

# **EXTREMADURA**

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*Catalina exits  
Cortés watches her go  
He crosses and opens a window  
He breathes the fresh air  
He climbs out the window  
He does so awkwardly and painfully  
He is still quite tipsy on his feet  
He finally makes it out  
He falls into the dirt  
He lies there for a minute  
He laughs at himself  
He stares at the sky  
The only sounds are the chirping crickets and cicadas  
A woman enters: **Marina**  
She is young, almost a child  
With dark rich skin  
Cortés has never seen anyone like her before  
He watches her, transfixed  
He becomes inspired to stand  
He follows her  
She becomes aware she is being followed  
Covering her head and face  
She continues to walk, nervous  
She speeds up  
Cortés runs to catch up with her  
He grabs her hand  
She screams, turning around  
It is a different woman  
Not Marina but **Luciana**  
She is in her 30's, pretty*

LUCIANA

Ahh!  
Oh, Hernán! It is only you.

CORTÉS

I thought you were someone else. Someone younger. She had these eyes like black stones. So beautiful. Where did she go?

LUCIANA

It is only me Hernán. So sorry to disappoint.

*Cortés looks long and hard at Luciana*

CORTÉS

No Luciana. Not a disappointment at all.

*Luciana becomes uneasy*

LUCIANA

You frightened me.

CORTÉS

What do you have to be frightened of?

*Luciana just looks at him a moment*

LUCIANA

I thought you were in Salamanca? Your mother said—

CORTÉS

I just returned. Today.

LUCIANA

You are visiting?

CORTÉS

No. I am done with my schooling.

LUCIANA

You've barely been gone two years.

CORTÉS

I finished early. I am something of a prodigy. I am going to the new world.

LUCIANA

What happened to your face Hernán?

CORTÉS

I was robbed. On my way home.

LUCIANA

Oh my! You look terrible.

CORTÉS

You should see how they look.

LUCIANA

They?

CORTÉS

Yes. They. They tried to take my pack but I fought them off. There were three of them.

LUCIANA

Three? Three men?

CORTÉS

They certainly weren't women.

*Cortés makes a pass at Luciana  
Putting his hand somewhere he shouldn't  
Luciana moves his hand away*

LUCIANA

Hernán. You are 16 years old.

CORTÉS

So?

LUCIANA

You expect me to believe you beat up three grown men?

CORTÉS

I am strong for my age. And fast.

LUCIANA

You look scrawny to me.

CORTÉS

Looks can be deceiving.

*He again attempts to move his hand to an intimate place  
Luciana quickly moves his hand away*

LUCIANA

I have a husband, Hernán. You know this.

CORTÉS

How is old Mateo?

LUCIANA

He is doing very well Hernán. Thank you so much for asking. But I must be on my way now.

*Luciana makes to depart  
Cortés takes her hand again*

CORTÉS  
Wait. You can't go yet.

LUCIANA  
And why not?

*Cortés suddenly kisses Luciana  
On the lips  
Luciana tries to pull away  
Cortés holds her fast*

CORTÉS  
Luciana. You are so beautiful.

LUCIANA  
I'm old enough to be your mother Hernán.

CORTÉS  
I've been in love with you my entire life.

LUCIANA  
Oh have you?

CORTÉS  
I have. You would come over to my house when I was little to gossip with my mother. I would watch you talking. Watch your lips moving. I love the way your lips move when you talk.

LUCIANA  
Don't speak this way to me Hernán. Please.

CORTÉS  
I'll speak however I like.

LUCIANA  
Do your parents even know you are here? Last I spoke to them they said you were doing well in your studies in Salamanca. They said they received a letter from your uncle detailing the many accomplishments of—

*Cortés kisses her aggressively again*

CORTÉS

Your lips Luciana. They move so well. But they are also so beautiful when they are still. When they part ever so slightly as you take a breath and the air fills your lungs as your breasts rise—

LUCIANA

You flatter me Hernán but your poetry needs work—

CORTÉS

Take me to your bed.

LUCIANA

Have you completely lost your mind?

CORTÉS

Yes. I have. I have completely lost my mind.

LUCIANA

This is foolishness.

CORTÉS

Yes it is.

*He kisses her again  
He looks into her eyes*

LUCIANA

Let go of me.

CORTÉS

I'm not a little boy anymore Luciana.

LUCIANA

You are behaving exactly like a little boy.

CORTÉS

I am wild with desire.

LUCIANA

You are wild with something. Let me go Hernán, before you get us both in terrible trouble. Mateo will kill you if he sees us like this.

CORTÉS

Mateo isn't here. I passed him on my way into town. He said he had business to the south. He said he would be gone for days.

LUCIANA

It doesn't matter if he is here or not. He is still my husband, wherever he is.

CORTÉS

Are you going to tell him about me?

LUCIANA

Not if you let go of me right now, Hernán. Just let me go and we will never speak of this again.

*Beat*

*They are looking at each other intently*

*Cortés releases her*

*She backs away from him*

Goodnight Hernán.

*She turns her back and walks away*

*Cortés pursues her*

*Luciana keeps looking over her shoulder*

*She speeds up*

*He speeds up*

*As she approaches her door*

*Cortés advances and pins her against it*

Stop it. Please Hernán.

CORTÉS

I want you.

LUCIANA

The children will wake up. Please.

CORTÉS

I want you Luciana. And when you want something you have to go and take it. That is the way of the world. I have ambitions Luciana. I'll take what I want. I want you Luciana. I want you. I want you.

*Cortés reaches around her and opens the door*

*He holds onto her tightly*

*Luciana has stopped struggling*

*They make their way inside*

*The door closes behind them*

*The nighttime sounds become louder*

*The sounds of crickets and cicadas are deafening  
Gradually the stage lightens as dawn approaches  
**Mateo enters**  
He approaches his front door and opens it*

MATEO

Luciana, are you awake? I made it halfway to Mérida before I realized I had forgotten the money. Luciana?

*Mateo disappears inside the house  
All is still for a moment  
The crickets have died down  
Birds are beginning to chirp  
Finally: a scream*

LUCIANA

Mateo!

MATEO

Luciana!

*There is a loud crash  
Much scuffling  
A side window of the house opens  
Cortés is attempting to climb out of it  
His foot is caught on something unseen*

CORTÉS

Let me go!

*He attempts to thrust himself through the window  
He is moderately successful  
But his foot remains caught  
He falls wrong  
His leg is bent in a horrific manner  
Cortés screams in pain  
His foot is released  
He falls into the dirt  
He lies there crumpled up and broken*

*The stage suddenly goes dark  
All sound stops*

*The lights slowly rise on Cortés' tent*

*We are back in the year 1519  
A 34 year old Cortés sleeps in a bed  
In the dim light we begin to make out the form of Marina  
The young woman we saw earlier  
She sits by the side of Cortés' bed  
She is stroking Cortés' hair  
Cortés stirs  
He smiles at her*

Marina. CORTÉS

*Marina doesn't respond  
She continues absently stroking his hair*

Marina.

Who is Marina? MARINA

You. You are Marina. CORTÉS

Am I? MARINA

Yes. You've been given a Christian name now. Your old name is gone. CORTÉS

But— MARINA

Gone. Dead. CORTÉS  
You are Marina now. Yes?

...Yes. MARINA

Good. A Christian name is an invaluable gift. A name that God will recognize will get you into heaven. CORTÉS

MARINA

I don't think the Gods care what you are named.

CORTÉS

God, Marina. Singular. You mustn't persist in these heathen thoughts.

MARINA

It is... difficult. I am trying.  
But it is difficult.

CORTÉS

Say your name.

MARINA

...Marina.

CORTÉS

Again.

MARINA

Marina.

CORTÉS

And again.

MARINA

Marina Marina Marina.

*Cortés laughs a big hearty laugh*

CORTÉS

You see? Is it not beautiful?

MARINA

Beautiful.

CORTÉS

I want you, Marina.

*Marina shrugs*

MARINA

You have me.

CORTÉS

I dreamt I was a child again. In my hometown. You were there.

MARINA

Where is that?

CORTÉS

Across the sea. Very far away.

MARINA

I have never been across the sea.

CORTÉS

It was only a dream.

I chased after you. I caught you. But it wasn't you. It was another woman. You slipped through my fingers.

MARINA

I am... caught... now?

CORTÉS

Yes. I caught you. And I named you.

MARINA

Marina.

CORTÉS

That's right. Marina.

*Cortés is becoming groggy again  
He closes his eyes  
Marina stands and slips out of Cortés' tent*

Marina Marina Marina.

*The tent and everything else fades into darkness  
Cortés is a boy of 16 again  
Lying in bed with a broken leg  
Catalina is there  
Cortés gradually returns to consciousness*

Marina.

CATALINA

Hush Hernán.

CORTÉS

Where is Marina?

CATALINA

*Luciana isn't here Hernán.*  
For heaven's sake, the least you could do is remember her name.

CORTÉS

Luciana?  
Fuck that. Ahh!

*He cries out in pain  
Reaching for his broken leg  
Catalina holds his hands down*

CATALINA

Hernán. I don't think you are grasping the severity of the situation.

*Martín enters  
Shortly followed by Mateo  
Martín prevents Mateo from coming any further into the room*

MATEO

Your son deserves the severest of beatings!

MARTÍN

I assure you, a beating is the least of what he will get.

MATEO

Martín. Your son raped my wife.

MARTÍN

Mateo, be sensible.

MATEO

No you be sensible! Luciana deserves vengeance, as do I. I understand he is your son, but—

MARTÍN

I see no signs of struggle here. Your wife let him into her home Mateo, into YOUR home, when she thought you would be away.

MATEO

She swears on her life that he forced himself on her. Followed her home.

MARTÍN

If you believe her then you are a fool Mateo.  
Go home. Deal with your wife. I will deal with my son.

MATEO

No! She would never do this!

MARTÍN

The evidence speaks otherwise Mateo. Go home.

*Mateo looks at Cortés  
He spits at him before departing  
Martín approaches Cortés*

You little fucking idiot.

CATALINA

Language Martín.

MARTÍN

We are so generous with you. You quit your schooling and we arrange for you to travel to the new world, against my better judgement,, and THIS is how you repay our genericity? This is what you do with second chances?

*Martín waits for Cortés to respond  
Cortés sits in sullen silence  
Martín clenches his fists*

CATALINA

He has been injured enough, I think. Hmm?

*Martín suppresses his anger*

MARTÍN

You are right. He is broken and useless as it is.  
You hear me Hernán? You are useless.

CORTÉS

Useless in this world. Reborn in the new one.

*Martín laughs*

MARTÍN

No rebirth for you. You are stuck now. Stuck right here, just like the rest of us.  
Just remember I tried to help you Hernán. I tried to give you a better life.

*Martín exits*  
*Silence*

CATALINA

It will be alright Hernán. The new world is not for everyone. This world will do just fine. When you have healed we will find you a new purpose.

CORTÉS

No.

CATALINA

No?

CORTÉS

No. I am already on my way.