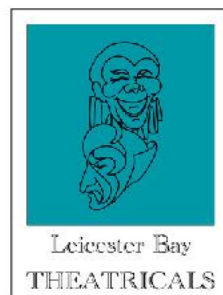
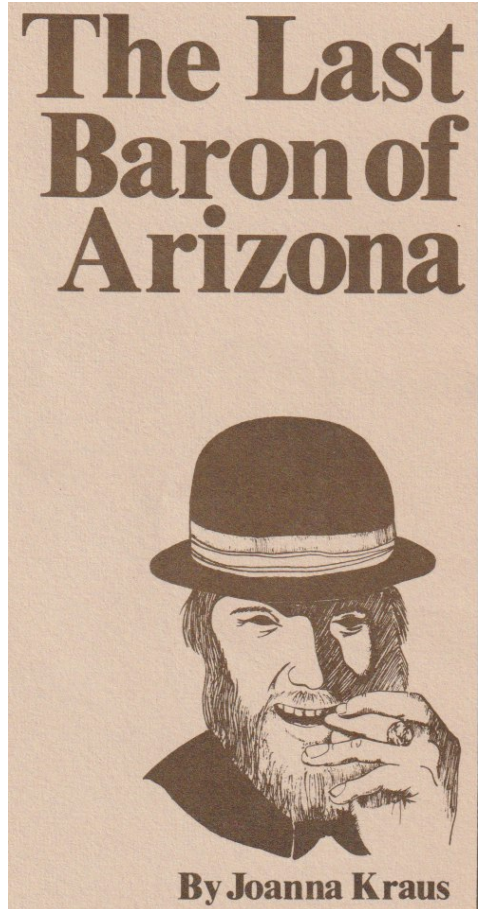


PERUSAL SCRIPT



Newport, Maine

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THE LAST BARON OF ARIZONA

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THE LAST BARON OF ARIZONA was first presented by the Department of Theatre, Arizona State University at the Lyceum Theatre, March 2, 1984 with the following cast:

Miguel—Mel R. Glotfelty
Isabel—Kathryn A. Schmitt
James Addison Reavis—Rives B. Collins
Elana—Karla Elane Jones
Judge—Richard I. Spiece
Matt Reynolds—Patrick W. Moore
Settlers—Mel R. Glotfelty, Kathryn A. Schmitt
Ellie Bigelow—Karla Elane Jones
Sofia—Jean M. Thomsen
Royal Johnson—Ric Alpers
Tom Weedin—Patrick W. Moore
Reporter—Mel R. Glotfelty
Mme. de Guy—Karla Elane Jones
Archives Clerk—Patrick W. Moore
Sherwood—Ric Alpers
Severo Mallet-Prevost—Mel R. Glotfelty

Directed by Don Doyle
Set Designed by Debrah Kaye
Costumes Designed by Peggy Hinsey
Lighting Designed by Eric Stack
Make Up and Hair Designed by Glorianne Engel

INTRODUCTION

The Last Baron of Arizona concerns the largest land swindle in United States history, and one of the most colorful characters of the Southwest, James Addison Reavis. His confident charm and talent in handwriting convinced lawyers, financiers, and a beautiful young woman that she was the true heiress to a Spanish Barony and was entitled to seven thousand five hundred square miles of the Arizona Territory.

It is a picaresque tale from the late nineteenth century and tells of a rogue hero, who lives by his wits. Although he used the pretense of having a moral obligation to his wife, he relishes his deeds throughout. Two "los graciosos," the wise and witty fools one finds in the Golden Age of Spanish literature, help develop the story.

The play illustrates a statement made by a more familiar nineteenth century figure, Abraham Lincoln: "It is true that you may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all the time; but you can't fool all of the people all the time." Reavis, however, thought he could. He nearly did.

And one doesn't have to hunt too hard to find contemporary parallels.

— JOANNA HALPERT KRAUS

CAST OF CHARACTERS (In the order of appearance) 5f, 10m (doubling possible)

ISABEL—A young guide who lives by her wits. Bilingual.

MIGUEL—Another young guide, bilingual.

JAMES ADDISON REAVIS—A tall, thin man in his thirties.

ELANA—A lovely Spanish speaking maid

CHIEF JUSTIC REED—A firm man in his fifties

MATT REYNOLDS—United States Attorney.

SOFIA—An impressionable seventeen-year-old

ROYAL JOHNSON—Head of the Office of the Surveyor General for Arizona

TOM WEEDIN—Editor of the Arizona Weekly Enterprise

ELLIE BIGELOW—A determined woman in her twenties

MME. DE GUY—Owner of a fashionable dress shop

REPORTER

ARCHIVES CLERK

SHERWOOD—A prospector in his sixties

MALLET-PREVOST—A distinguished lawyer

PLACE AND TIME

The action occurs in the Court of Private Land Claims, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1895, and in flashbacks in the Southwest, New York City, Mexico, and Spain, between 1881 and 1895.

RUNNING TIME: About 80 minutes

THE LAST BARON OF ARIZONA by Joanna H. Kraus 5f, 10m, doubling possible. Running time: 80 minutes. The largest land swindle in the history of the United States was perpetrated by dreamer and con-man, James Addison Reavis. His confident charm and talent in handwriting convinced lawyers, financiers, and a beautiful young woman that she was the true heiress to a Spanish Barony and was entitled to seven thousand five hundred square miles of the Arizona Territory. In this true story, although he uses the pretense of having a moral obligation to his wife, Reavis relishes his deeds throughout. The modern parallels of this story are far too numerous; about the man that almost got away with it. Of course, we seldom hear about those who did get away with it! **ORDER #3143**

Joanna H. Kraus is an award-winning playwright of twenty Theatre for Young Audiences produced/published plays, among them *The Ice Wolf* (Dramatic Publishing) and *Remember My Name* (Samuel French) both produced off-off Broadway. Picture books include *Tall Boy's Journey* (Carolrhoda/Lerner), *A Night of Tamales and Roses* (Shenanigan Books) *Blue Toboggan* (Mascot Books), *Bravo, Benny* (Mirror Publishing *Oh Little Ham of Buffalo, a Korean Adoption Memoir* done with her son, Tim. (Mirror Publishing.) and *The Blue Jeans Rebellion* (Leicester Bay Books.) She's written numerous media articles and for the past two decades reviewed children's books for the Bay Area News Group. Kraus is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), the California Writers Club, the Dramatists Guild and is Professor Emerita of Theatre and former Coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Arts for Children program at the College at Brockport State University of New York. She's a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, holds an M.A. from UCLA and an Ed.D. from Columbia University. Originally from Portland, Maine she now lives in the San Francisco Bay area. Visit her website: www.joannakraus.com

THE LAST BARON OF ARIZONA

SCENE ONE

The action takes place in Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1895, in the Court of Private Land Claims. An American flag of the period suggests the frontier government court. On stage is a judge's stand, witness stand, and a few rough wooden seats. A sign, which remains throughout the play, reads, "The Court of Private Land Claims, 1895." In a few places there are hat stands, which host a variety of hats, bonnets, and shawls that the actors use when they assume different characters. There are two levels for the flashbacks, which occur between 1881 and 1895, in the Southwest, New York City, Mexico, and Spain.

As the audience enters, the courtroom is visible in half light. Lights fade on courtroom and come up simultaneously on MIGUEL and ISABEL. They are young guides, who live by their wits. They observe, interact, and comment on the action, which they accompany with guitar, banjo, or harmonica. ISABEL strums a Southwest folk song. She strikes a chord, and the audience becomes the courtroom of spectators.

MIGUEL: Buenos días, señores.

ISABEL: Y señoras.

MIGUEL: Bienvenidos.

ISABEL: Welcome to the Court of Private Land Claims.

MIGUEL: To the most incredible case every tried.

ISABEL: The case of the Baron of Arizona.

MIGUEL: El Baron de Arizona.

ISABEL: But to tell you the whole story...

MIGUEL: ... la historia completa, es necesario...

ISABEL: It is necessary you meet the other characters.

(CHIEF JUSTICE REED and MATT REYNOLDS enter courtroom. CHIEF JUSTICE REED is a firm man in his fifties. United States Attorney, MATT REYNOLDS, is a forceful man in his forties.)

MIGUEL: The people he convinced.

ISABEL: The people he fought.

MIGUEL: The woman he loved.

ISABEL: *(Sighs)* Una bella dama!

MIGUEL: *(Crosses to hat stand)* You'll see us play all these parts. With a change of a hat or a shawl or a vest.

(Takes sombrero off the stand)

And the rest, *señores y señoras*, is up to you.

ISABEL: And when we do not sit in the courtroom...

(Crosses to hat stand)

MIGUEL: We travel.

ISABEL: To Spain, California, New York.

(Puts on serape)

MIGUEL: *(Puts on sombrero)* And to Guadalajara, Mexico, where it all begins. ¡Vámanos!

(They cross. Isabel strums a Mexican folk song as Miguel attaches a sign that reads "Guadalajara, Mexico, 1881" to the front of Posada Villa Hermosa, a rundown hotel.)

ISABEL: ¡Mira! Look! Here comes that rascal now!

(JAMES ADDISON REAVIS enters, a tall thin man in his thirties. He is charming, confident, and unfettered by ordinary scruples. His attire suggests his present impecunious status, but his bearing suggests that of a would-be gentleman. He carries a briefcase in one hand and a thick leather volume in the other. REAVIS starts to walk down the street, when MIGUEL and ISABEL intercept him.)

MIGUEL: Buenos días, Señor.

ISABEL: Welcome to Guadalajara. You are...

REAVIS: James Addison Reavis, correspondent for the San Francisco Examiner. I'm investigating the territory for my readers.

MIGUEL Señor...

(As he introduces Isabel with a gesture)

Isabel!

(She curtsies.)

ISABEL: *(As she introduces Miguel with a gesture)* Miguel!

(He bows.)

ISABEL and MIGUEL: A sus órdenes.

ISABEL: *(Peers at the title of the book in Reavis' hand and starts to reach for it.)* The Señor needs a translator?

REAVIS: *(Sharply)* Leave that alone!

ISABEL: *(Shrewdly)* The book is important to you, Señor?

REAVIS: It contains important documents.

MIGUEL: Señor. We do not ask questions of a ... gentleman.

ISABEL: But perhaps the Señor needs a room?

MIGUEL: A quiet place to study?

ISABEL: Dinner included?

REAVIS: Yes. Yes, I do. But how did you know? You must have read my mind.

MIGUEL: *(With a mock bow)* Ah, Señor, when times are hard, one makes a living the best one can.

REAVIS: *(They understand each other.)* Yes! Precisely!!

(MIGUEL and ISABEL escort him around the stage. They stop in front of the run-down hotel.)

MIGUEL: *(With an elaborate gesture)* ¡Mira! Posada Villa Hermosa!

REAVIS: Well, it isn't a villa, and it isn't beautiful. But all that in good time.

(Puts briefcase down)

Tonight it suits my needs exactly!

(MIGUEL and ISABEL turn the hotel front around revealing a dark, dingy room. Isabel lights the candle on the desk. Miguel brings the briefcase inside.)

Thank you.

MIGUEL: *Señor.* Now you are in Mexico. You must say “Gracias.”

REAVIS: Gracias.

ISABEL and MIGUEL: *(applaud him)* ¡Bueno, bueno, Señor!

(Hold out hands expectantly)

REAVIS: *(Dips into pocket and gives each one money)* Muchas gracias.

MIGUEL: Ah, Señor, you learn ... quickly.

REAVIS: *(With a smile)* Yes! I always have. Very quickly.

(ISABEL and MIGUEL exit. REAVIS quickly locks the door, sits down at the desk and pores over the contents of the book. MIGUEL and ISABEL hear the key turn in the lock, look at each other, and with the same thought in mind, they tiptoe away and return at once with a chair to stand on. MIGUEL pulls out a spyglass and peers down through the

transom and watches what REAVIS is doing. REAVIS searches and finds an appropriate page.)

And, now, to prove that Don Miguel really lived. To prove that Don Miguel was the first Baron of Arizona. But not the last!

MIGUEL: He's reading the book.

ISABEL: What does it say?

REAVIS: *(Translating)* To the city of Guadalajara. 1742.

(His eyes drop to the bottom of the page.)

Signed by Phillip V of Spain. Gracias, your majesty!

ISABEL: Let me see too!

(MIGUEL gets down so ISABEL can look. Hands her spyglass. REAVIS rushes over to his briefcase, unlocks it, removes blank paper, ink and pens. Laboriously he tries to copy the eighteenth-century script contained in the book, using different inks and pens, constantly comparing his work to the original.)

MIGUEL: What's he doing?

ISABEL: Writing.

MIGUEL: Writing what?

ISABEL: Old fashioned letters. It's a capital E...

REAVIS: Now a capital B ... a capital A...

ISABEL: He's writing them over and over.

REAVIS: Odd way to write a capital E. Ah-h! A curl here. A flourish there.

ISABEL: Oh ... o-o-oh, Miguel. He's copying the way the King wrote!

(THEY look at each other. Isabel gets down so MIGUEL can look through the spyglass. REAVIS examines his handiwork by the candlelight. Dissatisfied, he starts to crumple the paper on which he has been practicing, changes his mind and burns it instead.)

ISABEL: *(Sniffs)* What's burning?

MIGUEL: The paper he just used. O-o-oh!

(REAVIS has started painstakingly all over again.)

He's getting better!

(MIGUEL climbs down so Isabel can look. Finally REAVIS is satisfied that his handwriting matches that of the page he is attempting to copy.)

ISABEL: *(Applauds)* ¡Muy bueno!

(MIGUEL quiets her and scrambles up to look, almost pushing ISABEL off in his excitement.)

MIGUEL: ¡Es igual! Exactly the same!

(REAVIS goes to his briefcase and removes a small bottle of acid, soft rags, and thin paintbrushes.)

O-o-oh!

ISABEL: What's he doing now?

(REAVIS is delicately erasing the words.)

MIGUEL: He's erasing a name.

ISABEL: Why?

(REAVIS crosses to the door to make sure no one is coming.)

MIGUEL: Sh-h-h!

(REAVIS judiciously selects the right pen and writes in another name.)

O-o-oh!

ISABEL: What! What is it?

MIGUEL: He's writing in another name.

ISABEL: Who?

REAVIS: El Baron de Arizona.

(REAVIS scrutinizes his work in the light and grins.)

MIGUEL: With a talent like that...

ISABEL: *(Sighs)* We could be rich!

MIGUEL: Isabel

(Reverently)

It is a ... GIFT!

ISABEL: ¡Si!

(REAVIS takes a scroll from his briefcase, unrolls it, and studies it.)

What's he doing now?

MIGUEL: ¡ISABEL! Es muy importante. He's got a land grant.

(Whispers)

A Spanish land grant!

REAVIS: *(Reads)* The Peralta Grant.

ISABEL: Where?

MIGUEL: *(Pronounces the word as though he has never heard of it before)* Ar-i-zo-na.

(THEY look at each other. There is the sound of ELANA singing as she comes down the hall. It sounds like part of a folk song, but all the audience hears clearly is the one phrase.)

ISABEL: Sh-h-h.

MIGUEL: Quick.

(THEY tiptoe away carrying stool.)

REAVIS: And now, Baron, you must have an heir. Someone to inherit all this land.

(Thoughtfully)

Or... an heiress.

ELANA: *(Sings loudly and lustily)* *Una bella dama.*

REAVIS: Of course! Why not? *Una bella dama.* A beautiful girl.

(Speaks to the document)

Your great-grand-daughter. Tragically orphaned. At birth.

(There is a loud knock at the door and REAVIS hastily puts away all traces of his work in his briefcase. He opens the door very cautiously. ELANA, a comely, Spanish-speaking maid in her mid-twenties, stands in the doorway.)

ELANA: Señor. La comida.

REAVIS: *(Pulls out his pocket watch)* Ah, I nearly forgot about dinner. I had no idea it was so late.

(ELANA starts to leave.)

WAIT! Come in.

(Remembers word)

¡Entra!

ELANA: *(Entering hesitantly)* Señor?

(REAVIS gestures for her to come nearer the candlelight. She obeys. He looks at her intently. Gestures for her to turn around. She does.)

REAVIS: Ah...possible...possible.

(ELANA sneezes as he scrutinizes her, and nervously, noisily, she wipes her nose on her sleeve. REAVIS shudders.)

Out of the question. Absolutely not!

(Dismisses her. ELANA exits. REAVIS adjusts his collar in the mirror.)

We must be patient, Baron. She must be perfect! All my work will be wasted, if she wipes her nose on her sleeve!

(He snuffs out candle and exits. Lights fade out on hotel and come up simultaneously on courtroom. The court has been in session for two weeks. CHIEF JUSTICE REED, his hand on the gavel, presides. Matt Reynolds checks his notes before continuing the interrogation REAVIS crosses into the Court of Private Land Claims. He is fourteen years older, groomed in expensive dignified elegance. His attire is in sharp contrast to the frontier surroundings. The transition is covered by ISABEL's music.)

CHIEF JUSTICE REED: Call James Addison Reavis back to the stand.

(REAVIS crosses to witness stand.)

May I remind you that you are still under oath, Mr. Reavis. Are you aware of the penalty for perjury?

REAVIS: I am.

CHIEF JUSTICE REED: Will the United States Attorney proceed.

REYNOLDS: Mr. Reavis, do you recognize this?

REAVIS: I do. It's the decree signed by his Majesty Phillip V of Spain.

REYNOLDS: Is this the document in which you first found the name Baron of Arizona?

REAVIS: It is.

REYNOLDS: You're sure of that?

REAVIS: Yes. A priceless antique.

REYNOLDS: Your Honor, this is indeed the King's signature. Hardly priceless, but nevertheless, authentic.

(REAVIS looks triumphant)

However, there is one peculiarity on this page, and that is the reference to the Baron of Arizona.

CHIEF JUSTICE REED: Continue.

REYNOLDS: When our government experts analyzed the page they discovered that the whole page had been written with a quill pen with the exception of that one line. That one line had been written with a

steel pen.

CHIEF JUSTICE REED: Please tell the court the significance of this finding, Mr. Reynolds.

REYNOLDS: Your Honor, ladies and gentlemen, in 1742, the date of this document, the steel pen had not yet been invented!

REAVIS: Only a legal mind would get stuck on such a minor point! Naturally, a great monarch would have things the common people didn't. That's what being a King means.

REYNOLDS: Or being a Baron, Mr. Reavis?

(The two men glare at each other. CHIEF JUSTICE REED raps gavel.)

Mr. Reavis, please tell the Court how you found Sofia, alleged Baroness of Arizona, alleged heiress to the Peralta Grant.

REAVIS: *(Leaps up)* “Alleged!” You insult Doña Sofia, Sir. I demand an apology.

REYNOLDS: And I demand only the truth. But I shall be satisfied with nothing less! May I remind you that the purpose of the Court of Private Land Claims is to determine to whom the property legally belongs. That is why we've been sitting here for the past two weeks. That is why I insist you answer the question without further evasion. How did you find Sofia?

REAVIS: I'd heard a rumor there was a Spanish orphan working on a ranch near Sacramento. When I saw her, I knew at once I was in the right place.

REYNOLDS: How did you know?

REAVIS: Any fool could tell!

(Lights fade out on courtroom and come up simultaneously on ranch, 1882, where SOFÍA is hanging a lantern. SOFÍA is an impressionable seventeen-year-old, who works as a domestic on a California ranch. Her dark-haired beauty suggests a Spanish ancestry. She has an innate grace... "A Baroness from the moment she was born." Miguel hangs a sign, "Woodland, California, 1882." Unable to resist the music, SOFÍA starts to waltz by herself. REAVIS cuts in. Neither misses a step.)

SOFÍA: *(Breathlessly)* Oh! I should be working.

REAVIS: *(Enchanted by her looks)* No! You should be waltzing with me.

SOFÍA: The cook will be furious. But if I wait until all the work's done, the fiddler will be gone! He only comes at round-up time.

REAVIS: *(Gazing at her)* Besides, don't you know whenever there's a new moon, it's good luck to dance with a stranger.

SOFÍA: It is?

(Delighted)

You made that up!

REAVIS: You're right!

SOFÍA: You don't sound like any cowboy I've ever met before.

REAVIS: I'm not.

(Slight bow)

James Addison Reavis, correspondent for the San Francisco Examiner.

SOFÍA: I'm Sofia. What are you doing here?

REAVIS: I'm investigating the territory for my readers. Looking for good stories.

SOFÍA: Did you find any?

REAVIS: Oh, I always do. Sometimes in the most ordinary places,

(Looking at her)

I find something ... extraordinary.

SOFÍA: Like right here?

REAVIS: Like right here.

SOFÍA: Tell it to me!

REAVIS: It's a true story.

SOFÍA: *(Disappointed)* Oh! At this ranch the only true stories I hear are all about cows!

REAVIS: *(Enjoying her)* You don't like cows?

SOFÍA: Not at a party!

REAVIS: Well, if I tell you, if I promise you, that there isn't a single cow in the whole story, will you listen?

SOFÍA: *(Enjoying him)* Um-hmm.

REAVIS: First, you have to imagine a stone castle in Spain, and a brave nobleman who fought off the King's enemies.

SOFÍA: *(Flirts)* Was he as handsome as you?

REAVIS: *(Pleased)* More!

SOFÍA: *(Fascinated)* What was his name?

REAVIS: Don Miguel Nemecio Silva de Peralta de la Córdoba.

SOFÍA: *(Repeats)* Don Miguel Nemecio Silva de Peralta de la Córdoba. Go on.

REAVIS: Second, you have to remember that in the eighteenth century, when a King wanted to reward a

loyal subject, he gave him land.

SOFÍA: Is this true?

REAVIS: Of course. Sofía, the truth can be more fantastic than any fairy tale.

SOFÍA: Well, around here, it's not, even interesting!

REAVIS: *(Studying her. She has definite possibilities.)* Then why don't you leave?

SOFÍA: *(Laughs)* Oh, I can't. I work here! Finish the story. I'll have to go back to the kitchen in a minute. What happened next to Don Miguel?

REAVIS: King Phillip the Fifth made him Knight of the Golden Fleece and the first Baron of Arizona.

SOFÍA: Arizona! You mean the territory?

REAVIS: Yes.

SOFÍA: Did he give him a ranch there?

REAVIS: The king bestowed upon him...a piece of paper.

SOFÍA: A piece of paper?

REAVIS: A cédula.

SOFÍA: What's that?

REAVIS: A royal decree. Sofia, that one small piece of paper represents half the territory. The Peralta Grant is worth a fortune.

SOFÍA: But what does all that have to do with us?

REAVIS: Sofia! A great deal!

(Looks to see if anyone is watching, then leans in close.)

I'm going to tell you something no one else knows.

SOFÍA: GO ON!

REAVIS: *(Abruptly)* Sofía, how old are you?

SOFÍA: Seventeen.

REAVIS: About seventeen years ago a Peralta baby was born in California and then mysteriously disappeared.

SOFÍA: What happened to it?

REAVIS: Well, the Grant had been handed down by the first Baron to the second, when a terrible tragedy occurred.

SOFÍA: What?

REAVIS: The Baron's daughter died in childbirth. The baby never saw her mother's face.

SOFIA: Oh, I never did either.

REAVIS: (*Touches her hair lightly*) I know.

(*Resuming story*)

Unfortunately, the Baron had urgent business in Spain, so he left the baby with an American friend.

SOFÍA Did he come back?

REAVIS: No. He died in Spain.

SOFÍA: What happened to the baby?

REAVIS: That's the mystery! You see, all they knew was her name.

(*Pause*)

Doña Sofía Loreta Micaela Maso y Silva de Peralta.

SOFÍA: Oh, what a beautiful name. It's like music.

REAVIS: It suits her.

SOFÍA: You've found her!

REAVIS: Yes.

SOFÍA: Here?

REAVIS: Yes.

SOFÍA: Who?

REAVIS: (*Taking her face in his hands*) You don't know who you are, do you?

SOFÍA: Of course I do. I'm Sofía. Simply Sofía

REAVIS: You are exactly who I've been looking for.

SOFÍA: (*Upset*) You're making fun of me!

REAVIS: No! Never!

SOFÍA: (*Pulls away*) You're making a mistake.

REAVIS: (*Pulls her back.*) I don't make mistakes. I'm James Addison Reavis.

(*THEY waltz.*)

She would have been seventeen this year.

SOFÍA: Like me.

REAVIS: You see! She would have been a Spanish beauty like you.

SOFÍA: Like me?

REAVIS: Just like you! She was an orphan.

SOFÍA: So am I.

REAVIS: Exactly.

SOFÍA: Did you say her name was Sofia?

REAVIS: Yes.

SOFÍA: The same as mine?

REAVIS: The same!

(Holds her tightly and looks in her eyes.)

Doña Sofía Loreta Micaela Maso y Silva de Peralta.

SOFÍA: *(Repeats, looking in his eyes)* Doña Sofía Loreta Micaela Maso y Silva de Peralta.

REAVIS: Sofía, what kind of work do you do on this ranch?

SOFÍA: Most of the time I'm in the kitchen. Scrubbing the pots and pans,

REAVIS: *(Interrupts)* You should have a maid doing that for you!

SOFÍA: But I am the maid! That's what I'm trying to tell you. Every morning I peel the potatoes. Buckets of them. If I never saw another one, I wouldn't mind!

REAVIS: Peel the potatoes! Oh, now I know why fate brought me here tonight.

SOFÍA: Fate?

REAVIS: The stars, that slip of a moon. They led me here to you.

SOFÍA: *(Wavering)* That doesn't make sense.

REAVIS: It will. Trust me. It will. It will.

(Kisses her hand as they dance)

These hands should be wearing rings.

SOFÍA: What kind of rings?

REAVIS: Gold, diamond, ruby, pearl. And you will have them too. Sofía, lister to me and the whole world can be yours.

SOFÍA I'm listening.

REAVIS: *(Bows formally)* You are the lineal descendent and sole surviving heir of Don Miguel Nemecio

Silva de Peralta de la Córdoba, Baron of Arizona

SOFÍA: I don't understand.

REAVIS: It means you're an heiress. It means silken shawls and Spanish pearls and servants of your own. So, you must let me help you.

SOFÍA: How?

REAVIS: *(Looks to see if anyone is watching. Removes decree from his coat pocket and reverently shows it to her.)* This is the King's decree. You see, there is the royal seal and signature and there is the name Peralta.

SOFÍA: I can't read... Spanish.

REAVIS: Ah-h-h-

(He takes her finger and gently places it on the word.)

This is your great grandfather...

SOFÍA: *(Struggling)* Why would you go to all this trouble just to help me—if it were true?

REAVIS: *(Shocked)* Why, to restore what is rightfully yours.

SOFÍA: I don't understand.

REAVIS: You are Doña Sofia. You always have been. You always will be.

SOFÍA: I'm a servant girl on the ranch. Nothing more.

REAVIS: Oh, Sofia, you are so much more! You are descended from a fine noble family who would weep to see you working so hard. You must carry out the honor of your family.

(She reacts.)

Sofía, if you leave here the fiddle music will never stop. It'll play each night until the stars fade from the sky. But if you stay here, you'll scrub pots and pans till your feet are flat and your hands are red and swollen.

(She crosses away from him. He crosses to her.)

What is it?

SOFÍA: *(Turns away from him, softly)* I'm afraid in the morning this will all be a dream. You'll be gone.

REAVIS: *(Hands on her shoulders, gently)* Yes, I'll be gone. So I can help you claim all that is yours. You were a baroness from the moment you were born.

(Half means it.)

Anyone who can't see that doesn't deserve to be in the same room with you.

SOFÍA: *(Decides to let herself be persuaded)* Mr. Reavis, if what you said were, by some chance, true...

REAVIS: Not IF, Doña Sofía. Never use the word IF. It IS true. And together we can prove it!

SOFÍA: What would you need?

REAVIS: Papers proving your identity. Sofía, I can't let you stay here now that I've found you! You must permit me to assist you.

SOFÍA: If I do, will you come back to the ranch? Soon?

REAVIS: On the fastest horses that I can find.

SOFÍA: But what if you can't find what you need?

REAVIS: But I can. I will. It's a true story, remember?

SOFÍA: *(Smiling)* With no cows!

REAVIS: *(Smiles)* No cows!

(Kisses her hand as though in court)

Adios, Doña Sofía.

(Exits.)

OFFSTAGE WOMAN'S VOICE: Sofía! Hurry up!!

SOFIA: *(Holds out the hand he has just kissed)* Doña Sofía Loreta Micaela Maso y Silva de Peralta.

(Lights fade out on ranch and come up simultaneously on courtroom where REYNOLDS is questioning ROYAL JOHNSON, Surveyor General. He is a conscientious civil servant in his forties.)

REYNOLDS: Mr. Johnson, in your experience as Surveyor General have many Spanish land grants been brought to your office for approval?

JOHNSON: Yes. But frankly many of them aren't worth the paper they're written on.

REYNOLDS: Why is that?

JOHNSON: They're loosely drawn, carelessly executed, and the boundaries are hopelessly inexact.

REYNOLDS: Was that the case with the Peralta Grant?

JOHNSON: No. I have to say it was not. Mr. Reavis walked into my office carrying the original title papers to the Barony. It contained the royal decree and a description of the land.

REYNOLDS: *(Displaying papers bound together like a pamphlet with cloth cover)* Is this the document?

JOHNSON: Yes.

REAVIS: Have a care how you handle those papers. They're more than a hundred and fifty years old. You can see that the pages are brittle and the cover is torn.

REYNOLDS: I assure you I will not handle them unnecessarily. Mr. Johnson, is it customary for your office to honor these ancient Spanish land grants?

JOHNSON: It's the law! Ever since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 and the Gadsden Purchase in 1853. That's why the Office of the Surveyor General was established! My job is to represent the government in this matter and to investigate the authenticity of such claims to the best of my ability.

REYNOLDS: We understand. Mr. Johnson, what is the size of a typical Spanish land Grant?

JOHNSON: Approximately seventeen thousand acres.

REYNOLDS: And Reavis' claim?

JOHNSON: More than twelve million acres.

(As he crosses to other side of stage, finishing his line, lights fade on courtroom and come up on a mass indignation meeting in progress.)

(REYNOLDS has assumed role of TOM WEEDIN. MIGUEL holds up a sign that reads, "Mass Indignation Meeting, Phoenix, May 24, 1884. Six o'clock.")

SETTLER: I've heard all I want to hear about that scoundrel. I ain't got time to be wastin'. Let's just string him up from the nearest cottonwood.

OTHERS: *(ad-lib)* Yes. Let's do that. Get him. Gotta catch him first.

(WEEDIN, a fiery eloquent man who is the editor of the Arizona Weekly Enterprise is running the meeting.)

WEEDIN: Yes, Miss Bigelow.

(ELLIE BIGELOW is a determined woman in her twenties.)

ELLIE: We brought everything we owned out to the Territory by wagon train. The government promised us we could have the land if we lived on it five years. Well, we done it. And it hasn't been easy.

OTHERS: *(ad-lib)* No, it ain't. That's right.

ELLIE: And we're not moving without a fight!

SETTLER: Mr. Weedin, is it true that the Peralta Grant claims the best land in the Territory?

WEEDIN: That's why I called this meeting, ladies and gentlemen. There's a tall, thin cloud on this Territory. It's called the Baron of Arizona.

OTHERS: BOOOO!!

WEEDIN: He says the Peralta Grant was decreed for loyal service by his Majesty Phillip Fifth in 1742.

OTHERS: *(ad-lib)* That's a long time ago. Ain't he dead? That's ancient history. Who cares?

WEEDIN: I do. You do. We all do! Ladies and gentlemen, the Peralta Grant covers some of the best land in the Territory, including Phoenix, Maricopa, Casa Grande, Mesa, Clifford, Globe, Clifton, Tempe,

Florence, the whole Salt River Valley and the Silver King Mine.

SETTLER: Must have been mighty loyal service!

WEEDIN: But I think he's a phony and the good honest people of Arizona are being swindled out of the land, the land they earned with the sweat of their brow and the toil of their hands. And I say to you, we must stop him—NOW!

OTHERS: YEH!

WEEDIN: Ladies and gentlemen, I thought it was a joke when he showed those reporters in California forty feet of Spanish documents and they called him the Baron of Arizona, but I'm here to tell you today, it's no joke. He wants to take the land away from under your feet, and if we don't stop him, he'll swallow you up alive. Now, some of you may have heard that this Baron, this great mogul of the Territory, this lord of the limber tongue says he's willing to sell you quit claim deeds. Quit claim deeds! So you can have the privilege of staying on your own land. Trying to get you to pay for what's already yours. Well, out in Arizona we have a word for that. Extortion!

OTHERS: We don't want no quit claim deeds. Does he think we're going to pay twice?

SETTLER 1: We already bought our land from the United States Government.

SETTLER 2: The land is ours.

SETTLER 1: What's he gonna do if we don't pay?

WEEDIN: Evict you.

SETTLER 2: Unless we do it to him first!

ELLIE: Could he do that? Could he evict us?

JOHNSON: Ladies and gentlemen, I've been listening to you and you must remember that any land owner can do what he likes on his own property. That is why we must prove this case conclusively. You can't act rashly in such matters. It's my duty to examine every document.

SETTLER 2: Well, how long is all that gonna take, Mr. Surveyor General?

JOHNSON: It could take years.

SETTLER 2: Years! Whose side are you on? His or ours?

ELLIE: Is he going to try to throw us off the land? Land we cleared of sagebrush, land we planted with cottonwood. My grandfather and I carved our farm from the desert. Took us five years to irrigate so the water would flow right.

WEEDIN: My newspaper is going to start fighting him now and fight him to the finish. The Arizona Weekly Enterprise represents you, all of you, all the farmers, ranchers and miners living in the Territory.

OTHERS: YEA! YEA!

WEEDIN: We're going to fight him any way and every way we can.

OTHERS: YEA! YEA!

JOHNSON: Mr. Weedin, ladies and gentlemen, the development of the whole territory's at stake! We all know as long as the Peralta Grant looms over the land, no one will want to settle here. But the decision must be arrived at judiciously

OTHERS: (*ad-lib*) How much did he say he'd give you, Mr. Surveyor General? Ain't got time for waitin'. Plantin' time don't wait.

JOHNSON: And legally! The law is the law. And it's only fair to warn you that if the claim is valid, Congress will confirm it. That's plain American justice.

ELLIE: And I'm telling you that folks around here don't much care what a government back East said about honoring Spanish land grants. We fought for this land. And it's ours. And no dead royalty's going to take it away. That's Arizona justice!

(Lights fade on scene and follow JOHNSON as he crosses back to witness stand)

JOHNSON: There were indignation meetings in every town in the Territory but they didn't seem to ruffle Reavis one bit. He just introduced new evidence. Every deed, decree, certificate, will and codocil looked genuine.

REAVIS: They ARE genuine!

JOHNSON: But he always made it perfectly clear that it was his ward he was representing, the Baroness, Doña Sofía.

(REAVIS has crossed to other area and lights fade out on JOHNSON and come up on sign, "Mme. de Guy, Couturier, a dress shoppe for fashionable women, New York City, 1885." MADAME DE GUY is an enterprising business woman.)

REAVIS: I'll take the grey walking suit the mauve morning dress, the flowered silk, and the white fur muff. Oh, the muff is a surprise. Would you wrap it separately? They are to be sent round to the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

MME. DE GUY: Would you like the muff gift wrapped, *Monsieur*?

REAVIS: Yes. It's a birthday present for my ward.

MME. DE GUY: Ah, we shall attach a rose then.

REAVIS: Oh, very nice.

MME. DE GUY: The pleasure is mine, *Monsieur*. A perfect choice for *Mademoiselle*. She is *très charmante*. A real lady. You can always tell. The quality of a real lady shines through, *n'est-ce-pas*?

(SOFÍA floats in, radiant. Looks at gown in mirror)

Ah, *Mademoiselle*. You are the first woman to do this gown justice.

(To Reavis)

Most women, they cannot wear such a gown. But on *Mademoiselle, c'est magnifique*. Ah, excuse me, the bell. I will be back in a moment.

(Exits)

SOFÍA: Oh, James, I've dreamed of a dress like this. It makes me feel I like a princess. Look at the work on it. It's all handmade lace. What do you think?

REAVIS: I think every man in New York City will fall in love with you instantly.

SOFÍA: Oh, be serious! Anyway, I'm not interested in every man in New York City.

(Carefully)

Just one.

REAVIS: *(Indignant)* Just one? Who!

SOFÍA I'm nearly twenty.

REAVIS: Not till Friday, you're not. I'm still your guardian. Who is he?

SOFÍA: You know I never had a birthday before I met you. I never knew what day I was born. Not until you found my name at the San Bernardino Mission. But for the last two years, James, you've given me enough presents to make up for every birthday I ever missed!

REAVIS: Stop changing the subject. Who is he? Do I know him?

SOFÍA: *(Playing a game)* Um-hmm.

REAVIS: Well, why haven't you ever told me about him?

SOFÍA: I was afraid to.

REAVIS: Afraid?

SOFÍA: That you'd stop me from seeing him so much.

REAVIS: Well, you're absolutely right. Where have you been seeing him?

SOFÍA: At the theatre. And at the concerts. And sometimes in the park.

REAVIS: Well, you can't go on meeting him like this. It has to stop at once. Sofia, I've had the top lawyers in New York examining your papers. They all think you're entitled to your property. So, I will not allow you to ruin your life just because you think you're in love with some fool. When this claim is settled and the Peralta Grant is yours, you'll be one of the wealthiest women in America., Everyone knows that. Even the shopkeeper here. And my dear Sofia, you're still a child about these things. There are, to put it bluntly, men who'd take advantage of that.

SOFÍA: He wouldn't! I know he wouldn't.

REAVIS: He may be a greedy fortune hunter for all you know.

SOFIA: He isn't! He gives me beautiful gifts.

REAVIS: Gifts! Sofia! You must return them at once. Why haven't you come and talked to me about all this?

SOFÍA: Well, lately you've been so busy. Reading, writing, I don't know what you do when you're alone in your study. You keep the door locked. But you told me I must never bother you when you're working.

REAVIS: Well, that's right. You must never go into my study, and you must never bother me when I'm working. But we can't have secrets between us, can we? Now, look me in the eye and tell me the truth. Has he ever said he loved you?

SOFÍA: No-o-o.

REAVIS: Are you in love with him?

(SOFÍA hesitates, then turns away without answering)

SOFÍA!

(She turns around to face him)

How could you have been seeing someone without asking my permission? How could you have let it go this far without my even knowing? When? Where? I've taken you to every ball, every concert, every play, every dinner party you've ever been to in your life.

SOFÍA: I know.

REAVIS: *(Indignant)* And he's always there? Wherever we are? He gets himself invited!

SOFÍA: *(Bursting with happy excitement)* Yes!

REAVIS: Well, where is he now? I'll talk to him straightaway. This is sheer nonsense. I won't let you run off with some idiot. What do you know about love?

SOFÍA: I know it's unpredictable! That it doesn't come when you want it to or go away just because you tell it to.

REAVIS: *(Surprised)* That's a great deal, Sofia. Well, you better tell me what he looks like and where I can find him. The truth now.

SOFÍA: *(The game has gone too far.)* Do you really want to know?

REAVIS: I certainly do!

SOFÍA: *(Coldly)* Then turn round slowly, James, and look straight ahead!

(Starts to run out. Stops, turns)

And you're right. He's a perfect idiot!

(REAVIS turns around and sees himself in the mirror. Runs after Sofia, catches her, and takes her in his arms)

REAVIS: (*Embraces her. Wipes tears from her cheek. Takes out ring box.*) You know, I've been carrying this around for a week.

SOFÍA: (*Through tears*) What is it?

REAVIS: A ring. An engagement ring.

SOFÍA: An engagement ring. For who?

REAVIS: Oh, my dear Sofia, for you! Who else but you? You're all the stars in my sky, don't you know that? The simple truth is I was afraid to ask.

SOFÍA: Afraid? Why?

REAVIS: Afraid you'd say no.

SOFÍA: Why would I say no? How could I say no? You gave me my birthday. You gave me my name. You gave me my world. The simple truth is, James, you are my world.

REAVIS: Oh, my dearest Sofia, how could they have kept you in the kitchen peeling potatoes!!

(Puts ring on her finger. Excitedly)

Sofía, the Southwest is a desert that's going to bloom. You and I are going to make it happen.

SOFÍA: How, James?

REAVIS: (*Envisions*) Roads, canals, dams. A transcontinental railroad going through. Telephones, telegraphs. There's no end to the possibilities. No end to what I can do out there. Sofia, you'll never see another potato except when it's served to you on a silver plate.

SOFÍA: Oh, James.

REAVIS: Every man in the world will tip his hat to us. You'll see.

SOFÍA: (*Laughs happily*) James, you're a dreamer!

REAVIS: And so are you, my darling. So are you. But if you're going to dream, Sofia, dream big. DREAM BIG!!!

(Lights fade out on dress shop and come up simultaneously on courtroom. CHIEF JUSTICE REED raps gavel.)

REYNOLDS: Mr. Reavis, what is the source of your income?

REAVIS: Well, of course I'm a correspondent for several newspapers.

REYNOLDS: The San Francisco Examiner?

REAVIS: Yes, that's one.

REYNOLDS: According to them you were hired once, fifteen years ago, to sell subscriptions but they only received half the money you collected.

REAVIS: I had living expenses! A gentleman can't live on air.

REYNOLDS: No, indeed, Mr. Reavis. But it would take a newspaper salesman several years to earn what you spent in one morning at Mme. de Guy's Courturier dress shop.

REPORTER: (*Jumps up. He is a blunt, straightforward man.*) I've been working for the San Francisco Examiner for fifteen years and I never set eyes on him before.

REAVIS: Well, naturally, I don't work in the office. I'm a correspondent. I said that before! They published several stories I sent them. I distinctly remember one on the cattle round-up. It won a prize.

REPORTER: I'll bet you don't know one end of a horse from another!

REAVIS: I believe the tail's still at the back end! Of course, I've been in here so long, it might have changed.

(Court laughs. CHIEF JUSTICE REED bangs gavel.)

CHIEF JUSTICE REED: Proceed.

REYNOLDS: How much money did you collect in quit claim deeds?

REAVIS: I really couldn't say. My lawyers handled all that.

REYNOLDS: But you do admit you sold quit claim deeds?

REAVIS: I offered people the opportunity to settle at a fair consideration.

(As REAVIS crosses there is the sound of chickens. LIGHTS fade out on courtroom and come up simultaneously on the Bigelow farm. MIGUEL puts a sign in the ground, "Bigelow Farm.")

ELLIE: (*With a broom*) Get off my land!

REAVIS: The price is fair enough—one thousand dollars.

ELLIE: NO!

REAVIS: Payable in three installments.

(Looks around)

Nice farm you've got here. You ought to protect it.

ELLIE: I don't need to protect it—except from the likes of you! I'll move when I have to—not before.

REAVIS: Now, Miss Bigelow, no one said a word about your moving.

ELLIE: Don't you "Miss Bigelow" me! My grandfather and I built this farm.

REAVIS: I bet he's proud of it.

ELLIE: You bet he is.

REAVIS: An old man builds something as fine as this, why he wants to live out his days admiring all he's done.

ELLIE: That's just what he aims to do.

REAVIS: I was fond of my grandfather too. May he rest in peace. Seeing your farm here makes me wish he were still alive.

ELLIE: *(Softening)* It does?

REAVIS: Wish I could give him a farm like this...But it's too late now. Miss Bigelow, I'd like to meet your grandfather. Shake his hand.

ELLIE: Well, he's ailing now. He hardly recognizes me. But he still likes to look out at his garden.

REAVIS: Is that the garden?

ELLIE: Yes. I planted it this year. Just the way he always did, so's to comfort him. But the yellow roses didn't come up right. A couple of 'em died.

REAVIS: Roses, hm-m. You're a remarkable woman, Miss Bigelow, I want to make you an offer.

ELLIE: An offer?

REAVIS: Out of respect for my grandfather. I never had a chance to do anything for him.

ELLIE: The one that passed on?

REAVIS: What? Oh yes. Yes, that one. Now the Jones family, ten miles down the road, paid me one thousand dollars for their quit claim deed.

ELLIE: They did?

REAVIS: Ask them if you don't believe me! And that's a lot cheaper than it will be later. But your situation is unusual. Let's say three hundred and I'll sign a paper today saying that you can live on the Peralta Grant forever with no further charge.

ELLIE: Well, I dunno.

REAVIS: You won't regret this, Miss Bigelow. The land's worth a lot more than that. But your grandfather can live out his days in peace.

ELLIE: I can only give you fifty dollars now. That's all I got.

REAVIS: That's fine, Miss Bigelow.

(ELLIE goes to get money. From briefcase he takes out traveling desk with nib, ink bottle and deed, and signs with a flourish. She reads and gives him the money.)

ELLIE: *(As she signs)* Mr. Reavis, I don't want Grandpa ever to know there was a speck of trouble. It could kill him.

REAVIS: He'll never hear it from me.

(Starts to exit, turns)

Oh, and Miss Bigelow, I'm sending you a yellow rose bush for that garden of yours. Prettiest garden in the whole Peralta Grant!

(As REAVIS walks back lights fade out on Bigelow farm and came up simultaneously on courtroom.)

REYNOLDS: According to the County Clerk you collected nearly thirty five-thousand dollars in one year alone in quit claim deeds. Is that true?

REAVIS: *(Yawns)* I don't really know the exact amount.

REYNOLDS: Reavis, since you're acting in your own defense, I must insist you answer the questions.

REAVIS: Well, if they made any sense, I would!

REYNOLDS: What amount of money did you receive from the multi-millionaire, John Mackay?

REAVIS: When I explained we were missing a crucial piece of evidence he subsidized our trip to Spain.

REYNOLDS: What was the amount, Mr. Reavis?

REAVIS: I really can't be bothered to keep track of every penny I spend. We lived in the style suitable to our circumstance.

REYNOLDS: You mean a Baron and a Baroness?

REAVIS: Naturally!!

REYNOLDS: Did the Southern Pacific Railroad pay you fifty-thousand dollars for a right of way to cross the Peralta Grant?

REAVIS: They did! They knew the claim was valid. Every top attorney, political figure and financier in the country knew. Why is it that you are having so much trouble?

REYNOLDS: You're the one who's in trouble, Mr. Reavis!

(THEY come close to a fight. CHIEF JUSTICE REED bangs gavel.)

CHIEF JUSTICE REED: Please confine yourself to questions, Mr. Reynolds.

REYNOLDS: I will, Your Honor. When did you marry your ward?

REAVIS: We were married in 1886. In Spain. I wanted to introduce Sofia to her family.

REYNOLDS: But you just testified she was an orphan!

REAVIS: She was. Until I met her.

REYNOLDS: I see. Instant ancestors.

(Court laughs.)

REAVIS: Apparently you don't see at all. Doña Sofía is descended from the noblest of Spanish aristocracy. The Peralta family is respected throughout Spain.

(Lights fade out on the courtroom and come up simultaneously on the courtyard of the Hotel Sevilla, 1886. The courtyard itself is separated from the street by a high stucco wall from which an elaborate sign hangs. The name, Hotel Sevilla, is written in elegant script. Isabel and Miguel enter carrying a wrought iron bench that they place in the courtyard. Isabel wears a Spanish shawl. Miguel wears a Spanish sombrero cordobes, a hat of black cloth typically worn in southern Spain. Miguel's line follows Reavis' pronouncement immediately.)

MIGUEL: ¡Una familia distinguida! But ... a LARGE family. A family that did not know the names of all its cousins.

ISABEL: And Doña Sofía had so many *cédulas* to prove she was a Peralta.

MIGUEL: They welcomed her like a lost daughter!

ISABEL: The Baron and Baroness stayed right here. The Hotel Sevilla.

MIGUEL: ¡El mejor!

ISABEL: The best! Out there was the street. Hot, noisy, dirty. But in here, behind the high stucco wall, they had their own quiet courtyard.

(Gestures)

You see?

MIGUEL: ¡Muy caro!

ISABEL: VERY expensive. Every day, every night, there were fiestas, bullfight balls.

MIGUEL: And the music never stopped—till the stars faded from the sky. Just as he had promised her.

(MIGUEL exits. Isabel strums a Spanish folk song under REAVIS' entrance, then exits. REAVIS enters followed by MIGUEL, who carries two loosely wrapped paintings. REAVIS indicates that MIGUEL should wait outside a minute.)

REAVIS: SOFÍA! SOFÍA!

(SOFÍA enters followed by ELANA who carries a hand mirror)

SOFÍA: Oh, James, Elana was just trying to arrange my hair for the ball tonight. But I'm too excited to sit still. The Queen! The Queen of Spain invited us! Queen Maria Christina!

REAVIS: Why not? She wants to see for herself the most beautiful woman in Seville.

SOFÍA: *(Amused affection)* James, it's a masked ball!

REAVIS: Sofía, you'll never guess who I just found.

SOFÍA: Not more Peralta relatives.

REAVIS: Yes!

SOFÍA.: Where are they? Oh, James, I don't think I can spend one more afternoon trying to speak Castillian Spanish.

REAVIS: (*Beckons MIGUEL to come in*) You won't have to speak to them at all.

(Kisses her cheek)

They've been dead for years!

SOFÍA: What!

(MIGUEL enters, bows to SOFÍA)

MIGUEL: *Buenos días, Señora.*

(SOFÍA nods to him. Unwraps two identically framed portraits of an eighteenth century nobleman and his wife)

REAVIS: Muchas gracias, Miguel.

(Indicates he should wait outside. SOFÍA looks at paintings, startled by the resemblance in the woman's face.)

SOFÍA: James, who are they?

REAVIS: Elana, bring the Señora the mirror.

(ELANA does.)

Hold it for the Señora.

(She does. REAVIS directs SOFÍA)

Now look at your eyes.

(SOFÍA obeys.)

And look at the eyes in the portrait.

SOFÍA: Oh-h-h!

REAVIS: Thank you, Elana.

(ELANA curtsies and exits.)

I knew it from the moment I saw it. Then the owner of the shop asked if I knew the famous Don Miguel de Peralta. And when I checked the name was written on the back.

(Turns painting over)

See?

SOFÍA: (*Softly*) James, you know I can't read that.

REAVIS: (*Looks at her*) That's right.

(*Presents the portraits*)

Now my dear, look carefully. These are your great grandparents, Don Miguel and Doña Sofia Ava Maria.

SOFÍA: Oh, James, what a wonderful wedding present. But if you've found these, why do you have to hunt for a lost *cédula*? Aren't these even better?

REAVIS: To us, yes. But not the Surveyor General! Your real wedding present, Doña Sofia, is still in my pocket. Here.

(*Takes out tiny jewelry box and hands it to her. Inside is a cameo brooch, a miniature of the portrait.*)

SOFÍA: It's Doña Sofia Ava Maria!

REAVIS: You were named after her.

SOFIA: I was? How do you know?

REAVIS: I read it in one of the documents I found.

SOFIA: Oh, I wish I could read that too!

REAVIS: (*Indicates brooch*) Do you like it?

SOFÍA: Oh, James!

REAVIS: I thought the setting suited you.

SOFÍA: Such delicate pearls and tiny diamonds. You have exquisite taste.

REAVIS: (*Looking at her*) I know.

SOFÍA: (*Fastening it to her gown*) I shall wear it every day to remind me of my family, the Peraltas. My family that you found.

REAVIS: (*Apologizes*) My dear, I have to go out again.

SOFÍA: Again? James, couldn't I go with you?

REAVIS: No! I have to read more papers in the Archives. There's nothing you could do there.

SOFÍA: (*Has crossed to paintings*) I wish I could read like you.

REAVIS: (*laughs*) How absurd!

SOFÍA: It's not absurd! All my Peralta relatives read. I saw their books. Every home was filled with them. James, couldn't I learn, too? Couldn't you teach me?

REAVIS: Sofia, whatever for?

SOFÍA: So I could recognize my name on the back of these paintings. So I could read the King's decree. So I could help you.

REAVIS: NO!

SOFÍA: So I'd know more!

REAVIS: Now, Sofía, can't you ask me anything you need to know?

SOFÍA: Ye-es.

REAVIS: And don't I give you everything you want?

SOFÍA: Oh, yes, James, you do. But...

REAVIS: No "but's." It's a foolish idea.

SOFÍA: That's not an answer, James

REAVIS: Sofía, this is utter nonsense. Now, I must leave!

(Exits. SOFÍA grabs painting, tries to read words written on the back. We can see that the painting is upside down.)

SOFÍA: Peralta?

(She looks at the front of the painting, sees mistake, and turns the painting right side up. Then, frustrated, she throws the picture across the floor and runs out after him.)

Why won't you teach me? WHY? JAMES!

(She exits as REAVIS re-enters, intercepted by MIGUEL and ISABEL.)

REAVIS: And now take me to the...

MIGUEL: Los Archivos...

ISABEL: De Indias.

REAVIS: Yes! How did you know?

MIGUEL: To know what you want, Señor, is how we live!

(They walk, underscored by music. MIGUEL and ISABEL turn the courtyard around, and it becomes the interior of an old stone building with an atmosphere of stifling heat and years of accumulated dust. There is a wooden cabinet, table and chair. MIGUEL attaches an ornate sign that reads "Los Archivos de Indias." Near the entrance an honorable but overtired part-time ARCHIVES CLERK in his fifty's dozes. He wears a guard's uniform. When they enter, the ARCHIVES CLERK sits up with a start.)

REAVIS: James Addison Reavis, correspondent for the San Francisco Examiner. I'm researching eighteenth century land grants for my readers.

(MIGUEL and ISABEL gesture towards REAVIS and translate in mime as he speaks.)

ARCHIVES CLERK: Investigar? El Director de los archivos esta de vacaciones, y yo solo estoy aqui los domingos. Cerramos a las cinco.

MIGUEL: *(To REAVIS)* He says he's sorry he can't be of much help. The Chief of the Archives is on vacation, and he's only here Sundays. They close at five.

REAVIS: AH! Oh, well, I can get an idea of what's here. Tell him I particularly want to look at eighteenth century cédulas from King Charles III.

(MIGUEL and ISABEL rapidly translate in mime, wink at each other, and exit. The ARCHIVES CLERK unlocks the drawer and sets out thick files and bundles of loose papers on the table, blowing off the dust. REAVIS opens and scans bundles, occasionally taking a few notes. He keeps turning around hoping to find the ARCHIVES CLERK fast asleep again, so he can insert the paper hidden in his pocket. But although the ARCHIVES CLERK starts to doze, he wakes up with a start.) remembering his job, smiles and shrugs apologetically that he can't be of more help. REAVIS consults his gold pocket watch. Time is running out. Suddenly REAVIS feigns illness from heat and lack of air.)

REAVIS: *(As though ill)* Water! ¡Agua, por favor!

ARCHIVES CLERK: ¡Si, si, si!

(Rushes out in great consternation. As soon as the ARCHIVES CLERK leaves, REAVIS immediately recovers. He removes an envelope from his coat and cautiously withdraws a document from within. Holds it up.)

REAVIS: And the long lost cédula is miraculously found!

(Surreptitiously, using a white linen handkerchief as a cover, he bends down to insert the false document. The ARCHIVES CLERK, rushing back, enters before REAVIS can finish. Shocked, the ARCHIVES CLERK drops the container of water. REAVIS freezes. Slowly his back straightens. A church clock strikes five. It is closing time.)

ARCHIVES CLERK: *(With icy disdain)* ¡Señor! Los Archivos estan cerrados!

(MIGUEL and ISABEL reappear as REAVIS hastily stuffs the document back into his frock coat pocket. Quickly he attempts to bribe the ARCHIVES CLERK by pressing a wad of money in his hand.)

REAVIS: *(Murmurs)* We don't need to say anything about this little matter, do we?

(The ARCHIVES CLERK angrily throws the money on the floor, yelling and gesticulating.)

ARCHIVES CLERK: ¡Se lo dire al Director de Los Archivos! ¡Usted la pagara, Señor!

(ISABEL picks up the money from the floor as REAVIS hastily gathers his belongings and

departs. As MIGUEL and ISABEL start to escort REAVIS, the ARCHIVES CLERK's voice follows them, faint but still clear.)

¡Usted la pagara, Señor!

(MIGUEL and ISABEL lead REAVIS through a maze of streets. They stop once to see if they are being followed. They are. The ARCHIVES CLERK runs on in hot pursuit.)

¡Se lo dire al Director de Los Archivos! ¡Usted la pagara!

(REAVIS, MIGUEL and ISABEL dart into an alleyway and stand flat in the shadows of a building.)

REAVIS: What's he yelling anyway?

MIGUEL: *(Translating)* He says, "I'll tell the Chief of the Archives."

ISABEL: *(Translating)* He says, "You won't get away with this."

REAVIS: *(A moment of panic)* What does he mean?

(Falsely nonchalant)

What could the Chief do?

ISABEL: He could arrest you when he returns.

REAVIS: When's that?

ISABEL: In two weeks.

MIGUEL: But, Señor, it's summer in Sevilla. Even the law takes a little vacation.

ISABEL: He's coming back.

MIGUEL: Quick, run!

ISABEL: This way.

ARCHIVES CLERK: *(Yells from the opposite side of the stage, when he sees them.)* ¡Usted la pagara!

(There is a moment when audience can see all of them, but they are hidden from each other, ARCHIVES CLERK holds his heart and catches his breath. REAVIS, MIGUEL and ISABEL escape. ARCHIVES CLERK shakes his fist and continues to pursue them, but can't go as fast. As ARCHIVES CLERK goes off Stage Right, ISABEL, MIGUEL and REAVIS dart across from Stage Left. MIGUEL and ISABEL race to turn the courtyard back into view. There is the sound of an iron gate clanging shut. REAVIS sees his wife coming, whispers to MIGUEL and ISABEL, who exit.)

REAVIS: *(Sinks onto wrought iron bench)* Sofia!

SOFÍA: *(Enters, sees REAVIS and crosses to him, concerned)* James, what's wrong? Your face is all red. Are you all right?

REAVIS: It's just the heat. I'm not used to it.

SOFÍA: Shall I get you some water?

REAVIS: No, no, no.

(Decides to tell her)

Sofía...there's something.....

SOFÍA: Yes?

REAVIS: *(Changes his mind.)* It's the heat. It's the heat, that's all!

ARCHIVES CLERK: *(offstage)* ¡Usted la pagara!

REAVIS: Yes. We'll have to leave.

SOFÍA: When?

ARCHIVES CLERK: *(offstage)* ¡Usted la pagara!

REAVIS: Soon.

SOFÍA: Did you find the certificate?

REAVIS: No. But now I know where it is. I'll find it tomorrow. I'm sure of it.

SOFÍA: *(Kneels by him, concerned)* I'll tell Elana to pack. You're not well, James.

REAVIS: Sofía, I...

SOFÍA: What is it?

REAVIS: Nothing!

ARCHIVES CLERK: *(offstage, his voice coming clearly over the wall beside them)* ¡Usted la pagara!

SOFÍA: What is that dreadful cry in the streets? It sounds so ominous.

REAVIS: It's just a man selling vegetables.

ARCHIVES CLERK: *(offstage)* Señor, usted la pagara!

SOFIA: No. No, it's not! He's right outside the courtyard wall. He hasn't moved. It sounds like he's calling someone—someone in here. James? Oh, James, tell me if you're in some kind of trouble. Whatever it is, tell me!

REAVIS: Don't be silly, Sofía. It's just one of those street vendors. Now, come inside.

(She starts to exit with him, then hears the cry of the ARCHIVES CLERK yelling from just behind the wall. It is joined by offstage voices from all directions. She stands rooted, her apprehension growing. Lights fade except for a spotlight on SOFÍA.)

ARCHIVES CLERK and OFFSTAGE VOICES: ¡Señor, se lo dire al Director de los Archivos! ¡USTED

LA PAGARA!

END OF ACT ONE

18 more pages to the end of the script