking about forgetting, don't forget, you can't forget because it's tattooed all over your body, but let things go, let them go.

**Bernardo:** I won't forgive.

**Bettina:** Don't forgive, but let us all go, let us go, keep your hate but don't poison us any longer.

**Bernardo:** What have they done to me? What happened to me? There is no solution. I am such a wretch.

*They both cry.*



## Stasimon 4

### Juan The General

You can achieve so much in a lifetime. I carried the national flag at school. I was captain of the football team, the best looking guy in class and I wrote poetry. When I was sixteen I won an official poetry competition. They even published a book of my poems. They called me the poet in the barracks. It makes sense. I wrote poems and in a barracks they pigeonhole you according to your virtues or defects. The black, the drunk, the engineer, the pope. I never knew if calling me the poet was a virtue or a defect to them. I'd read them my poems at night, my comrades, they appreciated it because it was something different. And because it's nice. When we went on our first tour of duty abroad, we were surrounded by hostile troops, black Africans, it had been a hard day, we'd held out for several days killing hundreds of them but we got careless and they killed the toddler that afternoon, they called him toddler because he was a little guy, they shot him in the head. It's hard to see a friend die, it's not the same as watching the enemy die, it's a real loss if it's one of us. From that day on I write a poem for our war casualties every night. Mine and theirs. Years later, during a torture session over here, it was some idiot who insisted on not naming names, and he was completely broken there was no way he'd make it through the night, his face was a mess, you couldn't tell what was his eye and what was his tongue. Even if he wanted to, that viscous mass couldn't tell us anything any more. There was a hole on one side of his head, at first I thought we'd smashed his entire nose and all that was left was the hole, but then I realised it was his ear, or what was left of it. And I sat there, the floor covered in shit and blood, and that night, the last night of his life, I read him a poem. A beautiful poem I had written. I have hundreds of poems waiting for my victims and my dying friends. But really, believe me, I have no poems for what's coming now. If you'll excuse me...

## Episode 4

*Bernardo and Bettina are crying. Seeing Juan enter they fall silent and are surprised.*

**Juan:** I would ask you to please allow me to speak. I am aware that this may seem like a provocation, I remember well that the last time you saw me all those years ago you swore that if I set foot in this house again you would kill me. I remember the value of your words and respect them. I remember all the suffering we have caused you and provoked and it is not my intention to stir up the past in coming here. I remember that you think we have done awful things and that I personify the very worst of those things you think that we are capable of doing. I remember that you called me your daughter's murderer. And I remember perfectly that you told me to wash my mouth before ever speaking of your daughter again. But believe me, believe me, knowing and remembering all this has been a major reason in moving me to return to this house. Something huge, beyond your understanding is about to happen.

**Bernardo:** Not one more step.

**Juan:** Please.

**Bernardo:** Don't even breathe, your air is poisonous.

**Juan:** I come in peace.

*Silence.*

**Bernardo:** Look at me. Look me up and down. I am calm. But I am not at peace and I do not accept peace, much less from a son of a bitch like you.

**Juan:** Please, don't insult me, I demand that you not insult me as I have come here calmly to talk about things that are beyond you or I.

**Bernardo:** You don't ask me for anything, much less demand, I am not a soldier you can give orders to, I don't receive orders because I accept just one order which is to seek out the truth and destroy everything that gets in the way of that search.

**Juan:** I have come to bring you the truth, I'm not trying to hide it, you're the one who won't listen to me, you weren't ready to hear it as none of us were, but now there is no other alternative and whoever doesn't want to understand will have to understand by force.

**Bernardo:** What, are you going to push my head into water and shit to make me understand or pull out my nails and teeth? Which of your methods are you going to use to convince me?

**Juan:** Please, please, it is not necessary to begin all of our conversations with that. I accept, here before you, I accept what no one in the army will accept face to face, we used to employ torture, it was a war and we did it and we still do, not in this country any more, but in some other countries they still allow it. They accept what we are because they know it is not much different from what they are and what you, if you had any courage, would also accept you are. Because I don't want to have to remind you how back then you also tortured people, so don't come to me demanding that I tell you things you know full well that we did. Don't demand me to say it in front of a camera or the press because I won't do it and you know why I won't, because no one would understand and you know this very well. You know because you, unlike others, understand what it is to torture. Torturer, murderer...

*Bettina, who has been holding Bernardo to prevent him from attacking Juan, turns around and slaps Juan's face. He falls silent.*

**Bettina:** If we allow you to stand in this flat, breath our air and speak our language it is precisely because we are not the same as you. You, people like you, will never be like us and we will never be like you. There is an abyss between you and us and it's just as well. We think people like you are filth and you think that we are. You keep telling us this is a war you are carrying out, there were two sides with casualties on both sides, everyone killed. You filthy, vile son of a bitch, who killed my daughter? Who killed all those hundreds of stolen and murdered children?

**Juan:** I've come to talk to you about that.

*Both listen.*

**Bernardo:** About what?

**Juan:** Your daughter.

*Bernardo stops.*

**Juan:** No, Bernardo! Stay where you are, or I won't talk. Let me say what I've come to say. And if once again you don't want to believe me, it will all live in your conscience when certain things happen that I know about and you don't. We were friends, there was a time we were friends, do you remember?

**Bernardo:** Before you kidnapped my daughter.

**Juan:** At the time we were friends and serving in the army, because we were soldiers and proud of being soldiers.

**Bernardo:** Before you kidnapped my daughter.

**Juan:** We journeyed around the inland villages carrying out those "Blue Book Missions"... you remember? Of course you remember.

**Bettina:** What is the blue book?

**Juan:** The "Blue Book Missions" focused on specific areas of the country where we had recorded suspicious activity, generally in fields far from the cities. It was quite common to encounter the strangest and most varied events within a "Blue Book Mission", like rustling livestock, and I remind you that we stole a lot of meat for ourselves.

**Bernardo:** All of this was before you kidnapped my daughter.

**Juan:** Most of the reports that we reacted to were related to clandestine meetings of... how to say this... hostiles, those guerrilla agitators who called themselves freedom fighters that we used to hate so much, remember? Of course you remember, because most of the time we caught them in the middle of the night and they'd run away while we just mowed them all down. Remember how we shot them in the backs or while they slept? You'll also remember that when we were friends and they were our enemies, you liked to kick them in the face and spit on them and shit all over the corpses and you'd shout at the top of your voice "I'll shit on all of you and the graves of your ancestors". You'd say that over and over and then do it, you really did it and

I really laughed and laughed and the smell of shit and blood drenched us, that smell I will always remember, years later in those endless tortures, because when you went and left us we had to carry on torturing in those sessions where the blood and shit mixes... it reminded me of you... and I missed you, I missed you.

*Bernardo is crying with shame, with his face in his hands.*

**Juan:** And we have a code, you know? Of course you know. When you left and accused us of being traitors and you pointed your finger at us and spat on us and poured shit all over us, on all of us but particularly me, do you know what I did? I didn't say a word, I allowed you to point at me and spit on me and shit all over me, because I knew that the day would come in which the truth would show itself on its own. If I didn't come looking for you to kill you and kick you in the face and the balls and take a dump in your mouth while you choked, and if I didn't shoot you in the back of the neck while blindfolded so you wouldn't know what was happening to you, and if you didn't end up in a ditch with all the mess you've caused the past few years, if I didn't peel off the skin from your scrotum and rape your wife, as I would do with the wife of my enemy... do you know why none of that happened? Do you know why I still haven't done it today? Because I have a code and I love you.

*Everyone is silent for a few seconds.*

**Bettina:** What is he talking about, Bernardo?

**Bernardo:** Give me a moment.

## Stasimon 5

### Bernardo

A blue book mission is a secret mission. They began around 1950, when flying objects in the skies became popular, but down on the ground unidentified people were not quite as popular. 10 years later, the “blue book” code applied for years to secret missions related to sightings of unidentified flying objects around the globe began to be applied to other strange events and other unidentified objects... unidentified people, guerrillas. So the highly efficient paramilitary “blue book” squadron was in charge of clearing out areas of suspected sightings of unidentified people. And we really cleared those areas out. Juan Maria and I were two of the best, they’d send us where they knew there would be loads of ufos, that’s what we called them, ufos, it went with the mystique of the name and it fed the myth. With the blue book missions we covered all the paramilitary activity throughout the sixties. But luck wasn’t with me and while I was doing my job someone else was doing theirs and was setting a trap for me. One day they sent me on a mission, Juan Maria was reported sick, I went but when I got there, there was no one in sight. I thought it was very strange, but even so I went back home. When I got back, I came in and felt instantly something was different, they trained us to listen and feel that. Suddenly there was a shout, my little girl shouting, a spine-chilling scream, very thin, extremely high-pitched. I ran up the stairs and her bed was empty, the window open. I left the room, I run into Bettina who was coming out of our room. What’s wrong? She asked. They’re taking her away, they’re taking her away I answered. I ran down stairs, opened the door and there was no one outside. A peaceful night. I heard a noise amongst the trees in the back garden, so I ran and there was someone there, someone there, I screamed you bastard, leave her, I chased him, I lost him, I lost my

little girl. But when I came back I saw there in the grass, fallen, as if for the only time in my life I had a stroke of luck, a badge, a metal military nametag... and it said... Juan Maria...

*His voice is strangled, and he is going to cry even though he doesn't want to, it's hard but he tries to control it.*

All my life, all my life since then the only thing I have asked for is just to be told the truth, why did they take her, what for, what did they do and why me... and they're not able to do it and I can't live like this, I can't go on like this, I have to do something, I have to do something.

*He draws a gun and aims at Juan, he is going to fire.*

## Episode 5

*Pedro enters, he is holding Arnaldo. With quick reflexes, Pedro jumps on Bernardo and grabs the weapon.*

**Bernardo:** No!

**Pedro:** What are you doing aiming at my father?

**Juan:** I've already told you, I didn't take your daughter!

**Bernardo:** Die you son of a bitch, don't lie to me any more, just please die.

**Pedro:** Dad, I found this deserter leaving the village.

**Arnaldo:** I wasn't leaving.

**Pedro:** You were fleeing like a rat before danger.

**Bernardo:** Please die.

**Juan:** Someone... someone else took her, it wasn't us.

**Bettina:** I think I'm going to go.

**Pedro:** No one is going anywhere.

**Juan:** Easy, Pedro. Bernardo, listen to me, we weren't the ones who took your daughter.

**Pedro:** What a load of bollocks, all this whole family knows how to do is leave, run away, they don't even know how to fire a gun!

**Juan:** Pedro is right, you can't leave, you have to stay and face up to what's about to happen.

**Arnaldo:** I wasn't leaving, but everyone else in the village is going.

**Pedro:** That's true, dad, people are finding out.

**Juan:** Shit, shit.

**Bettina:** What's going on?

**Juan:** Calm down.

*Bernardo, in a quick motion, recovers his gun and aims at Juan again.*

**Bernardo:** Now we'll see...

**Pedro:** Give me the gun you bastard.

**Arnaldo:** What's going on?

**Juan:** It's what I've been trying to tell your dad, I know it's going to sound crazy, but it's the truth and I can't waste time proving it to you.

**Arnaldo:** What's going on? Tell us for crying out loud.

**Pedro:** You're scared, eh, you're scared, I can smell it.

**Bernardo:** Shut up.

**Juan:** I need you to believe me and not ask questions, please Bernardo, don't shoot me, just listen.

**Bernardo:** You're lying, all you know how to do is lie.

**Bettina:** *(Looking out of the window)* Everyone is out on the street running towards the main avenue.

**Arnaldo:** I'm not scared and I'm not scared of you, either you tell me what's going on or...

**Pedro:** *(Drawing a gun and aiming at him)* Or what?

**Bernardo:** Lower your weapon.

**Pedro:** You lower yours.



**Juan:** Bernardo, Bettina, everybody calm down. Something big is about to happen, a war.

**Bettina:** It looks like they're running away from something, I can't see what.

**Juan:** And it's going to begin in this town, in Or.

**Bettina:** Everyone is screaming and running, they're terrified.

**Juan:** The war is going to begin.

*Pedro laughs, excited.*

**Bernardo:** There's no war, you liar, there isn't, liar, you only know how to lie.

**Bettina:** *(Looking out of the window)* Oh my God!

**Juan:** We didn't take your daughter and I can prove it.

**Bettina:** Oh my fucking God! Oh dear lord, oh, oh, oh...

**Bernardo:** Enough! Tell me the truth or I'll kill you.

**Pedro:** Lower the gun you bastard!

**Bettina:** Oh dear lord, oh, oh, oh...

**Bernardo:** Where is my daughter you fucking bastard!!

*Tension.*

**Juan:** Why don't you ask the ones who took her?... They're outside... they came back...

*Bernardo is distrustful. Juan gestures towards the window. Bernardo goes and looks out of the window. So does Arnaldo. Bernardo keeps his gun aimed at Juan. He looks out of the window and is stunned by what he sees. His eyes widen, he can't believe it. The gun falls from his hands. Pedro laughs.*

**Bernardo:** What is that?

**Juan:** Aliens, Bernardo, Aliens.

## The Exodus of the Uruguayan people.

### **Bettina**

Here I am in the middle of this mess I tried to run away from, like I ran that summer afternoon when I abandoned my son and husband. I'd abandon them the same way now, I'd abandon them all like a rat, because I'm a coward, because I can't deal with the slightest conflict, much less a fight... a battle... a war... against aliens.

### **Pedro**

Here I am. While my mouth waters. I want to get out there and kick some alien ass. Squash little green men as if I were trampling on starving blacks, Jews and Arabs. I'm like the bull reacting to the opposing colour. I'm a white bull, show me the little green men and you'll see my horns in action.

### **Arnaldo**

Here I am. Surprised and confused by everything. There are no longer any factions, suddenly the line that separates different sides has jumped into space and now separates one planet from another. Those on this planet against those on that planet, natives against non natives. It's important to know which side you're on. But I'm confused.

### **Juan**

Here I am. With the hope of the Earth in our hands. In our hands. How are we going to get out of this one? We don't know, but it's not the moment to worry. From now on everything goes. Later, when we win, when we annihilate, and rape and torture and kill whoever needs killing, then and only then we can make up laws so that we can't be judged and we'll live unhappily like everyone else until the next war when we can go back to being who we are.

**Bernardo**

Here I am. Such a common cause and so necessary. Luck. This luck which touches or nods or winks at us all every so often and in different measures. Luck, for me, has been evasive. Here I am, unfortunate and unlucky. A tragedy from start to end, I lived in a mistake and at the end of days life reveals itself, tragically and the mistake eats my face and soul. What to do with so many years of hate and resentment? However, if I could live my life again, I'd live it the same way. Because these beings deserve to be hated and I deserve to be unhappy. That's the way it is. That's the story of my life.

## End of the Tragedy.

## End of Part I.

## Part II

## The Comedy

## Intermission 1

**Television:**

**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERScoreD”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

And while the calls keep coming in with updates and details about what for now appears to be a ship apparently from outer space, we have sent a reporter who is covering the story on the ground. Let's go to our correspondent: good evening, Elena Vázquez.

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez** (*who is in a room*)

Good evening, Jorge, we can inform you that even though it is hard to get near the affected area, due to the extensive police and army deployment which is not allowing the press to come within a kilometre of ground zero, the news team at Underscored in a tireless attempt to present you with the news and the truth, have managed to get through a broken fence and we are now only a couple of blocks away from what the experts are already calling ground zero, where the object has supposedly landed. You will understand if we speak quietly and don't tell you exactly where we are so that the army and police can't find us as they are under orders to arrest or even fire on all unidentified objects and people within the hot zone.

## **BREAKING NEWS**

**Jorge Traverso**

Elena, it would be very important if we could get a shot of what we are assuming is a UFO, is that correct Elena?

## **CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

Exactly, Jorge, at this time we are going to open a window so you can see the images, and we warn viewers the following images are very powerful. Let's see if we can get a shot...

*The camera moves towards the window and we see outside, it looks like the camera is on a fourth or fifth floor and we see the roofs of the adjacent buildings. The shot is dominated by a large piece of metal, which the camera follows upwards and on zooming out we see it is a great metal cylinder with three struts on the ground. It is larger than three buildings put together.*

## **CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

As you can see, it is a very shiny object, it is very large and seems to be made by a very advanced technology. As we know, it flew here and if the information we have collected is accurate, several armed forces around the world attempted to halt this object as it was at first thought it would impact with the Earth. However, on drawing near the Earth atmosphere it began to decelerate and finally it hovered exactly over the spot where it is now, above a building which according to reports was occupied by a military squad who were awaiting the arrival of this object. We repeat that the army is ready to activate a plan in brief moments, they knew where the object was heading and they will be prepared in a few seconds to initiate their plan.

## Act 1

*Arnaldo, Bettina, Juan and Pedro are all still, looking at the ceiling. Bernardo is the only one lost in his thoughts, and looks instead at the floor, paying very little attention to what is going on.*

*A long silence.*

**Bettina:** I wonder what's going on.

**Juan:** Now you believe me.

**Bernardo:** I don't understand anything.

**Juan:** We need to be strong.

**Pedro:** Yes, dad. I'm ready.

**Juan:** Do you have your things?

**Pedro:** Yes, dad. *(He goes towards the door, there is a bag there)*

**Bettina:** How are we going to get out of here?

**Juan:** We're not getting out.

**Bettina:** We're immediately underneath that thing, we can't stay here.

**Juan:** We're exactly where we need to be.

**Bettina:** What do you mean?

**Arnaldo:** Why do you say that, General?

**Bettina:** You're calling him a General?

**Arnaldo:** He is a General.

**Bettina:** But are you already a soldier?

**Arnaldo:** Yes, I am.

**Juan:** That's what happens when you abandon everything you love.

**Bettina:** I wasn't talking to you.

**Pedro:** General.

**Juan:** What?

**Pedro:** "I wasn't talking to you... General". She should call you General shouldn't she?

**Juan:** Shut up, Pedro.

**Bettina:** I'm leaving.

**Arnaldo:** Go on, that's what you always do, leave.

**Bettina:** Are you insane? You have a few screws loose.

**Arnaldo:** Insult me, abandon me, I don't need you.

**Bettina:** Don't play the victim like your father.

**Arnaldo:** Don't compare me to dad.

**Bettina:** Well you must have got something from him.

**Pedro:** *(After looking in the bag and closing it again)* It's all here.

**Juan:** Perfect, let's wait then.

**Bettina:** Wait for that? We need to get out of here, we're under that thing and we don't know what's going to happen.

**Juan:** You may not know.

**Bettina:** What?

**Juan:** Pedro, you need to be ready.

**Pedro:** Yes, dad.

**Juan:** Do you know what you need to do?

**Arnaldo:** Yes.

**Juan:** Do you know which side you're on?

**Arnaldo:** Yes, I think so.

**Bettina:** What are you talking about? Bernardo, are you hearing this?

**Juan:** There are no I think so's, this is the moment, this is what we trained for.

**Pedro:** Coward, I knew you wouldn't be able to.

**Bettina:** What are you talking about?

**Arnaldo:** Nothing.

**Bettina:** Bernardo, say something!

**Juan:** Are you sure, yes or no?

**Bernardo:** Aliens?

**Bettina:** For fucks sake.

**Arnaldo:** Yes, I am sure, General.

**Juan:** Right, listen to me carefully all of you. They're going to come out any moment now.

**Bettina:** I'm leaving.

*Bettina is about to go, but Arnaldo slaps her, stopping her.*

**Pedro:** Whoa!

**Arnaldo:** Listen carefully because I won't repeat this. I told you not to leave,

**Bettina:** *(Who is still amazed at having received the slap)* You hit me...

**Juan:** Help me close the doors and windows.

*Juan, Pedro and Arnaldo start sealing entrances with furniture, tape and glue, windows and doors. While they do this, Bettina speaks quietly with Bernardo.*

**Bettina:** Please, Bernardo, react for the love of God!

**Bernardo:** ...

**Bettina:** We need to work together, our son is lost, they brainwashed him, I don't know what's happening, but something is happening.

**Bernardo:** They...

**Bettina:** They are planning something, I think they want to fight the aliens.

**Bernardo:** Aliens...

**Bettina:** Yes Bernardo, for fucks sake, aliens. They're outside, above the house, we need to get out of here.

**Bernardo:** They took her?

**Bettina:** I don't know, we don't know, it doesn't matter. I'm not going to stay to ask them.

**Bernardo:** *(Starting to cry)* How did I not realise? How did I never realise?

**Bettina:** Because they're aliens, Bernardo! No one believes in aliens! How could you realise? If you'd have realised we'd have locked you away! React!

**Bernardo:** *(Crying)* They took my little girl away.

**Bettina:** Stop fucking crying. Bernardo, don't cry like a baby, help me, the little green men are coming down, if they're little and if they're green and we don't know what the fuck is going to happen. Help me get out of here.

**Bernardo:** I want to see them.

**Bettina:** Oh, you're not listening to me. They're going to kill us, they're going to colonise our planet, they're going to replace us, they're going to vaporise us, they're going to eat us alive or kill us the way you'd kill a virus. They can't be good, aliens are never good, they're always looking for something, to use our food or



take our riches or use our planet. There's going to be a war and we need to run for it, let those born to fight do all the fighting, and those who were born to run should run away, we're in the way here.

*A sharp sound begins, a bright light pierces the window and under the door. The sound is overpowering for all of them.*

**Bettina:** Oh shit, it's started.

**Juan:** (*Covering his ears*) Here they come!

**Pedro:** (*Covering his ears*) At last!

**Arnaldo:** (*Covering his ears*) It hurts.

**Bettina:** (*Covering her ears*) They're going to fry us like we're in a microwave.

**Juan:** (*Covering his ears*) Everyone stay on your toes.

**Bettina:** (*Covering her ears*) Oh, we're going to die!

## Intermission 2

**Television:**

### **BREAKING NEWS "UNDERScoreD"**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

And we're back with our correspondent. Go ahead, Elena.

### **CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

A few minutes ago the unidentified object started to emanate a very bright flashing light. As you can see, the light is pointing towards the house underneath the object. I don't know if the mic is picking this up, but there is a fine and very sharp annoying sound too, can you hear it?

### **BREAKING NEWS "UNDERScoreD"**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

No, Elena, we can't hear it.

### **CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

I can't hear you clearly, Jorge.

*We begin to hear the sound.*

**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERScoreD”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

I was saying that we can't hear it, ah... we can now.

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

I'm sorry, Jorge, but we can't hear you, the sound is extremely loud here.

**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERScoreD”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

We can hear it too now, Elena.

*The sound becomes extremely loud, we can barely hear what they say.*

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

It hurts, Jorge, it hurts, ahhhh.

*The camera that was trained on her seems to drop and turn off. For a while there is no image, and we return to the studio.*

**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERScoreD”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

Well viewers, we seem to have lost communication with our mobile unit. As you could see and hear, we do not know what will happen from one second to the next and at this time we are worried about our colleagues in the mobile unit... ah, let's see... I'm being told that we have re-established our connection with the mobile unit. Elena, are you there?

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

Hello?

**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERScoreD”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

Hello, Elena, we can hear you.

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

Hello, Jorge. We've just had a very strange experience.

**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERScoreD”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

Are you all alright, Elena?

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

Yes, Jorge, we're fine, I can tell you that the sound has ceased, as has the light. We don't know exactly what happened, nor what it was, but at least it seems to be over.

*We can see images of the house, as in the first broadcast. After we see it for a while the camera returns to Elena.*

**BREAKING NEWS "UNDERScoreD"**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

Elena, sorry to interrupt you.

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

Yes, Jorge...

**BREAKING NEWS "UNDERScoreD"**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

But there images we are now seeing, it looks like there is someone or something on top of the house. Can you see it?

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

No, I'm not sure...

*The camera focuses on the roof and there is indeed a figure there.*

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

Yes, Jorge. There is someone on the roof. You are right. I can't see very clearly, I'm not sure if you get a better image on camera. It's started to get dark here and there isn't much light around the house. But there is indeed someone there, I cannot tell if it's someone from the house, or even if it's human or not.

## Act 2

*They are all still, looking towards the ceiling. Noises can be heard on the roof, as if someone were walking above them.*

**Bettina:** There's someone on the roof.

**Juan:** Yes.

**Bernardo:** Is it them?

**Juan:** Yes, it's them.

**Bettina:** Oh, you decided to talk?

**Arnaldo:** Sounds more like just one of them.

**Juan:** What?

**Arnaldo:** It doesn't sound like many of them, more like it's just one.

**Bettina:** What are they going to do to us?

**Juan:** Calm down.

**Bernardo:** (*Going towards the door*) I want to talk to them.

**Pedro:** (*Intercepting him*) Where are you going?

**Bernardo:** Get out of my way.

**Pedro:** Or what? You'll kill me?

**Bernardo:** Juan, explain to him that I can kill him if I wanted to, and before he even realised I'd be shitting all over his dead face.

**Juan:** It's true, Bernardo is right, Pedro. In any case it is amazing the way you've suddenly recovered all your destructive potential.

**Bernardo:** If they took my daughter, then I'm going to talk to them.

**Juan:** We can't allow you to leave here.

**Bernardo:** You and who else?

**Arnaldo:** Me.

**Bernardo:** Would you look at how life keeps surprising me.

**Arnaldo:** No surprises, you were wrong before and you're still wrong now.

**Bernardo:** Oh that's really low, rubbing my face in the fact I didn't realise there were aliens!!

**Arnaldo:** Whatever, but for once in your life, listen to what I have to say.

**Bernardo:** Why don't you act like a son and support your father?

**Arnaldo:** Because my father is wrong.

**Juan:** Now then, we'd love to let you chat here on your own but please try to understand that we are facing an alien invasion so can you resolve your differences later?

**Bettina:** Alien invasion?

**Juan:** Yes, at least that's what we think.

**Bettina:** How come you know so much? Why won't you let us go?

**Juan:** We have our reasons.

**Bettina:** I want to know what they are.

**Juan:** It's best you don't know.

**Bettina:** (*Affectionately*) Juan, please.

**Juan:** I can't, Bettina.

**Bettina:** Juan, please, please. If you still feel anything for me, I really need you to tell me what's going on.

**Juan:** Alright, alright.

**Bernardo:** I'm sorry, did I miss something?

**Bettina:** Tell me.

**Juan:** They've come for you.

**Bettina:** For us?

**Juan:** We really don't know if they've come for one of you or for something specific but we were sure they were coming here and that they've come for someone.

**Bettina:** How can you be so sure?

**Bernardo:** Did I imagine it or did you just say "if you still feel anything for me..."

**Bettina:** Answer me, how can you be so sure?

**Juan:** I don't want to carry on with this.

**Bernardo:** "Still... feel"?

**Juan:** Oh... we can't talk about all that now, this isn't the time.

**Bernardo:** Can you please explain to me what there is or was between you two?

*A figure passes swiftly by the window.*

**Pedro:** It just went past.

**Juan:** What?

**Pedro:** I don't know, it went past there, in that direction.

**Juan:** Did you see it? What was it?

**Pedro:** It went by very quickly.

*We can see someone's shadow in the gap under the door.*

**Arnaldo:** It's in the doorway.

*The door begins to open and Pedro and Juan leap towards the door. A few seconds of silence. There is a huge amount of force placed on the other side of the door for it to open. Juan and Pedro struggle to keep it closed.*

**Juan:** Help us.

*Arnaldo and Bettina throw themselves at the door. It moves a lot. Bernardo looks on, not moving.*

**Bernardo:** Bettina, can you please explain to me what you meant?

**Bettina:** Bernardo, for the love of God, don't you realise that there is some kind of alien on the other side of this door, haven't you seen that film, don't you realise that aliens are always stronger, they have acid for saliva and they get inside you and jump out of your stomach, that has to hurt, Bernardo! Do you want to be killed?

**Bernardo:** I want to know the truth.

**Bettina:** Oh you and the fucking truth! Where did the truth get you? Come and help!

**Bernardo:** There is no doubt that the night they took my little girl away, Juan was there, I found his identity badge.

**Juan:** I can't believe you, help us!

**Bernardo:** If Juan wasn't kidnapping my daughter, then what was he doing in my house?

**Bettina:** Bernardo, please.

**Bernardo:** I can't believe it.

**Arnaldo:** Please, dad, not now, help us!

*Bernardo goes over to the table where the guns are, and he takes one. He takes aim at Juan, but at that very moment Juan is propelled away from the door by some unknown force. He is followed by Pedro, then Arnaldo, and*

*finally Bettina. They all fall far from the door. They try to get up but can't. Bernardo is standing opposite the door, aiming at nothing, or rather at the doorway and whatever is going to emerge.*

**Juan:** I can't get up, something has me pinned to the floor.

**Arnaldo:** Me neither.

**Bettina:** What are they doing to us, we're going to die, shut your mouths so they won't stick a little bug inside us.

*Suddenly the door opens, a bright light blinds them all. From the bright light a figure enters the room. Bernardo is still aiming at the figure. The light still doesn't allow us to see what has entered. Pedro shouts at Bernardo to shoot at what is coming in, and Bernardo's hands shake. The light begins to dim until it turns off. The thing that has come in, and which Bernardo is aiming at, is Anna, his disappeared daughter.*

**Anna:** Hello dad.

*Bernardo faints.*

## Intermission 3

**Television:**

### **BREAKING NEWS "UNDERScoreD"**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

We are being told by our reporter that a few moments ago another light emanated from the space object. Go ahead, Elena.

### **CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

That's right, Jorge. A few moments ago, we were observing the figure that descended from the rooftop when the light reappeared. I can tell you that from what we could see, the being was not very tall, possibly this is their average height, although this is all conjecture at this stage. In any case, this small being came down from the roof and went around to the front door of the house, then the bright light blinded us again and when it had dimmed, the uh... the... what we could call, well, I suppose... the Alien, right? It had also disappeared.



**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERScoreD”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

Do you know if it went into the house or if something came out, Elena?

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

I'm afraid not, Jorge. We don't know if this being entered the house or took away everyone inside. We may assume that the beam of light is used to descend or ascend into the craft, so we are presuming then that the alien must have gone back to its ship, or something like that.

**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERScoreD”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

Very good, Elena, any other developments?

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

I just wanted to add, Jorge, that the military activity in the area is intensifying, so we presume we will soon be seeing some intervention on the part of the armed forces gathered nearby.

**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERScoreD”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

Very good, Elena, we'll stay alert then and congratulations because you are really doing a fantastic job.

## Act 3

*Bernardo is unconscious on the floor. The others are all stuck to the floor, unable to lift themselves with their hips seemingly magnetised to the floor, as if gravity does not allow them to get free. Beside the door is Anna, an angelic little girl, very beautiful. The door closes quietly behind her without anyone touching it.*

**Anna:** Hello everyone, we come in peace.

*Silence.*

**Bettina:** My love?

**Anna:** Hello, mum.

**Bettina:** I can't believe it.

**Anna:** It's a lot to take in for one day I suppose.

**Bettina:** (*Emotional*) I can't believe it.

**Anna:** Believe it, because I have come to...

**Juan:** Hello, allow me to present myself, I am the leader of this group.

**Anna:** You are not the leader, you are Juan and you want to hurt me.

**Juan:** What?

**Pedro:** She's one of them, dad.

**Juan:** Be quiet.

**Pedro:** It's a disguise.

**Juan:** I don't want to hurt you.

**Pedro:** I do. Let me up, let me fight you hand to hand and you'll see how I use you for a punch-bag. Come on you half-arsed Alf!

**Anna:** You both want to hurt me.

**Pedro:** We have to shoot her, dad.

**Juan:** Shut up, you idiot, shut up!

**Arnaldo:** I...

**Anna:** You're my brother, and you're very confused.

**Arnaldo:** Could be, I don't know.

**Anna:** A confused man is a dangerous man.

*While Anna speaks to Arnaldo, without her noticing, both Pedro and Juan draw hidden weapons from behind their backs.*

**Arnaldo:** I don't mean to be dangerous.

**Anna:** In that case think clearly.

**Arnaldo:** It's just that I think so much.

**Anna:** A man who is always thinking is dangerous, on the other hand someone who thinks clearly never is.

*Pedro, in one quick movement, takes aim.*

**Pedro:** Now you'll see...

*Anna, in one gesture of her hand, looks at Pedro and immobilises him, without even touching him. As she does this, Juan is taking aim from the other side and Anna makes the same gesture with the other hand, thus immobilising him too.*

**Pedro:** Ahh, I can't move.

**Juan:** Me neither.

**Pedro:** She's choking me.

**Juan:** Me too.

**Pedro:** She's going to kill us.

*A shot is heard. Anna grabs her throat and falls. Pedro and Juan are freed of the energy that was choking them. Arnaldo has just shot his sister.*

**Bettina:** What did you do?

**Arnaldo:** Calm down, mum, we know what we're doing.

**Bettina:** You killed her.

**Arnaldo:** I didn't kill her, it's a tranquiliser.

**Bettina:** A tranquiliser?

**Juan:** Well done, Arnaldo, I knew you'd do it when the time came.

**Bettina:** What are you talking about?

**Pedro:** Turns out you do have balls, eh, you bastard?

**Juan:** Pedro, quick, bring me the syringe.

**Pedro:** Yes, dad.

**Juan:** Arnaldo, give word that we have her in custody.

*Pedro brings a syringe from the bag, and injects Anna. Arnaldo produces a radio from the bag.*

**Arnaldo:** Condor, come in Condor, this is Tatu 2, over.

**Radio voice:** This is Condor, go ahead Tatu 2, over.

**Bettina:** What are you doing?

**Juan:** Calm down.

**Arnaldo:** We have the rebel, repeat, we have the rebel, over.

**Radio voice:** Bring her in at once Tatu 2, over.

**Arnaldo:** Copy that, over and out.

**Juan:** Right, Pedro, you and I are going to take the rebel to base. It's ten blocks and we have to move fast. Arnaldo, you're in charge here.

**Arnaldo:** Yes, sir.

**Juan:** Remember, no one leaves this place.

**Arnaldo:** Understood, sir.

*Juan and Pedro leave with the sedated Anna. Arnaldo watches them go through the window.*

**Bettina:** I don't understand any of this.

**Arnaldo:** There's nothing to understand.

**Bettina:** I want to go.

**Arnaldo:** As usual.

**Bettina:** You'll never forgive me, will you?

**Arnaldo:** It's not a question of forgiveness, it's a question of understanding, I find it so hard to understand other people.

**Bettina:** I had to go, the same way you need to disappoint us... no, don't look at me as if you don't understand. At least be honest with yourself, it's the only thing I can teach you. Don't lie to yourself. I fled, the same as you disappoint, it's what we are, the sooner you accept this, the better things will go for you, you won't be happy but then, who is?

**Arnaldo:** I don't disappoint...

**Bettina:** Yes you do, all the time, you disappoint and you disappoint. Why else did you join the army? Why else did you just shoot your sister? To disappoint, all you want is to disappoint us because you think it hurts us, but it doesn't hurt us and you do it

anyway and you know why? Not to hurt us, you do it because that's what you are, a fraud.

**Arnaldo:** I know.

**Bettina:** I've always run away, I accept it, I left my house when I was young and I left my job, I left your father, I left my lovers and now that I had been forgotten I abandoned that too and I've come back, I can't stay in one place too long, I fear everything and I can't defy anything or anyone.

**Arnaldo:** But you're here, mum.

**Bettina:** You called me mum.

**Arnaldo:** You are my mother, even though I don't understand you and even though I still hate you so much, you are my mother.

**Bettina:** Fine, I'm happy that you hate me.

*The light outside intensifies again.*

**Arnaldo:** Something's happening.

**Bettina:** What? Now what??

## Intermission 4

### **BREAKING NEWS "UNDERScoreD"**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

We're going back to the mobile unit, where there has been a new development, go ahead, Elena.

### **CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

Jorge, the intense light from the sphere has returned, but this time it is much larger, I'm not sure if you can see how the light is widening and getting closer to where we are now. Jorge, we can feel the intensity and heat coming from that light. The light is reaching us now. It's extremely hot, I don't know if you can see anything. Oh, my God! Ah!

### **BREAKING NEWS "UNDERScoreD"**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

What's wrong, Elena?

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

Oh, the light, I can feel it, it hurts, Jorge. Ah!

*The camera falls over again and we also hear the cameraman screaming. The camera is still and now it is Elena who falls to the floor and the camera shows a wall where we see the intensity of the light reflected. So we see the light fade and disappear.*

**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERSCORED”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

Well, what a night, viewers. In truth we're all very worried here, we have never experienced anything like this, let's see if Elena and our cameraman are alright. Elena, can you hear us? Elena, are you there?

*Suddenly, Elena is getting up again. She seems to be very confused, she looks at the camera and does not appear to understand what's going on. She looks at her hands and frowns. She looks stunned and can't stop looking at her hands and the camera.*

**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERSCORED”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

Elena, I say again, are you alright? Are you alright?

*Elena opens her eyes, and in a confused state tries to reply.*

**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERSCORED”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

Elena, please speak to us, are you alright? Are you alright?

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Reporter Elena Vázquez**

I am not Elena. I am not Elena.

## Act 4

*Arnaldo and Bettina are stunned. Bernardo is still on the floor.*

**Arnaldo:** Are you alright, mum?

*Bettina does not answer.*

**Arnaldo:** Mum, are you alright?

*Arnaldo goes to her and touches her shoulder and she is startled.*

**Arnaldo:** Mum, it's me, are you alright?

**Bettina:** Yes.

- Arnaldo:** Do you want to sit down?
- Bettina:** No.
- Arnaldo:** You seem confused.
- Bettina:** I'm not confused.
- Arnaldo:** Are you sure?
- Bettina:** (*Looking around her*) Sure.
- Arnaldo:** What are you looking for?
- Bettina:** Are you alright?
- Arnaldo:** Yes.
- Bettina:** (*Looking at him*) How odd.
- Arnaldo:** What?
- Bettina:** Nothing, nothing... sure you're alright?
- Arnaldo:** Mum, what's the matter?
- Bettina:** Nothing, come and help me.
- Arnaldo:** What do you want?
- Bettina:** We need to shut the door.
- Arnaldo:** No. What for?
- Bettina:** So no one can come in.
- Arnaldo:** (*Now convinced something strange is going on*) What's going on here?
- Bettina:** (*Trying to put furniture in front of the door to blockade it*) Nothing, we need to get ready, they're coming back. We can't let them in. We need to be brave and face them. This will buy us time... we need to think of the best way to...
- Arnaldo stares fixedly at Bettina for a few seconds.*
- Arnaldo:** Who are you?
- Bettina:** What? What do you mean who am I?



**Arnaldo:** Who are you?

**Bettina:** I'm your mother, Arnaldo.

**Arnaldo:** No, tell me the truth.

**Bettina:** I'm your mother, that's the truth.

**Arnaldo:** Don't take me for an idiot and tell me who you are.

**Bettina:** But...

**Arnaldo:** (*Producing a gun*) Tell me who the fuck you are!

**Bettina:** Have you lost your mind? I'm your mother, Arnaldo!

**Arnaldo:** Don't lie to me.

**Bettina:** I'm your mother.

**Arnaldo:** Enough, my mother doesn't face her problems.

**Bettina:** I'm your mother!

**Arnaldo:** Enough! Enough!

*Arnaldo grabs her and pushes her up against the wall, holding the gun to her temple.*

**Bettina:** Please don't hurt me.

**Arnaldo:** So you're my mother.

**Bettina:** Yes, yes, please don't do it.

**Arnaldo:** Are you my mother?

**Bettina:** Yeeeeees.

**Arnaldo:** Ok, ok... so if you're my mother, answer me this... when I was little, I cut one of my knees and I had to have three stitches. Which knee was it, mum?

**Bettina:** What?

**Arnaldo:** You heard me! What knee did I injure when I was little? You were there, you must know.

**Bettina:** I don't remember, it was a long time ago.

**Arnaldo:** Don't lie to me, and tell me which knee it was or I'll kill you!

**Bettina:** Yes, yes, stop, I remember now, stop. It was the right knee. The right one!

**Arnaldo:** My right knee?

**Bettina:** Yes, the right knee.

*Arnaldo releases her, and takes a few steps away, but keeps pointing the gun at her.*

**Arnaldo:** I never hurt my knee, I never had stitches. Tell me who you are or I swear I'll kill you.

**Bettina:** No!

**Arnaldo:** If you don't tell me who you are in three seconds, I'll shoot.

**Bettina:** Please, Arnaldo, calm down, I'm your mother.

**Arnaldo:** One.

**Bettina:** Arnaldo, listen to me and calm down, you're not thinking clearly.

**Arnaldo:** Two.

**Bettina:** I'm your mother, I'm your mother, I'm your mother.

**Arnaldo:** Three!

**Bettina:** Alright, alright, alright, don't shoot, alright, you're right, I'll tell you..

**Arnaldo:** Talk!

**Bettina:** Listen to me and don't be afraid... I'm not your mother.

*Silence.*

**Bettina:** ... I'm your sister in your mother's body.

*Silence.*

**Arnaldo:** What?

**Bettina:** What I said. It's simple, I'm your sister in your mother's body.

**Arnaldo:** Do you think I'm stupid?

**Bettina:** Think clearly, don't get confused.

**Arnaldo:** Where's my mother?

**Bettina:** Take it easy.

**Arnaldo:** Tell me where you've put my mother or I'll kill you.

**Bettina:** It's me, your sister, I did this to escape from them, they had me tied up, I know you won't understand, but doing this kind of thing is easy for us.

*Bernardo wakes up.*

**Bettina:** You need to calm down.

**Arnaldo:** Don't tell me what I have to do and don't tell me how to think.

*Bernardo looks at what's going on, looks all around and seems not to understand anything.*

**Bernardo:** Oh fuck, shit. What's going on here, what is going on?

**Bettina:** Bernardo.

**Bernardo:** What's going on here?

**Bettina:** Are you alright, Bernardo?

**Arnaldo:** Listen to me, dad!

**Bernardo:** Lower the gun, Arnaldo. What are you doing?

**Arnaldo:** No, dad, you have to listen to me.

**Bernardo:** Drop the gun, Arnaldo, and don't call me dad.

**Arnaldo:** But, dad...

**Bernardo:** Don't call me dad, why do you call me dad?

**Arnaldo:** Dad, you have to listen to me.

**Bernardo:** Drop the gun!

**Arnaldo:** Dad, mum isn't mum.

**Bernardo:** What? (*Bernardo looks at his reflection in the window*)

**Arnaldo:** Yes, dad, like I said, mum isn't mum.

**Bernardo:** Fine, just lower the gun.

**Arnaldo:** Aren't you listening to what I'm saying?

**Bernardo:** And aren't you listening to what I'm telling you to do?

**Arnaldo:** The thing is that mum isn't mum!!!

**Bernardo:** Alright, fine, calm down, Arnaldo, listen to me...

*Silence.*

**Bernardo:** I'm not your father either, I'm your mother in your father's body.

*Silence.*

**Arnaldo:** I'm not thinking clearly, I'm definitely not thinking clearly.

## Intermission 5

### **BREAKING NEWS "UNDERScoreD"**

#### **Anchor Jorge Traverso**

In some people's lifetimes things happen that we cannot explain. Sometimes these inexplicable things happen to one person and sometimes to several people. There are exceptional cases in the history of our planet, where the whole globe goes through these extraordinary events. And there, in the pages of history, will be written the names of ordinary, common, normal people who due to the fortunes or misfortunes of life, found themselves in those moments in order to thus become major players in the history of the world. Elena, can you hear us?

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Cameraman Jose Silveira**

Yes, Jorge, I can hear you perfectly.

**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERScoreD”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

What can you tell us, Elena?

**CORRESPONDENT**

**Cameraman Jose Silveira**

Well, uh... um... things continue to be... in this... the unidentified object is still in its place while... the... these... I'm sorry, Jorge, it's just that I feel funny, I can't get used to this. We don't know what might happen to us...

**BREAKING NEWS “UNDERScoreD”**

**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

It's alright, Elena, we'll go to commercials and be right back with you. Take all the time you need, we're right behind you.

## Act 5

*Arnaldo, Bettina and Bernardo are in the same places as at the end of the previous act. Juan comes in carrying Anna's body, very agitated.*

**Juan:** Help me! Help me!

*Juan leaves Anna's body on the floor.*

**Bernardo (Bettina):** What's wrong, Juan.

**Juan:** I'm not Juan, I know I look like Juan, but I'm not Juan. And... ah! Who are you, I mean not you, me, what's going on? What's happened?

**Arnaldo:** Dad?

**Juan (Bernardo):** Yes, Arnaldo, it's me, dad, daddy, I don't know what happened.

**Bernardo (Bettina):** Calm down, Bernardo, it's happened to all of us.

**Juan (Bernardo):** Who are you?

**Bernardo (Bettina):** I'm Bettina, Bernardo.

**Juan (Bernardo):** So who are you? (*Pointing at Bettina's body*)

**Bettina (Anna):** It's me, dad.

**Juan (Bernardo):** Arnaldo?

**Bettina (Anna):** No, dad... Anna.

**Juan (Bernardo):** What?

**Bettina (Anna):** I'm Anna, dad.

**Juan (Bernardo):** So who did I bring with me then?

*Anna's body stands up, it had woken up a few seconds earlier and was trying to recognise itself, it screams and stands up.*

**Anna:** Ahhhhhhh..... Ahhhhhhhhh..... Ahhhhhhhhhhhh

**All:** Calm down.

**Anna:** Ahhhh... what's going on?

**Juan (Bernardo):** Calm down and tell us who you are.

**Anna:** Dad, what happened to me? What happened?

**Juan (Bernardo):** Pedro? I'm not your father, but take it easy.

**Arnaldo:** Calm down, Pedro.

**Anna (Pedro):** Don't tell me to calm down you fucking chicken. What's going on here? What the fuck have you done to me? Don't tell me to calm down when I've got titties! I'm in a

fucking little girls' body, I have a cunt, I want to kill myself! I want to die! I'm a girl! Oh, my brain is going to explode, get me out of here, get me out!

*Pedro enters through the door.*

**Pedro (Juan):** Pedro, take it easy.

**Anna (Pedro):** Oh, it's me, it's me coming in the door and telling myself to take it easy. Perfect, everything is ok now, I'll take it easy.

**Pedro:** I'm not asking you to understand, but I am asking you to shut up.

**Juan (Bernardo):** Juan, is it you?

**Pedro (Juan):** Yes (*Pointing*) nice body, may I know who is using my body?

**Juan (Bernardo):** It's me, Bernardo.

**Pedro (Juan):** (*With a gun in his hands*) Oh, how interesting, and could you tell me, Anna, where are you?

*Silence.*

**Pedro (Juan):** I know you can't stop me with that special magic of yours this time. When you switch bodies you lose that power don't you?

*Silence.*

**Pedro (Juan):** Even if you don't tell me which of you it is, I will find out even if I have to torture you one by one. Won't you tell me which one of you is Anna?

**Bernardo (Bettina):** There's a lot you didn't tell us.

**Pedro (Juan):** Bettina?

**Bernardo (Bettina):** Yes.

**Pedro (Juan):** Good, thank you, so if you are Bettina, Bernardo is in my body and Pedro is in Anna's body then we only have two options. And since Arnaldo can't be Arnaldo.

*He raises the gun and fires on Arnaldo who falls over. But he missed. He is about to fire again.*

**Arnaldo:** Stop, stop! It's not me, I mean, I am me.

**Pedro (Juan):** Yes, of course you are.

**Arnaldo:** Please, mum, dad, tell him.

*Bernardo (Bettina) and Juan (Bernardo) don't want to say anything to protect their daughter who is more important to them at this moment.*

**Arnaldo:** Please, please... tell them, Anna, tell them... (*Looking at Bettina*)

*Silence.*

**Bettina (Anna):** I am not Anna. Why don't you tell Juan the truth? Why don't you hand yourself in? It would be for the best.

**Arnaldo:** Please, help me, please...

**Pedro (Juan):** What are you on about?

**Arnaldo:** Juan, believe me, all of you, you have to believe me, mum, dad, please, it's me... it's me!

**Bettina (Anna):** It's me, it's me.

**Arnaldo:** Anna!

**Bettina (Anna):** Anna!

*Juan hesitates for a moment.*

**Pedro (Juan):** (*Aiming at Arnaldo*) Calm down, Anna, we treat foreigners very well here. It's time for you to come with us. Don't look at me with that expression of hatred and don't get angry with me, that won't get us anywhere.

*Arnaldo thinks for a moment and accepts that they have all abandoned him.*

**Pedro (Juan):** Well, let's go. Bernardo, we have to take her.

**Juan (Bernardo):** Me?

**Pedro (Juan):** Yes, listen, I know this is difficult, but no one knows this has happened. The world needs us to go on lying to it. We can't tell people the truth when it comes to this sort of thing, believe me, we know all about this, we know how to lie and hide information. It's going to be hard but



we're going to make something up, with regards to all of us, we are all going to play out the role that was given to us until we can invade the planet this being came from and we can find out how to put things back in their place.

**Anna (Pedro):** Oh, great...

**Pedro (Juan):** Pedro, act like a soldier. The nation has called on you.

**Anna (Pedro):** And I'm here, but...

**Pedro (Juan):** Each one will play out their role, no one will know what shape the rebel that came here had, we'll say it got into Arnaldo's body, which is true, and everything will become clear when she starts talking.

**Bettina (Anna):** What if she never talks?

*Pedro (Juan) and Anna (Pedro) laugh.*

**Pedro (Juan):** They always talk. We are very persuasive. When we finish with her, she'll accept there are 7 galaxies in a peanut shell, you just need to be persuasive. And believe me that Bernardo and I are very persuasive.

*A fierce noise and a flash of lights.*

**Bernardo (Bettina):** *(Looking out of the window)* The ship left, they're not here anymore.

**Pedro (Juan):** *(Looking at Arnaldo)* They left you here, your friends turned out to be cowards. Well, we're off. Bernardo, grab your daughter.

**Juan (Bernardo):** I don't know if I can do this...

**Pedro (Juan):** You can do it, because little Pedrito is going to stay here and look after Arnaldo and Bettina and they're going to live together and be happy ever after, unless you don't help me. Understood?

**Juan (Bernardo):** ...yes.

**Pedro (Juan):** Besides, who knows, they may not even feel pain, they're aliens after all.

**Juan (Bernardo):** I'm so ill-fated, with the comedy over my tragedy continues to be infinite. After all this I'm going to end up torturing my own son. I'm so unhappy.

**Bernardo (Bettina):** What about me? What are you leaving me with, I won't be able to run away any more. At every corner, every trip to the supermarket, every time I see the door open I'll be tempted to go. But the universe is perverse and the further you go, it just comes back harder and hurts so much, life hurts so much. I'm so unhappy.

**Anna (Pedro):** Hello, hello, I'm in a 9 year old girl's body and I feel a lot of pain down here (*pointing at her stomach*) Is there anything worse?... Fuck this, what is this? Blood? My period? Fucking son of a bitch, I couldn't be more unhappy.

**Pedro (Juan):** Come along now, may you be very happy, or at least try to be, that's the point isn't it? Tomorrow everything will be back to normal. Excuse me.

*Pedro (Juan) leaves, Juan (Bernardo) grabs his son and they also go. Arnaldo stops for a second in the door and looks at those that remain.*

**Arnaldo:** I hate you.

*He goes. They are all silent for a while.*

**Bernardo (Bettina):** At least he hates us, that's something...

*Silence.*

**Anna (Pedro):** Well, what's for dinner?

**Bernardo (Bettina):** I hate cooking.

**Bettina (Anna):** I don't know how to cook, I'm just a girl.

**Anna (Pedro):** What?

**Bettina (Anna):** I'm just a boy, a man, a young man I mean.

**Anna (Pedro):** You're such a little shit, you know that?

**Bernardo (Bettina):** Well, we'll have to get organised, otherwise...

**Anna (Pedro):** I'm not doing anything, you teach me and protect me, I'm a fucking twelve year old girl.

**Bernardo (Bettina):** Behave yourself or I'll tell your father.

**Anna (Pedro):** You are my father now, if you like you can slap my little botty.

**Bernardo (Bettina):** Don't be disgusting.

**Anna (Pedro):** (*To Bettina*) And you little shit, don't even think of looking at me while I shower or play with myself, because I'm at an age when I'm discovering my body, so show me a little respect...

## Intermission 6

**BREAKING NEWS "UNDERSCORED"**  
**Anchor Jorge Traverso**

Well, friends, what a day, eh?  
Moving, isn't it?  
Well, it's good night from us.  
Let's return to our own thoughts  
and take a moment, and why not  
to think, reflect and be with our families and loved ones  
and in spite of everything try to plough on,... because that's what it's really all  
about, isn't it?  
Try to just carry on.  
That's the news for today.  
We will be back with you tomorrow.  
A few minutes before seven o'clock.  
That's our world, friends.  
See you tomorrow.

## End of the Comedy

## End of Part II

# PART III

# The Tragicomedy

## Single Scene

*The same space as in the previous sections, with the exception that now there is a large table set with abundant food. There are small decorations and flower arrangements as if to liven the place up. Sitting alone at the table is Arnaldo, who appears to be asleep, his head hanging. He wears an eye-patch bandaging one eye and he is covered in bruises and scars, half of his face is noticeably swollen. However, he is richly dressed and combed. His hands are behind the back of the chair, and he is handcuffed. A year has passed since Part II. All the characters are still trapped in each other's bodies, except Arnaldo who never switched body.*

*For clarity's sake throughout this final Part, I will name the character according to who they really are, the reader must bear in mind that they have exchanged bodies, that is, for instance, when in the text the name Bettina appears, in performance we would see the actor who is playing Bernardo. The body swap is as follows:*

*The PERSON in the BODY of:*

Juan	-	Pedro
Anna	-	Bettina
Pedro	-	Anna
Bernardo	-	Juan
Bettina	-	Bernardo

*The stage is silent for a time until Juan and Bettina enter (so, Pedro and Bernardo's bodies, the latter brings a towel and is drying his hands).*

**Bettina:** I hope you like it.

**Juan:** Of course we'll like it.

**Bettina:** Oh, shush. Arnaldo is asleep.

**Juan:** Ah.

**Bettina:** Poor thing, he must be exhausted.

**Juan:** He had a long night.

**Bettina:** When are you going to stop doing things to him?

**Juan:** Bettina, we've been over this.

**Bettina:** Yes, but poor thing.

**Juan:** What poor thing? What are you talking about Bettina?

**Bettina:** You're right, it's just... well... it feels like it's him... and if it were her... I'm not...

**Juan:** Look, it's not her or him, the thing that came back didn't have anything to do with you, it came back to take you away, to capture you and do who knows what to you.

**Bettina:** It's just that... we don't know that they wanted to take me away. We don't know exactly what they wanted.

**Juan:** This was a year ago, Bettina, we're used to this reality now and we should start to forget about the problems and think about our future. Think about us...

*Juan goes towards her and Bettina moves away.*

**Bettina:** No, Juan, there is no us.

**Juan:** I know, I'm finding it hard, but just knowing that you're in there...

**Bettina:** Look, forget it, look at me as if I were Bernardo, because it's who I've been trying to be for the past year.

**Juan:** Don't be angry.

**Bettina:** I'm not angry, I just don't think it's appropriate.

**Juan:** I have a young body now, and the truth is that I would never look at your body, but if I close my eyes, then maybe...

**Bettina:** Nothing, maybe nothing. I don't want to hear about it.

**Juan:** Alright then. I'm going back to the base for a moment, it seems there's some problem there.

**Bettina:** There's always some problem.

**Juan:** I'll be right back, Bernardo is here to make sure she doesn't try to do a runner. I'll be back in a while and we can all have dinner together.

*Juan leaves. Bettina watches Arnaldo. Anna comes in.*

**Anna:** How is he?

**Bettina:** How do you think?

**Anna:** What happened to his eye?

**Bettina:** His eye? His face? All those scars? Everything happened to him.

**Anna:** He just has to hang on a little longer.

**Bettina:** How long, Anna?

**Anna:** I don't know.

**Bettina:** You don't know! You never know. I don't know if I ought to believe you any longer. None of us should believe you.

*Bettina leaves. Anna is silent for a few seconds and comes closer to Arnaldo.*

**Anna:** Arnaldo, can you hear me?... Arnaldo?

*Arnaldo lifts his head and looks at Anna.*

**Anna:** Hello... how do you feel?

*Arnaldo doesn't answer.*

**Anna:** We're very glad to see you. All of us I mean. We were worried... dad said that you were fine, well... fine... alive, at least,... and he also says you've been really brave and you aren't saying a word... I guess it must have been hard... I suppose it's all to protect us... dad thinks that you should say that you're me, lie to them, at least they'd leave you alone... anyway, I want you to know that I'm sorry and I hope everything gets sorted out soon, some day, soon.

*Bernardo enters.*

**Bernardo:** Oh, sorry, am I interrupting?

**Anna:** No, dad, I was talking to Arnaldo.

**Bernardo:** Oh, that's great, that's really good, Arnaldo needs to chat, he spends too much time not saying anything.

**Anna:** Yes, but he didn't say anything to me.

**Bernardo:** Well, he'll speak when he's ready, no need to pressure him...

*Arnaldo laughs.*

**Bernardo:** At least here, today, there's no need to pressure him.

**Anna:** He doesn't look good.

**Bernardo:** He's not.

**Anna:** Will he make it?

**Bernardo:** Who's to say? How long does he have to hold on for? Another month? A year? Or twenty?

**Anna:** I don't know, Dad, I already told you.

**Bernardo:** Can't you tell me anything?

**Anna:** Dad!

*Pedro enters.*

**Pedro:** Hello! Am I interrupting? I hope so. I wanted to show you my new dress, it's amazing the way my tits are growing. And they're great, they're beautiful, I can't stop looking at them and touching them.

**Bernardo:** Pedro!

**Pedro:** What?

**Bernardo:** Can you show a little respect, at least today that she's here.

**Pedro:** Ok. I only wanted you to see my new dress. I like the way it looks on me, I wasn't trying to offend anyone. Do you like it, little brother?

**Anna:** No.

**Bernardo:** Don't start, Anna, go and help your mother finish preparing dinner.

*Anna exits.*

**Pedro:** Dad?

**Bernardo:** He went to the base for a moment.

**Pedro:** Something wrong?



**Bernardo:** It's confidential.

**Pedro:** Oh come on, tell me something.

**Bernardo:** Pedro, you know what confidential means.

*Pedro stands on a chair and grabs Bernardo's shirt collar.*

**Pedro:** Listen to me you moron. I've been stuck in this fucking girl's body for a year, and once a month I have these pains that are worse than any torture a soldier would go through. I hate all the boys at school, but I have a boyfriend! I'm keeping up my end so all this goes well, I've already had to resign myself not to know what's going on in the army, in my army. I have a new life and my body is changing and so do my moods and (*Crying*) I don't know why I'm crying but it's just lately I can't control my mood swings, so please, I'm asking you to answer my questions because if not I'm going to go off like a mine... an anti-personnel mine... not the other mines... I mean... you know what I mean.

**Bernardo:** Alright.

*Pedro releases him.*

**Bernardo:** We suspect that she's not in Arnaldo's body any longer. At first we thought that she couldn't switch bodies without the ship. But after a year of doing the worst possible things to that body, we began to suspect that perhaps she could have jumped bodies. A month ago we set up a special squad to look into the possibility. We have 8 suspects. We're interrogating them but honestly we're lost, we don't know why they left, we don't know if they'll come back, and we don't know where the only one we've captured actually is.

**Arnaldo:** So who's in there?

**Bernardo:** We don't know.

*Bettina enters.*

**Bettina:** Pedro, didn't I tell you to wear your hair in a ponytail.

**Pedro:** Annoying old bag.

**Bettina:** Did you call me old?

**Pedro:** That's another thing, if this woman keeps breaking my balls I'll slit her throat or something.

*Bettina grabs her by the ear and pushes her out.*

**Bettina:** I told you to stop saying rude words, a little girl doesn't behave that way.

**Pedro:** Oh go fuck yourself you old cunt!

**Bettina:** Go and comb your hair.

*Pedro exits. Bernardo and Bettina are silent for a few seconds.*

**Bernardo:** How are you?

**Bettina:** Fine.

**Bernardo:** You all look better.

**Bettina:** We are better.

*Pause.*

**Bernardo:** I thought it would be worse.

**Bettina:** It's not that bad.

**Bernardo:** Sometimes I miss the past.

**Bettina:** Sometimes?

**Bernardo:** I know this isn't ideal, but.

**Bettina:** We're better.

**Benardo:** At least I'm better.

**Bettina:** We're all better.

**Bernardo:** So it would seem.

**Bettina:** So it would.

*Pause.*

**Bernardo:** I don't think Arnaldo is better.

**Bettina:** Well that's understandable.

**Bernardo:** But I think in the end this'll do him good.

- Bettina:** How so?
- Bernardo:** I mean, it's a tragedy, no one could deny that.
- Bettina:** Particularly for him.
- Bernard:** Particularly for him.
- Bettina:** It must be painful.
- Bernardo:** Yes...
- Bettina:** I couldn't take a single one of those sessions, I can barely listen to the descriptions of what they do, I'm scared to death, I'd talk immediately.
- Bernardo:** It's funny, everyone thinks that, but mostly they don't talk.
- Bettina:** Really?
- Bernardo:** Yes, I've seen this a lot, I know what I'm talking about. They all think they'll talk, but when they're there, they just shut their mouths. It's not unusual, it's rare that they do talk, very few people talk, most of them keep quiet until they die. Arnaldo is an ordinary person, he behaves like the majority, he doesn't say anything and he thinks that way he's saving the world.
- Bettina:** He's not talking because he's not what they think he is.
- Bernardo:** True, but he could make things up, tell us what we want to hear. No one gets this, but most of the few who do talk don't tell the truth, the truth is such a strange, odd, painful, special thing. He could lie or tell us what we want to hear and he'd go on to live a much better life, without these endless sessions, but he doesn't do it.
- Bettina:** Because he's protecting us.
- Bernardo:** He's not protecting us, he's destroying us. He knows that every time I have to torture him I die a little bit myself, perhaps I'm more destroyed by now than he is, perhaps I'll die sooner. He knows this and that's why he's resisting, that's why he's silent, he wants to watch me die and that's fine, all sons want to kill their fathers.
- Bettina:** I'm sure that's an exaggeration.
- Bernardo:** Could be.

*Pause.*

**Bettina:** Sometimes I feel like we're waiting for something to happen, for someone or something to take us back to our original states a year ago, but I remember that past and it was awful. And now I don't run away because I know that the worst has passed, or at least I can't stop it from happening whether I'm here or not. But in any case, I'm still waiting for something.

**Bernardo:** We're waiting for something to happen so we can get better.

**Bettina:** But nothing's going to happen.

*Anna enters.*

**Anna:** Mum, dinner's almost ready.

*Bettina exits, Anna behind her.*

*Bernardo goes over to Arnaldo.*

**Bernardo:** Arnaldo? I know you can hear me and you're in there. I want to say something... a year ago we had a huge fight and I was scared you would leave and turn into someone awful. Do you remember?

*Pause.*

**Bernardo:** A year ago we said a lot of ugly things and we were cruel to each other, at least I said and did things that I didn't mean. We haven't had the time, but I wanted to apologise for all that and for everything that came afterwards, and for this, well... for everything. I wanted to tell you I'm proud of you.

*Arnaldo and Bernardo have tears in their eyes.*

*Juan enters.*

**Juan:** Where is everyone?

**Bernardo:** Cooking.

*Bettina and Anna enter.*

**Bettina:** Alright, dinner's ready.

**Juan:** I'm starving.

**Bettina:** I hope all the food is alright.

**Bernardo:** I'm sure it will be.

**Juan:** Do I detect a hint of reconciliation in the air?

**Bernardo:** No.

**Juan:** It's time to move on, Bernardo.

*Everyone gathers around the table.*

**Bettina:** Pedro, dinner's on the table.

*Pedro enters, he also sits down, for now he follows the scene while everyone serves themselves food and eat.*

**Bettina:** That's not your place, Bernardo.

**Bernardo:** Ah, sorry.

**Bettina:** Pedro, you're beside your father, your real one.

**Juan:** A real family meal.

**Bettina:** Bernardo, you're between me and Arnaldo.

**Juan:** You're looking very pretty, Pedro.

**Pedro:** Go fuck yourself.

**Juan:** Some manners.

**Bettina:** Oh, you don't know the grief he gives me.

**Juan:** We'll have to be stricter.

**Bettina:** Pass me your plates.

**Pedro:** Bernardo told me about Arnaldo.

**Bettina:** What happened?

**Juan:** Bernardo, that's confidential.

**Pedro:** I'm still very persuasive.

**Bettina:** Will someone tell me what happened?

**Juan:** We're not supposed to say anything, but never mind, it's not that bad. We suspect that the girl isn't in Arnaldo's body any longer.

*Arnaldo looks up.*

**Juan:** Yes, don't look at us like that. We know, or at least we think, that you're not you, but since you won't make up your mind and tell us who you are, we're going to have to carry on with our little chats.

**Bettina:** But I don't understand why you can't let him go then.

**Juan:** Because we don't know who he is, Bettina.

**Anna:** Maybe they can give me my body back.

**Juan:** We don't know.

**Anna:** Maybe it'll help if he stays with us.

**Juan:** For fucks sake! I said we don't know, and that's that! We don't even know if our theory is right, we don't know!!!! Can we please leave off the same fucking topic all the time and have a nice peaceful dinner like a normal family?

*They all eat.*

**Pedro:** Can I have some more stew?

**Bettina:** You're eating too much and you'll get fat.

**Pedro:** Give me more stew or I'll smash this plate on your head.

*Bettina serves him more stew and they go on eating.*

*Silence.*

**Bettina:** Pedro has a boyfriend.

**Juan:** Oh, isn't that nice?

**Pedro:** Stop gossiping you old bag.

**Juan:** That's very good, it'll avoid raising suspicions.

**Bettina:** He's very handsome.

**Pedro:** Of course he's handsome, I'm not going to go out with any old retard, am I?

**Juan:** Will you tell us his name?

**Pedro:** No.

**Bettina:** He's called...

**Pedro:** Listen you senile chatterbox, stop provoking me or I'll put you on a spit.

**Juan:** Pedro, don't talk to your mother like that.

**Pedro:** She's not my mother.

**Juan:** You know what I mean.

**Pedro:** Fucking hell.

*They continue eating.*

**Bernardo:** How are you doing, Arnaldo?

*Anna looks at Arnaldo.*

*Pause.*

**Bernardo:** Arnaldo, I'm talking to you.

**Anna:** Oh, sorry, I was thinking of something else.

**Juan:** Must be in love.

**Anna:** Yes, a little bit.

**Juan:** Everyone's falling in love at the moment, it must be the springtime.

**Bernardo:** How are you holding up?

**Anna:** Well, it's not easy, dad.

**Bernardo:** No, I know.

**Anna:** But we're all alright.

**Bernardo:** Yes, we're alright.

**Bettina:** Nothing is going to happen...

*Silence.*

**Juan:** Allow me to propose a toast.

*They all top up their glasses.*

**Juan:** A year ago, the planet faced an unusual and unique event. And it was us, those in this very room, who defended and held out like true heroes of humanity. This has brought on terrible consequences that we have, with time, managed to face and pacify. It was not easy to silence the world, we launched a huge campaign to make everyone believe that it was all a publicity stunt orchestrated by a private company. And people believed it, people always tend to believe what they're told. I'm also thinking of that cameraman and reporter who suffered similar consequences to us but who only a few months ago couldn't stand it any longer and took their own lives. This world isn't made for the weak. And it is us, the strong, who must protect them. We ought to be proud because we have survived, we have protected our interests and the greater good, and we will go on doing so. We are one body, together, we are not one or the other, we are each other. This terrible thing which we have to live through with no end in sight, is in fact a gift and I want to tell you that I am proud of the way that each and every one of you have become accustomed to your new lives. Bernardo has returned to the army where day after day he is awarded recognition, not just because he's me, but by his own merits. Bettina, Pedro and Arnaldo, have turned this house back into a home. And you, (to Arnaldo), whoever you are, you are also a part of this, we don't know if you are a being from another planet, from another body, or what. But that doesn't matter, many nights have passed, and those nights have turned you into another person. Now you are the other, who no one can understand because no one can know what you've been through. And while you may have no place in this world, you will always have a place here in this house, with us, your family. Because, in some sense, we are doing what we are doing for your good, so we can all improve our situation and so we can all be happy... because at the end of the day that's the idea, isn't it? It's about being happy and making those around us happy... right? Cheers!

**All:** Cheers!

**Arnaldo:** May I say something?

*Silence. They all look at him in surprise.*

**Juan:** Well, well, well.

**Arnaldo:** May I say something?



**Juan:** If you tell us who you are, then of course.

*An expectant pause.*

**Arnaldo:** I am another. I am the other. I will always be The Other. I will always be something you will all fear, someone who wants to be distinct from you, and my thoughts, motivations and desires will always be entirely alien to you. I am moved by resentment and anger, you resent me and I resent you, this world was not made for you or for me. And yet it was made for us both, to separate the lands and the different sides. I am moved by envy, hate and the bitter taste of defeat. Because I am, because we are, the defeated. You are moved by arrogance, self-importance and the fear that victory produces. Because you have won. You have beaten me. We are the losers and we are faced with the victors. Tomorrow we will win and you will be the defeated. The world and the universe is divided into winners and losers and the energy that propels the world and the universe is produced by our wars. The world is moved by envy and is based on resentment. You wouldn't do anything if you didn't know, if you weren't certain that we were going to do something to reduce you, to move you, to trample on you. We are moved by hatred, you are moved by fear. The world is a huge mistake that won't stop turning in the wrong direction, and its centrifugal force fires off all the gentle feelings, all the weak. And I feel more linked to this earth than ever, grabbing it, rooted with all the lowest feelings that have come in through my feet. I am human, I am disgustingly human, I am keen for war and if there is no war I am keen to start one. You haven't learnt a thing, no one has learnt a single thing. And the past wars, the dictatorships, the deaths, the acts of treachery, the abductions, the rapes, the torture, it will all, all, all return. Because no one understood any of it. That's how it will be. It is a matter of minutes, hours, days, years, nothing, nothing compared to the history of the world. And when you open your eyes in the middle of the night, I'll be there, smashing your faces in with the truth and with my hatred which is so great, and so eternal that it can wait however long it has to wait. Because the time of pain will return and there will be no body or apology to mitigate it. You don't deserve even a short time on this earth and some day, someone will make you all disappear, because you are the greatest mistakes in the universe. Something is going to happen. And everything will be better, all future times will be better.

**Juan:** Violent little alien, aren't you? So you decided to speak up and reveal you're still in there. Very well. Bernardo, let's take her back to base. This is good news, we don't have to look anywhere else.

**Bernardo:** I'm going to finish my meal. We can all eat in peace and then...

**Juan:** Not then, right now, for fucks sakes.

*Juan stands up and hauls Arnaldo out of his chair.*

**Juan:** I'll take him then, what the fuck.

**Pedro:** Do you want me to come with you, dad?

**Juan:** Fuck. No.

*Juan exits, and Pedro follows him out anyway.*

**Anna:** What are we going to do?

*Pause.*

**Anna:** What are we going to do?

**Bernardo:** We're not going to do anything, Anna. That's it, he said what he wanted to hear and now what happens to him is out of our hands. I don't think there's anything worse that can happen to him that he hasn't already been through. Now we have to go on living, and we'll see what tomorrow brings, tomorrow.

**Anna:** But...

**Bettina:** You heard your father, Anna.

**Anna:** But...

**Bettina:** Anna, please! That's enough.

*Pause.*

**Bernardo:** Can you leave your mother and I alone for a moment?

**Anna:** Oh yes, of course, whatever you say, whatever you ask, your wish is my command.

*Anna exits.*

**Bettina:** She's so grown up.

**Bernardo:** Time flew by.

**Bettina:** It did.

**Bernardo:** I never thought she'd come back, I don't know what to say to her, I don't know what to talk about.

**Bettina:** I never thought this sort of thing happened in real life.

**Bernardo:** Real life is where everything we imagine turns out bad, isn't it?

**Bettina:** Yes, at a certain point it's as if all life becomes ridiculous.

**Bernardo:** It's just that maybe life is only one big joke.

**Bettina:** That no one laughs at.

*Pause.*

**Bernardo:** I miss you.

**Bettina:** I'm right here.

**Bernardo:** I mean that I missed you when you left and I've wanted to tell you since you came back.

**Bettina:** It's alright.

**Bernardo:** You're looking good.

**Bettina:** So are you.

**Bernardo:** You're saying that because I'm in Juan's body.

**Bettina:** I'm saying it because I miss you too.

*Pause.*

**Bernardo:** Maybe one day we could go out or something.

**Bettina:** Try it again you mean?

**Bernardo:** It's just that maybe...

**Bettina:** Since I've been in your body, I've had this bitter thought that you will never look at me with these eyes again.

**Bernardo:** I still look at you.

**Bettina:** Maybe we could try again.

**Bernardo:** I love you.

**Bettina:** I love you too.

*Bernardo and Bettina laugh.*

**Bettina:** What is this?

**Bernardo:** We're trying to start over.

**Bettina:** Is that what is it?

**Bernardo:** I hope so.

**Bettina:** What if nothing happens.

**Bernardo:** Something will happen... something's got to happen.

*A piercing light begins to pour through the windows and from everywhere, little by little it will intensify while they go on eating.*

## End of the Tragicomedy

## End of Part III

## Epilogue

### **BREAKING NEWS, UNDERSCORED**

#### **Anchor Jorge Traverso**

A year has gone by and there have been many who have tried to prevent the following video from seeing the light of day. But sometimes you have to do the right thing. That may not be the norm in television, much less for a news programme. But sometimes you have to do the right thing and show the truth, offer it without any intermediaries. We warn you that the following images may upset some viewers, but the truth often does. This video shows an honest person who at last was unable to bear so many lies, or perhaps so much truth:

### **A HOME VIDEO IN WHICH WE SEE JOSE SILVEIRA**

#### **Cameraman Jose Silveira (Elena Vazquez)**

Sometimes strange things occur. And sometimes you don't understand this world until otherworldly things start happening. You need aliens to appear or God to perform a miracle or a door to open to an unknown dimension. Sometimes the world needs this kind of event to make sense. Because otherwise we'd never understand. Thank God that God exists and is waiting for us in heaven and aliens look after us from distant planets and there are hundreds of parallel worlds where things are better and people are happy and evil, fear and pain don't exist. At least that's what we like to believe. And it's because of this belief and no other that we kill each other, because none of us want to believe what the other believes. Where will it all end we may ask ourselves? How many things will we have to invent for us to finally stop inventing and just see the truth that's right in front of our faces? That truth which is plain to see is so painful, just like the other, so necessary and so painful. To be the other, that will be the future. Meanwhile the present has become unbearable to me. I am not me, perhaps I never was. I can't take this. I hope you can understand what will come about, I hope you can take it, face up to it and survive it... because I can't.

*The cameraman (Elena) lifts a gun to his temple and shoots himself.*

*The light is so bright that it is blinding the whole world, it will blind the whole world forever.*

*End of Or.*