

ARIZONA

An american musical tragedy

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ARIZONA

escrita y dirigida por **Juan Carlos Rubio**

Tus vecinos te vigilan...¿estás preparado para defenderte?

escenografía **José Luis Raymond** iluminación **José Manuel Guerra** música original **Isabel Montero**
vestuario **Javier Esteban** fotografía y diseño cartel **Sergio Parra** ilustración cartel **Jaime García**
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productor ejecutivo **Carlos Rubio Núñez** producción **MUTIS PRODUCCIONES**

1.

(We find ourselves in the middle of the Arizona desert. It is represented by a giant drawing at the back of the stage: arid, dry mountains topped by a blue sky. In this surreal set there is a door which, after a few moments, opens fully. We then discover a couple, not too young, not too old, in fact, we don't care about their age at all. She is wearing a red felt hat. He, in turn, wears a baseball cap. They are admiring the scenery, without daring to enter.)

GEORGE.- Isn't it... Awesome?

MARGARET.- It is, indeed.

GEORGE.- We wanted it so badly...

MARGARET.- We did...

GEORGE.- And finally...

MARGARET.- Finally...

GEORGE.- The time has come.

MARGARET.- Oh yes, it has!

GEORGE.- I love you, Margaret

MARGARET.- I love you, George.

(GEORGE takes a remote control out of his pocket and turns on a few lights. He then leaves. MARGARET finally dares to enter the scene. She takes a look at everything with great curiosity. GEORGE comes back after a few seconds pushing a wheelbarrow with an artificial grass roll on top of it. He lets it fall by the side of the stage.)

GEORGE.- We've been very lucky with the distribution.

MARGARET.- Absolutely

GEORGE.- So many people interested...

MARGARET.- Hundreds, in fact.

GEORGE.- And to have been so fortunate.

MARGARET.- Very much so.

GEORGE.- This is a very good spot.

MARGARET.- One of the best.

GEORGE.- Well, I'm positive. The best spot!

(GEORGE takes the remote control and once again pushes a button. The stage lights on a bit more.)

GEORGE.- With such an amazing view.

MARGARET.- So lovely.

GEORGE.- It has got potential.

MARGARET.- It has. It certainly has.

(GEORGE leaves with the wheelbarrow. He comes back after a few seconds with another roll of artificial grass.)

GEORGE.- Huge events could happen right here.

MARGARET.- I'm sure they will.

GEORGE.- The kind of events that make history.

MARGARET.- Will we make history then?

GEORGE.- We are making it, Margaret... At this moment. At this very moment!

(GEORGE leaves once again and comes back with a third and last roll of grass.)

GEORGE.- And do you know what is really important at the end of the day?

MARGARET.- Important, you say?

GEORGE.- Yes. The meaning of all this. *(Pause.)* That this is a place only for us two.

MARGARET.- Yes, for you and me: together.

GEORGE.- Together

(A cheerful song from some American musical comedy starts play. He kisses her tenderly. The woman leaves the scene with the wheelbarrow while GEORGE starts unrolling the artificial grass. MARGARET comes back on stage with portable chairs, table, a fridge.....Everything they need to make themselves comfortable. The melody comes to an end.)

MARGARET.- Everything here is so... *(thinks of the right word.)*. So... Oh George, you say it!

GEORGE.- *(Looking around. Taking his time)*. Genuine.

MARGARET.- That's it, George: Genuine. You always know what to say: Genuine.

(MARGARET leaves the scene. She comes back with a great plastic cactus in her hand)

MARGARET.- I adore genuine things. Nowadays it is so difficult to be genuine...Those damned japanese manage to imitate everything. There is nothing original left. It just gives me the shivers... That obsession for fakes... The real thing is truly invaluable, don't you think so?

(GEORGE looks around. He suddenly seems upset.)

GEORGE.- Oh, I just can't believe it!

MARGARET.- Yes, darling?

GEORGE.- I... Yes, I forgot it in the car.

MARGARET.- You forgot it?

GEORGE.- Yes.

MARGARET.- Don't worry. Everybody forgets something sometimes.

GEORGE.- No, not me.

MARGARET.- *(After a pause. She nods.)* It's true. Not you.

GEORGE.- And not "that".

MARGARET.- It's true. Not "that". But you can go get it later...There's no rush.

GEORGE.- Margaret, I should go now.

MARGARET.- Alright. Then just go. Do you want me to go with you?

GEORGE.- No, I'll go by myself. Dear Lord, I forgot it... Can you believe it?

(GEORGE leaves the scene. MARGARET stays sombre for a moment. Then, she pushes away any dark thoughts and observes everything they have set up with a satisfied and happy look. GEORGE comes back on. He pushes a golf caddy.)

MARGARET.- Did you find it?

GEORGE.- I did! *(Pause)* You know what? As I was walking towards the car I felt something... How can I describe it? A premonition.

MARGARET.- Premonition...That is such a beautiful word!

GEORGE.- It's about all this. You and me, here... *(he gets emotional.)*

MARGARET.- *(She smiles.)* Oh, come on, George.

(GEORGE takes out a rifle from the golf caddy)

GEORGE.- I'm so happy.

MARGARET.- And me too, George.

(GEORGE grabs one of the chairs, sits down and starts polishing his adored rifle. She takes out some sun block lotion from her handbag and starts rubbing it. She tries to attract her husband's attention.....but doesn't get it.)

MARGARET.- Looking at the sky so incredibly blue makes me think of that Julie Andrews' movie, yes, you know which one I am talking about... She lived in a convent, but renounces her vows to look after the children of a Count... Or Marquis... High society people, anyway. They sang and sang the whole time... There were threats all over, but it didn't matter... They sang, and sang... She had such a sweet voice... *(she starts humming "My favourite things" from the movie The sound of music. She cuts short.)* Oh, poor Julie... Did you know that she had her vocal chords operated on, and then she couldn't sing anymore? I read it here, the Reader's Digest on June 1998... Or was it 1999? I will have to read it again... Her crystal voice cracked after surgery... Isn't it terrifying? The most important things in life can be lost in a moment...Oh, come on, George, what was the name of that movie? She was running around on a green hill, her arms reaching out to the sky with joy... And the whole world was a musical comedy, oblivious to tragedy... There was such a sweet expression on her face... I would like to look like this at some point during the day... George, seriously, don't you remember the name of that movie?

(GEORGE leaves the rifle by the side. Now, his mission accomplished, he does pay attention to his wife.)

GEORGE.- The Sound of Music.

MARGARET.- The sound of music! Bless that movie... And bless your memory too, George!

GEORGE.- Ready?

MARGARET.- Ready.

(GEORGE grabs a pair of binoculars. MARGARET grabs her magazine. GEORGE starts to look around, but when he realizes that there isn't much light, he takes the remote control again and pushes a button. The whole stage is flooded with light.)

MARGARET.- Oh, thank you, George.

(Darkness. Silence)

2.

(The man scans the horizon with his binoculars. The woman sunbathes.)

MARGARET.- Yes. No doubt.

(Silence.)

MARGARET.- Yes, yes. No doubt about it.

(Silence.)

MARGARET.- Don't you think so, George?

GEORGE.- Think what?

MARGARET.- That it's...

GEORGE.- That it's what?

MARGARET.- Hotter.

GEORGE.- Hotter?

MARGARET.- Yes, hotter.

GEORGE.- Hotter than what?

MARGARET.- Hotter than before, George.

GEORGE.- How do you know?

MARGARET.- Know what?

GEORGE.- That it's hotter than before.

MARGARET.- I feel hotter than before. And that means that...

(GEORGE stops watching the horizon.)

GEORGE.- If you feel hotter than before it doesn't mean that it's hotter than before, it only means that YOU feel hotter than before.

MARGARET.- Well, yes, that's what I meant. Isn't that the same?

GEORGE.- The same?

MARGARET.- Yes, isn't that the same? It's just the way I talk. You know I love to talk.

GEORGE.- It's not the same.

MARGARET.- Isn't it?

GEORGE.- No, it's not. You didn't ask yourself a question, Margaret, no. You haven't been objective, neutral. You were positive...Worse even. You were assertive!

MARGARET.- Was I?

GEORGE.- Yes. You were assertive.

MARGARET.- Dear Lord.

GEORGE.- You said "it's hotter than before" in a way that...

MARGARET.- Did I?

GEORGE.- Absolutely.

MARGARET.- You're right. Yes, I did. I was assertive.

GEORGE.- Oh yes, you were.

MARGARET.- Yes, I was. It was an impulse.

GEORGE.- You must not be assertive, Margaret! You must not... It's dangerous.

MARGARET.- Is it?

GEORGE.- It is. No doubt about it. It's dangerous to be assertive in that way. You know it is not acceptable for you to be assertive while we are doing our project: "Let's not be assertive about anything... Let's just raise questions and come to agreements". Those are the rules.

MARGARET.- It's true... Now I remember. I remember it perfectly. "Let's not be assertive about anything. Let's just raise..." (She shuts up)

GEORGE.- questions...

MARGARET.- "... questions and come..." *(She shuts up)*

GEORGE.- to agreements.

MARGARET.- Agreements!

GEORGE.- We have to be cautious, think about the consequences of our words thoroughly... Do you understand what I'm trying to say?

MARGARET.- Yes, George.

GEORGE.- I am your husband. I must warn you... Words can be misinterpreted.

MARGARET.- Even the beautiful ones?

GEORGE.- Especially the beautiful ones. They can turn against you like... *(thinks of a the right word)* ... like a boomerang.

MARGARET.- Like a boomerang... *(She spells it)* Boo-me-rang...

GEORGE.- Exactly. A boomerang. There are people waiting to slap our hands. Did you know that?

MARGARET.- I do. And I'm sorry. I won't do it again. I will never be assertive again.

GEORGE.- Well done.

MARGARET.- I will raise questions.

GEORGE.- Well done.

MARGARET.- I will reason.

GEORGE.- Well done, Margaret, well done.

MARGARET.- If you weren't by my side to show me the way... I...

GEORGE.- Oh, come on. Everybody can trip over. And you will always have my hand.

MARGARET.- Your hand never shakes, George. That's why I love you.

GEORGE.- And now it's time to carry on doing what we came for.

MARGARET.- It's time

GEORGE.- It's time.

MARGARET.- Let's do it.

GEORGE.- Oh yes, Margaret... Let's do it!

(GEORGE goes back to his binoculars. She sunbathes. Silence. Darkness. Silence.)

3.

(The same place, later on. She knits a large blanket made of pieces of cloth by different colours. He keeps scanning the horizon.)

MARGARET.- George...

GEORGE.- Yes, Margaret?

MARGARET.- I would like to know... as a question, you know, a doubt... Are doubts..?

GEORGE.- It depends. The project is not clear about that.

MARGARET.- In that case...

GEORGE.- Oh, go on, I'll be discreet.

MARGARET.- Well... yes...What did we actually come here to do?

GEORGE.- What did we come to do here you say?

MARGARET.- Yes, you and I, here...What did we come to do exactly?

(GEORGE stops watching the horizon with his binoculars. He looks his wife in the eye.)

GEORGE.- Are you serious?

MARGARET.- It's just... I don't remember well.

GEORGE.- You can't possibly be serious *(worried.)* Are you being serious?

MARGARET.- It may be the heat... and the sun. Yes, the sun makes you forget certain things. I read it... June 2003... or 2002... anyway, it was during this decade:"We must avoid exposure to sunlight at least two hours before and two after the sun reaches its highest point... the Zenith *(Pause.)* What did we come here for, George?

GEORGE.- We came to defend this country.

MARGARET.- Of course, darling, of course, thank you.

(GEORGE carries on scanning the horizon with his binoculars. She goes back to knitting.)

MARGARET.- And is it just you and me defending it?

GEORGE.- No, for God's sake, no! We defend it just as other hundreds of volunteers do...Men and women ready to jump into action at any moment, wherever they're needed. In just an instant.

MARGARET.- I do remember now! To defend this country. In just an instant. I must thank you, George.

(She goes on knitting, so does he scanning. Silence. A long silence.)

MARGARET.- But...who are we defending it against?

GEORGE.- The sun, it is definitely the sun.

MARGARET.- The sun, yes, George. The sun is more pleasant in Miami, but here... I put on this red felt hat in order to avoid something like this happening to me, but... I'm so sorry... Maybe a green felt hat would have been more appropriate.

GEORGE.- It's all good. I know it's not your fault.

MARGARET.- Believe me, it's not.

GEORGE.- We are defending against them.

MARGARET.- Them?

(GEORGE points at the horizon)

GEORGE.- Our neighbors. We came to watch out for our neighbours and reflect on our borders.

MARGARET.- Oh, so that's the reason. We are watching for our neighbours...

GEORGE.- And reflecting...

MARGARET.- And reflecting...

GEORGE.- On our borders...

MARGARET.- On our borders...

GEORGE.- Yes. That's it.

MARGARET.- Thank you again, George.

GEORGE.- Forget about it. I'm your husband. You can...You must trust me.

MARGARET.- I always have. From the very first day... you know that?

GEORGE.- I know... *(Pause.)* Margaret?

MARGARET.- Yes?

(The man hands over the binoculars.)

GEORGE.- Would you like to be the one...?

MARGARET.- It's too much responsibility... Too much. A whole country.

GEORGE.- Come on. You can do it... Go on!

(The woman takes the binoculars.)

GEORGE.- I know you can do it... I trust you, too. Right from the very first day.

(The woman starts scanning the horizon.)

GEORGE.- Well done... You go, girl. Well done!

(The man switches on the radio. We listen to some music. And then a speaker.)

RADIO.-...and now we present you the press release that the US Embassy in Mexico published earlier on today, March thirty-first, two thousand and five, in relation to the latest news from the so called “Minute man” project, which says: The “Minute man” project was explained by its founders as a volunteer effort from citizens to increase awareness among all americans about the problem of illegal immigration to the United States. The organization is planning to gather approximately one thousand volunteers in the little village of Bisbee, Arizona, on April, the first, for a period of thirty days. In their own words, “the call for all volunteers is not a call to take up their weapons” but rather “a call to get together peacefully on the border between Mexico and the US, in order to create a national conscience about the lack of attention and care by the US for the last few decades when it comes to migration laws. Neighbours keeping watch for other neighbours and reflecting on our borders”....The organization also highlighted that even though some of the volunteers will bring their own weapons, this will only be used in self-defense, and in the event that an illegal immigrant is caught, he will be handed over to the american authorities according to local rules and legal proceedings...

(The national anthem from the US sounds in the distance. GEORGE and MARGARET listen to it full of emotion. Darkness. Silence.)

4.

(The woman looks into the horizon. The man practices tai-chi quietly.)

MARGARET.- George

GEORGE.- Yes?

MARGARET.- Our neighbors...

GEORGE.- Yes?

MARGARET.- Don't take me wrong, but... where are they?

GEORGE.- *(points at the horizon.)* There. To the south.

(Silence. She keeps watching. He continues to practice tai-chi.)

MARGARET.- George....

GEORGE.- Yes?

MARGARET.- I don't see them... I could see our neighbors in Wyoming, the Dickfords, Jonathan and Carolyn... the Shepherds, Charly and Elsa.....and around the corner the Thomsons, Frank and Lily... and little Matthew... But here... I can't see them here.

GEORGE.- These neighbors are... *(Closes his eyes and thinks about the word.)* different.

MARGARET.- How different?

GEORGE.- They are more shy. They're afraid to face us.

MARGARET.- Are they scared of us?

GEORGE.- Scared? No, Good Lord, no! How can you think something like that? Scared?

MARGARET.- Maybe when they see us here, reflecting on our borders, maybe they feel...

GEORGE.- No.

MARGARET.- No?

GEORGE.- Of course not.

MARGARET.- Not even a little?

GEORGE.- No! They know we are doing this for their own good. And are thankful that we remind them where everyone belongs.

MARGARET.- Uh-huh...

GEORGE.- Someone has to do it, don't you think?

MARGARET.- Uh-huh...

GEORGE.- The natural order of things

MARGARET.- Uh-huh...

GEORGE.- We are... Let me give you an example.

MARGARET.- Oh, yes, George, please, give me an example. You are so good at examples.

GEORGE.- Let me think.

(GEORGE sits down and closes his eyes.)

MARGARET.- Ready?

GEORGE.- No, not yet. A good example takes its time.

MARGARET.- Of course. Take all the time you need, we have so much. Did you know that time is circular? That's what that charming scientist with white hair who invented the bomb that finally brought peace upon us... Cir-cu-lar... Does it mean that everything repeats itself again and again? Maybe that's the reason why the clocks are round... I must admit the whole thing puzzles me.

GEORGE.- A dam, you know?

MARGARET.- What?

GEORGE.- The example I was looking for.

MARGARET.- Oh, sorry, George... A dam... D-a-m.

GEORGE.- The dam keeps out water and prevents the valley from being flooded. We are the dam holding back the water that threatens to flood everything.

MARGARET.- It's such a beautiful example, George.

GEORGE.- We must not allow the dam to have any cracks, no! This is what they are waiting for.

MARGARET.- Waiting for...

GEORGE.- Waiting for you and me to give in, to lower our guard for a minute, just one crack, and then...

MARGARET.- Then...

GEORGE.- Yes, then! But that will never happen, will it, Margaret?

MARGARET.- It won't, George.

GEORGE.- We will never lower our guard.

MARGARET.- Never, George.

GEORGE.- Not even for a minute.

MARGARET.- We'll be ready in a minute.

GEORGE.- We are one dam.

MARGARET.- We are one dam.

GEORGE.- We are inhabitants of planet earth.

MARGARET.- We are inhabitants of planet earth watching out for other inhabitants and reflecting on our borders.

(Silence.)

MARGARET.- George...

GEORGE.- Yes?

MARGARET.- The other neighbors...The ones up north... Shouldn't... shouldn't we also reflect a little bit on them too?

GEORGE,- No, Margaret.

MARGARET.- Don't they..?

GEORGE.- No.

(Silence.)

MARGARET.- But maybe they are also looking for a crack and there is no one there keeping watch to prevent the water from...

GEORGE.- How can you even think about it? Our neighbors up north are always welcome. They are not a threat to us. To anyone for that matter!

MARGARET.- So the danger is down south, George?

GEORGE.- Always. When God created the universe he expelled the damned to the south. They have been trying to come back to paradise ever since.

MARGARET.- Is that another example, George?

GEORGE.- No, that is reality. Make no mistake. You must know your limits... And your obligations to those limits.

MARGARET.- I promise to work hard, George. I promise to learn the fundamental principles.

(He keeps on watching. She starts to sing softly.)

MARGARET.- “Our... our mission is to keep watch... to keep watch... and reflect... our mission is... *(she stops singing)* Is it good so, George? Is it?”

GEORGE.- Absolutely, absolutely.

MARGARET.- *(She carries on singing.)* “Our mission is to keep watch... to keep watch... and to reflect”.

GEORGE.- Good, Margaret, good! You must sing it to the project.

MARGARET.- Oh, George, no. Forget it!

GEORGE.- Go on, go on!

(She sings more determinedly. Some music starts to play. The woman takes out a microphone and interprets a musical tune. When finished, the two of them laugh out loud, happy.)

GEORGE.- Oh, Margaret.....There's such a sweet look on your face.....

(She spins around again and again, like Julie Andrews in The Sound of music.)

(Darkness. Silence.)

5.

(GEORGE watches the horizon. MARGARET takes some pictures with her camera. The woman, deep in thought, joins in watching.)

MARGARET.- Why do they want to cross over? Our actual neighbors, I mean. The ones down south, obviously... *(she points at her copy of the Reader's Digest.)* It doesn't say anything about it. Why do they want to cross over?

GEORGE.- They taught you at school.

MARGARET.- Yes, they taught me at school, but it was such a long time ago that...

GEORGE.- Did you forget?

MARGARET.- I was never a good student and...

GEORGE.- Did you forget something like that?

MARGARET.- I...

GEORGE.- How could you?

MARGARET.- I...

GEORGE.- I don't want anybody to find out that you forgot something like this! Ever! It's unforgivable, Margaret.

MARGARET.- I know, George. I know.

GEORGE.- Don't you really remember...?

MARGARET.- No. I don't remember. I've got a fragile memory, you know that. Sometimes it's best not to remember, it helps get you through the autumn months, but some other times I would love to save up every single detail, specially in summer. Oh, George, help me, help me drag out my memories...

GEORGE.- OK, then. I am your husband. I will take care. They...

MARGARET.- They...

GEORGE.- They come to steal everything that is ours.

MARGARET.- To steal everything that is ours...

GEORGE.- To take away our home...

MARGARET.- To take away our home...

GEORGE.- Our job...

MARGARET.- Our job...

GEORGE.- To kill our sons and rape our daughters...

MARGARET.- To kill our sons and rape our daughters...

(Silence.)

MARGARET.- We don't have any daughters, George. Or any sons, even.

GEORGE.- The children of this country are ours too.

MARGARET.- All of them?

GEORGE.- Each and everyone of them.

MARGARET.- *(To herself.)* What a strange feeling to be a mother...

GEORGE.- This nation based its foundations on solidarity...

MARGARET.- *(To herself.)* I always wanted to have a child...

GEORGE.- ... Loving the neighbors...

MARGARET.- *(To herself.)* But the Good Lord never did...

GEORGE.- ... cooperation, teamwork...

MARGARET.- *(To herself.)* ...want to grant me the wish...

GEORGE.- ... One project...

MARGARET.- *(To herself.)* Until today...

GEORGE.- ...The project. *(looks at his wife.)* Don't you get it?

MARGARET.- *(paying attention to GEORGE once again.)* Solidarity, love the

neighbors, cooperation, teamwork, one project. The project.

GEORGE.- But they want to destroy our harmony, to put an end to the purity of our bodies and souls.

MARGARET.- Why would our neighbors want to do something like that?

GEORGE.- Out of pure malice, of jealousy. The devil breathes through their mouths, thirsty for blood. Forever. But that's not going to happen. The dam!

MARGARET.- Of course: The dam. Would you like some cranberry cake, darling?

GEORGE.- That would be wonderful!

(MARGARET takes a cranberry cake out of the portable fridge. She cuts it into pieces with great care.)

MARGARET.- I was just thinking.....I know I shouldn't.....The project bans it, it's quite strict when it comes to that.....

GEORGE.- Very much.

MARGARET.- Very much. It's just that...We also came from overseas, George.

GEORGE.- We did?

MARGARET.- Yes, we did.

GEORGE.- What do you mean by WE did?

MARGARET.- My grandfather... My grandfather was Hungarian. He came here fleeing the nazis. And yours also came from far away...

GEORGE.- How can you compare?

MARGARET.- I'm sorry, I...

GEORGE.- How can you even..!

MARGARET.- I'm only trying to understand the reasons why they...

GEORGE.- There's nothing to understand, don't you get it? You must not try to understand what shouldn't be understood. They are our enemies. They come to steal, to loot...

MARGARET.- To kill our sons and rape our daughters.

GEORGE.- That's right, Margaret. That's right.

(MARGARET offers her husband a piece of cake.)

MARGARET.- Did you know that cranberries are of ecological significance? “They protect the soil from erosion and contribute towards the formation of humus”. Special edition for the seventieth anniversary of the Reader's Digest.

GEORGE.- I'm also learning stuff from you, you see?

(He is about to pray. She puts the cake to her mouth. He stares at her with a serious look. She realizes the mistake, puts the cake back on the plate and crosses hands ready to pray, too.)

GEORGE.- Dear Lord, bless this cranberry cake, whose fruit protects the soil from the erosion of the furious elements, as well as we protect our soil from other forces which try to drag it away and destroy the balance that you so mercifully created... Amen.

MARGARET.- Amen.

(They both eat the cake.)

GEORGE.- Delicious.

MARGARET.- Thank you, George.

GEORGE.- Really delicious.

MARGARET.- Thank you, George.

(She switches on the radio. A song from an american musical comedy starts to play. They both stop eating and look at each other, deeply moved.)

MARGARET.- George...

GEORGE.- Margaret...

MARGARET.- It's not possible! Oh, George.

GEORGE.- I'm happy to see that you didn't forget it.

MARGARET.- Never. Our song. Virginia, June the second, nineteen eighty-one. You see? The day I met you.

GEORGE.- You were so ethereal.

MARGARET.- And you so handsome.

(GEORGE stands up. He offers his hand. She blushes.)

MARGARET.- Oh, no. It would be inappropriate.

(But GEORGE insists. She finally gives in and stands up. They both start dancing. He gets excited with the dance and starts touching her. She feels a bit uncomfortable.)

MARGARET.- George. Somebody could...

GEORGE.- Who?

MARGARET.- Them. The neighbors. They are shy, but they are there... You said it yourself.

GEORGE.- Not now.

MARGARET.- No?

GEORGE.- No. They always rest at this time... Because of the zenith.

MARGARET.- What if one of them... We are one dam, George. Our mission is to keep watch.

(He grabs the binoculars and hands them over to her. She takes them obediently. GEORGE starts kissing her while she keeps watching. He puts himself behind her back, raises her skirt and makes love to her in a rush, without taking his clothes off. The man shakes, having an orgasm. He has finished. He goes back to his chair and dozes off. She pulls herself together with a look of infinite sadness and finally goes back to her task.)

MARGARET.- Some more cranberry cake?

GEORGE.- I'm satisfied.

MARGARET.- I'm glad about that, George... You know I am.

(Darkness. Silence.)

6.

(GEORGE is about to start golfing. She watches the horizon with a thoughtful look.)

GEORGE.- Margaret.

MARGARET.- Yes?

GEORGE.- Are you... thinking again?

MARGARET.- No...Yes. It's just that... Maybe they are fleeing something. My grandfather loved his country, but he had to come over here. He always longed for his country. And yours used to sing old love songs with a vodka in his hand and some tears on his face.

GEORGE.- Margaret, your grandfather, my grandfather...They both came here the way they were supposed to, in the right way, abiding the law. But they, they are like... like... I should give you an example.

MARGARET.- Yes, please, do it, George. But do look for the right words, not the ones that come back at you like a boomerang.

(GEORGE closes his eyes and meditates. Silence.)

GEORGE.- Snakes! They are like snakes. Yes, that's it, snakes of the desert. Filled with the poison of jealousy and greed. They slither until you find them under your bed... until it is too late and then...

MARGARET.- Then?

GEORGE.- Then!

(He goes back to golfing. Silence.)

MARGARET.- And yet...

GEORGE.- Margaret, I don't like you to say "and yet".

MARGARET.- I know. But...

GEORGE.- I don't like you to say "but", either. There is a lot of controversy within the project about those words.

MARGARET.- They must never know that I used them. There are words that shall never be used. You won't snitch on me, will you, George?

GEORGE.- Me? Of course not, for heaven's sake. Who do you take me for? I am your husband.

MARGARET.- I appreciate it... In that case... And yet, but... aren't they God's children, too?

GEORGE.- What?

MARGARET.- God's children.

GEORGE.- I'm not sure about it. Are you?

MARGARET.- I have my doubts.

(MARGARET hands over the Bible that was lying on the table.)

GEORGE.- The Holy Bible doesn't say anything about it.

MARGARET.- The Holy Bible says that we are all children of God.

GEORGE.- Not them! Definitely.

MARGARET.- Even in that case He talks about mercy. Isn't that word beautiful?

GEORGE.- I know the Holy Bible like the back of my hand! I know it. And there isn't there one single word written about them. And that only means that God doesn't consider them their own.

(He goes away, worried. Silence. He starts to play golf again.)

MARGARET.- Do you want me to read you that article of the Reader's Digest about a fifty ton whale that got beached on Long Island? It's such a moving story: "Sally..." that was its name, "it got disoriented and steered away from its migratory routes, then got beached to the south...". The south also exists for cetaceans, George. Thank God that a Non-Governmental Organization managed to save it. It's unbelievable that the Government would like to wash his hands over this. The actual volunteers had to fight for...

GEORGE.- *(stepping on her words.)* Volunteers like us.

MARGARET.- Yes, volunteers like us who fight...

GEORGE.- *(stepping on her words.)* To keep everything on course.

MARGARET.- To keep everything on course.

GEORGE.- *(stepping on her words.)* To impose law and order.

MARGARET.- To impose law and order. Poor whale, right, George? Poor Sally.

(Silence. She switches on the radio. We listen to a speaker.)

RADIO.- ... Recently, several humanitarian organizations have accused some of the members of the controversial “Minute man” project of poisoning the water wells in the desert in order to prevent immigrants from drinking from them. And if they do, making sure they're poised to death...

(He approaches the radio and changes the station. We listen to an ad for hair growing. She seems to be shocked by the news she has just heard.)

GEORGE.- *(Referring to his own hair.)* Do you think I should use.....?

MARGARET.- Oh, no. You look so masculine like this. It would be superfluous

GEORGE.- Superfluous is also a beautiful word.

MARGARET.- Yes, it is indeed.

(Silence. Darkness.)

7.

(The man keeps watching the horizon. The woman waters the cactus with a bottle. Suddenly, she starts crying. She doesn't want her husband to find out. She tries to hold herself, but she is not able to. He then notices.)

GEORGE.- Margaret?

MARGARET.- Yes, darling?

GEORGE.- What's wrong?

MARGARET.- Nothing.

GEORGE.- Are you crying?

MARGARET.- Crying? No. It's just some desert sand that went into my eyes.

GEORGE.- You ARE crying.

MARGARET.- I was remembering a scene of a melodrama that I watched on cable a few days ago. They colored those old movies from the golden age. It's just unnecessary, don't you think? Colors are not always vital for emotions. Black and white can be so...

GEORGE.- Why are you crying?

MARGARET.- Oh, George... This cactus is so beautiful... And it manages to survive with so little water.

GEORGE.- Did I do anything wrong? Did I do anything that..?

MARGARET.- The water, the water from the wells, George. That's not right. It isn't. Some of the members of the project said that they were going to take measures. It's not fair.

GEORGE.- Those wells belong to them, they are private property.

MARGARET.- They will die for a little bit of water.

GEORGE.- They can do whatever they please. If the neighbors didn't go where they shouldn't...

MARGARET.- Men, women, children... Dead for drinking a little bit of water off those wells poisoned by the project! You said our mission was to keep watch and reflect. But that's not true. The word used to define all this is too horrible to be spoken out loud...

(The woman cries. The man looks at her. Silence. A long silence.)

GEORGE.- You are not ready for this project.

MARGARET.- George...

GEORGE.- You shouldn't have come along.

MARGARET.- I am your wife, I want to be with you.

GEORGE.- I have been already in other borders, keeping watch over other neighbours, but you...

MARGARET.- I'm sorry, George, I'm sorry. I will get used to it...

GEORGE.- The sun has affected you.

MARGARET.- Yes, that's why, I'm sure of it. But now I'm fine, you see? I don't cry anymore. And now that I think about it... If they want to color those old movies, why not?

GEORGE.- Yes, the sun has definitely affected you. It has turned you into... Maybe you won't be yourself anymore.

MARGARET.- Calm down. Don't say that. Of course it's me....Your wife. And I'm here because I love you... Because I love you and I share with you a mission, one project. The project.

GEORGE.- You should have bought a green felt hat.

MARGARET.- Calm down. My hat is perfect. Would you like to drink something? Yes, let's drink something. It will do us good...

(MARGARET walks towards the fridge.)

MARGARET.- We need to drink at least eleven bottles of water a day in the desert. I read it in the Reader's Digest last month. You see? I do remember that... But we won't drink water, no. I used the last bottle for the cactus... It's so beautiful... And it seems so lonely... But we could drink a Coke, would you like to? Would you like a Coke, George? You like Coke so much...

(But GEORGE does not listen. He has grabbed his rifle and watches the horizon.)

MARGARET.- George, what's going on?

GEORGE.- Shut up.

MARGARET.- George... George...what are you doing?

GEORGE.- Can't you see? There...

MARGARET.- There?

GEORGE.- Yes. There. Look! It's moving.

MARGARET.- I can't see anything, my love.

GEORGE.- Your eyes can't see clearly anymore.

MARGARET.- I'll use the binoculars.

(MARGARET takes the binoculars and looks around.)

MARGARET.- Yes, I can see it now!

GEORGE.- Goddamned son of a bitch!!

(GEORGE points with his weapon.)

MARGARET.- Wait!

GEORGE.- What?

MARGARET.- It's only a boy, George.

GEORGE.- A boy?

MARGARET.- Yes, look, look, George. A boy... Five or six years old. He's alone. He's lost... He doesn't know where to go. He's crying.

(MARGARET hands him over the binoculars.)

MARGARET.- See for yourself. Please.

(GEORGE looks with the binoculars.)

MARGARET.- Can you see? Can you see now? A boy.... Boys are boys everywhere. Even down south.

GEORGE.- You're so naïve, Margaret.

MARGARET.- I don't understand.

GEORGE.- It's not a boy.

MARGARET.- Yes, it is.

GEORGE.- No. The neighbors on the other side are never children. They disguise themselves as children to try to melt our hearts and cross over.

(GEORGE takes up his weapon again.)

GEORGE.- They are snakes! I told you. I gave you an example, Margaret. A good example.

MARGARET.- George, for the love of God, don't do it!

GEORGE.- Move away!

(MARGARET tries to get the weapon away from him.)

GEORGE.- Move away, Margaret! Your eyes are blinded from the dust, the heat, possibly by some misguided mercy, but nothing blinds me.

MARGARET.- I beg you, don't shoot, George! Do it for me, don't!

(The woman hits the rifle, which shoots in the air. Silence. Silence.)

GEORGE.- Margaret... What have you done?

MARGARET.- I... I only wanted... It's just a child.

GEORGE.- You're putting the whole country in danger.

MARGARET.- It was just a boy.

GEORGE.- I don't recognize you, I don't... Are you the woman I once married..?

MARGARET.- Of course I am. Look at my wedding ring, on my finger. It has our wedding date engraved... And on yours too. Look at it.

(GEORGE grabs his wife and starts tying her up with the blanket she was knitting. She drags her along to the chair.)

MARGARET.- George! What are you doing? George!

GEORGE.- Our resolve must never weaken. It's dangerous. And your eyes... Your eyes are crying, Margaret. And they're crying for...

MARGARET.- Let me go!

GEORGE.- You didn't even allow me to defend myself.

MARGARET.- Please!

GEORGE.- And now he'll drag himself up to my own bed. I will feel his breath on my neck. And whenever I least expect it...

MARGARET.- George, that can never happen. Listen to me! George!

(Once tied up, he puts a cloth in her mouth in order to shut her up.)

GEORGE.- And what if everybody lost their memory, Margaret? What if we couldn't figure out where we really belong? Where is north, where is south. Who would take responsibility? Goddamn it! Goddamn it, Margaret! Who would be held accountable for each and every one of our actions?

(GEORGE goes towards the radio and switches it on to avoid listening to his wife's weeping. A tune from an american musical comedy starts to play. GEORGE tries to calm down.)

GEORGE.- I didn't choose to be here. This is my mission, that's it. Not everyone has the luxury of doubting, Margaret... Not everyone can have doubts.

(He takes back his rifle and binoculars and keeps watch. She cries on her chair. Silence. Silence. Darkness.)

8.

(We listen to a radio chat show specialized in american musical comedies. GEORGE has fallen asleep on his chair. She unties herself, with great care, as to not wake him up. Once free, she is tempted to run away, but decides to stay. She goes to the rifle and takes out the bullets. She hides them in the cactus pot. Afterwards, she sits back down. She takes the cloth back in her mouth and the blanket around her hands. GEORGE opens his eyes and stares at her for a good while. He stands up, goes towards the radio and switches it off. He takes the cloth out of his wife's mouth. They both look at each other in silence. She finally speaks up.)

MARGARET.- We should leave, George. Go back home... Both of us, together. We could take care of the garden, like we always have... Together. And talk to our neighbors, the ones we can see without the binoculars... The Dickfords, Jonathan and Carolyn... The Shepherds, Charly and Elsa... And around the corner the Thomsons, Frank and Lily... and little Matthew! You could help him bake a cranberry cake. We'll cross the street and share it with them... Would you like to, George? Would you like to go back home?

(Silence.)

MARGARET.- Talk to me, George. I'm afraid of your silence. I'm scared of all this. The desert sun is no good. And we have spent here too much time...

GEORGE.- Yes.

MARGARET.- Yes?

GEORGE.- Let's go back home.

(The man releases her.)

MARGARET.- Oh, my God! Thank you, George, thank you! I will feel better there... I don't want to reflect on the borders... I don't want to keep watch for my neighbours... I don't.

GEORGE.- You don't want to.

MARGARET.- No, I don't. Never again.

GEORGE.- Never again.

MARGARET.- We can save whales in Long Island. Would you like to, George? I bet

you would be wonderful at it...

(Silence.)

MARGARET.- Shall we?

GEORGE.- Yes. In a minute. You go ahead, to the car. Turn on the air. It will make you feel good. Yes, turn on the air. You need to get out of the sun... No more sun, Margaret...

(GEORGE takes his rifle. MARGARET goes to the table and starts to put away her things.)

GEORGE.- No, don't take anything.

MARGARET.- Why?

GEORGE.- It's not necessary.

MARGARET.- Why not?

GEORGE.- I will do it myself.

MARGARET.- George, I...

GEORGE.- Go to the car, Margaret... Now. It's time for you to go back home.

MARGARET.- Both of us.

GEORGE.- Go to the car. I am your husband. I know what's good for you.

(Silence. Silence.)

MARGARET.- I love you, George.

GEORGE.- I love you too, Margaret.

(MARGARET opens the door and leaves the scene. GEORGE takes a cartridge out of his pocket, puts it in his weapon and shoots her. Silence. A long silence.)

GEORGE.- We have to be careful in this place, you could get dehydrated. We have to guard against the sun, the desert sun which passed its zenith a long time ago... A beautiful word: Zenith...Twilight is a beautiful one, too: Twilight *(Pause.)* Yes, it's hot... Maybe hotter than before... Or maybe not... It's bad to be assertive...

(GEORGE takes the remote control from over the table and starts switching off the stage lights.)

GEORGE.- It's bad.

(He goes towards the radio and switches it on. We hear "My favourite things" from The sound of music, sang by Julie Andrews. He sits down. He cleans the rifle. Afterwards, he points it into his mouth. He shoots)

(Darkness. Silence. Silence. Silence.)

