

Facing Santa Fe Plaza

By

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ACT I

Scene One

(At the 'Oar House', in Santa Fe, N.M. Balcony table facing the Plaza. Margaritas in front of two already-seated ladies: DELIA and BEATRIZ. BEATRIZ is reading a letter, silently. They are late-40's, early 50's. DELIA, uncomfortable, fans herself with the menu.)

DELIA:

It's hot here.

BEATRIZ:

(putting letter down:)

No one shivers here in July.

DELIA:

I miss New York.

BEATRIZ:

New York is a hundred degrees right now. At least here there's room enough so you only have to smell your own sweat.

DELIA:

I can smell yours sometimes.

BEATRIZ:

I am not sweating.

DELIA:

Not now; in New York.

BEATRIZ:

Drink your margarita. Relax. You have a cow no matter where we go. Last year it was the streets of Venice.

DELIA:

Well, they WERE wet.

BEATRIZ:

They are called canals, and they've always been wet. It's part of their charm.

DELIA:

How much longer do we have here in this city?

BEATRIZ:

I miss vacationing by myself. You are always complaining. You never stop.

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DELIA:

You're complaining right now.

BEATRIZ:

No, I'm not.

DELIA:

See? There!

BEATRIZ:

That wasn't a complaint. That was the truth.

DELIA:

Oh. I didn't recognize it. An honest bitch. Sorry.

BEATRIZ:

You know, this was not a good idea, coming to Santa Fe.

DELIA:

No. It wasn't.

BEATRIZ:

Do you really want to go back to New York?

DELIA:

What for? I don't wanna smell your sweat.

(Silence.)

BEATRIZ:

What's wrong?

DELIA:

I'm just... you know.

BEATRIZ:

It's not the heat.

DELIA:

It's ten years today.

BEATRIZ:

What is?... Oh, no.

DELIA:

Today.

BEATRIZ:

Already?

DELIA:

Ten years.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRIZ:

I didn't... I'm sorry.

DELIA:

What for? It's just me. I wish I was better about forgetting.

BEATRIZ:

You don't want to. You don't have to.

DELIA:

Jorge himself would have been the first one to say: "Enjoy yourselves and have a drink." And look -- we are.

BEATRIZ:

He'd be smiling.

DELIA:

He wasn't one for mushiness.

BEATRIZ:

It's not mushy to remember someone you loved very much.

DELIA:

You're a good friend.

BEATRIZ:

Your ice is melting.

DELIA:

No, I mean it. A great friend. Thanks for getting me out of town.

BEATRIZ:

It was your suggestion.

DELIA:

God. You're right. Well, I'm glad.

BEATRIZ:

I'm glad you're glad. Cheers.

DELIA:

Cheers.

(They toast and drink.)

DELIA:

Shall we order another one?

BEATRIZ:

Remember the altitude.

DELIA:

It's only two stories.

BEATRIZ:

Santa Fe, silly. Seven thousand feet.

DELIA:

We'll just drink them slower.

BEATRIZ:

(calling someone:)

Waiter?... Yes: two more.

DELIA:

So that letter you were reading?

BEATRIZ:

Oh. My nephew.

DELIA:

Jaimito's writing you in Santa Fe?

BEATRIZ:

No.

DELIA:

I didn't think so. You were reading that letter in New York. You brought that letter all the way here.

BEATRIZ:

Yes.

DELIA:

You liked it that much?

BEATRIZ:

Yes.

DELIA:

Jaimito.

BEATRIZ:

Yes.

DELIA:

He understands.

BEATRIZ:

The only one who does. We never talked about it. But he always sends his love.

(CONTINUED)

(grabbing DELIA's hand:)
And to you too.

DELIA:
What about the rest of them?

BEATRIZ:
Not a word. Jaimito says everyone's okay, though. And Clarissa's already in first grade. (Sighs) I'd love to see that niece.

DELIA:
My family could not deal with a dyke, either.

BEATRIZ:
You hate that word.

DELIA:
I really do. It's a funny one. It just wish it wasn't used to describe a person. A dam in Holland, maybe. Not a person.

BEATRIZ:
Where's that drink?

DELIA:
Why don't you fly Jaimito to New York? He would love to come see some plays with us.

BEATRIZ:
God. I don't think Sandra would let him. He's too young.

DELIA:
He's already thirteen.

BEATRIZ:
I don't think she would let him.

DELIA:
I wonder what it would be like to have a sister. I wonder if even she would have made me feel like I had no family either.

(*BEATRIZ drinks.*)

DELIA:
Oh, God. I'm sorry.

BEATRIZ:
It's okay.

DELIA:

It's just... I don't know.

BEATRIZ:

It's -- not easy. Sometimes.

DELIA:

Why do people have to make everything more complex than it all is?

BEATRIZ:

I didn't help much stealing you away from Jorge.

DELIA:

Well, I had some say there too; it's not like I was, you know, kidnapped.

BEATRIZ:

After eighteen years of marriage.

DELIA:

That was some leap I meade, didn't I? Jesus!

BEATRIZ:

What do you get when you cross a lesbian with a dinosaur?

DELIA:

Oh God.

BEATRIZ:

A Lickalottapus.

DELIA:

(laughs)

Jesus!... That IS really funny. I'm glad it didn't have the "d" word in it.

BEATRIZ:

I heard that today. At the "Five and Dime." Two high school boys.

DELIA:

God. High school was hard. The pretending, you know?

BEATRIZ:

There was a lot of that.

DELIA:

It was hard. That age was hard.

BEATRIZ:

It still is.

DELIA:

That age?

BEATRIZ:

No. Ours. It can be. Hard.

DELIA:

Sometimes. And then you get a letter from Jaimito.

BEATRIZ:

(smiles)

Yes.

DELIA:

You have a beautiful smile.

BEATRIZ:

And you're irresistible when you're pissed off.

DELIA:

Am I?

BEATRIZ:

When you frown, I can't even contain myself.

DELIA:

You're gonna make me blush between bouts of vomiting.

BEATRIZ:

(looking around:)

Where the hell are our drinks?

DELIA:

It's weird to have a family that makes you feel as if you didn't have a family.

BEATRIZ:

You make your own.

DELIA:

Yeah... but, you know.

BEATRIZ:

What?

DELIA:

It would be nice.

BEATRIZ:

A lot of things would be nice.

DELIA:

Yes.

BEATRIZ:

Do you think if I go behind the bar and start making our own drinks they'll get the hint?

DELIA:

Try it. I'll tip.

BEATRIZ:

Look at the trees in the Plaza. What a view.

DELIA:

It's nice. Look. Those young lovers down there.

BEATRIZ:

God. They're probably still in high school.

DELIA:

How long do you think that'll last?

BEATRIZ:

Hopefully a long time.

DELIA:

Fifteen years?

BEATRIZ:

(smiles)

Sixteen. It's almost sixteen.

DELIA:

We're getting on.

BEATRIZ:

Honey, we got on a long time ago.

DELIA:

Look at them. Kissing. In the middle of the Plaza.

BEATRIZ:

Yes.

DELIA:

Wouldn't it be nice?

BEATRIZ:

It's a hot day. I hope they're wearing sunblock.

(CONTINUED)

DELIA:

Thanks for being here.

BEATRIZ:

Why not? We love Santa Fe.

DELIA:

Thanks for being HERE.

BEATRIZ:

Oh. Of course.

(Looks out to the Plaza)

It's beautiful out there.

DELIA:

The drinks never came.

BEATRIZ:

Who cares?

DELIA:

A lot of things would be nice...

(Beat)

Can you read it?

BEATRIZ:

Huh?

DELIA:

Why don't you read it?

BEATRIZ:

Okay.

(Reads letter:)

"Dear Aunt Beatriz: I am writing to say hi. Can you believe I start seventh grade next month? Already. How's Delia? Tell her hi. I dared mention your name at dinner. The table got quiet. Then I mentioned Delia's name too, and I made sure I mentioned it in the same sentence. You could hear a pin drop."

(They laugh)

"Then mom changed the subject. I took a chance. But I didn't care. When I grow up I promise I will see you more often. Thanks for the fifty dollars. I won't tell anybody. Please say hi to Delia. I like her. This is a secret, but I know that mom still uses your rice pudding recipe. But I don't want to say anything so she won't stop. I love you very much. And anything you want to do is OK by me. I miss you. Jaime. PS: I'll write you some more very soon. I'm going to the movies now."

(CONTINUED)

(Silence)

BEATRIZ:

(looking at the Plaza)
So beautiful, out there.

DELIA:

It's beautiful in here too.

(They look at each other.)

DELIA:

A lot of things ARE nice. In here.

BEATRIZ:

Shall I get your drink? You okay?

DELIA:

I AM okay. You?

BEATRIZ:

YOU'RE okay?

DELIA:

I am. I really am.

(BEATRIZ smiles, then nods:)

BEATRIZ:

Then so am I.

THE END