

VOLVER VOLVER VOLVER

A one-act play

by Leonard Madrid

VOLVER VOLVER VOLVER

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VOLVER VOLVER VOLVER

for Alfredo and Dubijen

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Characters

JUNIE. - Male. Forties. A dead man. Good looking (despite the burial).

DOLORES- Female. Sixties. Junie 's Mother. A Bruja. Best in Roosevelt County. She's always dressed for the kitchen.

SIRENA- Female. Forties. Junie's wife. Another Bruja. Always dressed for La Baila.

SOCORRO- Female. Twenties. Junie's Daughter. Always dressed for gardening.

REFUGIO-Male. Sixties. Junie's Father. An offstage voice.

Setting

Present day. Three front porches in Portales, NM

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I VOLVER A DOLORES

The front porch of DOLORES and REFUGIO OLGUIN in Portales, New Mexico. Dolores is standing on her porch. She waits.

DOLORES. Fugio, He should be here by now. I can feel him in the air.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. He's not coming, vieja.

DOLORES. Shut yer ass, viejo, I can feel it.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. He ain't got nothing to come home to.

DOLORES. Refugio! I know my son. And I know he's coming.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. If you're so excited, why come you didn't make no food?

DOLORES. He ain't gonna be hungry, is he? You know he ain't.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Fine. Just in case, I'll put some tamales in the microwave.

DOLORES. No.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. What?

DOLORES. The chicken.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. We don't have no chicken.

DOLORES. We got that box of fried chicken in the freezer.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. I don't know how to make fried chicken.

DOLORES. Read the pinche instructions.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. How many?

DOLORES. Eight.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Ok.

DOLORES. But check it after six.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Ok.

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DOLORES. On high.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Ok.

DOLORES. Dear God. I know that me and you ain't been the best of friends, but please let my son come home to me first. Before nobody else. *(Pause)* I know he's going to want to see everybody else, because a grown man has so many things on his brain and his Mama is last on the list.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. God ain't gonna listen to you, Bruja. You sold your soul to the devil.

DOLORES. I did not. I still go to church.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. So he might give you a cooler seat in hell.

DOLORES. Calle el hocico Viejo. *(pause)*

DOLORES. Bring me an egg.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. No.

DOLORES. Como que no? You're my husband. You do what I tell you.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. I ain't gonna let you waste no egg to cast no spells. You ain't the one who brought him home. Let him go there first.

DOLORES. Fine. Is the chicken done?

REFUGIO'S VOICE. You didn't pray that long.

DOLORES. Bueno. Check it at six minutes.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. I know, Vieja. *(Dolores pauses and sniffs the air. She spits on the ground and moves her toe around in it.)*

DOLORES. He's coming. He's turning down J and walking down Ivy. *(Junie enters.)*

JUNIE. Hiya, Mama.

DOLORES. Hola, Jito.

JUNIE. How are you?

DOLORES. I'm good.

JUNIE. Don't you want to know how I am?

DOLORES. Pues, I already know.

JUNIE. I came home.

DOLORES. You were home. Now you're here.

JUNIE. I needed to come back.

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DOLORES. When your daughter was born, we couldn't get you to come home from Clovis. For a whole week, we didn't see your pretty face. Clovis is 18 miles away, and you wouldn't do it. Now, you walk the longest anyone ever had to walk.

JUNIE. I had to come.

DOLORES. Why?

JUNIE. I had to see everyone. I had to see you.

DOLORES. Why? Cuz there was a little piece of mothering I didn't give you yet?

JUNIE. Cuz, maybe you wanted to see me.

DOLORES. No. I saw you the last time. I closed that book. I'll see you in heaven.

JUNIE. Brujas don't go to heaven.

DOLORES. Brujas don't believe in heaven. Ni blanca ni negra.

JUNIE. Is Daddy in there? Can I talk to him?

DOLORES. Fugio! Your baby boy is out here.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. What does he want?

DOLORES. He wants to talk to you.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Tell him he's dead and I can't talk to him.

DOLORES. He didn't know that yet, Cabron.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Well, now he does. And I can't talk to him...because it's a sin.

DOLORES. You can't talk to a dead man. But you can make him chicken?

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Yes.

DOLORES. You heard him.

JUNIE. What?

DOLORES. Which part? The he don't want to go to hell part or the you're done ready dead part? Or he made you chicken part?

JUNIE. The dead part.

DOLORES. Chite. somebody screwed up.

JUNIE. ...

DOLORES. Hijo. You been dead.

JUNIE. You lie.

DOLORES. Nuh uh.

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JUNIE. Why you lie to me, Mama?

DOLORES. Have I ever lied to you?

JUNIE. I ain't dead.

DOLORES. When you were four and you axed me if Santa Clause was real, did I say yes?

JUNIE. No.

DOLORES. No. I told you the truth even when it made you cry.

JUNIE. I ain't dead.

DOLORES. I ain't never spent no time lying, it's too hard. I got too much to think about than to worry what lie I told somebody.

JUNIE. Oh, God. I'm dead.

DOLORES. Watch your mouth.

JUNIE. How long?

DOLORES. Three years dead. Three years today.

JUNIE. How?

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Axe him if he want some chicken?

JUNIE. I ain't hungry, Dad.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Axe him if he want some tamales.

DOLORES. He can't have those tamales, viejo. I'm saving those for Tuesday.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Fine.

DOLORES. You really want to know?

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Axe him if he want a beer.

JUNIE. No thank you.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Dile, 'cuz you don't know. Sometimes a dead guy only want to eat and drink. He only want what he can't have here. Ain't no good food when You die, I guess.

DOLORES. He don't remember being dead.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Chite. What kinda bruja bring him back without no memory?

DOLORES. Yo se! I don't know what sort of cut rate bruja brought your ass back, but she didn't do a very good job.

JUNIE. Mama.

DOLORES. Bueno. You want to know?

JUNIE. Si.

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DOLORES. You were with some puta and her husband found you.

JUNIE. Linda.

DOLORES. Was that the puta's name?

JUNIE. Yes.

DOLORES. Linda the puta's husband caught you and beat you to til you died.

JUNIE. Don't call her a puta.

DOLORES. Well. You shoulda known better. You gotta wife. She gotta husband. You both got parts belong to other people.

JUNIE. She's my girlfriend.

DOLORES. Not no more. She paying conjugal visits to her real man en la pinta now. That's how much you mattered to her.

JUNIE. He didn't knock out any of my teeth did he?

DOLORES. Two.

JUNIE. In the front?

DOLORES. He been dead for three years. Your wife and daughter gotta live without him for three years, And all he's worried about your pretty face. And not worried about what's really important.

JUNIE. What?

DOLORES. ...

JUNIE. What're you talking about, Mama?

DOLORES. I'm not going to tell you. You gonna have to tell me.

JUNIE. I don't know, Mama. I'm dead. Maybe my brains got eaten by worms.

DOLORES. No. It don't work like that and you know it.

JUNIE. I do not. How would I know that?

DOLORES. How many times did I do this with you here, huh? Did I ever bring back a sack of rotten skin full of worms?

JUNIE. No.

DOLORES. Right. Who brought you back, Hijo? Why the hell are you here? Who called you?

JUNIE. Maybe I brought myself back.

DOLORES. You can't.

JUNIE. I could.

DOLORES. No. You're like your daddy. You're a well, not a

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bucket.

JUNIE. Then who did it?

DOLORES. Finally, he axed the right question.

JUNIE. Sirena?

DOLORES. I don't know. She got a reason to bring you back?

JUNIE. No. Maybe.

DOLORES. You got some money hid? Make a promise? Keep a secret?

JUNIE. I don't think so.

DOLORES. You shoulda listened to me, Hijo. Sons of brujas don't marry brujas.

JUNIE. Who I'm gonna marry, Ama? Who the hell gonna want you as a mother-in-law?

DOLORES. You should have been like Henry and married a hairstylist.

JUNIE. You always want me to be more like Henry.

DOLORES. Chite. I didn't want you to be more like Henry, jito. I wanted you to be more like you.

JUNIE. I was like me.

DOLORES. Bullshit. You think I don't know the difference between who you were and who you pretended to be? I raised you. I gave you birth.

JUNIE. I was who I was.

DOLORES. You were going to be my artist. I knew it. I knew it from the moment I found out I was pregnant. The day you were born. The first day you held a paint brush. I knew it. But you were afraid.

JUNIE. I wasn't afraid of nothing.

DOLORES. That's what all you badasses say. But that's because you're afraid of everything. You're like a cat who gets scared, so she tries to make herself look bigger and make alot of noise so no one will know that she's pissing herself.

JUNIE. Bullshit.

DOLORES. Refugio Olguin Junior, I never lied to you. Not once. But you lied to me all the time. You lied to me every time you

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talked to me. And you thought you tricked me. When you became a cholo and when all the cholo's died so you became a gangsta. I don't even understand what a gangsta is. A cholo, I understand. A cholo comes from us. Your tio was a cholo, he had the prettiest car in Portales. But what the hell is this gangsta? With your trying to pretend you're someone else and still can't and then calling the people vendidos for having jobs and going to school.

JUNIE. I only called Henry a vendido once.

DOLORES. With your voice. But in your head you called him that a million times. Your grandpo was a judge. Your grandmother was a poet. And you go out and buy a shiny car put on saggy pants and start listening to rap music? You tell me who the vended was. You were the pinche vendido, because you sold yourself to the cheapest bidder, so you wouldn't be so afraid. Well screw that. Your mama can make any man's huevos crawl so far into his stomach that he can taste them. What the hell did you have to be afraid of?

JUNIE. That's what you thought of me?

DOLORES. That's what I knew.

JUNIE. And why didn't you say anything?

DOLORES. Cause a river's got to flow where it flows, hijo. You don't go to the pecos and tell it that it's going the wrong way. You built your own dams and acequias. I don't fight nature.

JUNIE. Mama, you're a bruja. Everything you do is against nature.

DOLORES. Is that what you think?

JUNIE. ...

DOLORES. Look at me. Is that what you think?

JUNIE. ...

DOLORES. When did you forget everything I taught you?

JUNIE. You never taught me nothing. You only taught me everything I did was wrong. Then you gave up on me and spent all your time on Henry.

DOLORES. I shoulda known you were going to be a fight. Everything about you has been hard. I was in labor with you for thirteen days. I remember counting each hour and giving each one to an apostle. Ok, sain't Luke, that one was your day. Ok, Saint

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James, all that suffering was for you. You're welcome. Alright, Saint John, If he's born in your hour, I'm going to name him Juan after you. But you waited until the very last day, the thirteenth. Until the day of Judas to be born. If you had waited one more hour, that would have been for someone else, but NO. You were born on the day of Judas. And you were thirteen pounds. That's How I knew that you were going to be someone who ain't never going to have it good. Because you fought me until the Judas hour of the Judas day to be born. And I wasn't going to name a baby Judas. So I named you after your father.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Mentirosa.

DOLORES. And everything after that was a fight. You wouldn't take the teta. You wouldn't go to bed. You skipped school. You married a bruja. I didn't give up on you, baby. I just got tired. I tried to teach you plenty. If you had ever listened to me. You would know... A bruja, negra o blanca, can't play too far outside nature.

JUNIE. You brought me back from the dead.

DOLORES. I didn't. But whoever did, played in the rules. You can only bring someone back if they want to come back.

JUNIE. Oh.

DOLORES. And you know, I already brought you into this world, and we had to pull you out by the grenias. Ain't no way you would have come if I had called. Would you?

JUNIE. ...

DOLORES. Would you?

JUNIE. No.

DOLORES. See?

JUNIE. Then who called me?

DOLORES. I don't know, hijo. I can't tell. Ain't nobody I know. Can't you feel it?

JUNIE. No.

DOLORES. I would ask if there was nobody you could remember doing wrong. But that list would be too long. Ha. I just made a poem. Did you hear that, Refugio?

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Si, Mujer. It was a bad poem.

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DOLORES. Cabron. *(to Junie)* Try your mujer.

JUNIE. Sirena?

DOLORES. She might know someone I don't. You got one day to work it out. Or you're stuck here. Stuck here til you're skin starts to rot.

JUNIE. Can't I just go back now?

DOLORES. Nope. Someone called. You answered. Now you gotta do shit to make it right.

JUNIE. Ok, Mama.

DOLORES. Try your wife..... And, Baby.

JUNIE. Yeah?

DOLORES. It was good to see you, eh?

JUNIE. Yeah.

DOLORES. I'll see you in heaven. When it's right.

JUNIE. You too, Mama.

DOLORES. Wait. Here. Take this. She hands him a medal.

JUNIE. You gonna waste a spell on little dead me?

DOLORES. It ain't no spell, baby.

JUNIE. Then what?

DOLORES. A prayer.

JUNIE. Thanks, Mama.

DOLORES. Look how handsome you were. With your nice hair. You got that from your Daddy.

JUNIE. ...

DOLORES. Ain't right for a woman to bury her child. It ain't right to see every day of your son's life, beginning to end.

JUNIE. I'm sorry, Mama.

DOLORES. Don't be sorry.

JUNIE. I gotta go.

DOLORES. I know.

JUNIE. Bye Mama. Bye, Daddy.

REFUGIO'S VOICE. Tell him, we'll have a good long talk when I'm dead too.

DOLORES. Bye, Baby. *(Junie exits)*

REFUGIO'S VOICE. What are we going to do with this chicken?

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DOLORES. Eat it, Pendejo. We have some potato salad in the fridge.

End of Part I

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