

**Blood of My Blood**

TOMÁS URTUSÁSTEGUI

*Dedicated to María Muro*

*Sangre de mi Sangre* Copyright © 1990 by Tomás  
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## CHARACTERS<sup>1</sup>

*Pablo ..... 45 years old*

*Luz María . 37 years old*

*Hugo ..... 19 years old*

*Paola ..... 18 years old*

## SCENE

*A family room in a middle-class house. Bookcases full of books, paintings, lamps, stereo equipment, a TV, comfortable furniture. A pleasant place to read, study, listen to music, or just talk. A large window looks out over the yard. In front of it, a table for coffee or tea service. The room is attached to the rest of the house.*

## TIME

*The present.*

*As the curtain rises, the children and their mother can be seen sitting comfortably. The mother is smoking. The father arrives. He smiles. He carries a small cake in a wrapper. He puts it down on the table. He takes off his bag and hangs it on a coat stand. Maria goes to unwrap the cake. Her husband gives her a quick kiss on the cheek. Both father and mother are dressed elegantly. The young people are dressed in fashionable casual clothes.*

PABLO: It's triple-cream cake.

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<sup>1</sup> Names are typical Mexican names, with no specific metaphoric meaning. Any suitable names can be substituted. However, the name Hugo is involved in some wordplay in the text.

PAOLA: That's the kind I like.  
HUGO: You should have gotten raspberry.  
PABLO: Next time, I promise.  
LUZ MARÍA: Did they give you a fresh one?  
PABLO: I suppose. I don't know anything about things like that.

*(Pablo first greets his daughter with a kiss and his son with a high five, and then sits down. Almost immediately he stands up to get the cigarettes he's left in his bag. He takes them out along with a lighter, then sits down. He offers Hugo a cigarette.)*

PABLO: You want one?  
HUGO: I don't smoke, you know that.  
PABLO: Not even when you're by yourself?  
HUGO: I said, I don't smoke.  
PABLO: At your age I used to smoke when I was out. Never at home.

*(It's quiet. Pablo lights his cigarette. He smokes. Maria gets an ashtray and gives it to him.)*

PABLO: Thanks.  
PAOLA: *(To his father)* That's a new look ... since when do you wear a moustache?  
PABLO: You hadn't noticed it?  
PAOLA: You didn't have one the last time.  
PABLO: Sure I did.  
PAOLA: It looks good on you.  
PABLO: Thank you.  
PAOLA: You should grow a beard, too.  
PABLO: So I can look old?  
PAOLA: You'd look cool.  
PABLO: I'll think about it.

LUZ MARÍA: Do you want to have the cake now or later?  
There's coffee and soda, too.

PAOLA: Bring me a coke.  
LUZ MARÍA: It'll make you fat.  
PAOLA: Doesn't bother me.  
LUZ MARÍA: It should.  
HUGO: Bring me one, too, a cold one.  
PAOLA: It'll make you fat.  
HUGO: Doesn't bother me.

*(The two of them laugh. Luz María smiles and exits to get the sodas.)*

PABLO: And Mario?  
PAOLA: What about him?  
PABLO: Are you still seeing him?  
PAOLA: I broke up with him, like, three weeks ago.  
HUGO: You broke up with him or he broke up with you?  
PAOLA: We broke up.  
PABLO: Do you have a new boyfriend?  
HUGO: Are you kidding? She couldn't find a boyfriend if one bit her on the ankle.  
PAOLA: I've got plenty. Unlike you.  
HUGO: *(To his father)* She'd like to date Arturo, but he doesn't even know she exists.  
PAOLA: Arturo? Him? You're out of your mind.  
HUGO: Don't deny it. You flirt with him like crazy.  
PABLO: Which one is Arturo?  
HUGO: The one who drives the white Bug, you know him.  
PABLO: I don't know.  
HUGO: Remember, he's the guy who's got a ponytail down to here and wears a cross earring. Very flashy.  
PABLO: Now I know who he is.

PAOLA: What can I say? He's the kind of guy I go for.  
HUGO: He plays in the school band, he's a drummer. He's a cool dude.  
PABLO: Did you pay the tuition?  
HUGO: That's what you gave me the money for, isn't it?  
PABLO: I'm just asking.  
HUGO: If you don't pay up at that tightwad school, they won't let you in.  
PABLO: Don't you like it there?  
HUGO: It's ok.  
PABLO: What about the teachers?  
HUGO: They're fine.  
PAOLA: Aren't you going to ask me about my school or what I'm doing or what I think? Always him.  
PABLO: I was just going to do that.  
PAOLA: How wonderful. I love my school. My teachers are fantastic. We go to the chapel every day and pray together for our parents and our brothers and we pray for Mexico and that our leaders are doing the right thing. It's beautiful. Like the beautiful song of the birds that sing in the courtyard. *(Sings)* "The courtyard of my school is a very special place..."  
PABLO: *(Annoyed)* Very funny.  
PAOLA: Really, did you like it?  
PABLO: I'm not joking.  
PAOLA: Me neither. I like everything except this little reunion. As you can see.  
PABLO: It was your mother's idea.  
HUGO: Mother is just one person.  
PAOLA: What else do you want to know about me and about us?  
PABLO: Nothing.

*(A tense silence ensues. Luz María enters with the sodas. She hands them out. She gets a coffee for Pablo. She gives it to him.)*

LUZ MARÍA: It's hot.  
PABLO: Thanks.

*(She gets coffee. She sits down to drink. Everyone drinks silently. Every once in a while they look at one another. Paola smiles occasionally.)*

PAOLA: *(To her father)* You haven't asked Mother anything either.  
LUZ MARÍA: Asked me what?  
PAOLA: Whatever, like how it's going, how are you, what's going on with your life, etc., etc., etc. Stuff that respectable people ask who haven't seen each other in a while.  
LUZ MARÍA: Your father doesn't ask things like that. He's more practical. He asks if dinner is ready, or if the paper has arrived, or if anyone called. That sort of thing.  
PABLO: Are we going to start already?  
LUZ MARÍA: No, sorry, let's try to keep this a civilized meeting. That's what you asked for when I called you.  
PAOLA: Civilized comes from civil.  
HUGO: That's it, you got it, baby. Civil, see ... vile. Vile, vile, that's us.  
LUZ MARÍA: Can you save your jokes for another time?  
HUGO: Another time? Don't tell me that we're going to do this again! No, thanks.  
PAOLA: Me too. And it isn't that I don't want to. No, it's because I'm so busy with school and boyfriends and aerobics. For sure I've lost five pounds. *(She stands up and models.)* Can you tell? I could even compete. Really! Did

you see the Miss Mexico pageant? That girl from Campeche should have won.

HUGO: The girl from Veracruz was good. The one from Campeche didn't have her legs.

PAOLA: If you want to talk about legs, the best was that girl from Tamaulipas. Now *those* were legs.

LUZ MARÍA: (*To Pablo*) Did you watch the pageant?

PABLO: Yes.

LUZ MARÍA: Did you like it?

PABLO: They were good-looking.

PAOLA: (*To Hugo*) Hey, look out, here comes a big jealousy scene.

LUZ MARÍA: Good looking? I thought they all looked pretty ordinary.

HUGO: They were babes! Hot! Babelicious! (*To Pablo*) Tell mom *that*.

LUZ MARÍA: Your father isn't in the habit of saying vulgar things.

PAOLA: You don't say them but you do them, right, Dad?

PABLO: (*Annoyed*) What's this meeting for?

PAOLA: To see one another. To find out how we're doing. It's been years since all four of us have been together. Too bad I didn't buy film for my camera! Why, we're poster children for family values!<sup>2</sup>

LUZ MARÍA: I asked you to come to talk.

PABLO: That's something you like to do. You've really contained yourself today.

LUZ MARÍA: Any more remarks?

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<sup>2</sup> The original in Spanish is "La familia unida vive mejor," literally "A family together lives better." The phrase is the title of satiric Mexican television program about a dysfunctional family, along the lines of "Married With Children."

PABLO: (*Smiles*) No.

LUZ MARÍA: Thank you.

PABLO: You're welcome.

HUGO: Talk about what?

PAOLA: You saw already! About schools and boyfriends and cake and the weather. It's a beautiful day today, although it looks like it might rain tonight.

HUGO: (*Looks at his parents*) That's right, you can see dark clouds in the distance.

PAOLA: (*Smiles*) Very dark.

LUZ MARÍA: It's so hard to talk to you. You turn everything into a joke.

PAOLA: You talk, we listen ... like always.

LUZ MARÍA: You probably don't believe it, but the truth is that I'm happy like this, to be together. It's been a long time.

PABLO: Get to the point.

LUZ MARÍA: "Get to the point, get to the point." For you it always has to be so concrete and practical.

PABLO: Anything else is a waste of time.

LUZ MARÍA: Not for me, no way. Playing with my children wasn't a waste of time! Celebrating their birthdays, taking them to school, buying them clothes ...

PAOLA: (*Sarcastically*) Awww...

LUZ MARÍA: For me it was all a pleasure. A joy.

HUGO: (*Imitating his father*) Get to the point!

LUZ MARÍA: We all know why I asked you to come.

HUGO: (*Feigning ignorance*) Us? (*To Paola*) Do you know?

PAOLA: Search me.

HUGO: (*Contemplates his mother mockingly.*) Don't tell us you're going to have another kid.

PAOLA: At her age?

HUGO: (*To his mother*) You haven't hit menopause yet, have you?

PAOLA: How exciting, I'm going to have a little brother! Wait, ... no, it should be a little sister so we can go out together.

LUZ MARÍA: I want this to be a friendly meeting, but let me tell you, I'm not going to tolerate anyone being disrespectful to me.

PAOLA: We're incapable of it.

PABLO: Ok ...

HUGO: Ok ...

LUZ MARÍA: I brought us together to talk about the house.

PAOLA: You didn't even say anything about how it looks — it's been ages since you were here. I cleaned it myself.

HUGO: And I helped, like a good brother.

PAOLA: Between us we sweep and wash and cook.

LUZ MARÍA: Esther does all that, that's what I pay her for.

PAOLA: Well sure, but we supervise. We make sure that she waters your plants. The ferns out on the patio are amazing.

HUGO: Yeah, they're all green.

PAOLA: (*To her father*) We take care of your things, too, your books and your records and your tools. Everything is right where it belongs. You once told us that we shouldn't touch anything, and we haven't touched anything. (*Bats her eyelashes.*) We're obedient children.

PABLO: Everything is yours.

PAOLA: Thank you.

PABLO: (*Looks at his watch*) We've taken up fifteen minutes so far.

HUGO: That's nothing, a mere sigh in Eternity.

PABLO: I've had enough!

PAOLA: You don't like this?

PABLO: No.

PAOLA: You want us to talk seriously?

PABLO: Naturally.

PAOLA: What about you, mom, you too?

LUZ MARÍA: You make it sound like a threat.

PAOLA: When people start talking seriously they usually come out with something that's stupid and then some. They feel like they have to philosophize and explain and hand out advice. And that kind of stuff ...

LUZ MARÍA: ... you don't need? I suppose you're already a woman of the world.

PAOLA: I am, I am.

HUGO: (*Laughs*) You're *what*? I know: a busybody, a spoiled little brat, a musical ignoramus, a copycat ...

PAOLA: Me, a copycat?

HUGO: Yes, you. I bought myself a Luis Miguel<sup>3</sup> record and then you bought one, too. I went to the New Star club and then you went. Since when did you start wearing Adidas? Since I started. That isn't copying?

PAOLA: I'd be a moron to copy someone with your taste. (*To her parents*) Have you seen the way he decorated his room? Those posters are *so* out of it.

HUGO: Don't tell me that you don't like the car one. It's totally awesome!

PAOLA: Well, at least one of them had to be worth something. I'll get you some really good ones for your birthday. So you can educate yourself.

HUGO: Sure, I know, they'll be pictures of pop stars. I wouldn't even put those in the bathroom.

LUZ MARÍA: How about if we talk about decorating later ... ok?

PAOLA: (*To her mother*) What's your bedroom like? Is it full of paintings like the one here?

LUZ MARÍA: It's an ordinary bedroom.

PAOLA: Ordinary?

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<sup>3</sup> Popular Mexican singer.

HUGO: Yeah, ordinary. It's got a bed, a closet, a mirror, a rug.  
Nice!  
PAOLA: One bed or two?  
HUGO: Mom needs two. On the other hand, Dad needs one, a king size one. He's an athlete. *(Laughs)*  
PABLO: This is useless. I should leave.  
HUGO: You've always been an athlete. You're one of those people who works out every morning. Or don't you do that any more?  
LUZ MARÍA: Enough, Hugo! *(To Pablo)* Please wait, this isn't easy.  
PABLO: I left a meeting to come here. *(Hugo and Paola smile knowing that their father is lying. He doesn't notice.)* Yes, I have a meeting.  
PAOLA: You've always had meetings, and if mom weren't going tell me I was being vulgar, I'd say that the only thing that's meeting is bellybuttons. *(The siblings laugh)*  
PABLO: Twit!  
PAOLA: *(Claps)* Yay, now we're getting back to normal!  
LUZ MARÍA: This is exactly what I wanted to avoid.  
HUGO: You said you wanted to talk about the house.  
LUZ MARÍA: That's right.  
HUGO: When do we have to leave?  
LUZ MARÍA: Who said anything about that?  
HUGO: Are you going to come live here?  
LUZ MARÍA: I didn't say anything yet.  
HUGO: *(To his father)* Or are you the one who's going to move in?  
PABLO: *(To Luz María)* We had an agreement about the house.  
LUZ MARÍA: That was a long time ago.  
PABLO: It was two years ago, two years exactly. It was when you left.  
PAOLA: Without a divorce or anything.

HUGO: And with your lover.  
LUZ MARÍA: I was alone when I left.  
HUGO: For how long?  
LUZ MARÍA: A year, until the separation papers came through.  
HUGO: And then?  
LUZ MARÍA: You don't know?  
HUGO: I'd rather hear it from you.  
LUZ MARÍA: *(Draws herself up)* I'm living with Steven.  
PAOLA: But you're not married.  
HUGO: Living in sin.  
LUZ MARÍA: We love each other.  
PAOLA: Oh, great. Every time I fall in love with someone I'm going to live with him.  
LUZ MARÍA: I told everyone all this.  
PAOLA: You must have talked to *him* about it. *(Motions at his father)*  
LUZ MARÍA: I talked with you about it when I left.  
PAOLA: I don't remember.  
HUGO: Sure you do, remember? She said "I'm leaving!" ... and she left.  
LUZ MARÍA: It's the same thing your father did.  
PAOLA: Not the same thing, not at all. He brought his girlfriends here first, to the house. Of course! Because his bedroom is big and even has a bathroom with a bathtub in it ...  
PABLO: But I remarried.  
PAOLA: He'll never learn.  
HUGO: Dad didn't leave like you. *(Laughs)* They took him away. *(To his father)* Your one-year anniversary is coming up, who'd have thought.  
PAOLA: *(To her father)* Are you just as happy as can be?  
LUZ MARÍA: We should get back together, try again.  
PAOLA: That's the modern way to do it!

HUGO: Not really! These days couples separate so they can get together as gays or lesbians.

PAOLA: Shut your trap!

HUGO: (*Claps himself on the chest*) I have an idea. Those two want to come live in this house. Fine. On the bottom floor we'll have the Mendizabals, in the middle ... (*To Luz María*) What does your ... whatever ... call himself?

PAOLA: Guizar, Guizar-Robledo.

HUGO: Alright, the Guizar-Robledos in the middle. And upstairs, us, the Mendizabal-Huertas. Mendizabal after dad and Huerta after mom. Who's going to come out on top? Who gets the house? Who's going to sleep with who?

LUZ MARÍA: This house is pretty big for two people.

PAOLA: (*To Hugo*) She means you and me.

LUZ MARÍA: We could put a lot in the bank with what we'd get for this place.

PABLO: It's a mistake to sell property right now. Currency is being devalued, so houses are going up in price.

LUZ MARÍA: I need money.

PAOLA: Don't you get enough from what daddy gives you and from ... what his name?

LUZ MARÍA: I need it.

HUGO: I can understand screwing up with a first husband who let you down ... oh well! But to pick a loser the second time. Man!

LUZ MARÍA: The last thing I worry about is wealth.

PABLO: But it's a good thing that you're claiming your share now.

LUZ MARÍA: Because it's mine.

PABLO: I bought this house.

LUZ MARÍA: We had a community property marriage. I get fifty percent.

PABLO: That's a good deal. Why work? My husband provides everything, and if I get divorced, even if I'm at fault, he'll support me for the rest of my life.

LUZ MARÍA: Are we going back to talking about whose fault it is? We can start with you.

PABLO: No thanks, I've heard that story from you plenty.

HUGO: We don't know that one.

PAOLA: I love stories! And fairy tales! The king, his slaves, the evil queen, the dumb prince (*looks at her brother*) and the beautiful princess. (*She poses like a fairy tale princess and laughs.*)

HUGO: The ugly princess.

PAOLA: Ugly but sexy.

LUZ MARÍA: The assessor has been here and said that the property is worth around 80,000 dollars.

HUGO: They give you the number in dollars? That's pretty progressive.<sup>4</sup>

LUZ MARÍA: Forty for you and forty for me. We can split the costs. I spoke with a notary.

PABLO: I'd rather not sell it. The house is worth three times that.

LUZ MARÍA: It *will* be sold.

PABLO: And what if I'm against it?

LUZ MARÍA: I'll have to send you to talk to my lawyers again and we can start over with a new trial.

PABLO: Fine, you win.

HUGO: One to nothing! (*To his father*) Gee, dad, you let 'em score that one easy.

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<sup>4</sup> Because the value of the peso fluctuates, prices for certain items in Mexico, especially ones that can be affected by peso devaluation, are sometimes quoted in American currency.



PABLO: I don't like conflict. And anyway, I don't have time to go to court. It never ends.

PAOLA: So, the matter is settled ... as far as the house goes. When are you going to sell it?

LUZ MARÍA: As soon as possible.

PAOLA: What about us?

LUZ MARÍA: We can talk about that later. Right now let's go on with the things.

PABLO: What things?

LUZ MARÍA: The things in the house, what else?

PABLO: Those are theirs. (*Indicates the children*)

LUZ MARÍA: Who says?

PABLO: At least, that's what I thought.

LUZ MARÍA: You thought wrong. A lot of the furniture is worth something and some of it belongs to my family. They're mementos.

PABLO: I hadn't thought about that. I guess you're right.

LUZ MARÍA: Like the piano. That belonged to my grandfather.

PABLO: You don't play.

LUZ MARÍA: They don't either.

HUGO: Yes I do, I play "Chopsticks."

PAOLA: And I play "Silent Night." (*If there's a piano in the study, Paola runs to play a few notes of the Christmas carol. If not, she hums it.*) Every Christmas I sit down at the piano and play. I play "Silent Night."

PABLO: Do you want it for yourself or to sell it?

LUZ MARÍA: To sell it. I don't have room in my apartment.

PAOLA: What about the memento of your grandfather?

LUZ MARÍA: It's an antique, a good one. It's from Austria.

HUGO: You had it assessed as well?

LUZ MARÍA: I went to an antique dealer. One that was similar cost a fortune. This one is better.

PABLO: As far as I'm concerned, you can take it, it's yours.

LUZ MARÍA: Thank you.

HUGO: Two to nothing. House and piano.

PABLO: I was thinking about it, and I'd like to have the china, it belongs to my family. I'm sure that my wife would like it, she loves things like that.

LUZ MARÍA: Your mother gave it to me.

PABLO: So what? For that matter, they gave the piano to both of us.

LUZ MARÍA: I already have an offer on the china.

PABLO: Well, turn it down.

LUZ MARÍA: I can't, they've already given me a deposit.

PABLO: And you're the one who says she isn't interested in money. That's obvious! How much did they give you?

LUZ MARÍA: The amount isn't important.

PABLO: Yes it is. You'll have to return it. That china belongs to my family. We've eaten off it for three generations. My grandparents brought it over on the boat from Europe.

HUGO: And you've never broken a single piece? They sure don't make them like they used to.

LUZ MARÍA: They're coming this week for it.

HUGO: What day? So we can be here.

PABLO: No one is selling it. This china isn't leaving here without my permission.

LUZ MARÍA: That's what you think.

PABLO: That's right, that's what I think.

LUZ MARÍA: Too bad.

PABLO: I'd rather smash it.

LUZ MARÍA: Do it, let's see if you dare.

*(Hugo runs to the dining room. He returns with several plates and a pot or tureen from the china set. He holds them out to his father.)*

HUGO: C'mon, so it'll be two to one.

PAOLA: Do you really think he'll break it? You're dreaming.

Every one of those plates is worth a pile of money and they both know it.

PABLO: *(To Hugo)* Put that back where it was.

HUGO: Three to nothing.

PABLO: I'm taking it today.

LUZ MARÍA: Will you be able to?

PABLO: Why not?

LUZ MARÍA: It'll be theft. That's my china. *(Without his parents noticing during their discussion, Hugo puts the pieces he is carrying on the floor near his father.)*

PABLO: Yes, I know, all of it's yours — house, furniture, kids, air, dirt, everything. "Mine, mine, mine, me, me, me."

LUZ MARÍA: Look who's talking. If it hadn't been for your selfishness ...

PABLO: What?

LUZ MARÍA: Nothing.

PAOLA: *(To Luz María)* So you're going to leave it?

LUZ MARÍA: Of course. Don't you see that his mommy and grandma ate off it? He can take it to his wife to serve beans in. I don't think she can do anything else.

PABLO: Getting a bit irritated?

LUZ MARÍA: Me? Hardly.

PAOLA: *(To Hugo, aside.)* This is getting good.

LUZ MARÍA: I want the bronze statue of the gladiators.

PABLO: That, too?

LUZ MARÍA: What do you mean, that, too? We haven't even started yet.

HUGO: That belonged to your family?

LUZ MARÍA: No, your grandfather gave it to me when you were born. It was my reward.

PAOLA: What did he give you when I was born?

LUZ MARÍA: A car.

PAOLA: The Ford?

LUZ MARÍA: No, don't be silly. It was a little Renault. We sold it when you were five years old. It was a toy.

HUGO: *(To Pablo)* Shall we give her the statue?

PABLO: She can have it.

*(Hugo gets the statue. He puts it next to the chair where his mother is sitting.)*

LUZ MARÍA: What are you doing? Put it back where it belongs.

Don't you two ever mistreat these things again.

HUGO: It's so you can take it right now. It'll fit great in the trunk of your car.

LUZ MARÍA: You're right.

HUGO: Did you sell it already?

LUZ MARÍA: Not this one, it's a nice memento. *(Speaking tenderly to her son)* It's a memento of when you were born. You were so beautiful.

PAOLA: Notice that she said were.

HUGO: I am.

LUZ MARÍA: I always thought you'd be a girl. We even had a name picked out for you.

PABLO: *(Smiles contentedly at the memory)* Minerva.

HUGO: You were going to name me Minerva? Spare me!

LUZ MARÍA: The truth is, I wanted a boy. When the nurse brought you I thought it was a miracle. Your father was very proud.

PABLO: I gave out cigars to everyone, even total strangers.

HUGO: How did you come up with my name? You never told me.

LUZ MARÍA: Your grandfather wanted that name. I'd never heard it.

HUGO: The piano grandfather or the china grandfather?  
LUZ MARÍA: My father. He was the only upstanding man I've ever known.  
PABLO: I wanted the name Raúl, it's shorter.  
HUGO: It's got four letters, too.  
PAOLA: Hugo has fewer, the H doesn't count.<sup>5</sup> Raúl, four; Hugo, three. (*Chanting*) I go, we go, you go, Hugo. We go as in going, Hugo as in the car, Hugo as in my dear brother. Not to mention his ego.  
HUGO: Aren't you missing a letter there?  
PAOLA: Tell me, youngster, how's your ego? Strong ... reckless ... timid?  
HUGO: Strong.  
PAOLA: And your id, does it match your ego?  
HUGO: You mean, id like in *idiot*? Id and ego, it's my Self, why'n't Hu-go off and fuck yourself!

*(The two children laugh).*

LUZ MARÍA: Paola!  
PAOLA: Sorry. (*Continues laughing, but to herself*)

*(Hugo gets another piece of china and put it at his father's side. On the floor.)*

HUGO: So you can take that, too.  
PABLO: I'm not going home.  
LUZ MARÍA: Where are you going? If one may ask.  
PABLO: Like I already said, to a meeting.  
HUGO: I'll go with you. (*His father stares at him*) Don't look at me like that, I'm not going home with you. I'm just going to the car to put it in the trunk.

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<sup>5</sup> The letter "h" isn't pronounced in Spanish.

PABLO: You can come to my house whenever you want.  
HUGO: Yeah, you say that, but remember that you're married, and every time I come over your wife makes a face like this... (*makes a face*) She's almost like grandma.  
LUZ MARÍA: She is?  
HUGO: Can't you see it? Look, she walks this way. (*Imitates her*) She talks this way: "Son, have you washed your hands? Sonny, have you done your homework? Sonny, have you said your prayers?" (*The siblings laugh*)  
LUZ MARÍA: No one ever spoiled you as much as my mother did! I don't know how you can say that about her.  
HUGO: Forget it.  
LUZ MARÍA: I will not forget it! I won't tolerate this kind of impertinence.  
HUGO: (*To his father*) What was it like to be the daughter's husband, oops, I mean, the son-in-law? I can imagine.  
LUZ MARÍA: Leave your father out of this.  
HUGO: Fine, I'll speak for myself. I can't stand her! She's an ancient, bossy old hypochondriac. Good thing she didn't want to come live with us.  
LUZ MARÍA: She didn't come because she was sick, that's why. She loves you very much.  
PABLO: And what you say about my wife is wrong, too. She's happy to have you. She doesn't make faces.  
HUGO: So what you're saying is that everyone — grandma, stepmom, definitely stepdad, dad, mom, everyone — everyone's smiling, everyone' shappy, everyone loves us.  
PAOLA: How touching.  
HUGO: I think we'd better carry on with divvying things up. What do you think about the paintings? (*Goes to a painting, takes it down, and arranges it like an auctioneer at a sale. He examines the painting. Paula gets more paintings and puts them near the first one.*) Oil, 16 by 20.

Landscape. Artist: Luis Armenta, Mexican School. 20th century. Gilded mahogany frame.

LUZ MARÍA: I'm taking that painting.

HUGO: *(To his father)* You're not bidding?

PABLO: She can take it.

HUGO: Sold! To Mrs. Luz María Mendizabal. Excuse me. To Mrs. Guizar Robledo. That's not it either, she's not married. Huerta, that's it, her maiden name. Sold to Ms. Huerta. *(Puts the painting next to the statue.)*

PAOLA: Let's continue with this portrait.

PABLO: I don't want any of them. They're more to your mother's taste, not to mine. Still lifes, landscapes, portraits. Calendar art.

LUZ MARÍA: The Doctor Atl<sup>6</sup> isn't calendar art. The Velazco<sup>7</sup> either.

PABLO: I'm talking about the originals, not the reproductions. I'm talking about those seascapes. *(Points at one)* I'm always waiting for that wave to finally break.

*(The siblings take down all the paintings and place them next to their mother.)*

LUZ MARÍA: Have you gone nuts? Put everything back.

HUGO: Is that an order? It's been a long time since you ordered us around.

LUZ MARÍA: Do what you want, then, if it makes you happy.

PABLO: Well, I don't like it.

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<sup>6</sup> Mexican landscape painter, writer, and aspiring politician Gerardo Murillo (1875-1964) who used the name Dr. Atl (Nahuatl for "water") as a political statement.

<sup>7</sup> José María Velasco (1840-1912), another Mexican painter, primarily of the landscapes around Mexico City.

PAOLA: Just let us, ok? We're doing something here while you two argue. I mean, discuss things.

LUZ MARÍA: I hoped that you might have changed a bit, but no, I see that you're as willful as ever.

PABLO: Regarding the books ...

LUZ MARÍA: Take them all, I don't want them.

PAOLA: Not even your Bible?

LUZ MARÍA: That, yes. Bring it to me so I don't forget it later.

*(Hugo and Paola go get the books. They take down a sizable quantity from the bookshelves and set them down next to their father. Next to their mother they set down an enormous bible. While moving the books, they drop a few. Their father arranges them properly on the floor.)*

HUGO: What about the photo albums?

LUZ MARÍA: I want those.

PABLO: Two of them belong to my family.

LUZ MARÍA: Take them.

PABLO: The children will want a few pictures.

PAOLA: Yeah, well, this "child" doesn't want any. What about you?

HUGO: I do, I want the one from Chapultepec<sup>8</sup> when mom and dad took me rowing and that other one where they're eating a piece of cake out of my hand.

LUZ MARÍA: That was on your seventh birthday.

*(Hugo goes and gets the albums. Everyone sits down on the couch and starts looking at the photographs. For the moment they behave again like a family. They enjoy the memory.)*

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<sup>8</sup> Mexico City's equivalent to Central Park in New York.

HUGO: Here it is. Isn't it great?

PAOLA: Look at this one, we're all playing with Freckles the dog. I like that one.

HUGO: You said none.

PAOLA: Well, now I say this one. *(They continue turning pages of the album. They smile. Paula points to a picture of her mother.)* Here you are in that long purple dress. You looked like a bishop. *(Everyone laughs.)*

HUGO: Wow, what's this heap?

PABLO: That's a Pontiac. We drove it to Acapulco.

HUGO: I don't remember.

PABLO: It was your grandfather's car. I meant *we*, my brothers and sisters and parents.

LUZ MARÍA: *(Smiles sarcastically again)* What a lovely family.

PABLO: Better than yours.

LUZ MARÍA: You think so?

PABLO: Positive.

LUZ MARÍA: That's why your brother Francisco doesn't have a job.

PABLO: If you're going to start talking about my brothers and sisters, I can start talking about yours.

LUZ MARÍA: You'd have to say good things because they always helped you out.

PABLO: Oh? How?

LUZ MARÍA: You've forgotten already?

PABLO: Are you talking about Andrés, too?

LUZ MARÍA: I am.

PABLO: Excuse me while I laugh.

LUZ MARÍA: You never paid him back.

PABLO: You still have the nerve to say that?

PAOLA: *(Amused)* What did Uncle Andrés do?

LUZ MARÍA: Nothing.

PABLO: He's an asshole.

LUZ MARÍA: I won't let you say that!

PABLO: You don't have to give me permission!

LUZ MARÍA: You want me to talk about the people in your family?

PABLO: Go ahead, let's see what you make up.

LUZ MARÍA: You want me to talk about María Enriqueta, your spoiled sister?

PABLO: I told you to stay out of it.

HUGO: What did Aunt Queta do?

LUZ MARÍA: *(Looks at a Pablo a moment and smiles.)* Nothing. Your Aunt Queta is a perfect sister-in-law.

PAOLA: She's my godmother.

HUGO: I'm going to get more books. The encyclopedia will fit in the back seat.

PABLO: Leave it!

HUGO: *(He stands at attention like a soldier)* At your command!

LUZ MARÍA: *(Takes a notebook out of her bag and reads.)* We can sell the dining room table, it's very big. My bedroom furniture ...

PABLO: What do you mean, yours?

LUZ MARÍA: Ours. It feels strange to say ours or mine when really it doesn't belong to anyone any more. It's not mine *or* yours, much less ours.

PABLO: It was ours.

LUZ MARÍA: Was.

HUGO: That's where we were conceived, isn't it?

LUZ MARÍA: Yes. Very passionately, too.

HUGO: Well now, there's a surprise. I thought you were going to get mad.

LUZ MARÍA: Because you were conceived there? It's true, that's where you started. We wanted you badly. We dreamed about you.

PAOLA: Both of us or just him?

LUZ MARÍA: Both.

PAOLA: I thought that I had been conceived in Acapulco and that's why I'm such a hot ... I mean, passionate in my affections.

LUZ MARÍA: I've never understood where you learned to talk that way. We certainly didn't teach you.

HUGO: What are we doing?

PAOLA: We're doing the bedroom, the nuptial bed. That's a cool word ... nuptial!

LUZ MARÍA: The bedroom furniture can be for Paola.

PAOLA: For me?

LUZ MARÍA: Don't you want it?

PAOLA: I'd love it.

PABLO: Ok, it's yours.

PAOLA: Thank you, dear parents. *(To Hugo)* You see, they gave me the bed where our parents mingled their bodies. They gave me the bed that's soaked with their sweat and their smell. This is so exciting that I won't be able to sleep for days, maybe weeks!

LUZ MARÍA: You don't want it?

PAOLA: Of course not! It's the last piece of furniture I'd take. As far as I'm concerned you can burn it.

LUZ MARÍA: What about you?

HUGO: I'll take it. I can get some money for it at a used furniture place.

LUZ MARÍA: So that's how much respect you have for our things? If you won't take it then I'll have to sell it. Steven won't accept it.

HUGO: Because?

LUZ MARÍA: Because it's not his.

HUGO: You're not his either, but look! I thought he liked second-hand things.

*(Luz María makes as if to slap him, but she holds back. Instead she writes in her notebook.)*

LUZ MARÍA: *(To Pablo)* Do you want the wash machine? I have a new one.

PAOLA: It's broken.

LUZ MARÍA: Since when?

PAOLA: Beats me.

LUZ MARÍA: *(To Pablo)* Do you want it?

PABLO: *(Smiles and shakes his head.)* Thank you.

LUZ MARÍA: The desk in my bedroom ... I mean, in *the* bedroom.

PAOLA: Oh-oh!

HUGO: We're dead.

LUZ MARÍA: What?

PAOLA: Let's go on with the furniture in the guest bedroom.

HUGO: Or all the stuff in the garage.

LUZ MARÍA: What happened to my desk?

PAOLA: Should I tell her?

HUGO: Up to you.

PAOLA: Are you talking about the white desk with the pearl inlay?

LUZ MARÍA: As far as I know we don't have any other one.

PAOLA: That one, either.

LUZ MARÍA: What?

PAOLA: We don't have that one, either, it isn't here any more.

*(Short, tense pause. Paola smiles ruefully.)* We sold it.

LUZ MARÍA: *(Paralyzed with indignation)* You sold my furniture!? The furniture that belonged to ...

HUGO: ... to your grandfather.

LUZ MARÍA: No.

HUGO: To your mother, to your father ... or did dad give it to you after some miscarriage?

LUZ MARÍA: That's a piece of fine furniture! I think it's the best thing we have!

PAOLA: That's what they said. That's why they gave us a bundle.

LUZ MARÍA: A what?

PAOLA: 20 big bills, 10 for me and 10 for her. We know how to split things fairly, too.

LUZ MARÍA: Who did you sell it to?

PAOLA: Beats me.

HUGO: We put an ad in the classifieds. The first guy who came took it. He thought it was great.

LUZ MARÍA: Do you know what you've done? That was a real antique.

HUGO: Well, we sold it. We needed some money.

LUZ MARÍA: You could have asked me.

PABLO: What did you want money for? Your mother is right, that desk ...

HUGO: Another claim on the desk!

PABLO: Those things are valuable. That desk could be in a museum.

HUGO: We used the money for graduation. Remember we asked you? Not just one, both of you. Neither of you wanted to go, fine. But you didn't give us any money, either. The party was in the Blue Room at the Camino Real, that was 200,000 pesos — old pesos — per head. 80,000 went for the tux, 180,000 for her dress. The rest went for drinks and tip. There wasn't a nickel left over.

LUZ MARÍA: This is an outrage! This is theft!

HUGO: Call the cops, have us arrested. Yes, your honor, I sold it!

LUZ MARÍA: It's the least you deserve. You take after your father — you're irresponsible cheats and liars!

PAOLA: *(To her father)* What nasty things she's saying about you.

LUZ MARÍA: You have no idea what a relief it's been since I left. These days my problems are behind me.

PAOLA: Congratulations.

LUZ MARÍA: If I had *dared* to sell something of my parents without their permission!

HUGO: All *right* already.

LUZ MARÍA: That was the piece of furniture I wanted most! It was my favorite! The best one!

PAOLA: Do you like it better than us?

LUZ MARÍA: Yes! I mean .... How can you compare? You're making me say stupid things.

*(The telephone rings. No one makes a move to answer it. The phone is in the next room.)*

PABLO: *(To Luz María)* Are you done with everything?

LUZ MARÍA: Of course not, although I'll bet that the kids have given most of it away without telling me, just like they did with my desk.

PAOLA: We sold it, we didn't give it away.

LUZ MARÍA: For two thousand pesos, it was a gift. Just one more thing where you're...

PAOLA: Stupid.

HUGO: No, she wasn't going to say that. She was going to say "brain-dead."

*(The telephone continues to ring.)*

LUZ MARÍA: Is the silverware still here?

PAOLA: No.

LUZ MARÍA: *(Completely indignant)* No!?

PAOLA: Ok, yes.

HUGO: Not yes and not no. It's here, but it's incomplete. We're missing two forks, four spoons, and I don't know whether we're missing one knife or two. They've been getting lost.

LUZ MARÍA: Is anyone going to answer the phone?

HUGO: *(To Paola)* It's for you.

PAOLA: For you.

HUGO: Go answer it.

PAOLA: Why me?

PABLO: You want me to go?

PAOLA: *(Gets up to answer. To Hugo.)* If it's for you I'm telling them you're not home.

HUGO: It's always for you anyway.

PAOLA: Naturally. It's my fans.

*(Paola exits. Everyone waits. The telephone stops ringing.)*

LUZ MARÍA: The phone's always busy in this house.

PABLO: Who could it be?

LUZ MARÍA: It's not for me. Steven is the only one who knows I'm here, and he won't call.

HUGO: I'll bet it's for you.

PABLO: I don't think so.

*(Paola returns and sits down. Everyone looks at her, while she pretends not to notice.)*

HUGO: Who was it?

PAOLA: Are you talking to me?

HUGO: Don't do this. Was it for me?

PAOLA: I don't know.

LUZ MARÍA: Answer him, would you!

PAOLA: It wasn't anybody. They hung up.

HUGO: It wasn't Lucia?

PAOLA: Call her and ask her.

HUGO: Next time don't complain, then.

PAOLA: Next time you answer it.

LUZ MARÍA: How many pieces of silverware are missing in all?

PABLO: I want the silver.

LUZ MARÍA: You already took the china.

PABLO: That's why. They're a set.

LUZ MARÍA: My turn.

PABLO: Don't you think you've already gotten the best things? The most expensive things?

LUZ MARÍA: I'm taking the things that belong to me.

PABLO: Who says?

LUZ MARÍA: I do.

PABLO: We'll see about that.

LUZ MARÍA: You can take the rest of the silver. The pitcher, the butter dish, and the ashtrays.

HUGO: I kinda think you're not going to get those. We sold that along with the coffee set and a couple of other little things.

LUZ MARÍA: Like what?

HUGO: Things. Nothing important.

PAOLA: A painting here, a book there.

PABLO: My books!?! You sold my books?

HUGO: You told us that everything was ours.

PABLO: If we're going to split things up, then I want my belongings.

PAOLA: The only thing we sold were the books of paintings. No one here ever looked through them anyway.

PABLO: My German painting books?

HUGO: They were German? No wonder I couldn't read the titles.

PABLO: Those were my best books! Who did you sell them to?



HUGO: Why are you so worked up about who we sold them to?  
A guy came, paid us, and left. We're not going ask him  
who he is or where he lives or what he does.

PABLO: When did you sell them?

HUGO: Dunno.

PABLO: How would you like it if I sold your stereo or your  
books or your clothes?

PAOLA: You'd be doing us a favor. I wanted to get new stuff  
anyway. Juliana just got a new stereo from the States that's  
great ... not like mine.

PABLO: I just got you yours a year ago.

PAOLA: It was already out of date when you bought it.

PABLO: You told me that it was the latest and the best.

PAOLA: Here, but not there. I'll ask her to lend it to me so you  
can hear it. It sounds awesome.

LUZ MARÍA: What a great idea to have this meeting. If I'd  
waited a little longer I wouldn't have found anything in the  
house at all.

PAOLA: You would have found us.

HUGO: And you still haven't told us where we're going to live.

LUZ MARÍA: That'll be the last thing. Are all the lamps here or  
are we missing some?

PAOLA: Every one.

HUGO: I'll bring you the one from my room. (*Exits running*)

PABLO: Would it bother you if I took the chandelier from the  
living room? I don't have one in my house.

LUZ MARÍA: If you ask like that, I'm happy to let you have it.  
With a little consideration, anything is possible. Not like  
with the silverware.

PABLO: (*With exaggerated friendliness*) Would you be  
amenable to me taking that, too?

LUZ MARÍA: No, it's mine. (*To Paola*) Would you do me a favor  
and bring it?

PAOLA: Of course. (*Exits*)

PABLO: You're mean.

LUZ MARÍA: I don't have to give you anything.

PABLO: As if they were your things.

LUZ MARÍA: They're mine and the kids'.

PABLO: They don't mean a thing to you!

LUZ MARÍA: More than to you.

PABLO: No way.

LUZ MARÍA: If I knew that the furniture was going to be for you,  
then I wouldn't argue about it. But if it's going to be used  
by that vixen that you married ...

PABLO: She was your friend.

LUZ MARÍA: Don't remind me.

PABLO: You're the one who brought it up.

LUZ MARÍA: She can have you, but not my things.

PABLO: I was just a thing to you, too.

LUZ MARÍA: You still are.

PABLO: And yourself?

LUZ MARÍA: Some day you'll realize how good a woman you've  
lost, if you haven't already. I'm millions of light years  
better than ... that woman.

PABLO: Better to who? I wouldn't give a dime for you and I  
don't think anyone else would.

LUZ MARÍA: Oh? (*Pablo shakes his head*) You can think that if  
you want. Someone else thinks differently.

PABLO: Your partner? Poor guy!

LUZ MARÍA: He's the happiest man in the world.

PABLO: He's got to be a masochist or screwed up. Probably  
more the second than the first. If he's willing to have you  
...

LUZ MARÍA: Try this one: he loves me.

PABLO: Well, they say that anything is possible.<sup>9</sup>

LUZ MARÍA: I never would have believed this about you until just now. It's true that people get married with their eyes shut. Jealousy and bitterness seem miles away. When I got married I didn't see any of that.

PABLO: Because the only thing you saw was money. It dazzled you just like it would dazzle any ... woman like that.

LUZ MARÍA: Say it! Prostitute! Whore! That's your favorite insult — it's the easiest! The shortest! You've always been stingy with everything, even with words!

PABLO: You're pitiful.

LUZ MARÍA: Don't give me that. You can insult whoever you like, but don't tell me *I'm* pitiful. Go pity yourself.

*(Hugo listens to the latest exchange. He enters with the lamp from his room and a box containing the silverware. He spreads it out on the couch next to his mother. Paola follows, carrying three table lamps. She puts them down on the floor next to her father.)*

HUGO: Should I keep bringing lamps? There's still a lot to go.

PABLO: No.

*(The youngsters sit down. They contemplate their parents. There is a long, tense pause.)*

PABLO: Did you get your passport arranged?

HUGO: Yup.

LUZ MARÍA: Passport? What for?

HUGO: Didn't I tell you? I'm going to work in San Francisco.

LUZ MARÍA: To work?

HUGO: In a club like Chippendales here. We have to run around naked.

LUZ MARÍA: You mean nude?!

HUGO: The pay is good.

LUZ MARÍA: Isn't it dangerous?

HUGO: How?

LUZ MARÍA: They say that there are a lot of gays there.

HUGO: And ...?

LUZ MARÍA: Is it a club for women or for men?

HUGO: You know all about it, admit it.

LUZ MARÍA: *(Worried)* When are you going?

PAOLA: *(Laughs)* Don't listen to him, he's just kidding you.

The passport is so he can go to Laredo with Luis.

PABLO: Did you finally decide how you were going to get there? By car?

HUGO: What else? Airfare is too expensive.

PABLO: You should be careful.

HUGO: We will be, don't worry.

LUZ MARÍA: No one tells me anything.

HUGO: We haven't done anything yet, it's just an idea.

LUZ MARÍA: Where are you getting the money for this?

PABLO: I'm giving it to him.

LUZ MARÍA: You!?! Since when are you so generous?

PABLO: Since always.

LUZ MARÍA: That's good to know. *(Smiles sarcastically.*

*Returns to her notebook.)* We still have to talk about the wineglasses and the furniture in the guest room and about the rugs.

PABLO: You can have all of it.

LUZ MARÍA: Everything?

PABLO: That's what you want, isn't it?

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<sup>9</sup> In the original, " Todo es posible en la paz." An ironic quotation of a phrase used repeatedly by Mexican president Díaz Ordaz during the unrest of the late 60s that culminated in government troops firing on left-wing student demonstrators on October 2, 1968.

LUZ MARÍA: I want a fair division.

PABLO: I can see that.

PAOLA: The records! We haven't done the records! (*Goes to the bookcase to get them. They are vinyl LPs. Some are operas in boxed sets. Many still have their original packaging.*)

Here they are. Operas, operettas, Beethoven symphonies, Mozart symphonies. All brand new, still in their wrappers.

LUZ MARÍA: Your father can take those.

PABLO: I don't have room.

HUGO: We'll sell them, don't worry. Too bad they're not CDs.

PABLO: (*Looking around*) What about the collection of Lladró figures?

PAOLA: Mom took those when she left. You're not too observant.

HUGO: (*Determinedly*) The tools belong to dad.

PAOLA: And everything in the kitchen to mom.

(*Both exit running to fetch the items.*)

LUZ MARÍA: You see.

PABLO: What?

LUZ MARÍA: How your children were brought up.

PABLO: People say that it's the mother's job to bring them up.

LUZ MARÍA: And the father's to undo their upbringing.

PABLO: They're going to the school that you picked.

LUZ MARÍA: That doesn't have anything to do with it.

PABLO: It has a lot to do with it! In those parochial schools ...

LUZ MARÍA: Now that they'll be living with you, you can send them to whatever school you like. Let's see if you can find a better one.

PABLO: What's this about them coming to live with me?

LUZ MARÍA: You don't think I'm taking them — ? My place is really small.

PABLO: They're you're children.

LUZ MARÍA: Yours, too.

PABLO: Oh?

LUZ MARÍA: No, they blew in on the wind.

PABLO: They can't come with me, period.

PABLO: Or with me. Two periods.

PABLO: Elena won't take them in.

LUZ MARÍA: Or Steven.

PABLO: Wouldn't it be a better idea to get them an apartment?

LUZ MARÍA: They can't keep living by themselves.

PABLO: Why not? Up to now ...

LUZ MARÍA: Up to now we've been lucky that they haven't gotten involved with drugs or with ...

PABLO: They're not children any more.

LUZ MARÍA: What kind of an apartment were you thinking of?

PABLO: I don't know. A small one.

LUZ MARÍA: Where?

PABLO: Wherever.

LUZ MARÍA: I knew it! You want to send them to some neighborhood far away where they'll rape my daughter, and mug them and kill them!

PABLO: You're the one throwing them out of the house, not me.

LUZ MARÍA: I need the money.

PABLO: To give to your pimp.

LUZ MARÍA: You can assume that, but that's what I want.

PABLO: And so you can get your way, everyone else can take a hike.

LUZ MARÍA: That's it.

PABLO: I'll accept selling the house but not to have the children come live with me. I have now my own life.

LUZ MARÍA: And what a great life it is! Watching sports on TV while you get drunk, shouting all the time, leaving

everything lying around, eating with your mouth open ...  
but why should I go on? An exemplary life!

PABLO: It's my life and what I do is up to me.

LUZ MARÍA: (*Smiles*) Can *anything* still get up on you?  
Remember, use it or lose it.

PABLO: Now it's you and *your* favorite insult: impotence.

LUZ MARÍA: It's not an insult, it's the truth.

PABLO: Impotent with you, but that's all. When you serve  
dinner, things should smell good and look good and taste  
good. But if the meat has gone bad ...

LUZ MARÍA: And I suppose that Elena is young and tender? The  
only one fooled by all her surgery was you. Well, you've  
always been gullible.

PABLO: We were talking about the children.

LUZ MARÍA: (*Smiles triumphantly*) What do you propose?

PABLO: That they go live with your mother.

LUZ MARÍA: She's not young any more.

PABLO: So then what?

LUZ MARÍA: No one in their right mind would send them live  
with your family.

PABLO: I already know that.

LUZ MARÍA: Well, they could go to Lucia's. Do you think she'd  
agree?

PABLO: As far as I know, she's off to go live in Veracruz.

LUZ MARÍA: Why won't your wife take them?

PABLO: Shall we ask her?

LUZ MARÍA: You should make her. Tell her they're your  
children.

PABLO: They're mine when it's convenient for you. I'm not  
going to saddle her with them!

LUZ MARÍA: How strange. The first time we talked about  
divorce you fought for them. You talked about custody and

their schooling and about setting a good example. (*Laughs*)  
I was the bad example!

PABLO: You still are. You're not married.

LUZ MARÍA: That's why it isn't a good idea for them to come  
live with me. I'll corrupt them.

PABLO: A *real* mother would fight for her family.

LUZ MARÍA: That's what I did when I asked for a divorce. It was  
for their sake that we stayed together so long, so we  
wouldn't damage them. That's why I had to wait six long  
years.

PABLO: It's your obligation to take them.

LUZ MARÍA: Look, you'd better not talk about obligations ...  
right?

PABLO: They're in your way?

LUZ MARÍA: What if I say yes?

PABLO: Tell *them*.

LUZ MARÍA: I don't see why.

PABLO: So they'll know.

LUZ MARÍA: They're in your way, too, right?

PABLO: No. The problem is that I don't have space for them.

LUZ MARÍA: Where there's a will there's a way.

PABLO: I would need another bedroom.

LUZ MARÍA: Hugo can sleep in the living room.

PABLO: Permanently?

LUZ MARÍA: The children won't live with you forever. They get  
married, they leave.

PABLO: I have another idea that's more fair.

LUZ MARÍA: What?

PABLO: One could go with you and one with me. One is easier  
than two.

LUZ MARÍA: They won't like it.

PABLO: Let's not ask them.

LUZ MARÍA: (*Agreeing*) Well, it's an idea. I would still prefer ...

PABLO: Paola could go with you and Hugo could come with me.

LUZ MARÍA: It would be better the other way around. Remember that Oedipus and Electra thing. We'll send the girl with you and the boy with me. Or whatever you want. It's all the same to me.

PABLO: Actually, I prefer Hugo. With him, I could .....  
(Thinks) No, better not.

LUZ MARÍA: No, what?

PABLO: I don't trust Steven. Paola is still young.

LUZ MARÍA: (Laughs) You think he'd molest her? For that matter, Elena will seduce Hugo, I don't doubt it for a second. She always went for young guys.

PABLO: Paola will come with me and Hugo will go with you!

LUZ MARÍA: I already told you that it doesn't make any difference to me. So we're in agreement?

PABLO: Ok.

LUZ MARÍA: Now that we've solved that one, let's talk about the car.

PABLO: Don't tell me you want to take that, too. The kids use it to go to school.

LUZ MARÍA: Now they're going to be separated. Who's going to get it?

PABLO: Whoever needs it most. Whoever lives farther away from school.

LUZ MARÍA: They'll fight about it, I know them. Anyway, if Paola wins, she'll have to leave it on the street, because I only have one parking space in my building. They'll steal it. So we should sell it.

*(Pablo shrugs his shoulders as if to say "do what you want." He lights a cigarette. They wait.)*

PABLO: What on earth are they doing?

LUZ MARÍA: Leave them. This way we can talk.

PABLO: Is there something else?

LUZ MARÍA: Yes. The bank account.

PABLO: That's mine.

LUZ MARÍA: Wrong.

PABLO: Anyway, it's not there any more. I closed it a while back.

LUZ MARÍA: That's not true. You would need my signature.

PABLO: It was a joint account. You could have closed it. Too bad. Looks like you were too slow this time.

LUZ MARÍA: What about the money? There was a lot.

PABLO: I invested it. I bought my condo and the car and some other things.

LUZ MARÍA: What about me?

PABLO: I pay you every month. I don't think it's fair, but oh, well! Laws are laws.

LUZ MARÍA: You have to pay as long as I'm not married. And since I don't have any plans to get married again ...

PABLO: I can prove that you're living with someone.

LUZ MARÍA: And I can prove that no one is supporting me and that for now it's your responsibility.

PABLO: You've got everything figured out.

LUZ MARÍA: That's right.

PABLO: Congratulations.

LUZ MARÍA: We'll talk about the money later on. Don't think that I'll let it go just like that. Right now I want to know where the money is going to come from to support Hugo.

PABLO: You work it out with what I give you.

LUZ MARÍA: I'm supposed to pay tuition and buy clothes and everything? You're terrible.

PABLO: There's enough.

LUZ MARÍA: You know it's not. Don't think that I'm going to make Steven support him. It's already enough for him to take him in.

PABLO: Don't you have enough with everything you're taking? The house and all the things. Not to mention the jewelry you already have.

LUZ MARÍA: What's missing is the money from the account.

*(Paola enters with kitchen utensils in grocery bags. There are many. She puts the bags down on her mother's side.)*

PAOLA: *(While she's arranging the things she's carrying)* Did you put your time to good use? Looks like we gave you a chance to remember the good old days. I guess there must have been *some*.

LUZ MARÍA: What about Hugo?

PAOLA: He's coming. You know what he's like, he's so stubborn. You wouldn't believe it. He wanted to unhook the chandelier in the living room and he almost fell off the ladder. What an incompetent! *(Laughs)*

LUZ MARÍA: This is stupid.

PAOLA: Later on we'll roll up the carpet. It's really dusty, you'll have to have it cleaned.

*(Hugo enters with a box of tools. He sets it down on his father's side.)*

HUGO: The tools!

*(He leaves again without waiting for a response. Everyone waits. He enters again dragging a carpet. He can barely do it. He turns to his sister.)*

HUGO: What are you waiting for? Help me.

PAOLA: I already helped you.

HUGO: C'mon, don't be that way!

*(Paola gets up and helps him.)*

PAOLA: Admit it, you can't do anything without me. *(They arrange the carpet near where their parents are sitting.)*

HUGO: I'm going to get the drill.

LUZ MARÍA: You're not getting anything. Sit down.

HUGO: I won't be long, it's in my room.

LUZ MARÍA: I'm about to lose my patience! Sit down!

HUGO: Where?

LUZ MARÍA: Wherever you want.

HUGO: On the floor?

LUZ MARÍA: The floor is for dogs, for animals! That's why we have chairs.

HUGO: *(He sits down on the floor with his back against a piece of furniture)* I like it here.

LUZ MARÍA: Stubborn as usual.

PAOLA: Aren't you going to talk to us any more?

PABLO: Yes, your mother and I have been having a little chat.

LUZ MARÍA: Let me.

PABLO: I think it's best if I tell them.

LUZ MARÍA: By all means.

HUGO: Tell us what? You're about to get together again? Wow! So what are you going to do with your partners now?

PAOLA: They can be their own couple! *(They laugh)*

LUZ MARÍA: We've been talking about you.

PAOLA: Oh!

PABLO: I know it will be hard. You've spent two years living practically on your own.

LUZ MARÍA: With a maid.

PAOLA: It's only been one year. Before that dad lived with us.

PABLO: Ok, one year.  
HUGO: Three hundred sixty five days of happiness.  
PABLO: You realize that this isn't good. Children shouldn't live by themselves.  
PAOLA: But we have been.  
LUZ MARÍA: It's not right!  
HUGO: Because?  
PABLO: It's dangerous, I don't know ...  
LUZ MARÍA: Just because.  
HUGO: Period!  
LUZ MARÍA: That's right, period.  
PAOLA: So?  
LUZ MARÍA: You won't have a house any more.  
HUGO: Or any of the stuff in it.  
LUZ MARÍA: That either.  
PAOLA: I suppose that Esther will have to go, too.  
LUZ MARÍA: Tomorrow I'll come and talk to her.  
PAOLA: You should give her severance pay.  
LUZ MARÍA: I know what I have to do.  
HUGO: What else?  
LUZ MARÍA: Before I forget ... which of you has the keys to the car?  
HUGO: What do you want them for?  
LUZ MARÍA: Don't look at me like that. I'm going to sell it.  
HUGO: (*Sullen for the first time*) Not the car.  
LUZ MARÍA: (*To Pablo*) Do you have the title and the other papers?  
PABLO: I think so. I'll have to look for them.  
HUGO: Are you going to get us another one?  
LUZ MARÍA: Of course not!  
HUGO: I need it!  
PAOLA: Me, too.

LUZ MARÍA: Everyone needs things. You two have a thousand times as much as ...  
HUGO: Now you're going to drag the poor into it, right?  
LUZ MARÍA: Yes. You've had a thousand times as much as they have.  
HUGO: But it so happens we're not poor, damn it!  
LUZ MARÍA: Millions of people would like to have ...  
HUGO: Millions of people would like to have and we would like to have millions. That's the difference.  
LUZ MARÍA: You can take the subway or the bus or a cab. It's only fair that for once in your life you can live like everyone else.  
HUGO: And you're going to do the same?  
PABLO: When I was your age...  
HUGO: I don't care what you did when you were my age.  
PABLO: You should.  
HUGO: That was a long time ago.  
LUZ MARÍA: And people behaved differently, too. Now he lies around on the floor, and she sits around with her legs wide open.  
PAOLA: (*Reclining on the couch*) I wear pants. Besides, I'm just practicing. Women always have to open their legs. (*Opens hers as wide as possible. She can also close and open them.*)  
LUZ MARÍA: You think I'll be offended by what you say and do, but I won't be. I know that you're just doing that to bother me.  
PAOLA: So much the better.  
LUZ MARÍA: Now that you're going to live with your dad he won't allow that.  
PAOLA: Where, did you say?  
LUZ MARÍA: To Elena's house. I mean, your dad's. That's where you're going.

PAOLA: Who says?

LUZ MARÍA: We do, your father and I.

PAOLA: Just like that?

PABLO: At first we thought that you could stay together in one of our houses. That's not easy because neither of us has enough room. So we decided that the best thing would be for one of you to come with me and the other to go with your mother.

HUGO: So you *are* going to separate us. It makes most sense for me to go with mom. (*He gets up and sits down among his mother's things. He turns to Paola.*) You get to go over there with the china. I get to go with the silverware. (*Paola obeys her brother. She sits down among her father's things.*)

LUZ MARÍA: (*Ignoring them*) You should both pack up your clothes and your things. If you want any furniture from your rooms you can take that.

PAOLA: What about the TV? I have to watch my soaps.

PABLO: I have one at home.

PAOLA: I want the one here.

HUGO: No, dear heart, not this one. I watch sports on it.

PAOLA: Well, I'm taking it.

HUGO: That's what you think.

PAOLA: Selfish!

HUGO: You're the selfish one!

PABLO: We can buy another one.

HUGO: (*With mock emotion*) Oh, thank you, father.

PAOLA: (*Gets up, goes to her father and gives him a kiss*) You're sweet.

LUZ MARÍA: Naturally, you're going to have to follow certain rules. I'm speaking for myself here, I don't know about your father. Steven isn't one of those people who stays up

late, so you have to be home early. And no playing the stereo at top volume.

PAOLA: (*First pretends to sob, then cry.*) I don't want to be separated from my dear brother.

PABLO: You'll be able to see him weekends. Anyway, he can come visit you.

HUGO: I'll go, of course I'll go.

LUZ MARÍA: Don't you want to tell them anything?

PABLO: About what?

LUZ MARÍA: Rules. Regulations.

PABLO: There's nothing particular. Elena has her own way of doing things, but Paola will be able to adjust little by little.

PAOLA: I'm sure we'll be great friends.

PABLO: With a little effort on your part.

PAOLA: I'll make a great effort.

HUGO: And do you two still go out to the country a lot?

LUZ MARÍA: Almost every weekend. Steven really likes it.

HUGO: Will I be able to go with you?

LUZ MARÍA: Of course.

HUGO: Awesome!

PAOLA: One question, just out of curiosity. I must say that I'm happy that you chose me to go live with daddy. But I want to know how the divvying up went. Of us, for example.

LUZ MARÍA: We were thinking about what would be best for you. It's easier for a man to understand another man.

PAOLA: And a woman another woman.

LUZ MARÍA: Exactly.

PAOLA: That's smart.

PABLO: (*Smiles*) Your mother was thinking about Oedipus and Electra. You see how she is. The truth is, girls get along better with their fathers and boys with their mothers. It's a law of nature.



HUGO: Mom! You don't think I was hoping for an incestuous experience –? I don't like stuff like that.

LUZ MARÍA: Is this another one of your elaborate jokes?

HUGO: You're not going to tell me that I can't tell jokes at your house.

LUZ MARÍA: Not that type of joke.

HUGO: Oh well ... sigh.

PAOLA: Lovely, this is lovely. I get along with my dad because of an Electra complex, and I get along with my stepmother because we're both women. Just like in the movies!

HUGO: And they all lived happily ever after! (*He makes as if narrating*) And we fade off into the last rays of the setting sun. The End. Rated G, all ages. Don't miss it.

PAOLA: (*Picks up her brother's lead*) And the Oscar for best new actress goes to Paola, at your service, for being able to overcome great adversity.

HUGO: And the best young male actor for accepting the challenge of being ... pause ... the unwanted son.

LUZ MARÍA: That's enough!

PAOLA: But we still have to do the awards for Best Female Villain and Best Useless Old Fart.

LUZ MARÍA: Fine, make fun of everything. One of these days you'll see for yourselves.

PAOLA: That's the part when we get to the castle of the ogre or the wicked witch. Oh, please, Mr. Ogre, please don't eat me!

HUGO: (*Laughs like an ogre*) You deserve it for being a bad girl! For being disobedient! For not honoring your parents!

PAOLA: I promise I'll be good from now on.

*(The two of them laugh. The parents, annoyed, exchange looks.)*

LUZ MARÍA: You can start packing tonight. Tomorrow I'll bring some big cardboard boxes. If you need suitcases ...

PABLO: Can I leave now?

LUZ MARÍA: I suppose. Remember that we have to talk about the money and what you're going to be paying me for Hugo.

PAOLA: (*To her father*) Should we help you carry out your things?

PABLO: Thanks, but I'll need boxes. I'd better come back tomorrow.

PAOLA: Up to you.

LUZ MARÍA: Take care of yourself!

HUGO: Extra special care.

PABLO: (*Approaches Paola and gives her a parting kiss on the cheek.*) Goodbye.

PAOLA: Wait, there's one more little detail.

PABLO: What.

PAOLA: After thinking about it some more, I'd rather not go with you ... or with her. I don't know about Hugo. I just decided. Period! As you guys say.

LUZ MARÍA: We're not playing. You already agreed.

PAOLA: When?

LUZ MARÍA: And besides, this isn't for you to agree to. You're going to go, and that's that.

PAOLA: Are you saying that I'm your stupid-ass daughter that anyone can order around?

LUZ MARÍA: Stop swearing.

PAOLA: I've barely gotten started.

HUGO: And once you've started ... look out!

PABLO: We agreed that this is for your own good.

PAOLA: Sounds like you want me to agree to be a good little sheep. You and she might agree but I'm ... not ... *going!*

LUZ MARÍA: Don't make things difficult. You have to go. We're going to sell this house, you don't have anywhere else to go.

PAOLA: I'll look for something.

HUGO: Paola, it's weird the way you're changing sides. Mom and dad are offering you a room and board and a stable family. Never mind about losing the car and the other things ... the important thing is that the family stays together. I'm sure that they'll let you have the freedom you need.

LUZ MARÍA: That's what you're looking for ... freedom. Freedom to do whatever you want with no one watching over you. But that's over.

HUGO: To tell you the truth, I'd go with them.

PAOLA: Fine, leave. No one is stopping you.

HUGO: I'll return to the womb — every man's dream.

PABLO: I want to know what's solid.

HUGO: Not this house! The walls here are made of paper.

PABLO: *(To Paola)* Are you going to come with me or not?

PAOLA: No.

PABLO: *(To Luz María)* See? She doesn't want to.

LUZ MARÍA: Don't ask her. Make her.

PAOLA: *He's* going to make me?

LUZ MARÍA: If you don't do as he says, you won't have anyplace to go.

PAOLA: I have friends.

LUZ MARÍA: They live at home.

PAOLA: I can move in with my boyfriend.

LUZ MARÍA: You said a little while ago that you don't have one.

PAOLA: I can get one.

LUZ MARÍA: You do what you want. But you should know one thing: this house is going away, the maid is leaving, and we're not giving you any money.

PAOLA: Anything else?

HUGO: The car goes, too, remember. Me, on the other hand, I'm no rebel. I'm going to go live with mom, and she's going to buy me a new car. A Golf. Good enough for me!

LUZ MARÍA: Maybe.

HUGO: *(To Paola)* You see?

PAOLA: I'm talking about me. You stay out of it.

HUGO: You think you're free? Pardon me while I laugh.

PAOLA: If you had any respect for yourself, you'd do the same as me.

LUZ MARÍA: Leave your brother alone. He can decide for himself.

PAOLA: He's a coward.

HUGO: And I suppose you're Prince Valiant, eh?

LUZ MARÍA: Today's the 22nd. You have to move by the end of the month

HUGO: *(Sweetly, to his mother)* Have you asked your boyfriend yet if it's ok for me to come live with you? I'll bet he won't like it.

LUZ MARÍA: I'll talk to him today.

HUGO: Tell him all about me, and be sure to tell him about my faults. Tell him that I'll put my paws all over his stuff and his car and his stereo and his booze.

LUZ MARÍA: You're not going to do any of those things.

HUGO: What makes you think I won't? That's the way I am! You should be ready to defend me. I'm going to listen to music at top volume! I'll eat however I want! I'll have all my buddies over for parties at the house!

LUZ MARÍA: I won't let you.

HUGO: And I should let *him*?

LUZ MARÍA: What?

HUGO: Let him put his hands all over you. Let him sleep with you and treat you like a whore.

*(Luz María slaps him. Hugo grabs her hand to prevent her from doing it again.)*

HUGO: Don't do that again!

LUZ MARÍA: I'll do it as many times as I need to.

HUGO: *(He lets go of her hand and taunts her)* I dare you! *(Luz María raises her hand to strike him, but puts it down again. Hugo laughs. Infuriated, Luz María slaps him. Hugo slaps her back so hard that she is knocked to the floor or into a chair. Pablo tries to intervene. Hugo threatens him.)* You stay out of this!

PABLO: Only a coward would hit a woman.

HUGO: I said I would!

*(Luz María stands up. She tries to hit Hugo, but he grabs her hand hard enough to stop her. She gives up.)*

LUZ MARÍA: How dare you raise your hand against your own mother!

HUGO: *(Neither in jest nor seriously)* Sorry.

LUZ MARÍA: *(To Pablo)* You just sit there and watch.

PABLO: What do you want me to do? Kill him?

LUZ MARÍA: He deserves it. A son who would do that!

PAOLA: Don't get your panties in a bunch, it was no big deal.

LUZ MARÍA: *(To Hugo)* Some day you're going to regret this.

HUGO: I already did.

LUZ MARÍA: And you want me to buy you a car!

HUGO: You're not going to now? In that case I'm not going with you. I'm staying here with my sister.

PAOLA: Yes, stay, stay!

LUZ MARÍA: *(To Pablo)* Do something about them!

HUGO: Him? He's never had anything to say in this house. You took off and he didn't say a thing. Then you screwed around on him and he didn't say anything then, either.

PABLO: Up to now I've been tolerant. You know that I don't like violence.

PAOLA: *(Approaches him. Challenges him.)* I like dangerous men. Not cowards. Discipline me!

*(Pushes her body against her father's. Disturbed, he takes a step back. He pushes her as she comes close to him again.)*

PABLO: Spoiled children! That's what they are.

HUGO: So rotten that we decided not to leave this house.

LUZ MARÍA: You decided?

HUGO: Do you really think we're that stupid? *(Laughs. Imitates his mother.)* "Let's have a family reunion. I'd like for us all to be together." *(Changes his tone)* If the reason for our happy little meeting wasn't to throw us out of the house, then what was it for?

PAOLA: Well, they're wrong. They're not getting us out of here. You want your things? Take them. *(Takes several of the china plates. Makes as if to give them to her mother, but raises them and throws them on the ground.)* Here's grandfather's china.

*(Hugo takes the silverware and throws it up toward the ceiling so it falls from as high as possible.)*

HUGO: And the silver.

LUZ MARÍA: *(Furiously)* What are you doing?

*(Hugo y Paola begin throwing everything: books, lamps, records, paintings. They wreck everything and then stomp on it, naming each thing as they do so. They work*

*themselves into a frenzy. Their parents attempt to save some things by seizing them. The children snatch the things away again away and throw them on the ground. The parents attempt to stop them, but are pushed onto the couch. Stunned, they let the children continue. Luz María becomes enraged. She gets up and confronts the children.)*

LUZ MARÍA: Are you finished yet?

HUGO: For now.

LUZ MARÍA: You should go get hammers! Bats! Wreck everything! Destroy everything!

PABLO: They're crazy.

LUZ MARÍA: That wouldn't be so bad, at least crazy people you can put in an asylum. But if you have wild animals like these two, you shoot them down. Since that's not allowed in civilized society, we'll leave them on their own to return to the jungle. *(To the children)* From now on you're free, at least as far as I'm concerned. Neither of you is going to come live with me. From today on you can scratch out your own living.

PABLO: And I can't take them either.

HUGO: That's what it's about.

LUZ MARÍA: You have eight days to finish wrecking the place. After that, you're out of here. And then I couldn't care less, you can do whatever you like with your lives.

PAOLA: Thank you, mommy.

PABLO: What about the things?

LUZ MARÍA: Let's take whatever they don't destroy. Everything else we'll have to throw away. *(Looks at her children)* I would throw everything away.

PAOLA: Who's going to throw us out of here, you two?

LUZ MARÍA: You'll see. Remember, you can do anything if you have the money. I have it, you don't.

PABLO: *(To Luz María)* Where will they live?

LUZ MARÍA: Beats me, as they say. They're old enough to be on their own, let them work out whatever they can. *(Looks at Paola)* Women have lots of ways to make a living. *(Looks at Hugo)* And you, if you're capable of striking your mother, then you're able to work. The only thing I ask is don't come begging to me.

PABLO: My presence here is not required.

LUZ MARÍA: It never was.

PABLO: I'll send for my things tomorrow.

*(Looks at the others. Leaves without saying anything.)*

LUZ MARÍA: I'm taking off, too. It's been a lovely family reunion.

PAOLA: And above all a very education experience.

LUZ MARÍA: Goodbye.

HUGO: Have a nice life!

LUZ MARÍA: Remember that you have eight days. *(Leaving)* Goodbye, my dears.

*(Luz María exits. The youngsters don't know what to do. They walk around looking at the wreckage. All of a sudden they roar with laughter. Paola sits down in the place where her mother was earlier.)*

PAOLA: The china is mine!

HUGO: *(He stands the way his father does)* And the silver is mine!

PAOLA: I want the paintings and the cars and the pens and the cat and the frying pans and the mops ...

HUGO: *(Laughing)* And I want the tools and the flyswatters and the watering can in the upstairs bathroom.

PAOLA: And the rolls of toilet paper that we got on sale.

HUGO: And I get the newspapers that we have out in the garage.

PAOLA: *(In a new tone of voice, one that is sad.)* I want the blue taffeta dress and the Japanese fan.

HUGO: *(Similarly)* I want the bicycle ...

*(Paola gets up. She picks up one of the things. They pretend to have a tug of war while laughing. After breaking it, they grab another and do the same. The third time they're not laughing any more, they just break things.)*

PAOLA: What's yours is mine!

HUGO: What's mine is yours!

*(They dance for a moment with whatever they have in their hands, then throw it on the ground. They become anguished. Paola sits down on her mother's couch. Hugo sits down in the chair next to her. They remain staring at the destruction as if hypnotized. The lights dim. They feel as if they were alone in the world. Hugo rests his head in Paola's lap. She stokes him mechanically. The curtain falls.)*

THE END

## Notes

The original work, *Sangre de mi Sangre*, is a contemporary Mexican play. The current translation provides an English version of the text, but makes no effort to transfer the play's situation or characters into a more American setting. The reader should have no difficulty in understanding the play's biting satire or in following the characters' motivations. However, a few notes are in order to clarify certain cultural differences between Mexico and the United States that have a subtle effect on how some of the events in the play might be interpreted.

The household represented in the play is an upper middle-class family, as indicated by the implicit material well-being of its members, the reference to private (parochial) schools, and such small clues as a maid. Nonetheless, it is a luxury that the children have exclusive use of a car, in contrast to the United States, where it is not unusual for high-school age students to have their own vehicle. Thus, when the mother lectures her children about the good life that they lead, her point about the difference between the haves and have-nots is not without merit.

The graduation party described by the children, including the expensive preparations, is extravagant, but not unusually so. Among those in the social tiers represented by the family of the play, major events in life, such as a wedding, a graduation, and a girl's fifteenth birthday, are celebrated with large formal parties to which many guests are invited.

Mexican mores concerning marriage, divorce, and premarital sex would be considered old-fashioned by many Americans. For example, divorce is legal in Mexico, but continues to bear a social stigma in a culture that is more influenced by the Catholic church (which doesn't recognize divorce) than by secular laws. Similarly, living together without being married — in Spanish, *una unión libre* — is uncommon and unaccepted enough to earn approbation even among those who are not particularly religious. Because of these attitudes, a Mexican audience for this play will not find it strange that the father can accuse the mother of being a bad influence on the children for behavior that might not raise many eyebrows among Americans.

It would not be considered unusual in Mexico for children of 18 and 19 years to be living with their parents. On the contrary, it is extremely uncommon in the upper middle class for young people of that age to be on their own. Schooling continues longer than in the U.S., and college students frequently live at home. But even if a child has finished school and is working, he or she very often continues living in the parental home. The reason is both practical and cultural. The type of job likely to be held by a young person usually pays comparatively poorly, and therefore does not allow the young person to be independent. Perhaps just as importantly, Mexican families are very close, and it is not assumed that a child should leave the home upon reaching maturity. In many cases, a child leaves only to start a new household — that is, to get married. Thus the prospect of being homeless and away from the bosom of the

family, as in the conclusion of the play, is a situation much more grave than Americans would generally consider it to be.