

JARABE

Adriana Domínguez

Cast

DANCE TEACHER	40s, kind, and joyful
MAMÁ	A mother who would do anything for her child; ages 30-45
SARAÍ	A young girl who blooms before us through the magic of folklórico dance; ages 5-15
Other dancers as available for production	(minimum of 1 male and 1 female)

Setting

A variety of performance spaces (non-specific)

Act I

Scene1

Setting: An outdoor community festival. Perhaps it is at a local park, recreation center, senior center, etc.

At Rise: Play opens with a folklórico group on stage dancing “La Raspa.” The music is clear but not professional; we get a sense that a middle school or high school mariachi band is playing the song off stage. SARAÍ is wearing

a basic folklórico skirt and peasant top. It is clear that this is one of her first performances.

DANCE TEACHER

Now you all know what this means—audience. YOUR turn. Dancers, please go to the audience and find a guest to bring up to the platform with you to dance. We want everyone to bloom into beautiful dancers!

(Dancers go off stage to get their guests. SARAÍ is alone on the stage; she is desperately searching for MAMÁ.)

SARAÍ

Mamá. Mamá, where are you? Ay. I cannot see you. Mamá!

(MAMÁ comes in from off stage.)

MAMÁ

I am here Saraí. I am always here. You don't want to grab anyone else? You always come for me.

SARAÍ

(eyes filling with tears)

No, I don't like it. I don't want to. I just, please.

MAMÁ

M'ija, it is fine. I am here. Don't you worry babycakes, Mamá will dance with you.

(They dance for the last 30 seconds of the song and MAMÁ walks off stage when the song is over and the audience of the dance performance claps. DANCE TEACHER and DANCERS bow and exit.)

SARAÍ bows and grabs her bag to change into her next outfit. She speaks directly to the audience while she is changing (a true dancer, she will always have her bloomers or fondo on). SARAÍ changes into her traditional Jalisco dress. Through this costume change, we also understand that SARAÍ is growing up.)

SARAÍ

I hated putting on that heavy skirt—they always had to tie it so tight to make sure that it would not fall off during dancing—sometimes my panza would hurt after practice because the skirt was so tight. And squeezing my toes into those tacones—I could not wait to get my chanclas on! And my hair was soooooo tight--not a hair could be out of place. That tight bun at the top of my head is what held that beautiful ramo of blooming flores. BUT I LOVED that I got to wear make-up! I was four years old and had my own make-up bag! That red on my lips, and the bright, bright, blue on my eyes—like a blooming flower jumping off my eyelids. Then I got to top it off with some stunning aretes. The confidence that came with that costume was powerful. It was worth the headache from the tight hair and the sore feet after a performance.

Yet, I sure hated having to hold hands with a stranger when we would have to dance with a person from the audience; I thought I was going to melt into the floor. As often as I could I would grab my Mamá's hands. I would tear through the audience so that I could find her so that I would not have to dance with anyone else. And my Mamá would put on this amazing dance with me; sometimes I wonder if she secretly wanted to be picked from the audience to dance.

Scene 2

(Lights shift to indicate a change in location and time)

DANCE TEACHER

(announcing to a new audience)

Thank you all for joining us tonight! For our first number, our folklórico two class will perform el Jarabe Tapatio.

(Sound: Jarabe Tapatio)

(SARAÍ and her troupe perform the first 45 seconds of the dance.)

(Sound: “Emergency Alert System: There is an active shooter at the Wal-Mart in Cielo Vista. Shelter in place.”)

(Lights dim as dancers run off stage to frantically find their families. MAMÁ runs on stage.)

MAMÁ

Saraí! Saraí!!!!

SARAÍ

Mamá! Mamá, what does that mean?

MAMÁ

I am not sure. We will just need to stay here until we know what is going on. I am here--we are ok, right? Look at me—Saraí—look at me. We are here together. Mamá will never let anything happen to you. Look at me Saraí—Mamá loves you more than anything in this world—you are my babycake.

(MAMÁ and SARAÍ stay huddled and hold each other.)

SARAÍ

Mamá, en Wal-Mart? Who is it? Why?

MAMÁ (sobbing)

Ay m'ija. It just means that I am going to have to hold you even closer. I don't know why Saraí. I don't understand either. But we will be okay--I promise.

Let me just call Abue to check on her and let her know we are okay.

(MAMÁ kisses SARAÍ and exits.)

SARAÍ is alone on stage and addresses the audience.)

SARAÍ

On August 3, 2019, a racist terrorist came to my hometown and killed 23 people at a local Wal-Mart during the tax-free school supply-shopping weekend. I quit folklórico the next day.

(SARAÍ takes off the folklórico dress and puts on a plain white dress).

I just couldn't put on that dress without thinking of the fear and pain of that day. I know Mamá would've wanted me to continue, but the panic that came with that song and that dress was just too overwhelming; I suffered my first panic attack at age five. I didn't know that was what it was—all I knew was that I could not breathe and that the thought of being separated from my familia at any time was paralyzing.

Scene 3

(MAMÁ and SARAÍ bring two chairs in and they are the audience members at a folklórico performance. We understand that time has passed.)

Sound: La Bamba)

MAMÁ

M'ija thank you so much for bringing me out tonight. I LOVE this dance—it is my favorite!! I just love how they are able to make the ribbon into a bow with their feet. I can't imagine how much practice it takes to really be able to do it. I get tired even looking at them—I would never have that kind of energy (yawns). I'd probably end up on my pompis!

SARAÍ

(giggling but also knowing that MAMÁ wanted SARAÍ in folklórico longer)

Sorry Ma, they didn't teach that in folklórico two, that was for folklórico four—and even then, there were hardly any boys in there!

MAMÁ

That is true—what happened to Efrain?

SARAÍ

He quit too. He decided to play football instead—you know, it was just hard for him to keep going to rehearsals and being made fun of, he...

MAMÁ

Ay. That is so sad—he was so very good—even after you stopped going, it was so nice to see him at the festivals and performances.

SARAÍ

Yeah. Well, the game schedule conflicted with folklórico practice and so he had to make a choice. He still misses it, but that is what he decided.

MAMÁ

You sure seem to know a lot about that Efrain.

(SARAÍ blushes and turns away.)

MAMÁ

What was that, eh?

SARAÍ

Nada. I was just...

MAMÁ

M'ija, you're fifteen—you already had a quinceañera; you're blossoming into a beautiful young lady—you can talk to boys.

SARAÍ

Ya, Ma. I know, I can. I will, I mean I do.

MAMÁ

And how many do you talk to?

SARAÍ

Ma! Nothing is happening! Ay! This is why I don't say anything!

MAMÁ

Saraí, relax. Even though I look like an exhausted dinosaurio, I too, was young. I know. I know it is weird and complicated and awkward. I know. *M'ija*, just know that you can talk to me. I never really talked to Abue about personal stuff and I wish I had; I think we missed out on some real connecting—like really knowing each other as people, you know? You are my babycake.

SARAÍ

Ma! Your 15-year-old babycake.

MAMÁ

Yes, exactly—always my babycake. Know that I always want you to be full of joy—that is it. And I'd like to share some of that joy with you—and guess what—this tired dinosaurio can offer some advice or just an *oreja*.

SARAÍ

I know, I know. Ok. Well now that we have that out of the way, can I meet Efrain AND a group of friends at the food booth to hang out? His parents are staying until the end so Mrs. Herrera can take me home.

MAMÁ

Ok. I am pretty tired too—I think I am going to head home. I haven't been sleeping well so maybe I can take a nap while you are out.

(SARAÍ helps MAMÁ up from the chair and begins walking toward her friends.)

MAMÁ

Con cuidado! Make sure you buckle up and be home by 10:30. Keep an eye out for any brujas.

(MAMÁ exits.)

Scene 4

(SARAÍ returns to the stage alone with the Vera Cruz delantal over her white dress, she is holding a candle.)

SARAÍ

Mamá didn't tell me she didn't have the proper paperwork. La migra took her from our house while I was out with my friends. I tried tracking her. My Abue sold her house to hire a lawyer...pero nada. MY Mamá was taken from ME. I hear the music, when I see the colors, the flores—I can feel my Mamá. I know she is with me—always.

(SARAÍ takes the flower from her delantal and dances La Bruja. SARAÍ dances with the candle on her head as the traditional dance requires as the lights fade. We only hear the footwork and see the candle.)

CURTAIN

