



## ROAD THROUGH HEAVEN

By Ricky J Martinez

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# Road Through Heaven

by Ricky J. Martinez

part of  
"In God's Land: an Island Trilogy"

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Spanning the full term of a pregnancy, then several years after  
on an forgotten island, lingering in the Caribbean: Cuba.

### **THE ISLANDERS:**

#### Jesus

(20's) an intoxicatedly good looking orphan, who despite his abusive past harbors hope and honesty; believes he can create a better life.

#### Maria

(20's) a street smart virgin, who knows every rumor but doesn't spread them; whose social status doesn't limit her ambition, but fuels it.

#### Dolores

(30's) a brazen woman, who strives to cleanse herself of her families cursed lineage; desperately yearns to be a mother and good wife.

#### Victor

(40's) a hard-working, loyal hunk who wants a clan of his own; prefers to recognize the light in everyone instead of the dark.

#### Child

(7) a little rascal, who can unhinge the stars from the sky with his laugh.

### **PLAYWRIGHTS NOTES:**

- A dash (-) denotes an interruption of thought or of another person; a fast pace mark.
- An ellipsis (...) denotes an inhale, a gesture, or a silent thought; a slower pace mark. Ending a line and beginning another line of dialogue from the same character, means an overlap with continuous energy in thought.
- All repetitions in dialogue are purposeful.

A word of CAUTION to all directors, actress/actors that approach the characters and the style of this creative, but deeply honest world of the play; avoiding melodramatic, emotionally anguished interpretations as a soap opera/ novella would call for. Strive rather for nuanced, realistic, and active choices when incorporating the magical moments.

The feathers falling from the ceiling require keen creative production values.

## ANNUNCIATION

Darkness.

Distant and hungry drums pervade that darkness.

As a woman's sharp gasp breaches those drums.

In a flick, a match reveals the anguished woman, Dolores, who urgently lights a candle on an modest alter to the Holy Virgin Mother.

## DOLORES

(Intensely whispering)

...she's closer, keep her back... *Virgencita* show mercy... grant me your angels as protection...

Sinister whispers ooze from the darkness around her.  
...help me find a way to break this chain...

From a bundled napkin, Dolores sprinkles ash across her belly to trace patterns of crosses.

(praying)

*Dios te salve, Maria.*

*Llena eres de gracia: El Señor es contigo.*

*Bendita tú eres entre todas las mujeres.*

*Y bendito es el fruto de tu vientre: Jesús.*

*Santa María, Madre de Dios,  
ruega por nosotros pecadores,*

*ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte.*

*Amén.*

The drums, the whispers subside, as Dolores is able to regulate her breath and her fears.

**LIGHTS SHIFT:**

## Scene 1 VIRGIN AND ORPHAN

Sirens in the distance.

A wounded young man, Jesus, is supported in by a young woman, Maria, with a Royal Poinciana in her hair; they collapse on a shore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED :

MARIA

*GUAO!* Those drunks didn't see that coming, did they? HA! I just blew up that trash can with their own bottle of rum and- BOOM! Bastards! Serves them right for hurting someone who speaks about women's rights as strongly as you! Hey... hey... you dead?

Maria turns him over.

JESUS

They'll point you out now.

MARIA

Who?

JESUS

Rumors will leap from windows to balconies, down to the cafés; transforming into hungry hyenas swarming the city streets with *chiqui-chiqui-chiqui* over here, *chiqui-chiqui-chiqui* over there...

MARIA

What's *chiqui-chiqui-chiqui*?

Jesus makes chattering hand puppets before her face.

JESUS

Tongues clicking.

MARIA

Tongues, huh?

JESUS

From those drunks feeding the gossip.

MARIA

We're neighbors, you know?

JESUS

HMGH.

MARIA

You're Jesus, no?

JESUS

HMGH.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARIA

HMGH, is what our mule says when he doesn't want to be bothered.

JESUS

You speak mule?

MARIA

(suckles through her teeth)

Whatever!

JESUS

(beat) Those handsome walking palm trees are your brothers then?

MARIA

Walking palm trees, AH, yes! That's them, yeah...

JESUS

You're the Poinciana, the small flower.

MARIA

Like my mother who passed away giving birth to me, so they say.

Jesus places his hand over his heart.

JESUS

You're Maria...

MARIA

So you've heard *chiqui-chiqui-chiqui* about me, have you?

JESUS

Whatever!

MARIA

Padre Joaquin says Dolores and Victor took you in.

JESUS

The pastor chose those words?

MARIA

Yeah, why?

JESUS

You know, you should go. Before your brothers come chasing me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARIA

Because I helped the "afflicted?"

JESUS

(nods)

...

MARIA

I'm helping you home, fool. You're all...

JESUS

I am- I am all..., aren't I?

MARIA

At least you didn't say, HMGH.

JESUS

You knew those men?

MARIA

Creeps!

JESUS

Have they ever hurt you?

MARIA

Yes. They...

(beat)

Over this stranger visiting our side of the island who promising money, clothes, a house, the moon, the stars; all those things precious to a country-girl's dreams. He used colognes to cover up his wolf scent; a perfect smile; opened doors-*BLAH-BLAH-BLAH*- could have sold you this island with all his refinement. My brothers didn't trust him, neither did Pipo. Me- I- I knew something wasn't right but, I don't know- you know? A prayer whispered in the dark? A secret dream?

Two months after courting me, being the perfect gentleman he made his move. Miles from the farm; no one around. During a picnic, you know, when the sleep of the meal hits- *PAH!* Pounced on top of me using all the force of his arms and legs to keep me down- trying to steal my honey- the wolf! But- *RAH!* I kicked him so hard, down there, you know; took his breath away. He forgot I have brothers. And while he whimpered on the floor, instead of running, I stood over him, grabbed his face, and spat. Then, with all the grace in the world, I grabbed my purse, straightened my dress, and *RING-PANG-POONG* walked home. Calm as can be. Whole two hours I walked home, never looked behind to see if he was following. HA! If he would have followed me I would've snapped it off him! I swear; you know his... HA!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MARIA (CONT'D)

Next day, though, the rascal spread rumors. In your words, "*Chiqui-chiqui* over here, *chiqui-chiqui* over there." So when I tried coming to the city, to see Our Lady Of The Blue, that's what they call this part of the beach, you know, they...?  
*RAKATAH!*

Smacked by stones, if not worse. And no one, not one single decent person, ever stopped to help me like I helped you just now. Lucky you.

JESUS

If you- if Our Lady of the Blue would grant me a little luck, I wouldn't refuse it.

MARIA

I wouldn't as well... I'd- if she granted me a wish... I'd die a virgin.

JESUS

A what??

MARIA

Don't laugh!

JESUS

Like that saying, "Die a virgin, become a saint?"

MARIA

I want to be memorialized, yeah!

JESUS

Well, if you can dream it; you can will it.

MARIA

It won't happen. But... if it did... at least, for one of the parades, you know. Carried on one of those floats by all those men. The crown, the cape! People calling up to me- reaching for my blessing.

JESUS

"Virgin Saint. Look down. Bless me. Here, here!"

MARIA

I'd throw tiny feathers down to you so that everyone can see I'm blessing you, cause that's what Virgin Saints do. Then, very dramatically, I'd speak in a low rumbling voice: "Island boy what do you desire most?"

JESUS

"To be a known Poet."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MARIA

"Become our islands' most honored one." And I reach down for the blessing-

JESUS

But before you can touch me, the men carrying you and the watchful crowd notice it's me: "The *afflicted!*" They rush to grab my face- my hair- arms- pushing me down- below their treading hooves to trample me! And as they steady your throne and trot forward... I'm left like a smeared pulp of guava on the dirty road behind. Forgotten.

MARIA

Now that's dramatic!

Wild laughter from both turns to an amicable moment.

JESUS

Honesty is one of the most important qualities, you know.

MARIA

Sometimes I'm too honest, though; so my brothers say.

JESUS

When choosing a friend that is.

MARIA

A friend??

JESUS

Yes.

MARIA

*HMGH.*

JESUS

Speaking mule again...

MARIA

(chuckling)

You- you really want to be a poet?

JESUS

I am one actually, but I'd-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

MARIA

(As if hit by a stone)

OH MY GOD!!

JESUS

Are they here?!

MARIA

No, no- I have an idea!

JESUS

*Coño!* Thought a stone hit you or something-!

MARIA

No- listen- maybe you could write something for me??

JESUS

Write what?

MARIA

Ok- how can I put this... I'm studying to be an actress, see?

JESUS

Training to be an actress, you mean.

MARIA

Well, nothing formal or anything, you know, yet! A friend of mine who's an actor, Raymundo- when you meet him you'll love him, he's so sweet- he says, I've got potential. He sneaks me in to see his company's rehearsals; invites me to their classes- their shows; that sort of thing- maybe you can write something for my audition to be part of their company??

JESUS

(beat)

Write something for the virgin actress?

MARIA

Oh... that's...

JESUS

Write for an enigma?

MARIA

I like that! Ave Maria the Virgin Saint of Actresses. Maybe that could be my *affliction*??

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

Whatever!

JESUS

So? What do you think?

MARIA

Can I walk you home?

JESUS

You mean, can I help walk you home. Cause you're all...

MARIA

Yes, please, I'm all...

JESUS

Only if you recite some of your poems on the way.

MARIA

If you so desire.

JESUS

**LIGHTS SHIFT:**Scene 2 MULE, MAN, LOVE

At a wooden table sits Victor, while Dolores stands inspecting a bloody gash in the palm of his hand.

In one swift gesture she takes a swig from a bottle of rum and spits on his open wound.

VICTOR

(Anguished)

AGH! Have you gone crazy?

DOLORES

That would be something, no? Set up in one of those *institutions*: clean bed; free meals; people attending on me hand-and-foot; away from all this poverty-

VICTOR

I can't believe you spat rum on my-

DOLORES

Alcohol! We ran out of the other kind; can't afford an infection.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED :

VICTOR

You will kill me before the infection does!

DOLORES

If I wanted to kill you I would've picked up the knife, instead of the rum. Sit! What are you waiting for?

He does while she bandages his hand.

Day in and day out, Luck is punching-out of that *infierno* for you with all these accidents of yours. I don't understand why you can't get work over at *la Plaza*. That work's much safer.

Taking the bandage away and wrapping it himself.

VICTOR

Nothing's ever safe or easy.

DOLORES

You're right. Except my kisses...

She kisses him.

Stay seated. I'll bring the *potaje*.

Dolores exits.

VICTOR

Where's our poet?

DOLORES (O.S.)

He- ummm- he had- you know- you know one of those longings for the sea.

VICTOR

The way people are talking about our *affliction* it's not safe for him out there.

DOLORES (O.S.)

Ran out faster than my words could stop him, so I let him...

VICTOR

(toasting)

To inspiration then.

Dolores enters with their plates.

DOLORES

Have we run out of it?

(CONTINUED)