

PERUSAL SCRIPT

ASÍ ES
(THAT'S JUST HOW IT IS)

A 10-minute play
by Lyvia Martinez



Newport, Maine

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ASÍ ES

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ORDER # 2105

CAST — 1m 1f

JAVIER—18, Hispanic male

MONSERRATE—20, Hispanic female

ASÍ ES • That's Just How It Is a 10-minute play by Lyvia Martinez. 1m 1f, simple setting, contemporary costumes. A Puerto Rican, Mormon teen moves to Utah hoping to no longer be the odd-Mormon out, only to find the culture shock to be worse than he expected. **ORDER #2105**

Lyvia Martinez — Lyvia Martinez was born and raised in Puerto Rico where her love of stories grew with every book and Blockbuster rental. From an early age, she loved creating stories and acting them out with costumes made out of cardboard boxes. She studied theater and filmmaking at Brigham Young University, and later Chapman University. Lyvia produced and co-wrote the double-Emmy Award-winning short “Inspector 42,” and has written several short plays performed by New Play Project, two of which won audience choice awards. At present, she plans events for festivals and expos by day, and writes freelance by night. Her most recent project was writing for the *Toca Life Stories* webseries. She lives in Los Angeles, CA with her wife and six cats.

ASÍ ES

(JAVIER stands Center Stage, hands in pockets, rocking on his heels, looking out at the audience.)

JAVIER. I had several reasons for deciding to study at BYU. First, sadly, I'd get a better education than if I stayed Puerto Rico. Second, it's affordable, and third . . . well, I grew up being the only Mormon in my high school, always having to explain myself to everyone. "Do you think Joseph Smith was a god?" "Do you have more than one mom?" "What's with the funny underwear?" I hated getting those questions, and going to BYU, where there would be lots of Mormons and I wouldn't get those questions, seemed like a good escape.

(Lighting change. We see that JAVIER stands in a dorm room full of moving boxes. MONSERRATE enters with another box.)

MONSERRATE. Is that all?

JAVIER. Casi. [*“Almost.”*] I think I only have one or two more smaller boxes left.

MONSERRATE (*Letting herself fall onto JAVIER'S bed*) Well, all's I gotsta say is they better be small, because I only have one more "back down and up five flights of stairs" trips left in me.

(JAVIER begins organizing his things. Every now and again he glances out the door.)

JAVIER. Hay tanta gente aquí. [*“There are so many people here.”*]

MONSERRATE. Bueno, estamos en los cuartos de los prepas [*“Well, we're in the freshman dorms”*] and the semester starts in just two days. Everyone's scrambling to get settled in. I'm surprised there aren't more people.

JAVIER. Aún así, [*“Still,”*] there's lot of people. You sure no one will care that you're in my room?

MONSERRATE. Yeah. Of course. Not only am I your cousin, but I'm helping you move in. We have two loopholes to the dorm guidelines right there. We're good.

(He looks a bit nervous. MONSERRATE notices and sits up.)

MONSERRATE. (*Looking through a box, pulling out a snack*). No te preocupes. [*“Don't worry.”*] I won't let anything happen to you.

JAVIER. You'd probably let me make an idiot of myself so you could get a laugh.

MONSERRATE. *(Starts to eat a bag of platanutres).* I would never do such a thing. Besides, your mom would kill me if I did.

JAVIER. Mom would probably laugh too. No te comas mis platanutres. [*“Don't eat my platanutres.”*]

MONSERRATE. Hey, come on. I haven't had a platanutre in months. They're not that easy to come by over here.

JAVIER. Ay, esta bien. [*“Oh, fine.”*] But I need to save those for when I really start to miss home.
(He starts to think about something else.)

What do I do when I say hello?

MONSERRATE. What do you mean, what do you do?

JAVIER. Well, in Puerto Rico we always kiss on the cheek to say hello, even when meeting someone for the first time, you know? So . . . what do I do?

MONSERRATE. You just say hello.

JAVIER. There's nothing else I can do?

MONSERRATE. Well, what would you want to do?

JAVIER. I don't know. But something, you know? It just feels incomplete otherwise.

MONSERRATE. You could shake their hand. That's what I did.

JAVIER. Is it the same?

MONSERRATE. Not at all, but it's something, you know? When I first came here there was definitely a lot of this happening to me.

(MONSERRATE stands and goes to JAVIER.)

Hi. I'm Monserrate.

(She moves in to kiss him on the cheek, but stops awkwardly and twitches through going in for a kiss, pulling back, and sort of holding her hand out to shake JAVIER'S.)

The first few people I said hello to thought I was having an aneurysm. Tuve que acostumbrarme a no volverlo a hacer. [*“I had to get used to not doing it.”*]

JAVIER. But how do you get used to something like that?

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MONSERRATE (*Shrugging*). Time. You just are, eventually.

(*JAVIER takes a moment, but then nods.*)

JAVIER. Okay.

MONSERRATE. Well then, let's get those last couple of boxes and go back to mom's. She'll have some arroz con gandules y pasteles [*"rice with chick-peas and pasteles"*] ready for us. See, I'm glad you're here, because she never cooks like that when it's just me. Usually it's like, "Monse, hazte tus propios tostones si los quieres tanto." [*"Monse, make your own tostones if you want some so much."*]

(*MONSERRATE exits as she talks.*)

JAVIER (*To the audience*). Going to my first singles ward was . . . you remember that one Mormon comedy? Singles Ward? First time I saw that movie I was about fourteen or fifteen and I remember sitting there thinking, "Oh. What a funny idea they came up for this movie. All of the singles trapped into one ward without adults or children? Que ridicules más cómica." [*"What a ridiculous and funny thing."*]

(*Small pause.*)

I'd never seen or heard of something like it in Puerto Rico, so I thought the singles ward was the joke of the movie. ¿Cómo iba a saber? [*"How was I to know?"*] And there seemed to be a lot of things I didn't know about.

(*Lighting change, or something to indicate that it's a different day. MONSERRATE enters.*)

(*Pulling a small notebook out of his pocket*). Okay. I've made a list.

MONSERRATE. Dímelo. [*"Tell me."*]

JAVIER. DTR?

MONSERRATE. Determine the relationship.

JAVIER. Y, ¿qué es eso? [*"And, what's that?"*]

MONSERRATE. It basically means like when a couple sit down and talk about what their relationship is. Are they just friends, dating, or just get together for NCMO.

JAVIER. NCMO?

MONSERRATE. Non-Committal Make-Out. It means—

JAVIER. Yeah, I think I get what that means.

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(He goes back to his notebook.)

JAVIER. Pre-mie.

MONSERRATE. Pre-missionary. Means a young man that hasn't gone on a mission yet.

JAVIER. FHE.

MONSERRATE. Family Home Evening. It's noche de hogar.

JAVIER. Oh. Pero mi familia no está aquí. [*“But my family's not here.”*]

MONSERRATE. No, no. They divide up the members in your ward into groups and you just get together on Monday nights to share a message, play games and eat treats.

JAVIER. Oh, okay, but por qué? [*“Why?”*]

MONSERRATE. To socialize, creo. [*“I think.”*]

JAVIER. So basically they kept the name, but it's really a group of students, pretending to be a family because they are at college, away from their real families, and they want to get together every Monday night just to socialize.

MONSERRATE. It's just how it is.

JAVIER. I didn't expect to have been missing out on so many things.

MONSERRATE. You'll get used to it. No todo de cantaso, pero eventual- mente. [*“Not all at once, but eventually.”*]

JAVIER. What, to them looking at me como si fuera un idiota? [*“Like I'm an idiot?”*]

MONSERRATE. No, no. Just that feeling. It happened to me pretty often. One time I called it a tangent instead of tandem bike and it turned into this big thing with my roommate because she couldn't believe I mixed them up. It was like she was suddenly realizing I was from another planet.

JAVIER. And what's with ward prayer?

MONSERRATE. Well, usually on Sundays, the ward gets together to pray.

JAVIER. I know that. But what is it? I mean, did we have it in my old ward and I just didn't know about it?

MONSERRATE. No. I think it's just something they do here, in singles wards.

JAVIER. But why?

MONSERRATE. I don't know. That's just how they do it.

(JAVIER is still a bit frustrated.)

It can be quite a bit of a shock, the culture shock.

(She chuckles at her own joke.)

Okay, enough of that. You coming over again today? Mom's making some tres leches this time.

JAVIER. Yeah. Yeah. I'll drive myself this time. I've got something I want to do. I'll see you there.

MONSERRATE. Esta bien. Nos vemos. [*“Okay. See ya.”*]

(MONSERRATE exits.)

3 more pages to the end

THE END