by

Tara Goldstein
Harriet’s House
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Developmental History

An early draft of Harriet’s House was read and critiqued by Gailey Road Productions’ Artistic Director Jocelyn Wickett in the spring of 2009.

A four-day workshop exploring the characters, themes and politics of Harriet’s House was undertaken by Gailey Road Productions from July 13-16, 2009. The workshop was facilitated by Jocelyn Wickett, managed by Gillian Lewis, and archived by Amy Gullage. Collaborating artists were:

Lara Arabian
Clair Acott
Sochi Fried
Jorie Morrow
Sora Olah

The post-workshop draft of the script was read and critiqued by playwrights and actors attending the 2009 International Women’s Playwright Conference in Mumbai, India in November 2009. They were:

Vanessa Adams-Harris (USA)
Kristin Bjorn (Norway)
Hina Siddiqui (India)
Denise Walsh (New Zealand)
Fiona Wheeler (Australia)

Finally, Sharon Singer, writer, poet and facilitator of The Moving Pen writing group, read and critiqued the post-conference draft of the script.

Harriet’s House premiered at Hart House Theatre on July 2, 2010 during the Pride Festival in Toronto. Jocelyn Wickett directed the production and music for the production was composed and performed by Dan Parker. The cast featured:

Harriet Joanne Latimer
Luisa Supinder Wraich
Ana Rebecca Applebaum
Anita Jorie Morrow
Marty Julie Burris
Clare Estée Feldman

The production attracted 450 people over its three-day run.
Characters

HARRIET: School teacher, mother of three daughters, the first two adopted from Colombia. Jewish. Ages from 44 to 46.

LUISA: Harriet’s eldest daughter, adopted from Colombia at the age of 10. Ages from 17 to 19.

ANA: Harriet’s middle daughter, adopted from Colombia at the age of 7. Ages from 14 to 16 and is lighter-skinned than Luisa.


MARTY: School teacher, Harriet’s girlfriend/partner. Ages from 39 to 41.


Place
Harriet’s kitchen, Toronto, Canada.
An orphanage, Bogotá, Colombia.

Time
The present
Pre-show music
(At the 5-minute call a selection of Dan Parker’s music begins. The music fades as the lights come down for scene 1.)

Scene 1 (December)

(HARRIET’s kitchen. Dan’s Salsa Loop [Track 2] opens the scene. ANA is in the kitchen dancing to the music. HARRIET and LUISA enter arguing. The music fades.)

HARRIET
(Heated) Over my dead body.

LUISA
Oh, please.

HARRIET
You’re going to start university this January, just like we’ve been planning —

LUISA
(Calm, cool) I’m going home.

HARRIET
Colombia’s not your home.

ANA
Here we go again.

HARRIET
This is your home.

LUISA
This is your home.

HARRIET
You can go in the spring. After classes are done.

LUISA
I’m not waiting.

HARRIET
There’s no rush. The Sisters will still need your help at the orphanage in the spring. Or we can all go together in the summer when school finishes.
LUISA
I’m leaving right after New Years.

HARRIET
No you’re not.

LUISA
I already bought the ticket.

HARRIET
Then you’ll have to cancel it. You’re only 17 and you can’t go without my permission.

LUISA
I’m going back and you can’t stop me.

HARRIET
Yes, I can.

ANA
Just let her go.

HARRIET
I will not!

LUISA
I promised you that I’d finish high school here and I did. I fast-tracked so I could get out early. Now I’m leaving.

HARRIET
What about the scholarship you just won? I assumed that –

LUISA
I don’t care about the scholarship.

HARRIET
Don’t be crazy. You’ll be more useful in Colombia if you go to university. They need doctors, nurses, teach—

LUISA
January 7.

ANA
Just let her go. She might not even like it there. Then she’ll come back and go to university. Don’t you think?
(To LUISA) Will you?

HARRIET

LUISA

I’m going to like it there. It’s where I belong.

HARRIET

Maybe, maybe not. You were ten when you left.

LUISA

It’s my home. My real home.

HARRIET

How can you say that?

ANA

Do we have to go through this again?

LUISA

You can’t take a girl of ten from her home in Colombia and expect her to forget where she comes from.

HARRIET

I never asked you to forget! (Beat) I don’t want you to go.

LUISA

We’ve been talking about this for a year. I’m going.

HARRIET

But now you have a scholarship. Give university a chance.

LUISA

No.

HARRIET

One semester. Give it one semester.

LUISA

No.

HARRIET

Why not?

ANA

She wants to find our birth mother.
(Surprised) What?

Shut up!

We never found out what happened to her.

She was sick. Very sick. And she couldn’t take care of you.

Maybe she got better. Maybe she’s alive.

Is that what you think? You think she’s alive?

(Neither LUISA and ANA answer.)

(Gentle) If she had gotten better, she would have come back for you. You were at the orphanage for three years and …

But that doesn’t mean she died. Did any of the Sisters ever actually tell you how she died?

(Thinking) No, but –

I want to know what happened to her. And if she’s alive, I want to meet her.

You can understand that, can’t you?

Of course you can. You love me. And it’s because you love me that you’re going to give me permission to go back to Colombia.

When will you come back?

When I’m ready.
ANA

Oh, oh.

HARRIET

That’s not good enough.

LUISA

(Defensive) How do I know when I’ll be back when I haven’t even gone yet?

HARRIET

You’ll come back in August. In time to start university in the fall.

LUISA

I’m not –

HARRIET

If you want my permission to go, you’ll come back in August and do a full year of university here. A full year. In exchange for my permission to go now.

ANA

That’s fair.

LUISA

Whose side are you on?

ANA

It’s a fair deal. You owe her that much. Don’t you think?

HARRIET

(Angry) No one owes me anything! I am your mother! And I’m doing what mothers do! Making sure my daughter gets the best that I can give her. You have a chance to go to university. On scholarship! University is a privilege. How many girls in that orphanage get to go to university? None. That’s how many. You get to go. You’re going to go. You’re going to try it. One year.

ANITA

(Sticks head into kitchen and returns offstage) What’s taking you so long? People are asking for you.

HARRIET

One year.

(LUISA doesn’t answer.)

One year or I don’t let you go.

LUISA

All right. One year.
HARRIET
And you’ll live at the orphanage with the Sisters like you said you would.

LUISA
Yes.

HARRIET
And you’ll call once a week.

LUISA
Yes.

HARRIET
I have your word?

LUISA
Yes.

HARRIET
All right, then.

(HARRIET gives LUISA a kiss.)

ANA
Good. (ANA takes LUISA’s hand) Let’s go dance now. I’m not spending all of Colombia Night in the kitchen arguing.

(As ANA and LUISA leave, ANITA enters peeved.)

ANITA
I’m so mad.

HARRIET
(Distracted, still upset by what’s just happened) Why?

ANITA
One of the newcomers just asked me: “Isn’t it better for the children to be adopted by families living in their birth countries?” If he isn’t serious about adopting what’s he doing at Colombia Night, wasting my time?

HARRIET
Maybe he is serious, but just trying to figure out where he stands on the issue before –
ANITA
(Angry) “Issue”? What issue? There’s no issue. Children who need a home should get a home. Wherever it is. (Beat) Never mind. We need to mingle.
(She starts to leave.)
Aren’t you coming?

HARRIET
I need a minute, okay?

(ANITA waves without looking back and leaves. Dan’s Salsa Loop [Track 2] begins again while HARRIET sits down at the island and allows herself to feel the weight of what’s she’s just done, given LUISA permission to go to Bogotá. The music closes the scene and opens scene 2.)

Scene 2 (The next day)

(HARRIET’s kitchen. HARRIET and her girlfriend MARTY, age 35, are sitting at the island. There are milk and cookies on the island counter.)

MARTY
You’re letting her go?

HARRIET
Yeah.

MARTY
What happened?

HARRIET
She used the L word.

MARTY
Lesbian?! You told her about us?

HARRIET
No, no, no. Another L word. Love. She said I’d understand why she had to go back because I loved her.

MARTY
Oh. (Disappointed) So you didn’t tell her about us.

HARRIET
No.
MARTY
We were going to spend Christmas together.

HARRIET
We *are* going to spend Christmas together.

MARTY
Out of the closet.

HARRIET
, I know. But with Luisa leaving in a couple of weeks ... There’s just so much going on right now.

There’s always a lot going on.

HARRIET
(Takes her hand) Don’t give up on me.

MARTY
(Squeezes her hand) You need to tell them. It’s been six months. You’ve got to trust them. You can’t let Luisa go without knowing.

HARRIET
(Still holding MARTY’s hand) I know, know. It’s just that … I had no idea how difficult it was going to be. In the beginning, it was all so simple. There were children out there who needed a home. I had a home. There were children who needed a family. I wanted a family. The children were from Colombia. So what? I always thought that when the time came, we’d go back to Colombia together, all four of us. I never imagined that Luisa would insist on going back by herself, that –

(CLARE, age 11, calls out from offstage. HARRIET drops MARTY’s hand.)

CLARE
¡hola, Harriet!

HARRIET
¡hola!

MARTY
She calls you Harriet?

HARRIET
She wants to be just like her sisters. They call me Harriet.

(CLARE enters and gives HARRIET a hug and kiss on both cheeks and takes a cookie.)
How was school?

CLARE
Good. Want to know what I learned in Spanish class? *(Takes a bite of her cookie)* Can I have some milk.

HARRIET
Sure. *(Pours Clare some milk)* Do you remember Marty? You met her that night you came to school with me to help out with the bake sale.

MARTY
Hi.

CLARE
Hi. I learned how to count to fifty. I already knew how to count to forty. Now I can count to fifty. Want to hear?

*(Takes a sip of milk).*

HARRIET
Where’s Ana?

CLARE
Outside. *Cuarenta y uno, cuarenta dos, cuarenta tres* –

HARRIET
What’s she doing outside?

CLARE
Talking. *Cuarenta cuatro, cuarenta cinco, cuarenta seis* –

HARRIET
Talking to who?

CLARE
Luisa. *Cuarenta siete*,

HARRIET
Luisa’s home too?

CLARE
Yes. *Cuarenta ocho* –
HARRIET
What are they talking about?

CLARE
I’m not sure. They’re talking too fast. Cuarenta neuve, cincuenta!

MARTY
Muy bien.

CLARE
Graçias. Wait until Luisa hears!

(LUISA and ANA enter and put their knapsacks down on the floor. There’s a lot of after school energy in kitchen, with the girls sometimes talking over each other.)

Want to hear me count from one to fifty? Uno, dos, tres –

LUIZA
Later. (To Ana) Have you seen my blue shirt?

ANA
(Takes a cookie, pours herself some milk) No.

LUIZA
Are you sure? The last time --

ANA
The last time what?

HARRIET
I just washed it. Say hi to Marty.

LUIZA and ANA
(In unison, like school kids) Hi Marty.

MARTY
(Chooses to laugh) Hi.

(LUISA pours herself some milk.)

CLARE
Is Marty your real name?

MARTY
It’s my real name now.

CLARE
What was your real name before?
MARTY
If I tell you, do you promise not to tell anyone else?

CLARE
(Excited she’s getting in on a secret) Yes.

MARTY
C’mere.

(CLARE goes over to MARTY who leans over and whispers her name into CLARE’s ear.)

CLARE
Oh!

ANA
What is it?

CLARE
It’s a secret! (Beat) Between Marty and me.

You want to hear another secret?

LUISA
(Thrilled) Yes!

CLARE
I’m going back to Colombia.

When?

LUISA
After Christmas.

CLARE
When are you coming back?

HARRIET
(Quick) When school starts in the fall.

CLARE
(Upset) You’re not coming to the cottage this summer with Daddy – I mean Jonathon?
LUISA

No.

CLARE

I don’t want you to go.

LUISA

I have to go.

CLARE

Why?

LUISA

I need to find my mother.

CLARE

Harriet’s your mother.

HARRIET/LUISA

Her birth mother/My real mother.

CLARE

Harriet’s your real mother.

LUISA

She’s your real mother.

CLARE

(Reaches out to hug LUISA, but LUISA walks away to get a cookie) I don’t want you to go!

(HARRIET stands up and comforts her.)

HARRIET

Luisa will call once a week. And she’ll write to you.

CLARE

(Hopeful) In Spanish?

LUISA

(Laughs) You don’t know how to read Spanish yet.

CLARE

Yes, I do. A little. And Ana can help me. Right?
ANA
(Reaches for another cookie) I don’t read much better than you.

LUISA
Which is not something to be proud of. So I’ll write to both of you in Spanish. So both of you can practice.

CLARE
Promise?

LUISA
Promise.

(Dan’s Luisa’s Ballad-1 [Track 3] closes the scene and opens scene 3.)

Scene 3 (January: One month later)

(HARRIET’s kitchen. MARTY is helping ANA tape up her hockey stick.)

MARTY
Keep the tape tight. You don’t want any bumps.

ANA
Okay.

MARTY
That’s good.

ANA
(Stops taping) How old were you when you started playing?

MARTY
Older than you. In my twenties. Hardly any girls played hockey when I was in high school.

ANA
Too bad. Don’t you think?

MARTY
Yeah.

ANA
Maybe I could come to one of your games sometime.

MARTY
Sure. That’d be great.
When are they?

Monday nights. You could come to one of the early games. They start at 6:30.

And then maybe you could come to one of mine. We play on Saturdays.

How early?

Not too early. Ten.

Ten!

That’s not early!

(Grins) I know. I was just joking. I’d love to come see you play.

Have you ever coached?

Nope.

Would you like to?


(Starts taping again) Can I ask you something?

What? Be careful, it’s a little bumpy there.

(Pulls back the tape that made the bump) Are you and Harriet …
MARTY
(Is silent for a split second) Are me and Harriet what?

ANA
You know …

MARTY
Are Harriet and I …

ANA
(Stops taping) Are you her girlfriend?
(MARTY doesn’t answer.)
I don’t mean a friend who’s a girl. I mean girlfriend.

MARTY
(Makes a decision) Yes.

ANA
I knew it!

(ANA walks away and gets a cookie. Her back is to MARTY.)

MARTY
(Worried) Is that okay?

ANA
Does Luisa know?

MARTY
I don’t know. Harriet was going to tell her before she left, but in the end she didn’t. But if you knew, maybe Luisa does too.

ANA
I didn’t know until you starting coming over. After Luisa left. (Beat) Why didn’t Harriet tell her?

MARTY
I’m not sure.

ANA
(Turns to face MARTY) Luisa can be difficult. Like when we go out shopping to buy clothes? All three of us go to the mall together, and any of the clothes that I like have to be approved by Luisa before we buy them. I actually have two mothers.

MARTY
Really?
Ana

Luisa was the one who took care of me in the orphanage before Harriet and Jonathon adopted us. I was four and she was seven and she took care of me. For three years.

Marty

Wow.

Ana

Yeah. But just so you know, if you ever decide to live with us, I don’t need a third mother.

Marty

Right.

Ana

Having two is hard enough.

Marty

Right.

Ana

Do you want to know what I really need?

Marty

Sure.

Ana

I really need a hockey coach.

Marty

(Amused) Oh, yeah?

Ana

Ours is leaving at the end of the season.

Marty

That’s too bad.

Ana

Yeah. (Beat) It’s probably a good thing that Harriet didn’t tell Luisa. Don’t you think?

Marty

I don’t know. It’s never good to hide something like this. It comes back to bite you.
ANA
We should tell Harriet that I know.

MARTY
We should. Do you want to tell her or should I?

ANA
I can do it.

MARTY
Okay. What are you going to say?

(NAHEEET walks into the living room behind MARTY who doesn't see her come in.)

ANA
(To HARREET) I know about you and Marty. And it’s cool.

(MARTY grins.)

HARREET
You know?!

(MARTY, surprised, turns around quickly to face HARREET.)
You told her?!

ANA
(Quick) I asked her. And it’s cool. Marty and I really like each other.

(MARTY grins again) We do.

ANA
And she’s going to be our new hockey coach!

MARTY and HARREET (at the same time)
I am/She is?!

ANA
(To MARTY) Yeah. (Beat) It’ll be fun. Don’t you think?

MARTY
(Grins) Yeah. It’ll be fun. (To HARREET) One down. Two to go.

HARREET
Three. Three to go. I still need to tell Anita.
ANA

(To MARTY) Anita can be nice, but you have to be careful not to get into an argument with her.

HARRIET

Ana!

ANA

I mean I respect her, and everything. She’s very devoted to the orphanage. She’s always raising money to buy them things they need. Books, clothes, Christmas presents. But, really, you don’t want to get her mad.

MARTY

What makes her mad?

ANA

People who say it’s better for children to be adopted by families living in their birth countries. She tells them off. (Speaking in ANITA’s voice, passionate, and a little righteous) Thousands of children who have been abandoned by their families are growing up in orphanages all over the world. Children who need a home should get a home. Wherever it is. Children should never be the victims of politics. (Speaking in her own voice) So be careful when you meet her. Don’t get into an argument.

HARRIET

(To MARTY) What you have to understand is that Anita is adopted herself. And because she’s –

ANA

I’m going outside and try out my stick.

HARRIET

Oh. Okay. (Beat) So everything’s okay?

ANA

(Kisses HARRIET on the cheek) Yes. Everything’s okay. Don’t worry.

(ANA leaves with her hockey stick.)

MARTY

(Anxious) Are you mad? It just came out. I didn’t plan to tell her or anything. She just asked. Out of the blue. And I don’t like lying. Especially about being gay. I never lie about being gay. So I told her. I know it wasn’t my place but –

HARRIET

(Puts her arms around her) It’s fine. Don’t worry. You heard her. It’s okay. Everything’s okay.
MARTY
As long as I don’t get into an argument with Anita.
(They laugh. They hug. They laugh).
We’re out! We’re finally out. It feels great, doesn’t it?

HARRIET
(Steps out of the hug and looks at MARTY) Yeah. It does. It really does. It feels great.

(She takes MARTY’s hand and gives her a kiss. A lover’s kiss.)

(Dan’s Uncertainty [Track 4] closes the scene and opens scene 4.)

Scene 4 (March: Two months later)

(HARRIET’S kitchen. HARRIET and ANITA are making sandwiches. There is a jar of mustard, the fixings for sandwiches and a dishtowel.)

ANITA
I know it’s last minute, but Belinda –

HARRIET
Cancelled at the last minute. No problem. I’m happy to do it.

ANITA
You’re a doll. You always come through for me. You know what newcomers want to know. They want to know what –

HARRIET
Adopting Luisa and Ana was like.

ANITA
And how long –

HARRIET
We had to wait.

ANITA
If you had any –

HARRIET
Problems in Colombia. (Laughs) Don’t worry, I know.

ANITA
(Warm) Of course you know. So you’ll come next Sunday. Seven to –
HARRIET
Nine. I’ll be there.

ANITA
(Warm) Thank you.

HARRIET
You’re welcome. How many of these do we need to make?

ANITA
Twenty. Can you keep them in your fridge for now? I’ll pick them up later.

HARRIET
Sure. I’ll make room. Somehow.

ANITA
It’s so busy this time of year. There’s the annual advisory board meeting tonight and Passover is just around the corner. You and the girls are able to come?

HARRIET
(Excited, waiting for the invitation) We’d love to come. (Beat, takes a nervous breath) How do you feel about me bringing a friend?

ANITA
(Teases) A special friend?

HARRIET
Yeah.

ANITA
Finally! Mazel Tov! Do you have enough Saran to cover the sandwiches?

HARRIET
I think so.

ANITA
Good. So what’s his name?

HARRIET
(Soft) It’s not a him.

ANITA
Sorry, what?

HARRIET
(Too loud) It’s not a him. It’s a her.
ANITA
(Not sure she’s heard right) What?

HARRIET
I’m seeing a woman.

ANITA
You’re seeing a woman?

HARRIET
Yes. I know it’s a bit of a surprise.

ANITA
I’ll say.

HARRIET
It was a surprise for me too. (Pause) Okay. So you’re happy for me, right?

ANITA
Do the girls know?

HARRIET
Ana and Clare know. And they both really like Marty.

ANITA
Marty?

HARRIET
It’s a nickname. For Martha.  
(ANITA doesn’t answer.)

You’re upset.

ANITA
Of course, I’m upset. This changes everything.

HARRIET
How? I’m still me.

ANITA
(Intense) No, you’re not. My Harriet was married for 13 years. I always assumed you’d get married again. Now all of a sudden you’re, you’re …
(Light) Coming out!

ANITA

(Remembers the phrase) Coming out of the cupboard!

HARRIET

(Hides a smile) Closet.

ANITA

What?

HARRIET

People say they’re coming out of the closet.

Whatever. How long have you known? That you’re a, a …

HARRIET

Lesbian? A while.

ANITA

And you never thought to mention it?

HARRIET

I guess I was afraid.

ANITA

Of what?

HARRIET

Of this! (Beat) Look, when Marty comes to Seder, you’ll have a chance to get to know her and once you do –

ANITA

Seder’s for family. We need to finish up here. It’s getting late.

HARRIET

I’m family. Ana and Clare are family.

ANITA

You and Ana and Clare can come.

HARRIET

What if I won’t come unless Marty comes too?
ANITA

Then you won’t come.

HARRIET

If I don’t come, then Ana and Clare won’t come. (ANITA doesn’t answer.)

Clare’s been practicing the four questions for weeks. In Spanish as well as Hebrew and English. You can’t disappoint her.

ANITA

I’m not the one who’s going to disappoint her. (Points her mustard covered knife at HARRIET) You are. (She gets mustard on her blouse.)

Shit! (She grabs the dishtowel and tries to take the mustard off her blouse.)

Shit, shit, shit. (She looks at her blouse.)

I need to wash this off before it stains. (ANITA begins to leave, dishtowel in hand.)

HARRIET

(Calls after her) But I’ve already invited her.

(ANITA stops.)

Well you shouldn’t have.

ANITA

Why?

HARRIET

You’re not the only one who comes to Global Seder. I have the other families to think about. Not everyone will approve of your new lifestyle, you know.

ANITA

But we’re the only Globals who are actually Jewish. You and I and the girls, we’ve been doing Seder from the very beginning.

HARRIET

You think I don’t know that?

ANITA

Look, Anita. You’re the force behind Global Family. You set the tone. If you make Marty welcome, so will they.
ANITA
(Scrubs at the mustard stain on her blouse, then) The others won’t approve. They’ll call me up the next day and tell me that the girls should be living in a family with a mother and a father. They’ll say Ana and Clare’s lives are complicated enough without having kids at school calling them names because their mother is a … a …

HARRIET
(Getting heated) Lesbian, Anita. The word is lesbian. Look, they’ll learn to deal with the homophobia the same way they learned to deal with the racism. What will make their lives more complicated is if you abandon us.

ANITA
(Scrubs at the stain again) Who’s abandoning you? You and the girls can all come to Seder.

HARRIET
But only if we come without Marty.

ANITA
Look, you don’t know how serious this is. What if it’s just a fling?

HARRIET
(More heated) It’s not a fling. (Beat) Not all gay relationships are casual, you know.

ANITA
If you’re still together a year from now, then we’ll talk.

HARRIET
You didn’t make Belinda wait a year before you invited the new man in her life to come to Seder.

ANITA
That was different.

HARRIET
How?

ANITA
I had a chance to get to know him. He was becoming part of the family.

HARRIET
If you invite Marty to Seder, you’ll get to know her too.

ANITA
Seder’s not the place to get to know someone.
HARRIET
All right. Come over for dinner then. Before Seder. Pick a night. Any night.

ANITA
I can’t. Not before Seder. Maybe after.

HARRIET
(Angry) This is so ironic. Seder is all about escaping and fighting oppression and here you are oppressing me and Marty because you’re afraid of what other people might think!

ANITA
(Angry) Hey! First of all, I don’t need a lecture from you about the meaning of Seder. And second of all, it’s not just about you and Marty. There are laws against gay people adopting children in lots of countries. What’s legal here is not legal everywhere. I have the reputation of my agency to think about. All those kids waiting to be adopted are depending on me. (Looks at her blouse) I’m going home to put on a new blouse. This one’s ruined. Call me if you change your mind. (Beat) I’ll send someone over to pick up the sandwiches.

(ANITA leaves. HARRIET is devastated. Her cheeks are hot with anger. She begins to make another sandwich and then stops and slams the knife on the counter.)

Scene 5 (August: Five months later)

(HARRIET’s kitchen. Dan’s Pop Song [Track 5] opens the scene. There’s a “Welcome Home Luisa” sign that Clare made that is attached to the island. HARRIET and CLARE wait for LUISA to wake up and come into the kitchen. HARRIET skims through the newspaper as she waits. The music fades.)

CLARE
It’s almost time for lunch. Can’t I wake her up?

HARRIET
No. Let her sleep.

CLARE
Why didn’t you wake me up when you got home?

HARRIET
It was one in the morning.

CLARE
So?
HARRIET
She was tired. She wanted to go straight to bed.

CLARE
How does she look?

HARRIET
Good. But tired.

CLARE
Is she glad to be back?

HARRIET
(Hesitates) Of course.

CLARE
I can’t wait. I’m going to wake her up.

HARRIET
(Quick) No. Don’t.

(LUISA enters in her pyjamas.)

LUISA
It’s okay. I’m up.

(CLARE runs over to her and throws her arms around her waist.)

CLARE
Luisa! You’re home! You’re finally home!

LUISA
Just like I promised.

CLARE
Did you see my welcome home sign?

LUISA
No! Where is it?

(CShe points to the sign) Right here!

CLARE

LUISA
Let me take a look at it.

(She takes a long look at the sign)
Que bella.
(She kisses CLARE on both cheeks.)
Gracias, Clara.
(CLARE is thrilled.)
I bought some presents for you and Ana and Harriet. They’re up in my room in a big red cloth bag. Go find them.

CLARE
Okay. I’ll be back in a minute.

(She leaves.)

HARRIET
How did you sleep?

LUISA
Okay.

HARRIET
Are you hungry?

LUISA
No. I woke up at 6:00 so I made a grilled cheese sandwich and went back to bed.

HARRIET
It’s wonderful to have you back.

LUISA
(Smiles) It’s nice to be back. (Beat) I meant what I said last night. I’ll stay and visit for a few weeks, but then I’m going back.

HARRIET
We’ll talk about it later, once you’ve had a chance to settle in.

LUISA
I’m not going to change my mind. I can’t focus on school or anything else until I find out what happened to her.

HARRIET
No one can tell you anything?

LUISA
If the Sisters know anything, they’re not saying.

HARRIET
Why?
LUISA
Who knows? Maybe because she asked them not to. But the longer I work there, the more they’ll trust me, and if I keep on asking one day someone will tell me.

HARRIET
Do you really think so?

LUISA
Yes. (Beat) So what’s new around here?

HARRIET
Well, actually, there is something important that’s happened just before you left –

CLARE
(Enters with the red bag) I’m back!

LUISA
(Laughs) That was fast! Bring it over and I’ll show you what I’ve brought!

(As LUISA hands out her gifts to CLARE and HARRIET Dan’s Pop Song [Track 5] closes the scene and opens scene 6.)

Scene 6 (That night)

(HARRIET’s kitchen. ANA and LUISA are at the island drying dishes, pots and pans. The music fades.)

LUISA
Estas cambiada. (“You’re different,” in a fundamental way.)

You think?

ANA

LUISA
Y no para bien (“And not in a good way.”)

(ANA shrugs her shoulders.)

Ya no hablas español. (“You don’t speak Spanish anymore.”)

So what?

ANA
LUISA

*Es nuestro idioma.* (“It’s our language.”)

ANA

Speak Spanish with Clare. She can count up to a thousand now.

LUISA

*i Caramba muchacha!* [“Jesus, girl”!] *No quiero hablar español con Clare. Yo quiero hablar contigo.* (“I don’t want to speak Spanish with Clare. I want to speak Spanish with you.”)

(ANA shrugs her shoulders.)

*Quiero que no lo tierdas.* (“I don’t want you to lose it.”)

ANA

You’ve been home for less than twenty-four hours and already you’re bossing me around. I don’t need it here.

LUISA

*Aquí no vas a pasar toda la vida.* (“You’re not going to be here all your life.”)

(Grounded) Yes, I am.

LUISA

(Switches to English) No, you aren’t. You’re going to go back someday.

ANA

How do you know?

LUISA

You’re going to be curious.

ANA

About what?

LUISA

About how people in Colombia live. What our culture’s like, what our music’s like.

ANA

(Puts down the dish/pot she’s dried) I know what Colombian music’s like. I’ve heard it. Lots of times.
(She takes her dishtowel and snaps it against LUISA’s backside playfully. It doesn’t hurt.)

    LUISA

Ow!

    (She takes her dishtowel and tries to snap it against ANA’s backside, but ANA moves away too quickly. Ana laughs.)

There’s more to Colombian music than Shakira, you know.

    ANA

(Picks up another pot, still grounded) I like Shakira.

    LUISA

(Excited) You need to hear some Reggaetón.

    ANA

Sahkira sings Reggaetón.

    (She begins to sing Hips Don’t Lie from Shakira’s Oral Fixation CD.)

    LUISA

I mean real Reggaetón. (Puts down the pot she’s dried) I want you to come back with me next summer.

    ANA

I already have plans.

    LUISA

What plans?

    ANA

(Puts down the pot she’s dried and picks up a third one) I’m going to work at Brian’s camp.

    LUISA

Brian, Brian, Brian. All I hear about is Brian. (Beat) He’s the reason you don’t speak Spanish anymore. He’s the reason you act white.

    ANA

You’re behind, I’ve done four you’ve done one.

    LUISA

(Picks up a pan/dish) Three. You’ve done three. (Beat) Don’t you want to meet her?

    ANA

Who?
Our Mamá.

(Puts down the dried pot and picks up another one and waves it in LUISA’s face) I’m way ahead of you. We should get the dishes done before Harriet gets back. Are you going to help?

Where is she?

She’s at the doctor. She told you.

(Starts drying again) We have to find out what happened to her.

Harriet?

No. Our Mamá.

If you haven’t found out by now, she’s probably dead.

But there’s no record of her death in our files. The Sisters looked.

So?

So, there’s a chance that she’s still alive. And that one day I’ll find her and we’ll get a chance to meet her.

I don’t need to meet her.

I don’t believe you. (Puts down the pot.) Maybe you look like her.

(Suddenly angry) Even if I do look like her, I’d never act like her. Every single thing inside of me comes from living here. In this family. In this country. (Raises her voice)
If you want to go back to Colombia, go! You want to look for a woman who left us and who is probably dead, go! Go look for her. But I’m staying here.

(HARRIET enters.)

HARRIET

What’s going on?

LUISA

Nothing.

HARRIET

(To ANA) Why are you shouting?

ANA

She made me mad.

HARRIET

(Light) Just like old times.

LUISA

All I did was ask her to come to Colombia with me next summer and she freaked out.

ANA

I didn’t freak out.

LUISA

Yes, you did.

(puts down the pot she’s drying, picks up another one.)

ANA

(Angry) No, I didn’t. I told you that I’m not going because I’ve got other plans. You just can’t take no for an answer.

HARRIET

(To ANA) You don’t want to go?

ANA

(Trying to be calm) No.

HARRIET

(Trying to buffer the tension) Well, there’s no rush. Most of the other Global kids don’t go back until they finish high school. You have plenty of time.
LUISA

*(Exasperated, puts the pot down with a bang)* You shouldn’t try and influence her that way.

HARRIET

I wasn’t trying to influence her. I just said there’s no rush.

LUISA

Yes, there is a rush. She’s not speaking Spanish anymore. She’s losing it. *(Accusatory)* She’s being robbed of our heritage.

HARRIET

And that’s my fault?!

*(CLARE, who has been standing in the doorway quietly enters.)*

LUISA

She doesn’t have a chance to practice. She spends all her time with Brian. She doesn’t see any of the Globals anymore. Clare says you didn’t go to Seder and you haven’t been to any of the events since Passover. What’s that about?

HARRIET

*(Worried now)* That’s a long story … Let me make some tea and we can –

CLARE

I can do it.

HARRIET

No, that’s okay. Honey. I’ll do it.

LUISA

What happened?

ANA

It’s because of Marty.

LUISA

Marty? Who’s Marty?

HARRIET

You remember my friend Marty. From school?

ANA

She’s my new hockey coach.
CLARE
And she’s Harriet’s –

HARRIET
Clare, honey, could you go next door and ask to borrow some milk for the tea? We’re all out.

CLARE
Okay. Luisa, do you want to come with me?

LUIZA
No. You go. I’ll stay here.

CLARE
Okay. ¡hasta luego!

(CLARE leaves.)

LUIZA
So what’s the problem with Marty? Anita doesn’t like her?

HARRIET
Anita has never even met her.

LUIZA
So then why –?

HARRIET
Marty’s gay.

LUIZA
So?

HARRIET
(Brave, defiant) And so am I. She’s my partner now and Anita doesn’t approve.

(There’s a second or two of silence while Luisa absorbs the news.)

LUIZA
She’s your partner?

(HARRIET nods.)

You’re with a woman?

(HARRIET nods.)

Why didn’t you tell me? I called every Sunday. You could have said something!
HARRIET
I wanted to … but you were so full of stories of what you were doing in Colombia … they seemed more interesting than my … I don’t know. I should’ve told you. I’m sorry.

LUISA
Sorry’s not good enough.

HARRIET
Sorry’s what I have to offer.

ANA
There’s nothing to be sorry about. Marty’s great. Everyone likes her. I like her, Clare likes her. She’s even got Clare coming to our games.

LUISA
Are you planning on moving in together?

HARRIET
Someday.

LUISA
Someday soon?

HARRIET
I don’t know. Maybe.

LUISA
With Ana and Clare still living here?

HARRIET
Maybe. Why not?

ANA
Marty’s great!

LUISA
Sshh.

ANA
Don’t sshh me! This isn’t Colombia. I’m not one of your orphans who you can sshh.

LUISA
(Ignores ANA, to HARRIET) I don’t think she should move in here.

HARRIET
Well, it’s not your decision to make.
LUISA
Fine. I’m not staying anyway.

HARRIET
You made a promise that you’d go back to school if I let you go to Bogotá. You promised to give it a year. All your registration material is sitting here, waiting for you. I want you back to school next week. Just like you promised.

LUISA
I don’t care about what you want or don’t want. I’m done listening to you. I’m done hearing what you want me to do and not do. I’m eighteen now and I am going to do what I want. I’m not interested in going back to school. There’s only one thing I’m interested in. Finding out what happened to my real mother.

(LUISA leaves. ANA and HARRIET look at each other in dismay and then ANA goes over to give HARRIET a hug.)

HARRIET
What am I going to do about your sister?

ANA
What can you do? You have to let her go.

(Dan’s Luisa’s Ballad-2 [Track 6] closes the scene and opens scene 7.)

Scene 7 (September: One month later)

(HARRIET’s kitchen. MARTY is moving into HARRIET’s house. She, ANA and CLARE are unpacking some of her boxes).

ANA
Look at this!

(She unrolls a set of silver candlesticks from the white tissue paper they’ve been wrapped in.)

MARTY
Be careful with those. They belonged to my grandmother. She used to light them on Rosh Hashana and Passover.

CLARE
How many people did she invite?

MARTY
Thirty.
CLARE
Thirty! Anita only invites fifteen because that’s already a lot of work. But this year she only had twelve because we didn’t go.

ANA
No one cares.

CLARE
I care. I was supposed to say the four questions in Spanish.

ANA
Ancient history. (To MARTY) Tell us more about your grandmother. Did she live in a big house?

MARTY
No. In a small one-bedroom apartment.

ANA
So how could she invite thirty people?

MARTY
She borrowed four small bridge tables and thirty fold-up chairs.

From who?

MARTY
The relatives and neighbours. I used to help her. After that she covered the tables with a white linen tablecloth that her mother, my great grandmother, had embroidered by hand. With blue and gold thread. For the holidays, she’d take out her white and gold china and crystal glasses and put some flowers in the middle. Her kitchen was tiny. There was only room for one person to work in there. But somehow she managed to feed thirty people a seven-course meal. I don’t know she did it.

ANA
She sounds amazing. You must have really loved her.

MARTY
I did. She was the most generous person I’ve ever known. Your mum is like her.

Is she still alive?

CLARE

MARTY
No.
CLARE

How did she die?

MARTY

(Lowers her eyes) She had cancer.

ANA

What kind of cancer?

MARTY

(Looks up at ANA) Breast cancer.

CLARE

(Anxious) Like Harriet?

ANA

Shut up!

MARTY

Hey, we don’t know for sure if your mum has cancer. All we know is that she has a lump on her breast. That’s why they did the test they did today. To find out. Maybe she has cancer, but we’re hoping she doesn’t.

ANA

I don’t want to talk about it.

MARTY

Okay. Why don’t you open another box?

CLARE

(Panicked) If Harriet has cancer is she going to die? Like your grandmother?

ANA

(Loud) Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!

MARTY

(A little sharp) Sssh. Lower your voice. Your mum’s trying to sleep.

ANA

You can’t tell me to shut up. You’re not my mother.

MARTY

I didn’t tell you to shut up. I told you to lower your voice. You’re the one who told Clare to shut up.
CLARE

Yeah!

ANA

Why don’t you just go home? And take your grandmother’s ugly old candlesticks with you!

(She throws the candlesticks into the box she was emptying.)

MARTY

(Surprised) Ana! Be careful. (Raises her voice) Watch what you’re doing!

Don’t yell at me!

MARTY

(Tries to calm down) I’m not yelling. I’m just telling you to be careful.

(CLARE starts sniffing. MARTY goes over to CLARE and sits her in her lap.)

I want you to go back to your place.

No!

CLARE

ANA

When Harriet wakes up I’m going to tell her that we don’t want you here.

No!

CLARE

ANA

You heard me.

(ANA is silent for a few seconds. Then she stalks off stage.)

Shit. (Calls out with CLARE still in her lap) Ana, come back. I’m sorry. I’m sorry I raised my voice. I was upset. Come back. Come back and we’ll finish unpacking. Then we’ll go for some ice cream. Okay?

(ANA doesn’t respond.)
Shit.

You said “shit”! Twice.

I know. Don’t tell anyone, okay?

Okay. I won’t.

Do you want to help me unpack the rest of my stuff? There’s not much left.

Then can we go for ice cream? Even if Ana doesn’t come?

Sure. We deserve a treat after all this work.

(They begin to unpack the boxes again. ANA enters and goes over to the box with the candlesticks. She picks them up carefully and puts them on the island. Lights fade.)

(Dan’s Cancer [Track 7] closes the scene and opens scene 8.)

Scene 8 (March: Six months later)

(HARRIET’s kitchen. HARRIET and MARTY are coming in from a walk and taking off their winter jackets, hats and gloves. Under her winter hat HARRIET is wearing a bandana that covers her bald head.)

They’re not going to want to go. Not if you’re not well.

(Determined) I’ll be fine.

We should wait until you’re healthy again.

Ana needs to go back now.
MARTY
But she doesn’t want to go back.

HARRIET
It doesn’t matter. Luisa’s been gone for seven months. A year and a half altogether. It’s
time to go visit her.

MARTY
What about us? You and me? How will that play out?

HARRIET
No one there has to know about us.

MARTY
(Sharp) What?

HARRIET
It’ll make things easier.

MARTY
For whom? Look, either we’re a family or we’re not. (Hurt) I thought I was part of your
family.

HARRIET
(Quick) Of course you’re part of the family. (Goes over to hug her) I’m crazy about you,
the girls adore you, and I don’t know how we would have made it through chemo without
you! But we can’t be out as a family in Colombia. People won’t understand.

MARTY
That’s their problem.

HARRIET
And ours. We can’t visit Luisa at the orphanage without the Sisters’ permission. They
might not give it to us if they know.

MARTY
So what do you want? For me to pose as Ana and Clare’s “Aunt”? A family friend?

HARRIET
(Sits down on the stool behind the island) If that’s what it takes.

MARTY
(Emphatic) I hate pretending.
I know. What choice do we have?

(Pause. MARTY walks over to the window.)

They’ve taken the boards of the hockey rink down. Hockey’s officially over for the season.

How many afternoons and nights did you spend out there this winter?

Lots.

Lacing up skates. Taping up sticks. (Beat) I’m really sorry Ana didn’t play in the playoffs.

She wanted to be with you during your last round of chemo. She’ll play again next year.

And you’ll coach her team again?

Only if you promise to bring us some of your famous hot chocolate.

I promise.

Are you sure, really sure, you’re well enough to travel?

(Determined) I’m sure.

(Starts pacing, upset) We don’t even know if the chemo worked!

It doesn’t matter. All that matters is that right now I’m strong enough to go.

Are you sure that Luisa will see us?
HARRIET

She’ll see us.

MARTY

How do you know?

HARRIET

She’s called every week since I started chemo. She’s upset. And living far away. She needs to connect. With all of us. You too. I think I need to lie down for a bit.

MARTY

(Takes her arm and helps her get off the stool) Let me help you. We shouldn’t have gone out for so long.

HARRIET

Don’t worry. I’m fine.

MARTY

No, you’re not.

HARRIET

I’m fine enough.

MARTY

(Upset) And what if you don’t stay fine enough? What if I end up losing you and the girls go and live with their father? What if I lose all three of you at once?

(HARRIET moves and gives MARTY a hug.)

HARRIET

I love you. And so do they. Everything’s going to be okay. (Carefully breaks out of the hug) But I need to take the girls to Colombia. So I’ll have no regrets.

MARTY

(Looks at her for a second or two) Everyone has regrets.

HARRIET

So I won’t have that regret.

(Dan’s Reggaetón [Track 8] closes the scene and opens scene 9.)

Scene 9 (April: One month later)

(Outside an orphanage in Bogotá. Morning. HARRIET, MARTY, ANA, [now age 16] and CLARE [now age 12] are sitting on two benches, waiting for LUISA to arrive. There are several bottles of water beside each bench. HARRIET is still wearing a bandana over her bald head. The music fades).
CLARE
What’s taking her so long?

HARRIET
The Sisters went to tell her we’re here. She’ll come out soon.

CLARE
I can’t wait to see her!

(LUISA, now age 19, enters. She’s very thin and very sad. CLARE runs to greet her. The others stand up.)

CLARE
(Joyous) ¡hola, Luisa! Como estas?
(CLARE throws her arms around LUISA’S waist)
You’re so thin.

(She stands back to take a look at her face and takes Luisa’s hands in her own.
LUISA stares at HARRIET and the bandana. It’s devastating.)

(HARRIET walks over to CLARE and LUISA. ANA and MARTY hang back.)

LUISA
(Soft) hola, Harriet.

HARRIET
I’m very, very glad to see you.

LUISA
(Hugs HARRIET carefully and touches her bandana) Welcome back to Colombia. I’ve missed you.

HARRIET
(Hugs her back) I missed you too.

LUISA
(Looks over to ANA) Hola, Ana! Aren’t you going to say hello?

ANA
(Doesn’t move) Hi. This is Marty.

LUISA
(To MARTY) I remember. (Beat). Thank you for coming.
MARTY
I’m glad to be here.

CLARE
Me too. I’m glad to be here too. I couldn’t wait to see you! *(Throws her arms around LUISA’s waist and holds on)* You’re so thin!

LUISA
*(Looks at ANA)* I found out what happened to Inés.

CLARE
Your birth mother?

*MARTY puts her arm around ANA’s shoulders.*

LUISA
She’s dead.

HARRIET
*(Reaches out and takes LUISA’s hand)* Honey, I’m sorry. I’m so, so sorry.

LUISA
*(Squeezes HARRIET’S hand)* She died right after she left us at the orphanage. She was sick and she died.

*(LUISA breaks away from CLARE’s hug and walks over to ANA who has begun to cry.)*

Our Mama’s dead.

*(ANA continues crying. MARTY holds her tighter. HARRIET begins to sway. CLARE grabs a hold of her.)*

MARTY
Clare, help Harriet back to the bench so she can sit down.

*(CLARE helps HARRIET back to the bench. MARTY opens a bottle of water for HARRIET. HARRIET takes the bottle from MARTY and sits down. CLARE stands beside her.)*

CLARE
How did you find out?

LUISA
Sister Francesca told me. She wanted to tell me before, but the other Sisters told her not to.

ANA
How did she die?
LUISA
She had pneumonia. Do you remember her coughing?
(ANA shakes her head.)
I do. I remember her coughing.

CLARE
Why didn’t she go to the walk-in clinic and get antibiotics?

LUISA
There was no walk-in clinic. There were no antibiotics. The people here are very, very poor. You can’t imagine how poor they are. She got pneumonia and she died. She wasn’t strong enough to survive.

HARRIET
(Soft) But she was strong enough to make sure that her daughters would survive. She was strong enough to take them to a place where they would be cared for. She was strong enough to make sure that you and Ana would live even if she didn’t. (In tears) Imagine the strength she had to have had to do that. (Beat) You have her strength. You have your mother’s strength.

(LUISA doesn’t respond, but she is grateful. CLARE, very upset, gets up, walks over to LUISA and puts her arms around her waist again.)

CLARE
I’m sorry. I’m sorry your mother died.

(LUISA puts her hand on CLARE’s head.)

LUISA
Me too. I wanted to see her again. Talk to her again. (To ANA) Now we never will.

ANA
At least we know what happened to her. You found out. Now we can move on.

LUISA
(In disbelief) Move on? I came back to find our mamá and get back the years I lost with her. There’s nothing to move on to.

(There’s an awkward silence for several seconds.)

HARRIET
(Gentle) Maybe it seems that way right now, but –

LUISA
Never mind. It doesn’t matter. Let’s go in. The Sisters are waiting for us.
ANA
I don’t want to go in.

LUISA
You have to go in. They’re waiting to see you.

ANA
I don’t care.

LUISA
(Stares at ANA) How can you be so selfish? They were the ones who took care of us when no else did. It won’t kill you to visit.

ANA
(To HARRIET) You told me that if I didn’t want to go inside the orphanage I didn’t have to.

LUISA
(Still staring at ANA) What’s wrong with you?

CLARE
Maybe she’s afraid.

LUISA
(Still staring at ANA) Of what?

CLARE
Of being sad. Even sadder than we already are.

(ANA bursts into tears.)

HARRIET
(Gentle) Look, the news about your mother … It’s a shock. She needs some time. Maybe tomorrow. We’ll all come visit the Sisters tomorrow. But take Clare inside with you now. She has something to give you and the Sisters. (To CLARE) Tell her what you’ve brought with you.

CLARE
It’s a cheque.

LUISA
(Surprised) What?
CLARE
For $10,000. Canadian. We raised it at my school. Lots of the teachers at my school remember you and Ana. They remember when you first arrived from Colombia. They said they never met a child as brave and capable as you. They wanted to help you. In your work at the orphanage.

LUISA
$10,000 is a lot of money.

(CLARE walks over and takes LUISA’s hand.)

CLARE
Maybe we could begin another campaign. A bigger one. To raise money for a clinic.

HARRIET
And you could come back and stay with us. (Quick) Just for a while. To kick-start the campaign.

CLARE
(Puts her arms around LUISA’s waist) You can speak at my school. And Ana’s school. And all the other schools in Toronto!

(LUISA looks at ANA who says nothing.)

HARRIET
(Soft) We’ll all help out. (Beat) Your sisters need you now. Come back with us. (Slight pause) Please.

(Dan’s Luisa’s Ballad [Track 9] closes the scene and opens scene 10.)

Scene 10 (The Next Day)

(Outside an orphanage in Bogotá. Afternoon. LUISA and ANA are sitting on a bench.)

ANA
Everything is so much smaller.

LUISA
Yeah. I thought so too when I first got here.

ANA
The blackboard was bigger. The window.

LUISA
The bookshelf near the door.
It’s really hot here.

LUISA

You get used to it.

ANA

It’s hard to breathe.

LUISA

Take slower breaths.

ANA slows down her breathing.

And drink some water. That will help.

ANA drinks some water.

I’m glad you’re here.

ANA drinks some more water.

ANA

I feel like I might pass out.

LUISA


ANA sips some more water.

So did you remember any of the Sisters?

ANA

(Soft) All of them.

She sips some more water.

LUISA

Me too. I remembered all of them. It’s incredible what they’ve done here with so little money.

ANA sips some more water.

ANA

Everyone here’s so poor.

LUISA

I know.

ANA

Do you ever think about what would have happened if we had stayed here?

LUISA

Yes.
We would’ve had nothing.

We’d be out working.

Doing what?

I don’t know. A few of the girls work in the orphanage. Cooking meals, doing laundry. Because I finished high school and can speak and write in English, I’m allowed to teach. Lots of the girls go out and clean people’s houses.

I’d hate that.

It’s safer than working in the sex trade. Lots of poor girls do that.

(ANA is shocked and is silent for a few seconds.)

Do you ever feel guilty?

That we got to leave?

(Takes a sip of water) Yeah.

No. What I feel is mad. Our mamá didn’t have to die. People don’t have to die of pneumonia. If hadn’t she been so poor she would’ve seen a doctor and gotten antibiotics. And she wouldn’t have had to leave her two little girls in an orphanage to be adopted by a family who lived a world away from everything they knew and loved.

I feel guilty.

Feeling guilty doesn’t help anyone. Or change anything. I want to change things.

How?
I don’t know yet.

Are you coming back with us?

Maybe.

Whose room would you sleep in?

(She drinks some water.)

I don’t know. My old room I guess.

You mean our old room. Which is my room now.

(Hurt) You want me to share with Clare?

That depends.

On what?

(Takes another sip of water) If you’re coming back as my sister or my mother.

What’s that supposed to mean?

It means I don’t want to have two mothers again. You and Harriet. I like having just one. Harriet.

Harriet said you and Clare needed me.
ANA
We do. It’s awful hearing Harriet throw up after chemo. I hate it. So does Clare. And it’ll be better if you’re home. But not if you’re always mad at me for not speaking Spanish. And not if you’re not nice to Brian.

LUISA
(Sighs and rolls her eyes) Brian. (Beat) You know, I was really glad to see her.

Who?

Harriet. I missed her. A lot.

You should tell her.

(Dan’s Uncertainty Reprise [Track 10] closes the scene and opens scene 11.)

Scene 11 (June: Two months later)

(HARRIET’s kitchen. LUISA and ANITA are sitting at the island stuffing Global Family newsletters into envelopes.)

ANITA
(Upset) I didn’t know.

LUISA
(Surprised) How could you not know?

ANITA
I don’t know. I was busy. We stopped talking …

LUISA
None of the other Globals said anything?

ANITA
No. They must not know either.

LUISA
(Angry) How is it that none of the Globals know that Harriet has breast cancer? Did everyone cut her off?

ANITA
(Defensive) We didn’t cut her off. She cut us off!
LUISA
Did you ever try to call her after that disagreement about Seder?

ANITA
Of course. *(Beat)* Once or twice.

LUISA
*(Angry)* Once or twice! You were close friends. She was the one who hosted all those Global Family parties. Why didn’t you try harder?

ANITA
*(Defensive)* How hard did you try? You’re the one who took off to Colombia when you found out about …

LUISA
Marty.

ANITA
Marty. What kind of name is that for a woman?

LUISA
I didn’t leave because of Marty. I left to find my mother. And I didn’t stop speaking to her. I spoke to her every Sunday. Just like before.

ANITA
And did you tell the Sisters all about your mother’s new girlfriend?

LUISA
*(Hesitates, then)* No.

ANITA
It’s not so easy, is it?

LUISA
But I didn’t cut her off and I came back when she needed me.

ANITA
*(Sincere)* And I’m sure she’s very glad to have you home.

LUISA
You need to apologize.

ANITA
What?
LUISA
We still don’t know if they got it all. Or if the cancer will come back. If it does, we’ll need help from you and the other Globals. You need to apologize so you can become friends again.

ANITA
I tried calling. She never returned my calls.

LUISA
She says you rejected her.

ANITA
I didn’t reject her.

LUISA
Well, she thinks you did.

ANITA
Well, that’s her problem. Tell me about you. Have you started fundraising?

LUISA
(Decides to allow ANITA to change the topic for the moment) I’m strategizing. I went to see the people at the Stephen Lewis Foundation. They raise money to support children affected by HIV and AIDS in Africa.

ANITA
I know what they do.

LUISA
I like their philosophy. (Careful, trying to avoid an argument) They think that one of the best ways to help children is to support the orphanages in a way that allows them to stay in their own countries.

ANITA
(Annoyed). I hate all that talk about how bad it is to take children out of their country, out of their culture. They live in an orphanage, for God’s sake. They have no culture.

LUISA
You know that’s not true. Ana and I learned to read and write in Spanish in the orphanage. We sang songs, played games. When we came here, we lost a lot of that.

ANITA
You can’t tell me that growing up in an orphanage is better than growing up in a family.

LUISA
I know.
(There’s an awkward silence.)

ANITA
So how long are you planning to stay?

LUISA
I’m not sure. I’m thinking of going back to school. Marty says I should use the privileged middle-class life Harriet gave me to go to medical school so I can set-up the clinic we’re building.

ANITA
(Annoyed again) She didn’t just give you a “privileged middle-class life”. She gave you and Ana a loving home. A family. She gave you a mother!

LUISA
We didn’t need a mother. We already had one.

ANITA
No you didn’t. Your mother had died.

LUISA
But we didn’t know she died. To us, she was still alive. And because she was alive in my mind, Harriet could never be my mother. She was just a woman, a very nice woman, who was taking care of Ana and me until we were old enough to take care of ourselves and find our real mother. I never wanted to be Harriet’s daughter. All I ever wanted was to go back to Bogotá so I could find my own mother and be her daughter.

ANITA
(Angry) I don’t understand you.

LUISA
Well, Marty does.

ANITA
Is that so?

LUISA
Marty says it doesn’t matter that I never wanted to be Harriet’s daughter. What matters is that when Harriet needed me, I came back. That’s what daughters do.

(ANITA doesn’t respond.)
And that’s what good friends do. She needs you back.

(ANITA takes a look at her watch.)
ANITA
What time did you say she was coming back?

LUISA
Five.

ANITA
And she knows I’m here.

LUISA
She knows.

ANITA
And she’ll be happy to see me.

LUISA
If you apologize.

ANITA
It’s been such a long time. What do I say?

LUISA
Hi. It’s good to see you. I’m sorry you’ve been sick.

ANITA
You make it sound so easy.

(Offstage, HARRIET and MARTY are talking and are about to enter. HARRIET is still wearing a bandana that covers her bald head.)

ANITA
(Looks at her watch) She’s early!

(HARRIET and MARTY enter carrying grocery bags.)

LUISA
(Get up) Hi. Let me help you. (Takes the bags from HARRIET). Marty, this is Anita Levinson from Global Family.

MARTY
Hi.

ANITA
(Too loud) Hello. (Softer) Hello.
LUISA
We’re stuffing newsletters.

HARRIET
Just like old times.

ANITA
Hi. It’s good to see you. I’m sorry you’ve been sick.

HARRIET
(Guarded) Thank you. (To LUISA) There are more bags in the car.

LUISA
I’ll help Marty bring them in.

HARRIET
Thanks.

(HARRIET sits down. MARTY and LUISA leave. ANITA tears up. HARRIET stares at her.)

ANITA
I’m sorry. It’s such a shock. To see you so pale, with that schmatte on your head.

HARRIET
I didn’t want a wig. They’re too hot.

(ANITA nods.)

So.

ANITA
So.

HARRIET
I’m really pissed off at you.

ANITA
(More vulnerable than angry) I’m really pissed off at you.

HARRIET
What?

ANITA
You never returned my calls.

HARRIET
You never apologized. I’m waiting for an apology.
ANITA
For what? Not inviting you to Seder? That was over a year ago.

HARRIET
For deserting me. And the girls. Just when we needed you most.

ANITA
You put me in a terrible position.

HARRIET
What?

ANITA
You made me choose between you and the agency.

HARRIET
That’s ridiculous.

ANITA
If I condoned your relationship with Marty and the Sisters in Colombia had found out, they would have cut us off. They would have found another agency to work with.

HARRIET
Bullshit.

ANITA
Easy for you to say.

HARRIET
We visited the Sisters. All of us. As a family. They met Marty and they liked her. No one cut us off.

ANITA
They liked her?

HARRIET
Of course they liked her. They admired her. She’s the one who kept our family grounded during the surgery, through the chemo. After you abandoned us. (Beat) (Raw with anger, sadness, regret, loss) The irony would have been funny if it hadn’t hurt so fucking much. The same woman who has dedicated her life to finding homes and families for abandoned children, abandoned one of the families she helped create.

ANITA
(Shocked, then) I’m sorry. I’m very sorry.
(Dan’s Reconciliation and Reggaetón [Track 11] begins, closes the scene and opens scene 12.)

HARRIET
All right, then.

ANITA
(Reaches out her hand) Let’s start again. Tell me about Marty.

Scene 12 (June: A week later)

(HARRIET’s kitchen. Colombian reggaetón opens the scene. HARRIET, MARTY, LUISA and ANA are all sorting clothes to send to the orphanage. ANA is dancing to the music while she sorts the clothes. The music fades.)

LUISA
You want to get married?

HARRIET
Yes.

CLARE/LUISA
Can I be a bridesmaid? Why?

ANA
Why do straight people get married? For love.

MARTY
And for legitimacy. Getting married will give us legitimacy.

LUISA
You mean as a couple?

MARTY
Yeah.

LUISA
You think?

HARRIET
You don’t?

LUISA
No.
ANA
(Sarcastic) That’s supportive.

LUISA
She asked me what I thought. People who support queer families support queer families. People who don’t, don’t. Getting married won’t make a difference.

ANA
Well, I think it’s great you want to get married.

CLARE
Me too!

HARRIET
I’m glad.

LUISA
What’s wrong with the way things are now?

MARTY
I didn’t like the way one of the nurses treated me when we went in for chemotherapy. She treated me like dirt.

CLARE
What did she say?

MARTY
It doesn’t matter now. But, God forbid, if Harriet ever has to be admitted to the hospital, being married will give me some authority in decision-making.

LUISA
You think so?

MARTY
I do.

LUISA
Then you should get married.

HARRIET
(A little shy) Would you be my witness?

LUISA
(Touched) Sure. Why not?
'ANA

(To MARTY) And can I be yours?

MARTY

If you’re old enough, I’d love you to be mine. We’ll find out.

And I’ll be the bridesmaid.

CLARE

What about holding the rings for us?

HARRIET

Sure!

CLARE

You better not lose them.

ANA

We should totally have a party. With lots of food and music and dancing. We could invite all the Globals.

HARRIET

We can have a party. And we can invite the Globals and (rueful) see who comes. But first, there’s one more thing we have to talk about. (Hesitates) It’s about what happens if I get sick again.

ANA

(Freaks out) The cancer’s back?

CLARE

(Scared) You’re sick again?

HARRIET

No, no, no. It’s not back. But we need to talk about what’s going to happen if it does come back. And if …

LUISA

(Soft) You don’t make it.

HARRIET

Yes.
ANA  
(*Get up to leave the room*) I’m not talking about this.

LUISA  
We have to talk about this. Don’t be such a baby.

ANA  
Shut up!

CLARE  
(*Upset*) Don’t fight. Please don’t fight.

MARTY  
Listen. We’re going to do everything we can to make sure the cancer doesn’t come back. And if it does, then we’ll fight it. We’ll fight it hard. Just like this time. But we need to figure out who’s going to be your guardian in case –

LUISA  
I’m nineteen. I don’t need a guardian.

HARRIET  
No. You don’t. But Ana and Clare do. We’ve talked to your father and –

ANA  
I’m not going to live with Jonathon.

CLARE  
Me neither.

HARRIET  
(*Quick*) You won’t have to. Marty wants to be your guardian.

MARTY  
(*Quick*) If it’s all right with you. And Luisa.

ANA  
It’s fine with us. And it’s fine with Luisa.

LUISA  
No, it’s not.

ANA  
(*Freaks out*) What!

LUISA  
I mean, I’m not sure. I need to think about it. It’s a big decision.
MARTY

(Expecting this) Right.

LUISA

Maybe I could be Ana’s guardian. And you could be Clare’s.

MARTY

(Careful) Maybe.

CLARE

I’ll still see Daddy every summer at the cottage, right?

MARTY

Of course. Every summer.

ANA

(To Luisa) It’s my decision, not yours. And I want Marty to be my guardian.

LUISA

But I’m your sister.

ANA

Yeah, my sister. Not my mother.

HARRIET

Look we don’t have to decide right this minute. I’m planning to be around for a long time so that no one will need a guardian. This is just in case. (Takes MARTY hand) Let’s just leave this for now and go out for dinner. To celebrate. (She gives MARTY a kiss.) Where do you want to go?

ANA

The Keg.

LUISA

I hate The Keg. All that meat, it’s disgusting. There’s nothing for vegetarians.

ANA

It’s not disgusting. And you can have a salad.

LUISA

I hate having to order a salad just because there’s nothing else.

HARRIET
Yeah, I hear you.

LUISA

Let’s go to Fresh.

ANA

But if we go to The Keg we can order a cake. And it will come with sparkers and the waiters will sing and it will be a real celebration.

HARRIET

Clare?

CLARE

Mexican.

ANA

You always say Mexican.

LUISA

What’s wrong with Mexican?

ANA

Nothing. I just want to go to The Keg.

HARRIET

We’ll let Marty choose.

MARTY

No way. I’m not choosing. You choose.

HARRIET

Let’s just go. We’ll decide in the van. Whose got the keys?

MARTY

Me. Let’s go, girls.

CLARE

It’s my turn to sit near the window.

ANA

No it’s not. You sat near the window last time.

(MARTY and the girls exit arguing. HARRIET takes moment to tidy up the table before leaving. Then follows them out. Dan’s Reggaetón Bows [Track 12] closes the scene. Lights fade. Reggaetón Bows stays on for bows and applause.)
End of play

Post-show music

(After the bows Dan Parker’s Reggaetón Closing [Track 13] begins.)

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Texts consulted


