

FLOR DE GRANADA [POMEGRANATE FLOWER] by Jackson Used

SYNOPSIS

Isabella arrives in Cordoba, where she meets Leni, a charismatic and recently unemployed villager who pulls Isabella towards her, convincing her with wine and words to stay in Cordoba before setting out for Madrid.

In Spain, 1957, two Nationalist soldiers, Jose Luis and Miguel, stop at a cantina in Cordoba. It is winter and the cold creeps in through every imperfection in each brick. They barter with Carmen, the bartender, squabbling over payment for their wine and bread. Maria enters the cantina, drawing the attention of the two soldiers. She asks them where they have come from, but they avoid her questions. We hear gunfire outside.

As the play continues we see these stories overlapping and connecting to one another. We learn the truth of Isabella's intentions in Spain: The government believes that the remains of some of Isabella's family might be buried at the Valley of the Fallen, a Francoist monument to the tragic loss of life from the Spanish Civil War. In 1957, a villager bursts into the cantina, only to be shot down by Jose. The connection between Maria and Isabella grows as we see Isabella confront the memories of her family's past: Maria is the grandmother who she never got to meet. Maria confronts the two soldiers at knifepoint, demanding they return the remains of her brother, a Republican soldier who died during the civil war.

CHARACTER LIST

1957

MARIA	F	A defiant farmer
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MIGUEL	M	A war veteran
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JOSE	M	A young soldier
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CARMEN	F	The innkeeper
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VILLAGER	F	An innocent
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PRESENT DAY

ISABELLA	F	A traveller
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LENI	F	A local
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FUNCIONARIO	M	A government official
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SOFIA	F	Leni's friend
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DOUG	M	Her partner
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ADDITIONAL CHARACTERS

CAMARERO, PEDRO, STRANGER, ENFERMERO, MEDICA

These roles can be doubled and performed with a cast of five.

English translations from Spanish are notated with square brackets beneath the Spanish dialogue. The first act should contain no translations from Spanish to English.

MARIA: Basta. Vas a venir conmigo a la camioneta.
[Enough. You're going to come with me to the truck.]

MIGUEL: Estas sangrando.
[You're bleeding.]

MARIA: Muéstrame dónde está.
[Show me where he is.]

MIGUEL: Eso es demasiada sangre.
[That's too much blood.]

MARIA: Camina a la puerta.
[Walk to the door.]

MIGUEL: Te estás muriendo, María.
[You're dying, Maria.]

MARIA: Mírame. Mírame a los ojos.
[Look at me. Look me in the eye.]

Miguel meets her gaze. He sighs.

MIGUEL: Ojalá pudieras ver lo que yo veo. Cuando conducimos desde Madrid.
[I wish you could see what I see. When we drove from Madrid.]

MARIA: No vives donde yo vivo.
[You don't live where I live.]

MIGUEL: Ver cambiar los colores. Son grises mundanos dando paso al suelo.
[Watching the colours shift. They mundane grey giving way to soil.]

MARIA: Te Vas a morir.
[You're going to die.]

MIGUEL: Lo se.
[I know.]

MARIA: Tráemelo y te dejaré ir.
[Bring him to me and I'll let you go.]

MIGUEL: Me odias y me dejarías caminar.
[You hate me and you would let me walk.]

MARIA: Solo lo quiero a él.
[I only want him.]

MIGUEL: No puedo ayudarte. Ese camión está lleno de huesos, pero no queda nada humano.
[I can't help you. That truck is filled with bones, but there is nothing human left.]

MARIA: Entonces se te acabó el tiempo.
[Then you're out of time.]

MIGUEL: Si.

Silence. Maria fires the rifle. Miguel stumbles back to the wall.

MIGUEL: Mira.
[Look.]

He slides down the back wall.

MIGUEL: Un desperdicio.
[Such a waste.]

His breath slows.

MIGUEL: Un desperdicio.
[So much waste.]

Maria drops the rifle. She takes a seat, pressing a hand to her wound. She looks at the blood on her hand.

MARIA: Rojo brillante.
[Bright red.]

As Maria starts to fade, we hold her image on the screen. Isabella, in Maria's clothes rises on stage. She works forward and starts to remove Maria's clothes, washing the blood from her body.

MARIA: Tengo un sabor dulce en mis labios.
[I taste sweet on my lips.]

ISABELLA: You were much stronger than me. Abuela.

MARIA: Frunciendo mis mejillas. Semillas rojas derramándose de mi.
[Puckering my cheeks. Red seeds spilling from me.]

ISABELLA: You can taste pomegranates. Me too. You have my mother's temper. Or I think, she has yours. The same beauty too. I can hear you. The words sound like a memory.

Maria applies more pressure.

ISABELLA: This is how you died. My mother could never say. She never really knew, but we didn't talk about you. My grandfather, your husband, he died when I was young. It was just Mum and I. We never spoke of Spain. A whole geography of our history held back from me. And it tears my heart open knowing, but I couldn't feel anything before it. I want to mourn you, remember you in grief. I resented her for that. My mother. Felt like she robbed something of me. These impulses that fire when I see a certain colour or remember a scent from before I was born but the words aren't there. The idea is distant, a forgotten dream. But I was a child. Up until this moment. Even in this moment. Knowing you is a relief, shifting weight that left a rash upon my shoulders.

Pause.

ISABELLA: I used to think, how can we have the same family then? When we use different words. All I have are sketches. Vague outlines of stories. Of root systems.

On screen, Maria looks up towards Isabella.

MARIA: Isabella.

Isabella looks at the screen.

ISABELLA: Abuela?

MARIA: Te veo
[I see you.]

ISABELLA: You do?

MARIA: Eres mi nieta.
[You are my granddaughter.]

ISABELLA: Yes. I am.

MARIA: De mi Amalia.
[From my Amalia.]

ISABELLA: My mother's name. Amalia.

MARIA: ¿No ves esas cuerdas que nos atan desde los huesos de tu muñeca?
[You don't see those strings that tie us from the bones of your wrist?]

Isabella looks at her wrist, brushing it with her other hand.

ISABELLA: I've felt alone in myself for a long time. I missed that part of myself. I don't know that part.

MARIA: No, Isabella. Simplemente no sabías dónde mirar.
[No, Isabella. You just didn't know where to look.]

ISABELLA: Don't dismiss it, please. It's real. All that aching I felt for a home I never knew.
It was real to me.

MARIA: Por supuesto mi amor. Puedes descansar aquí. Descansa conmigo.
[Of course, my love. You can rest here. Rest with me.]

ISABELLA: You're dying.

MARIA: No. Ambos estamos aquí, ¿no?
[No. We are both here, aren't we?]

ISABELLA: You have this world of words that I don't belong to.

MARIA: ¿Amalia nunca te enseñó nuestra lengua?
[Amalia never taught you our tongue?]

Isabella shakes her head.

MARIA: Eso me hiera.
[That wounds me.]

ISABELLA: It's like she was trying to get rid of everything to do with this place. To do
with home.

MARIA: Nunca llegué a casa.
[I never came home.]

ISABELLA: I know.

MARIA: No es una sorpresa entonces.
[It's no surprise then.]

ISABELLA: One time I fought with her. She was quiet at first and then broke. Yelling
through tears. She said I lost my mother. I lost my home with her.

MARIA: Entonces nos hemos encontrado. Juntas otra vez.
[Then we have found each other. Back together again.]

ISABELLA: Funny how that worked out.

Pause.

ISABELLA: *Te quiero.*

MARIA: Oh. Mi lengua.
[Oh. My tongue.]

ISABELLA: How are you feeling?

MARIA: I love you, child.

ISABELLA: I meant your wound.

MARIA: No te preocupes ahora. Háblame. Necesito conocerte.
[Don't fret now. Talk to me. I need to know you.]

ISABELLA: I miss the way my house would smell when Mum cooked from home. It didn't happen often. Just when the family was over. Less and less over the years.

MARIA: Ahora tu casa puede oler igual. Te enseñaré. Darte todo lo que pueda.
[Now your home can smell the same. I'll teach you. Give you everything I can.]

ISABELLA: How?

MARIA: Está en ti.
[It's in you.]

ISABELLA: It doesn't smell the same. I can use the same spices but it's different.

MARIA: Tal vez olerás más como yo cuando seas mayor.
[Maybe you'll smell more like me when you're older.]

ISABELLA: Old woman. You look so young.

MARIA: Yes.

ISABELLA: I wish I got to watch you get older.

MARIA: Vas a. Mirame junto al agua, mirándote fijamente
[You will. See me by the water, staring back at you.]

Silence.

ISABELLA: It's getting late. Isn't it?

MARIA: Tu mente podría no saber las palabras. Pero tu piel lo hará. La médula de tu huesos.
[Your mind might not know the words. But your skin will. The marrow of your bones.]

Maria reaches for Isabella.

MARIA: Venir.
[Come.]

Isabella shakes her head.

ISABELLA: I don't want to leave yet.

MARIA: Bueno. Pero solo un poco más.
[Okay. But just a little longer.]

Maria holds her wound. Her hand is thick with blood.

MARIA: Pensé en Amalia mientras yacía aquí.
[I thought of Amalia as I lay here.]

Pause.

MARIA: Su padre sacándola de sus sábanas. Arrancado de la tierra y acunado a un nuevo hogar.
[Her father pulling her from her bedsheets. Plucked from the earth and cradled to a new home.]

ISABELLA: I'm so sorry, Abuela.

MARIA: Hubiera sido repentino. El paisaje deslizándose de ella como sus mantas. Eran todo mi mundo. Y los entregué por venganza, pero no pude irme con mi hermano. Le debía eso.
[It would have been sudden. The landscape slipping off her like her blankets. They were my whole world. And I gave them up for vengeance. But I couldn't leave my brother. I owed him that.]

ISABELLA: But if you had stayed...

MARIA: Lo sé.
[I know.]

Pause.

MARIA: ¿Puedo ver tus manos?
[Can I see your hands?]

Isabella nods, holding up her hands.

MARIA: Misma línea.
[Same lines.]

Maria moves a hand to her forehead.

ISABELLA: Will I be able to come back here?

Maria shakes her head.

ISABELLA: So this is it?

MARIA: No angel. Iré contigo.
[No, angel. I will go with you.]

Maria begins to hum.

ISABELLA: That song.

Isabella hums with Maria.

MARIA: Tú lo sabes. Solía cantarla para tu madre.
[You know it. I used to sing it for your mother.]

ISABELLA: She would hum it to me as a child.

Maria smiles.

ISABELLA: What is it called?

MARIA: Granada.

Maria begins to sing.

Granada, tierra soñada por mí

Mi cantar se vuelve gitano cuando es para tí

Mi cantar hecho de fantasía

Mi cantar flor de melancolía

Que yo te vengo a dar

Isabella joins Maria as music plays.

Granada

Tierra ensangrentada

En tardes de toros

Mujer que conserva el embrujo

De los ojos moros;

Te sueño rebelde y gitana
Cubierta de flores
Y beso tu boca de grana
Jugosa manzana
Que me habla de amores
Granada manola
Cantada en coplas preciosas
No tengo otra cosa que darte
Que un ramo de rosas
De rosas de suave fragancia
Que le dieran marco a la virgen morena
Granada
Tu tierra está llena
De lindas mujeres
De sangre y de sol

The music fades. Eventually, Isabella speaks.

ISABELLA: Those words. I felt them falling out of me. Melody given text.

MARIA: Tienes una hermosa voz.
[You have a beautiful voice.]

ISABELLA: You taught me, through my mother.

MARIA: Isabella, necesito que hagas algo por mí.
[Isabella, I need you to do something for me.]

ISABELLA: Anything.

MARIA: ¿Le dirás a tu madre que lo siente? ¿De mi parte? Dile que mi mente nunca la dejó, que mi espíritu llama incluso ahora.
[Will you tell your mother sorry? From me? Tell her that my mind never left her, that my spirit calls even now.]

ISABELLA: Okay, Abuela.

MARIA: Te veo
[I see you.]

ISABELLA: I see you.

MARIA: Bien.
[Good.]

ISABELLA: *Bien.*

The music picks up once more as the image of Maria begins to fade. Black out. The music continues in the darkness.