



Set design by Cristine Jones

Photo by Michal Daniel

A scene from the Guthrie Theater production of *Blood Wedding*.



BLOOD WEDDING

BY
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★

★
DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



CHARACTERS

- MOTHER
- BRIDEGROOM
- NEIGHBOR
- WIFE
- MOTHER-IN-LAW
- LEONARDO
- FIRST GIRL
- SERVANT
- FATHER
- BRIDE
- SECOND GIRL
- YOUTH
- 3 WEDDING GUESTS
- 3 WOODCUTTERS
- LITTLE GIRL
- MOON

BLOOD WEDDING

PART I

BLOOD WEDDING

ACT ONE

Scene 1

A room all painted yellow.

BRIDEGROOM. Mother.

MOTHER. Yes?

BRIDEGROOM. I'm off now.

MOTHER. Where?

BRIDEGROOM. The vineyards. *(He starts to exit.)*

MOTHER. Wait.

BRIDEGROOM. Need anything?

MOTHER. No ... your meal.

BRIDEGROOM. That's all right. I'll eat grapes. Hand me the knife.

MOTHER. What for?

BRIDEGROOM. *(Laughing.)* Why, to cut them off the vine!

MOTHER. *(Muttering, looking for a knife.)* A knife, a knife ...

God damn all knives and the bastard that invented them ...

BRIDEGROOM. Let's change the subject.

MOTHER. And guns and pistols, and the smallest blade and all the sickles and pitchforks in the land.

BRIDEGROOM. All right, now.

MOTHER. Anything that could cut into the body of a man. A beautiful man, a man with a flower in his mouth, who goes to his vineyards, or his olive groves ... his, handed down to him in patrimony ...

BRIDEGROOM. (*Lowering his head.*) Please. Let's not.

MOTHER. ... and one day that man doesn't come home. Or rather he does, but with a branch of palm across his breast and a dish of coarse salt in his coffin so the body won't swell in the heat. I don't know how you can carry a knife on your person, or I, keep those vipers in the house.

BRIDEGROOM. Are you done?

MOTHER. If I lived a hundred years I'd never speak of anything else. First your father, the scent of carnations on his skin, mine barely three years. Then your brother. And is it right, could it be that something as small as a pistol or a knife can finish a man powerful as a bull? I would never be silent. Months go by, despair stings hot in my eyes and runs to the very tips of my hair.

BRIDEGROOM. (*Angry.*) Will you be done with it!

MOTHER. No. We'll never be done with it. Can someone bring your father back to me? Your brother? Oh, yes, and then, the prison. What's a prison? They let them eat there, and smoke, and make music if they want to! My dead are full of grass, speechless, turned to dust; two men, my two geraniums in bloom ... And the killers in prison, alive, looking at the mountains ...

BRIDEGROOM. Do you expect me to kill them all? Is that what you want?

MOTHER. No. I'm just saying — I see you going through the door and I can't help — I just don't want you carrying a knife, that's all. And — and I wish you wouldn't go to the fields.

BRIDEGROOM. (*Laughing.*) Oh, come now!

MOTHER. I wish you were a woman. You wouldn't be going to the river now, you'd be staying with me, embroidering little pup-pies made of wool.

BRIDEGROOM. (*Getting a hold of her, laughing.*) How about coming to the vineyards with me?

MOTHER. To the vineyards? An old crone like me? What, would you hide me under the vine leaves?

BRIDEGROOM. (*Picking her up in his arms and turning around singing.*) Old, oooooold lady! Such an oooooold lady you are!

MOTHER. Your father used to take me there. Good breed that he was. Blood. Your grandfather left a son in every corner. I like that. Men should be men. And wheat, wheat.

BRIDEGROOM. What about me, mother?

MOTHER. You ... what?

BRIDEGROOM. Do I have to tell you again?

MOTHER. (*Suddenly serious.*) Oh, that.

BRIDEGROOM. You don't approve?

MOTHER. No, it's not that.

BRIDEGROOM. So?

MOTHER. I don't even know myself. It's so sudden. I'm still surprised, that's all. I know she's a good girl. She is, isn't she? Works hard, makes her own bread, sews her own clothes, and I feel ... somehow, when I say her name, I feel as if I'd been hit with a rock in the middle of my forehead.

BRIDEGROOM. Nonsense.

MOTHER. Oh, more than nonsense. It's just that I'll be left alone. You're all I have and I can't bear to see you go.

BRIDEGROOM. You'll come live with us!

MOTHER. No. I can't abandon your father and your brother. I go to their graves every morning. Because if I leave and one of those killers, one of the Felix family dies, they might bury him next to mine. And I won't have it! I won't! I would claw their rotting remains up with my own hands and hurl them against the cemetery walls!

BRIDEGROOM. Are you starting again?

MOTHER. I'm sorry. (*Pause.*) How long have you known her?

BRIDEGROOM. Three years. And since I was able to buy the vineyards ...

MOTHER. Three years. Didn't she — Wasn't there someone else, sometime back?

BRIDEGROOM. I don't know. I don't think so. Girls have to look around very carefully before they take a husband.

MOTHER. Yes. Well. I didn't look at anybody. I looked at your father and when they killed him I looked at the walls. One woman, one man, and that's that.

BRIDEGROOM. You know she's a good girl.

MOTHER. I don't doubt it. At any rate, I wish I'd known her mother.

BRIDEGROOM. Whatever for?

MOTHER. (*Looking at him.*) Son ...

BRIDEGROOM. What?

MOTHER. Nothing. It's true. You're right. When shall I ask for her hand?

BRIDEGROOM. (*Happy.*) Sunday all right with you?

MOTHER. I'll give her my brass earrings. They're old and valuable. And you'll buy her ...

BRIDEGROOM. Whatever you think is right.

MOTHER. You'll buy her some lace stockings, and for yourself two suits of clothes ... no, three! You're all I've left!

BRIDEGROOM. I'm off. I'll see her tomorrow.

MOTHER. Yes, yes; and give me six grandchildren to cheer me up, or however many you wish, since your father didn't have the time to give me any more.

BRIDEGROOM. The first one, for you.

MOTHER. Yes, but let's have some girls too. I want to embroider and make lace and live in peace.

BRIDEGROOM. I know you'll love her.

MOTHER. I will, son. (*She goes to kiss him but stops herself.*) Get along with you. You're too old for kissing. Go kiss your wife.

(*Pause. Aside.*) When she is your wife.

BRIDEGROOM. I'm off!

MOTHER. And don't forget to tend the land just around the little mill, you've neglected it.

BRIDEGROOM. All right.

MOTHER. Go with God. (*He exits. The Mother remains seated, with her back to the door. A Neighbor appears, dressed in dark colors, scarf on her head.*)

MOTHER. Come in.

NEIGHBOR. How are you?

MOTHER. As you see.

NEIGHBOR. I had to come down to the store so I thought I'd drop by and see you. We live so far!

MOTHER. I haven't been to the upper end of the street in twenty years.

NEIGHBOR. You look fine.

MOTHER. You think?

NEIGHBOR. Everything passes. Two days ago my neighbor's son was brought home with both arms cut off by the machines. (*She sits.*)

MOTHER. Rafael?

NEIGHBOR. Yes. And there he is. I often think your son and mine are better off where they are, asleep, resting, out of danger.

MOTHER. That's no comfort. That's fancy.

NEIGHBOR. Ah!

MOTHER. Ah! (*Pause.*)

NEIGHBOR. (*Sad.*) And your son?

MOTHER. He's out.

NEIGHBOR. So he's bought the vineyards at last!

MOTHER. He was lucky.

NEIGHBOR. Now he can get married.

MOTHER. (*As if awakening from a dream, pulling her chair next to the Neighbor's.*) Listen.

NEIGHBOR. (*Confidential.*) Tell me.

MOTHER. Do you know the girl?

NEIGHBOR. A very nice young woman!

MOTHER. Yes, but ...

NEIGHBOR. No one knows her very well. She lives alone with her father, so far away, ten leagues from the nearest house. But a good girl. Used to being alone.

MOTHER. And her mother?

NEIGHBOR. I did know her. Beautiful. A glow in her face, like a saint. But I never liked her. She had no love for her husband.

MOTHER. (*Annoyed.*) People know everything, don't they!

NEIGHBOR. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend, but it's true. Now, was she a decent woman? Nobody ever said. There was no talk. (*Beat.*) She was very proud.

MOTHER. Always the same!

NEIGHBOR. You asked!

MOTHER. I just wish no one knew either of them: the live one or the dead one. I wish they were both like thistles, unnamed and prickly if need be.

NEIGHBOR. You're right. Your son's worth it.

MOTHER. He is. That's why I look after him. I heard the girl had a suitor of sorts, once?

NEIGHBOR. She must have been fifteen or so at the time. And he married a cousin of hers two years ago. No one remembers.

MOTHER. You remember.

NEIGHBOR. You ask such questions!

MOTHER. Everybody wants to know what might hurt them. Who was the man?

NEIGHBOR. Leonardo.

MOTHER. Which Leonardo?

NEIGHBOR. Leonardo Felix.

MOTHER. (Rising.) Felix!

NEIGHBOR. It's not his fault! He was eight years old when — when the trouble happened.

MOTHER. True ... But I hear "Felix" and I feel I've a mouthful of mud. (She spits.) And I have to spit ... To spit so as not to kill.

NEIGHBOR. Control yourself. What's the point?

MOTHER. None. But you understand.

NEIGHBOR. Don't go against your son's happiness. Don't say a word. You're old and I am too. It's our turn to be silent now.

MOTHER. I won't say anything.

NEIGHBOR. (Kissing her.) Not one word.

MOTHER. (Calmly.) Things...!

NEIGHBOR. I'd better get going, my people must be on their way home from the fields.

MOTHER. Hot day!

NEIGHBOR. Yes. The little water boys are tanned black. Well, goodbye.

MOTHER. Goodbye. (She goes towards the door, left. Half way she stops and slowly crosses herself. Lights.)

Scene 2

A room painted in rose colors with copper objects and bunches of wild flowers. Center, a table covered with a tablecloth. It's morning. Leonardo's Mother-in-Law is rocking a baby in her arms. Leonardo's Wife sits in a corner, sewing.

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

Nana, baby, nana,
there was a great big horse
who wouldn't drink the water
The water was black
among the reeds and branches.

Coming to the bridge
it stops and sings a song,
Who can say, my baby,
what the water hides
walking with her silk train
through her dark, green house?
WIFE. (Soft.)

Sleep my flower blossom
for the horse won't drink.

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

Sleep my flower blossom
So the horse won't weep.
Wounded his legs,
frozen his mane,
and deep in his eyes,
a sharp, silver blade.
They came to the river,
They ran to the river!
And the blood rushed downstream,
Faster than the water.

WIFE.

Sleep my flower blossom
for the horse won't drink.

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

Sleep, my little rosebush,
or the horse will weep.

WIFE.

He wouldn't come close
to the wet, reedy banks
with his warm soft muzzle,
in its silver bit.

He would neigh at the mountains
with the river, dead,
wrapped around his throat.

Ah, the great big horse
who wouldn't drink the water!

Sorrow made of snow,
horse made out of sunrise!

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

Stop! Keep away,
And bar all the windows
with a branch of dreams
and a dream of branches.

WIFE.

My baby's asleep.

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

My baby won't speak.

WIFE.

Horse, my baby's head
rests on pure soft down,
MOTHER-IN-LAW,
in a solid steel bed,

WIFE.

and a spread of lace.

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

Nana, baby, nana.

WIFE.

Ah, the great big horse

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who wouldn't drink the water!

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

Keep away, don't come in!
Go up to the mountains
through the grayling valleys
where you'll find your mare.

WIFE. (*Watching him.*)

Nana baby nana.

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

My baby is asleep.

WIFE. (*Very softly.*)

Sleep my flower blossom
for the horse won't drink.

MOTHER-IN-LAW. (*Rising softly.*)

Sleep, my little rosebush,
or the horse will weep.

(*She takes the baby inside. Leonardo enters.*)

LEONARDO. Where's the boy?

WIFE. Asleep.

LEONARDO. He wasn't feeling well yesterday. He cried all
night.

WIFE. (*Gaily.*) Well, today he's fresh as a dahlia. And you? Did
you go to the blacksmith's?

LEONARDO. Yes. Can you believe it? I've been putting new
shoes on that horse for two months now and he keeps losing them.

Must be the stones on the road.

WIFE. Could you be riding him too hard?

LEONARDO. No. I almost never use him.

WIFE. The neighbors told me they'd seen you yesterday at the far
end of the plain.

LEONARDO. Who said that?

WIFE. The women who gather capers. I was surprised. Was it you?

LEONARDO. No. What would I be doing out there, in that desert?

WIFE. That's what I said. But the horse was sweating hard.

LEONARDO. You saw it?

WIFE. No. My mother.

LEONARDO. Is she with the boy?

WIFE. Yes. Do you want some lemonade?

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LEONARDO. Make it very cold.
 WIFE. You didn't come home for lunch ...
 LEONARDO. I was having the wheat weighed. They're very slow.
 WIFE. *(Making the lemonade. Very tender.)* Do they pay well?
 LEONARDO. Fair price.
 WIFE. I need a new dress, and the baby, a little cap with ribbons.
 LEONARDO. *(Rising.)* I'll go take a look at him.
 WIFE. Careful, don't wake him up.
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. *(Entering.)* Who's running the poor horse like that? He's stretched out in the stable, eyes bulging out, like he's been to the end of the world and back.
 LEONARDO. *(Sharp.)* Me.
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. I'm sorry, it's your horse.
 WIFE. *(Timidly.)* He went to have the wheat weighed.
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. Kill it for all I care. *(She sits. Pause.)*
 WIFE. Is the lemonade cold enough?
 LEONARDO. Yes.
 WIFE. My cousin is being asked in marriage. Did you know?
 LEONARDO. When?
 WIFE. Tomorrow. The wedding's in a month. I hope we'll be invited.
 LEONARDO. *(Grave.)* Who knows?
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. His mother wasn't very pleased with the marriage, I don't think.
 LEONARDO. She's probably right. That girl is to be watched.
 WIFE. She's a good girl. Why do you say that?
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. He must know whereof he speaks. He knew her very well for ... three years, was it?
 LEONARDO. I left her. *(To his Wife.)* Are you going to start crying now? Stop it! *(He roughly pulls her hands away from her face.)*
 Let's go see the baby. *(They exit arms around each other. A Girl enters running merrily.)*
 GIRL. Mrs!
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. What is it?
 GIRL. The bridegroom came to the store and bought the best of everything!
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. Was he alone?
 GIRL. No, with his mother. Such a serious woman. *(She imitates*

her.) Oh, you should see what they bought!
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. They have money.
 GIRL. Lace stockings! Oh, those stockings! The dream of women in stockings! Look: a swallow here, *(She indicates her ankle.)* a little boat here *(She indicates her calf.)* and here, a rose *(She indicates her thigh.)*
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. Girl!
 GIRL. A rose! Seeds and stalk and leaves and everything! All pure silk!
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. Two fortunes coming together. *(Leonardo and his Wife enter.)*
 GIRL. I came to tell you what they've been buying.
 LEONARDO. *(Sharp.)* We don't give a damn.
 WIFE. Let her be.
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. Leonardo, get a hold of yourself.
 GIRL. I'm sorry. *(She exits weeping.)*
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. No need to go around antagonizing the neighbors, now.
 LEONARDO. Did I ask your opinion? *(He sits down.)*
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. Fine.
 WIFE. What's the matter? You have something on your mind. Please tell me?
 LEONARDO. Stop it.
 WIFE. No, I want you to look me in the eye and tell me the truth.
 LEONARDO. Will you leave me alone! *(He rises.)*
 WIFE. Where are you going now?
 LEONARDO. *(Sharp.)* Can't you shut up?
 MOTHER-IN-LAW. *(To her daughter.)* Quiet! *(Leonardo exits.)*
 The baby! *(She exits and comes back with the baby. The Wife stands motionless.)*
 Wounded his legs,
 frozen his mane,
 and deep in his eyes,
 a sharp, silver blade.
 They came to the river,
 They ran to the river,
 And the blood rushed downstream,
 Faster than the water.

WIFE. (*Turning slowly as if in a dream.*)

Sleep, my flower blossom
the horse began to drink.

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

Sleep, my little rosebush,
or horse will weep.

WIFE. Nana, baby, nana.

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

Ah, the great, big horse
that wouldn't drink the water!

WIFE.

Keep away, don't come in!

And run to the mountain!

Sorrow made of snow,
horse made out of sunrise!

MOTHER-IN-LAW. (*Weeping.*) Nana, baby, nana,

WIFE. (*Weeping and walking slowly towards him.*) My baby's

asleep ...

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

Sleep my flower blossom,
for the horse won't drink.

WIFE. (*Weeping, leaning on the table.*)

Sleep my little rosebush,
Or the horse will weep.

(*Lights.*)

Scene 3

Interior of the Bride's house. Upstage, a cross made of large rose-colored flowers. The doors are round with lace curtains pulled back with rose-colored ties. The walls are of a white, hard material, and have round fans, blue crockery and little mirrors on them.

MAID. (*Obsequious.*) Please come in ... (*The Bridegroom and his*

Mother enter. The Mother, in black silk and lace mantilla. The Bridegroom in black corduroy and a large gold chain.) Won't you sit down? They're coming. (*The Maid exits. The Mother and the*

Bridegroom sit motionless, like statues. Long pause.)

MOTHER. Did you bring a watch?

BRIDEGROOM. Yes. (*He pulls it out and looks.*)

MOTHER. I'd like us to get back on time. These people live so far!

BRIDEGROOM. Good land, though.

MOTHER. Good enough, but too isolated. Four hours on the road and not a single house. Not a single tree.

BRIDEGROOM. It is the desert.

MOTHER. Your father would have covered it with trees.

BRIDEGROOM. Without water?

MOTHER. He would have found it. In the three years he was married to me he planted ten cherry trees, (*Trying to remember.*) the three walnut trees by the mill, an entire vineyard and a plant called Jupiter that bears red flowers and dried up. (*Pause.*)

BRIDEGROOM. She must be getting dressed. (*The Father enters. He is an old man with a mane of shining, white hair. He walks with bowed head. The Mother and the Bridegroom rise and they all shake*

hands in silence.)

FATHER. Long trip?

MOTHER. Four hours. (*They sit.*)

FATHER. You must have come the long way.

MOTHER. I'm too old to sail down the river.

BRIDEGROOM. It makes her sick. *(Pause.)*

FATHER. Good year for hay.

BRIDEGROOM. Very good.

FATHER. In my time you couldn't get this land to give a blade of grass. We had to punish and beg to make her yield anything of value.

MOTHER. Well, look at it now. And don't complain. I haven't come to ask for anything.

FATHER. *(Smiling.)* Well, you're richer than I. Vineyards, now that's capital. Each furrow a silver coin. What I regret, really, ... and I hope you understand ... is that the lands are separated. I like to see everything together. I have one thorn in my heart, and that's a little orchard right in the middle of my land, which I can't get them to sell to me for all the gold in the world!

BRIDEGROOM. Isn't that always the way.

FATHER. I wish we could get twenty pair of oxen to pull your vineyards over to this side. Now that would make me happy! ...

MOTHER. What for?

FATHER. What's mine is hers and what's yours is his. That's why. To see it become all one. That's the beauty of it!

BRIDEGROOM. A lot less work for me, I can tell you that.

MOTHER. When I die you can sell and buy down here.

FATHER. Sell, sell! No, ma'am, buy! Buy it all! If I'd had sons I would have bought this entire mountain all the way to the creek. Because it's not really good land, you see, so you have to use your muscle to make it yield. And it's so remote, nobody comes around to steal the fruit. You can sleep in peace. *(Pause.)*

MOTHER. You know what I'm here for.

FATHER. Yes.

MOTHER. And...?

FATHER. All right by me. They've talked it over.

MOTHER. My son is able and well set up.

FATHER. My daughter too.

MOTHER. My son is handsome. He's never known woman. His honor is as spotless as clean sheets drying in the sun.

FATHER. What can I say about my daughter? She gets up to knead the dough for bread at three, with the morning star. She never speaks; soft as wool, embroiders all sorts of things and could

cut rope with her teeth.

MOTHER. God bless their house.

FATHER. God bless. *(The Maid enters with two trays: one with glasses and the other with sweets.)*

MOTHER. *(To her son.)* When do you two want the wedding?

BRIDEGROOM. Next Thursday.

FATHER. Her twenty-second birthday.

MOTHER. Twenty-two! My eldest son would be that age if he had lived. And he would have lived, hot male that he was, if men hadn't invented knives.

FATHER. You shouldn't think of such things any more.

MOTHER. Every minute of my life. Put yourself in my place.

FATHER. Thursday it is, then?

BRIDEGROOM. Thursday.

FATHER. The bride and groom, you and I drive together to the church which is so far, and the guests in the carts and horses they may bring.

MOTHER. All right.

FATHER. *(To the Maid, who is serving.)* Tell her to come in. *(The Bride appears, bowed head, arms to the sides, in modest attitude.)*

MOTHER. Come closer. Are you happy?

BRIDE. Yes, ma'am.

FATHER. Why so solemn, girl? She's to be your mother, you know.

BRIDE. I am happy. When I say yes I mean yes.

MOTHER. Of course. *(She pulls her face up gently by the chin.)*

Look at me.

FATHER. She resembles my wife in everything.

MOTHER. Really? Beautiful eyes! Do you know what marriage means, child?

BRIDE. *(Serious.)* I know.

MOTHER. A man, children, and a wall three feet thick between you and everything else.

BRIDEGROOM. What else is there?

MOTHER. Nothing. And may they all live. That's all. May they live!

BRIDE. I know my duty.

MOTHER. I brought you some presents.

BRIDE. Thank you.

FATHER. Would you like to take some refreshment?

MOTHER. I don't want anything. *(To the Bridegroom.)* And you?

BRIDEGROOM. I will. *(He takes a sweet and the Bride takes another.)*

FATHER. *(To the Bridegroom.)* Wine?

MOTHER. He doesn't touch it.

FATHER. Good. *(Pause. Everybody stands about.)*

BRIDEGROOM. *(To the Bride.)* I'll come back tomorrow.

BRIDE. At what time?

BRIDEGROOM. Five o'clock.

BRIDE. I'll be waiting.

BRIDEGROOM. When I leave your side, I feel something is torn from me, and I've a knot in my throat.

BRIDE. When you're my husband that will pass.

BRIDEGROOM. I hope so.

MOTHER. Let's go. The sun won't wait. *(To the Father.)* Are we settled on everything?

FATHER. We are.

MOTHER. *(To the Maid.)* Goodbye, girl.

MAID. Go with God. *(The Mother kisses the Bride.)*

MOTHER. Goodbye, daughter. *(The Bride answers with a hand gesture.)*

FATHER. I'll walk you to the gate. *(They exit.)*

MAID. I'm dying to see the presents!

BRIDE. *(Sour.)* Stop it.

MAID. Oh, show them to me!

BRIDE. I don't want to.

MAID. The lace stockings, at least. They say they're all embroidered. Come on, girl!

BRIDE. I said, no!

MAID. God help us. All right. It's as if you didn't want to get married.

BRIDE. *(Biting her hand in rage.)* Aaaaahh!

MAID. Girl, child, what's wrong? Are you afraid to give up the life of a princess? Let's have no dark thoughts, now. You've no reason. None. Come. Let's look at the presents. *(She picks up the box.)*

BRIDE. *(Grabbing her by the wrists.)* Let go.

MAID. Lord, woman!

BRIDE. Let go, I said.

MAID. You're stronger than a man.

BRIDE. I've done man's work. I wish I were a man!

MAID. Don't talk like that!

BRIDE. I thought I told you to shut up. Let's talk about something else. *(The light gradually fades. Long pause.)*

MAID. Did you hear the horse last night?

BRIDE. What time?

MAID. Three.

BRIDE. A rogue horse from the herd, no doubt.

MAID. No, this one had a rider.

BRIDE. How do you know?

MAID. I saw him. He stopped by your window a long time. I was shocked.

BRIDE. My bridegroom, perhaps. Sometimes he comes by around that time.

MAID. No.

BRIDE. You saw him, you say?

MAID. Yes.

BRIDE. Who was it?

MAID. Leonardo.

BRIDE. *(Angry.)* That's a lie! What would he be wanting here?

MAID. It was him.

BRIDE. Shut up! God damn your tongue! *(Off stage, the hooves of a horse in full gallop.)*

MAID. *(At the window.)* Look, look out the window. Was it him?

BRIDE. Yes. *(Lights.)*

ACT TWO

Scene 1

From porch of the Bride's house. A gate at the back. Night. The Bride enters in voluminous pleated white petticoats, with lace and embroidered ruffles. A white, sleeveless bodice. The Maid wears the same.

MAID. I'll finish your hair out here.

BRIDE. It's unbearable inside. This heat!

MAID. It doesn't cool down even at dawn. *(The Bride sits in a low chair and she looks at herself in a little hand mirror. The Maid combs her hair.)*

BRIDE. My mother came from a place full of trees. Rich land.

MAID. Maybe that's why she was so merry!

BRIDE. She burned up here, though.

MAID. Fate.

BRIDE. We all burn up here. Even the walls are on fire. Ouch! Don't pull!

MAID. It's just this curl. I want it to fall on your forehead. *(The Bride looks at herself in the mirror.)* Oh, you look so beautiful! *(The Maid kisses her warmly.)*

BRIDE. *(Serious.)* Just comb my hair.

MAID. Lucky you! You're going to have a man in your arms, you're going to kiss him, you're going to feel his weight!

BRIDE. Be quiet!

MAID. And the best of all is when you wake up and feel him next to you, his breath brushing your bare shoulder like the tiny feather of a nightingale.

BRIDE. *(Angry.)* Will you shut up?

MAID. Heavens, girl! What do you think weddings are about?

That's what a wedding is, and nothing else. Is it the cake? The bouquets? No. It's a dazzling bed and a man and a woman.

BRIDE. You shouldn't say such things.

MAID. Well, that's something else again. But it's a very happy occasion.

BRIDE. Or very bitter.

MAID. I'm going to put the orange blossoms from here to here so that they show better. *(She tries some blossoms on her hair.)*

BRIDE. *(Looking at herself in the mirror.)* Just give it to me. *(She takes the orange blossoms, looks at them and drops her head on her chest.)*

MAID. What's this, what's this?

BRIDE. Leave me alone.

MAID. This isn't the time to be sad. *(Gaily.)* Give me those orange blossoms. *(The Bride hurls them to the ground.)* That's bad luck, throwing your wedding flowers down like that! Look at me! Don't you want to get married? You can say so, you know. There's still time. You can back down if you want to.

BRIDE. It's nothing. A black cloud. An ill wind here inside ... It's

not uncommon ...

MAID. You ... love your husband to be, don't you?

BRIDE. I do.

MAID. Of course you do!

BRIDE. It's ... such a big step.

MAID. Sooner or later ...

BRIDE. And I said yes.

MAID. I'll put the flowers on your hair.

BRIDE. Hurry. People are about to arrive.

MAID. They've been on the road for a couple of hours already.

BRIDE. How long from here to the church?

MAID. Five leagues up the river, and twice as long on the road. *(The Bride rises and the Maid is delighted to see her.)*

Let the bride awaken

on her wedding day.

Let the wild, broad rivers

float her wedding wreath!

BRIDE. *(Smiling.)*

Let's go.

MAID. (*Kisses her happily and dances around her.*)

Let her awaken
with the greenest armful
of laurel in bloom.
Let her awaken
by trunk and branch
of the laurel trees!

(*Offstage knocking at the door.*)

BRIDE. You'd better open. It must be the first guests. (*She exits into the house. The Maid opens the gate.*)

MAID. You?

LEONARDO. Me. Good morning.

MAID. The first one!

LEONARDO. I was invited, you know.

MAID. Yes.

LEONARDO. So I came.

MAID. Where's your wife?

LEONARDO. She's on her way. I came on horseback.

MAID. Did you run into anyone?

LEONARDO. I passed everybody on the road.

MAID. You're going to kill that poor horse.

LEONARDO. When he's dead, he's dead. (*Pause.*)

MAID. Sit down. Nobody's up yet.

LEONARDO. Not even the bride?

MAID. I'm getting her dressed right now.

LEONARDO. The bride. She must be happy!

MAID. (*Changing the subject.*) And the baby?

LEONARDO. What baby?

MAID. Your son.

LEONARDO. (*Remembering, as if half asleep.*) Ah, yes ...

MAID. Are they bringing him too?

LEONARDO. No. (*Pause. Voices in the distance.*)

VOICES.

Let the bride awaken
on her wedding day!
LEONARDO.

Let the bride awaken
on her wedding day.

MAID. It's the wedding guests. They're on their way.

LEONARDO. Is she wearing a big white wreath on her hair? She shouldn't. A small one would look better on her. Did the bride-groom bring the orange blossom she's to put on her breast? (*The Bride enters, still in petticoats, wearing the orange blossoms in her hair.*)

BRIDE. Yes. He did.

MAID. What are you doing? You're not dressed!

BRIDE. Who cares? (*Serious.*) Why do you ask if he brought me the flowers? What do you mean by that?

LEONARDO. Nothing. What should I mean? (*Coming closer.*) You know me. You know I never "mean" anything. Tell me: who have I been to you? (*Silence.*) Let me refresh your memory. Two oxen and a shack were not enough, isn't that so? That was the thorn.

BRIDE. What do you want here?

LEONARDO. To see your wedding.

BRIDE. Good, because I saw yours!

LEONARDO. You did that. You arranged that marriage with your own two hands.

BRIDE. That's a lie!

LEONARDO. I won't say another word. This is blood running through my veins. The mountains would hear me if —

BRIDE. And me too!

MAID. Stop it! Both of you! You can't talk about the past anymore. (*The Maid looks towards all the doors with great unease.*)

BRIDE. You're right. I shouldn't even be speaking to you. But it burns my soul your coming to see me, spying on my wedding, asking sarcastic questions about the orange blossom. Get out of here. Go wait for your wife outside.

LEONARDO. We can't talk?

MAID. (*Angry.*) No, you can't.

LEONARDO. Since my wedding I've been asking myself day and night whose fault it was, and every time I think about it, a new blame is born that devours the first one. But there is blame!

BRIDE. A man with a horse knows much and can do much to confuse a poor desert girl. But I have pride. And I'm getting married. And I will lock myself up with my husband whom I will love above anything and anybody else.

LEONARDO. Pride won't help you. *(He comes closer.)*

BRIDE. Don't you come any closer!

LEONARDO. To shut ourselves up in burning silence will be our greatest punishment. What good was pride to me, and never looking at you, and haunting your sleep night after night? It set me on fire! And you think time heals and walls cover up, and it's not true, it's not true. When things reach their center, they can't be stopped!

BRIDE. *(Trembling.)* I can't listen to you. Your voice ... It's like drinking a bottle of anisette and falling asleep on a blanket of roses. And it pulls me, and I follow, and I know I'm drowning and I can't stop.

MAID. *(Grabbing Leonardo by the lapels.)* You must leave right now!

LEONARDO. It's the last time I'll speak with her. You've nothing to fear.

BRIDE. I know I'm mad and that my heart is rotten with denial, and here I stand, motionless, just to hear his voice, just to watch him move.

LEONARDO. I had to say this. Now go get married. I did.

MAID. She is getting married!

VOICES. *(Coming closer.)*

Let the bride awaken

on her wedding day.

BRIDE. Let the bride awaken! *(She runs into her room.)*

MAID. They're coming. *(To Leonardo.)* You mustn't ever come here again.

LEONARDO. Oh, don't worry. *(He exits. The sun begins to rise.)*

FIRST GIRL. *(Entering.)*

Let the bride awaken

on her wedding day;

and the rounds begin,

and on each house a wreath.

VOICES.

Let the bride awaken!

CRUADA. *(Making as much noise as possible.)*

Let her awaken

with the greenest branch

of her love in bloom.

Let her awaken

by trunk and branch
of the laurel trees!

SECOND GIRL.

Let her awaken
with her long hair down,
and a snowy corset,
and a silver buckle
on her leather shoes.

MAID.

Look out shepherdess
the moon is waxing full!

FIRST GIRL.

Oh, handsome youth,

toss your hat down in the olive grove!

FIRST BOY. *(Entering holding his hat high.)*

Let the bride awaken,

the wedding approaches
circling the fields,
with armfuls of dahlias
and bread blessed by God.

VOICES.

Let the bride awaken!

SECOND GIRL.

The bride is wearing
her snow-white wreath
fastened by her bridegroom
with a lace of gold.

MAID.

Down by the grapefruit grove
the bride cannot sleep.

THIRD GIRL. *(Entering.)*

Down by the orange grove
the bridegroom will give her
a silver spoon and a linen cloth.

(Three guests enter.)

FIRST BOY.

Awaken my dove!

Bells made of shadows

will not ring at dawn.

GUEST.

The bride, the white bride
today is a maid,
tomorrow a woman.

FIRST GIRL.

Black curls down your back,
silk train in your wake.

GUEST.

Come down, pretty dark eyes,
the morning is drizzling cold dew.

MAID.

I will embroider a tree
with scarlet ribbons abloom,
and on each a winged "Love,"
and on each wing one red plume.

VOICES

Let the bride awaken!

FIRST BOY.

On her wedding day!

GUEST.

On your wedding morning
You will look so bright;
Flower of the mountain

A sea captain's wife!

FATHER. *(Entering.)*

This captain's wife
is taking a bridegroom
who comes with his oxen
to take up his trowel!

THIRD GIRL.

The bridegroom, a flower
spun out of pure gold.
At each step, a carnation
leaves scent on the road.

MAID.

Ah, my happy girl!

SECOND BOY.

Let the bride awaken!

MAID.

Ah, my precious girl!

FIRST GIRL.

The wedding is rapping
on window and door.

SECOND GIRL.

Let the bride come out!

CRUADA.

Let the bells ring and play
on this your wedding day!

FIRST BOY.

She's coming! She's coming!

MAID.

And the wedding rises
like a fighting bull!

(The bedroom doors fling open and the Bride appears, dressed in black, 1900 style, silk lace, long train and a crown of white orange blossoms. Sound of guitars.)

End of Part I

BLOOD WEDDING

PART II

Scene 1

Act Two, Scene 1 continues. The girls surround the Bride.

THIRD GIRL. What's that scent, in your hair?

BRIDE. *(Laughing.)* I have none!

SECOND GIRL. *(Looking at her dress.)* Oh, the beautiful cloth!

FIRST BOY. Here's the bridegroom!

BRIDEGROOM. Saluti!

FIRST GIRL. *(Putting a flower behind his ear.)*

Spun gold in bloom

is the bridegroom.

SECOND GIRL.

Peace and contentment

deep in his eyes.

(The bridegroom goes towards the Bride.)

BRIDE. Why are you wearing those shoes?

BRIDEGROOM. I thought they'd be merrier than the black

ones.

LEONARDO'S WIFE. *(Entering and kissing the Bride.)* Saluti!

(Everybody starts talking at once, gaily and noisily.)

LEONARDO. *(Entering, as if doing it out of pure formality.)*

On the morning of your wedding

we crown you with a wreath.

WIFE.

And the fields will smile at last,

at your flowing mane of hair!

MOTHER. *(To the Father.)* Are they here too?

FATHER. They're family. Today is a day for forgiveness!

MOTHER. I'll keep quiet, but I won't forgive them.

BRIDEGROOM. It makes me happy to see you standing there,

crowned with flowers.

BRIDE. Let's go to the church!

BRIDEGROOM. In a hurry?

BRIDE. Yes. I long to be your wife, to be alone with you and to listen to no other voice than yours.

BRIDEGROOM. I want the same too!

BRIDE. And to see only your eyes. And to have your arms around me so tight that even if my dead mother called me, I wouldn't be able to break away.

BRIDEGROOM. My arms are strong. They'll be tight around your waist for forty years, at least.

BRIDE. *(Desperately, grabbing his arm.)* Always!

FATHER. Let's go! Get your horses and your carts! The sun is up.

MOTHER. Be careful, everybody! No mishaps on the road. *(The big gate in the back opens and the wedding party starts out.)*

MAID. *(Weeping.)*

You leave this house

pure, fair maid, remember,
whiter than white,

a silver star.

FIRST GIRL.

Spotless in body and robe

from the house to the church, she goes. *(They continue exiting.)*

SECOND GIRL.

From the house to the church!

MAID.

And the air scatters flowers
over the sand.

THIRD GIRL.

Oh, pure, white girl!

MAID.

Darkness weighs the air
on the lace of her veil.

(They are all gone. Offstage guitars, tambourines, palillos. Alone on stage, Leonardo and his Wife.)

WIFE. Let's go.

LEONARDO. Where?

WIFE. To church. But you're not going on that horse, you're coming with me.

LEONARDO. In the cart?

WIFE. What else?

LEONARDO. I am not a man to ride a cart.

WIFE. And I am not a woman to attend a wedding without her husband. I can't stand it any more!

LEONARDO. Neither can I!

WIFE. Why do you look at me like that? With thorns in your eyes?

LEONARDO. Let's go!

WIFE. I don't know what's happening. But I think. And I don't want to. Something is clear: I'm finished. But I have a son, and another one on the way. Let's go.

OFFSTAGE VOICES.

You leave this house

pure, fair maid, remember,
whiter than white,

a silver star.

WIFE. *(Weeping.)* Remember, girl, you're leaving white and pure as a star! That's how I left my house. I felt I was carrying the entire fields in my arms.

LEONARDO. *(Rising.)* All right, let's go.

WIFE. With you!

LEONARDO. Yes. *(Pause.)* Start walking then! *(They exit.)*

VOICES.

You leave this house,
pure, fair maid, remember,
whiter than white,

a silver star.

(Slow fade out.)

Scene 2

Exterior of the Bride's house. Whites, grays, and cold blues. Great big fig trees. Somber, silvery tones. Dry, tan plateaus in the background, everything hardened, like a painted landscape in popular ceramics.

MAID. *(Setting cups and trays on the table.)*

And the wheel kept turning,
and turning, and turning,
and the water rushed,
and the wedding after.
Let the branches part
and the Moon wear finery
on her white veranda.

(Loud.)

Bring the tablecloths out!

(Sally.)

And the newlyweds were singing,
and singing, and singing,
and the water rushed
and the wedding after.
Let the frost glow red
let the bitter almonds
brim with honey sweet.

(Loud.)

Get out the wine!

(Poetic.)

Handsome girl,
handsomest in the land,
watch the water run.
Your wedding is here,
so gather your skirts
and hide yourself fast

under your groom's wing.
Never leave your house,
because he's a dove
his breast all aflame,
and the mute fields wait
for a rush of blood.
And the wheel kept turning,
and turning, and turning,
and the water rushed,
and the wedding after.

Let the water sparkle!

MOTHER. *(Entering.)* At long last!

FATHER. Are we the first?

MAID. No. Leonardo and his wife got here a while ago. They must have raced like the devil. The poor woman was terrified.

They made time as if they'd been on horseback.

FATHER. That man is looking for trouble. Bad blood.

MOTHER. What do you expect? His family's blood. From his great-grandfather who started killing, straight down to that deadly rabble of false smiles and hidden knives.

FATHER. All right, let's not —

MAID. How can she not?

MOTHER. I hurt down to the very end of my veins. I look at them and see nothing but the hand that killed what was mine. Look at me. You think I'm mad? I am. Mad I never shouted out all I carry in my heart. In my breast I nurse a howl, always ready, which I hide close to my skin. But the dead are borne away and one must be silent. Or people talk. *(She takes off her shawl.)*

FATHER. This is not the day to speak of such things.

MOTHER. When the subject comes up, I talk. I have to. Today most of all. Today I'll be alone in my house.

FATHER. But expecting company very soon, eh?

MOTHER. My dream. Grandchildren. *(They both sit.)*

FATHER. I hope they have many. This land needs hands that don't cost money. There's an endless battle to be waged against bad weed, thistles, stone and rock everywhere. And those arms must belong to the masters. To those who punish and govern and make the seeds yield. We need many sons.

MOTHER. And a daughter or two. Boys belong to the wind. They must needs handle weapons. Girls stay home.

FATHER. (*Happyly.*) I think they'll have boys and girls.

MOTHER. My son will cover her well. He's of good stock. His father could have had many children with me.

FATHER. I wish it could happen in one day. That they'd give birth to two or three grown men right away.

MOTHER. Well, it doesn't work that way. It takes a long time to bring them up. That's why it's devastating to see one's blood spilled on the ground. A stream that runs for a minute and has cost us years. I found my son lying dead in the middle of the street, I plunged my hands in his blood and licked them clean with my tongue. Because it was mine. You can't imagine what it's like. I would keep that blood soaked dirt in a chalice of crystal and topaz.

FATHER. And now we wait. My daughter's wide and your son is strong.

MOTHER. I hope so. (*They both rise.*)

FATHER. (*To the Maid.*) Get the trays of wheat ready.

MAID. They are.

LEONARDO'S WIFE. (*Entering.*) All the best to both!

MOTHER. Thank you.

LEONARDO. Is there going to be dancing?

FATHER. Not much. People have to get home.

MAID. Here they come! (*The guests arrive in happy chattering groups. The Bride and Bridegroom enter arm in arm. Leonardo exits.*)

BRIDEGRROOM. I have never seen so many people at a wedding in my life!

BRIDE. (*Somber.*) No.

FATHER. It was beautiful.

MOTHER. Even distant relatives came.

BRIDEGRROOM. People who never left their home before.

MOTHER. Your father sowed, now you reap.

BRIDEGRROOM. There were cousins I didn't know I had.

MOTHER. All our people from the coast.

BRIDEGRROOM. (*Laughing.*) They were scared of the horses. (*Everybody talks in the background.*)

MOTHER. (*To the Bride.*) What are you thinking?

BRIDE. Nothing at all.

MOTHER. Blessings can be heavy to bear. (*Guitars offstage*)

BRIDE. Like lead.

MOTHER. (*Strong.*) Well they shouldn't. You must be light as a dove.

BRIDE. Are you staying the night?

MOTHER. No. I don't want to leave the house alone.

BRIDE. You should stay!

FATHER. (*To the Mother, happy.*) Look at them dancing. Dances from the coast. (*Leonardo enters and sits. His Wife stands behind him, rigid.*)

MOTHER. My husband's cousins. They can dance all night.

FATHER. It does the heart good to watch them. What a nice change for this house. (*He exits.*)

BRIDEGRROOM. Did you like the orange blossoms?

BRIDE. (*Looking at him fixedly.*) Yes.

BRIDEGRROOM. They were wax. They'll last forever. I wish you'd put them all over your dress.

BRIDE. No need. (*Leonardo exits.*)

FIRST GIRL. Let's take the pins out!

BRIDE. (*To Bridegroom.*) I'll be right back.

WIFE. I hope you will be very happy with my cousin.

BRIDEGRROOM. I know I will.

WIFE. The two of you, here. Never venturing out, busy building your house. I wish I lived this far away!

BRIDEGRROOM. Why don't you buy land? The mountain isn't expensive and it's better for rearing children.

WIFE. We have no money. And the way we're going ...

BRIDEGRROOM. Your husband is a hard worker.

WIFE. Yes, but he likes to flit about. From one thing to the next. He's not a staid man.

MAID. Aren't you having anything to eat? I'm going to wrap up some wine cakes for your mother. I know she likes them.

BRIDEGRROOM. Give her three dozen.

WIFE. No, no. Half a dozen's enough.

BRIDEGRROOM. This is a special day.

WIFE. (*To the Maid.*) Where is Leonardo?

MAID. I haven't seen him.

BRIDEGRROOM. He must be at the party.

WIFE. I'll go find him. *(She exits.)*

MAID. It's wonderful out there.

BRIDEGROOM. You're not dancing?

MAID. Haven't been asked. *(Upstage, two girls pass by. Throughout the whole Act, there will be guests coming and going animatedly.)*

BRIDEGROOM. *(Laughing.)* Ah, these days men don't know what's good. Lively old women like you dance better than the young ones.

MAID. Oooh, now you're sweet-talking me! What a family! Males among males! When I was a child I saw your grandfather's wedding. What a figure he cut! Like a whole mountain getting married.

BRIDEGROOM. Well, I'm not quite as tall.

MAID. But you got the same glint in the eye! Where's my girl?

BRIDEGROOM. Taking off her veil.

MAID. Ah. Now look. Come midnight, since you won't sleep, I prepared some ham and a good bottle of old wine. It's in the lower part of the cupboard. In case you need it.

BRIDEGROOM. *(Smiling.)* I don't eat at midnight.

MAID. *(Winking.)* If not for you, for the bride then. *(She exits.)*

FIRST YOUNG MAN. *(Entering.)* You have to toast with us!

BRIDEGROOM. I am waiting for the bride.

SECOND YOUNG MAN. You'll have her at dawn!

FIRST YOUNG MAN. Which is the best time!

SECOND YOUNG MAN. Come on, just for a moment.

BRIDEGROOM. All right. *(They exit. Great merriment offstage.)*

The Bride enters. Two girls enter from the other side and meet her.)

FIRST GIRL. Who did you give the first pin to, me or this one?

BRIDE. I can't remember.

FIRST GIRL. You gave it to me, here.

SECOND GIRL. No, she gave it to me, in church.

BRIDE. *(Restless, with great inner turmoil.)* I don't know anymore.

FIRST GIRL. I'd like you to —

BRIDE. I really don't care. I've a lot on my mind.

SECOND GIRL. Sorry. *(Leonardo crosses in the back.)*

BRIDE. *(Seeing him.)* And this is an — an unsettling time.

FIRST GIRL. We wouldn't know!

BRIDE. You will when it's your turn. These are difficult steps to take.

FIRST GIRL. Are you angry?

BRIDE. Of course not. Forgive me.

SECOND GIRL. For what? But these pins are to catch a husband with, right?

BRIDE. Both of them.

FIRST GIRL. But one will get married first.

BRIDE. You really want to, don't you?

SECOND GIRL. *(Embarrassed.)* Yes.

BRIDE. What for?

FIRST GIRL. Well ... *(She embraces the other girl and they both run off. The Bridegroom enters, and very softly walks to the Bride and puts his arms around her.)*

BRIDE. *(Jumping.)* Don't!

BRIDEGROOM. Are you afraid of me?

BRIDE. Oh, it's you.

BRIDEGROOM. Who else? *(Pause.)* Your father or me.

BRIDE. True.

BRIDEGROOM. And your father wouldn't have embraced you quite the same way.

BRIDE. *(Somber.)* No, he wouldn't.

BRIDEGROOM. Because he's old. *(He embraces her again, somewhat roughly.)*

BRIDE. *(Sharp.)* Let go!

BRIDEGROOM. *(He does.)* Why?

BRIDE. Because — people — they could see us. *(In the back, the Maid crosses without looking at them.)*

BRIDEGROOM. So? We have God's blessing now.

BRIDE. I know. But — don't. Later.

BRIDEGROOM. What's the matter? You look scared.

BRIDE. Nothing at all. Don't go! *(Leonardo's Wife enters.)*

WIFE. I'm sorry if I'm interrupting ...

BRIDEGROOM. Not at all. What's wrong?

WIFE. Has my husband come through here?

BRIDEGROOM. No.

WIFE. I can't find him and his horse isn't in the stable.

BRIDEGROOM. *(Laughing.)* He must be running the fields.

(The Wife exits uneasy. The Maid enters.)

MAID. Aren't you happy with so many greetings and good wishes?

BRIDEGROOM. I hope it'll be over soon. I'm afraid the bride's a little tired.

MAID. What's this, my girl?

BRIDE. My head hurts as if someone had hurled a rock at it.

MAID. Around these mountains brides are supposed to be sturdy. *(To the Bridegroom.)* And you, you're supposed to make her feel better because she's all yours now. *(She exits running.)*

BRIDEGROOM. *(Putting his arms around her.)* Let's go dance for a little while. *(He kisses her.)*

BRIDE. *(In anguish.)* No. I'd like to lie down for a bit.

BRIDEGROOM. I'll keep you company.

BRIDE. Never! With guests in the house? What would they say? Let me catch my breath for a second.

BRIDEGROOM. Fine. But don't be like that tonight.

BRIDE. *(At the door to her bedroom.)* I'll feel better tonight.

BRIDEGROOM. Good.

MOTHER. *(The Mother enters.)* Son.

BRIDEGROOM. Where have you been?

MOTHER. In the midst of all that noise. Are you happy?

BRIDEGROOM. Yes.

MOTHER. And your wife?

BRIDEGROOM. Taking a little rest. Bad day for brides!

MOTHER. Bad? It's the only good one. I felt as if I had inherited a fortune. *(The Maid enters and goes into the Bride's bedroom.)* It's the

BRIDEGROOM. Are you leaving?

MOTHER. Yes. I need to be home.

BRIDEGROOM. Alone.

MOTHER. Not alone. My head is full of things, and men, and strife.

BRIDEGROOM. There is no longer any strife. *(The Maid enters quickly and runs off.)*

MOTHER. There is strife as long as there's life.

BRIDEGROOM. You know I will obey you always.

MOTHER. Be warm towards your wife, and if you notice her distant or skittish, caress her a little roughly, a tight embrace, a little bite, and then a soft kiss. Not enough to make her angry but to let her feel you're the male, the master, the one who gives orders.

That's how I learned from your father. And since you no longer have one, I'm the one to teach you these things.

BRIDEGROOM. I will always do as you say.

FATHER. *(Entering.)* Where's my daughter?

BRIDEGROOM. Inside. *(The Father exits.)*

FIRST GIRL. Time for the round with the bride and groom!

FIRST BOY. *(To the Bridegroom.)* And you have to call it.

FATHER. *(Entering.)* No, she's not.

BRIDEGROOM. No?

FATHER. She must have gone up to the balcony.

BRIDEGROOM. I'll go find her. *(He exits. Offstage guitars, dancing chatter.)*

FIRST GIRL. They've started!

BRIDEGROOM. *(Entering.)* She's not inside.

MOTHER. *(Uneasy.)* No?

FATHER. Where could she have gone?

MAID. *(Entering.)* Where is my girl?

MOTHER. *(Grave.)* We don't know. *(The Bridegroom exits. Three guests enter.)*

FATHER. She's not dancing out there?

MAID. No.

FATHER. *(Increasingly uneasy.)* So many people. Look again!

MAID. I have!

FATHER. Well, where is she?!

BRIDEGROOM. *(Entering.)* Nowhere to be found. *(Leonardo's Wife enters.)*

WIFE. They've run away! They've run away! She and Leonardo.

On horseback. Arms around each other, fast, like lightning.

FATHER. It's not true! My daughter! No!

MOTHER. Your daughter, yes! Seed of a bad mother, and him, him too! But she's my son's wife now!

BRIDEGROOM. We'll go after them! Who has a horse?

MOTHER. A horse! Right now! A horse! I'll give everything I have, my eyes, my tongue, for a horse ...

VOICE. Here!

MOTHER. *(To her son.)* Go! After them! *(The Bridegroom and two young men exit.)* No, don't go! Those people kill fast and well ... yes, go, and I'll follow!

FATHER. It wasn't her. Probably an accident ... My God, she could have fallen into the well!
MOTHER. Honest women drown, clean ones. Not that one! Oh, no! Two bands. There are two bands here. *(Everybody enters.)* My family and yours. *(To her people.)* Let's get out of here, wipe our feet clean of this place, and go help my son. *(The crowd separates in two groups.)* He has his people on his side; his cousins from the sea, and those from inland. Out! Everybody out! To the roads! The time for blood has come again. Two bands. You with yours and I with mine! After them! After them! *(Lights.)*

ACT THREE

Scene 1

The woods. Night. Great big humid trees. Very dark. The sound of two violins. Three woodcutters enter.

FIRST WOODCUTTER. Have they found them yet?
SECOND WOODCUTTER. No. But they're searching every-

where.

THIRD WOODCUTTER. They'll find them.

SECOND WOODCUTTER. Shhhhhhh!

THIRD WOODCUTTER. What?

SECOND WOODCUTTER. It sounds as if they were coming

from everywhere all at once.

FIRST WOODCUTTER. When the moon comes out they'll

find them.

SECOND WOODCUTTER. They should leave them alone.

FIRST WOODCUTTER. The world is so big. Room for everybody.

THIRD WOODCUTTER. They'll kill them.

SECOND WOODCUTTER. One must follow one's instincts.

They did well to flee.

FIRST WOODCUTTER. They lied to each other and to them-

selves but their blood won.

THIRD WOODCUTTER. Blood!

FIRST WOODCUTTER. One must follow the blood.

SECOND WOODCUTTER. But blood that sees the light is fast

drunk by the earth.

FIRST WOODCUTTER. So what? Better to die drained of it

than to live with it rotting inside.

THIRD WOODCUTTER. Quiet.

FIRST WOODCUTTER. What? Do you hear anything?

THIRD WOODCUTTER. I hear the crickets, the frogs, and night on the prow!

FIRST WOODCUTTER. But you can't hear the horse?

THIRD WOODCUTTER. No.

FIRST WOODCUTTER. He's making love to her now.

SECOND WOODCUTTER. Her body for him and his for her.

THIRD WOODCUTTER. They're looking for them. And they'll kill them.

FIRST WOODCUTTER. But their blood will be one by then, and they'll be two empty vessels, two dry brooks.

SECOND WOODCUTTER. There are clouds. The Moon may not come out.

THIRD WOODCUTTER. The bridegroom will find them with or without the moon. I saw him leave. A raging star. Ashen face. The fate of his kind stamped on his forehead.

FIRST WOODCUTTER. His kind ... People murdered in the streets.

SECOND WOODCUTTER. That is true.

THIRD WOODCUTTER. Do you think they can break through?

SECOND WOODCUTTER. Difficult. There are knives and shotguns ten leagues around.

THIRD WOODCUTTER. He's got a good horse.

SECOND WOODCUTTER. But he's got a woman with him.

FIRST WOODCUTTER. We're getting near.

SECOND WOODCUTTER. A tree with forty branches. We'll cut it down in no time.

THIRD WOODCUTTER. Here's the Moon. Let's hurry. *(A strong light comes from left.)*

FIRST WOODCUTTER.

Oh, rising moon!

Moon of the great leaves!

SECOND WOODCUTTER.

Blood full of jasmine!

FIRST WOODCUTTER.

Oh, lonely moon!

Moon of the green leaves!

SECOND WOODCUTTER.

Silver on the Bride's face.

THIRD WOODCUTTER.

Oh, evil moon!

Cast one shadow for love.

FIRST WOODCUTTER.

Oh, sad moon!

Cast one shadow for love.

(They exit. The Moon enters through the light coming from left. The stage becomes vividly blue.)

MOON.

Circular swan in the river

wide open eye of cathedrals

illusion of dawn in the leaves

I am; they won't get away!

Who's hiding? Who's weeping

in the wild brush of the valley?

The Moon has left a knife

abandoned in mid air,

which, being an ambush of lead

wants to be sorrow of blood.

Let me in! I am frozen

on your walls, in your windows!

Open your breasts and your rooftops,

let me come into your warmth!

I am cold! And my ashes,

left from the sleepiest metals,

long for the crest of a fire

they hunt through mountain and street.

And the snow carries me off

on icy shoulders of jasper

and drowns me in the hard, cold

water of the lakes.

But my icy cheeks will glow tonight

with the warm, red breath of blood.

And the reeds will part and bow to me

as I walk across the black.

No shadows, no dark corners,

There is no escape for them!

I want a breast to take me

in, and warm me well tonight.
A heart! A heart for me! A heart!
To brim with hot blood flowing
down the mountains of my breast;
let me in, oh, let me in!

(To the branches.)

No more shadows, let my beams
flood the forest full and then,
from each tree I'll hear the rustling
and cold humming of my light.
And my icy cheeks will glow tonight
with the warm, red breath of blood.
And the reeds will part and bow to me
as I walk across the black.
Who goes there? Out I say!
There is no escape for them!
I will set their horse alight
in a diamond-fever ray!

(The moon disappears through the trees and the stage is dark again. A Beggar Woman appears completely covered in dark green cloth. She is barefoot. Her face is barely discernible under her cowl. [This character should not appear in the list of characters of the play.]

BEGGAR WOMAN.

That Moon retreats and they approach.
No further than this spot.
And the river's rush will drown with it
the ripping, tearing sound of cries
in flight towards the night.
It must be here, and soon. I am tired of the chase.
Open the coffers. Let white linen shrouds
lie on the floor as they wait
for heavy bodies with the throats fresh cut.
Not a bird will waken and the breeze
gathering cries in her lap,
will flee with them over black treetops,
or bury them deep in soft, warm mud.
(Impatient.)
Ah, that moon, that moon!

(The Moon reappears, and with her the intense blue light.)
MOON.

Now they're coming.
Through ravines and river bed.
I'll light up the stones. What else?

BEGGAR WOMAN. Nothing.

MOON. Here comes the air, hard, with a double edge.

BEGGAR WOMAN.

A light on their jackets, rip open the buttons!
So the knives may all find their way home.

MOON.

Let them be a long time dying. Let their blood
place in my hands its delicate young hiss.
Watch my fields of ashes awaken in thirst
to the quivering gush of this flood.

BEGGAR WOMAN. Don't let them cross the river! Quiet now!

MOON. Here they come! *(The moon leaves. It's dark again.)*

BEGGAR WOMAN.

Hurry, hurry! More light! Did you hear?

They must not get away!

(The Bridegroom and First Young Man enter. The Beggar Woman sits and covers herself completely with her shawl.)

BRIDEGROOM. This way.

FIRST YOUNG MAN. You won't find them.

BRIDEGROOM. *(Hotly.)* Yes, I will!

FIRST YOUNG MAN. I've a feeling they're on another road.

BRIDEGROOM. No. I heard the gallop of the horse a moment ago, right here.

FIRST YOUNG MAN. Perhaps some other horse?

BRIDEGROOM. Listen. There's only one horse in the world:
that one. Do you understand? Now if you're going to follow me,
follow me and be quiet.

FIRST YOUNG MAN. It's just that I wish —

BRIDEGROOM. Shut up! I know I'll find them here. Do you
see this arm? It's not mine. It belongs to my brother and my father
and all the dead in my family. And it's so strong that it could pull
this tree up by the roots. So let's go. I feel the teeth of all my peo-
ple dig into me so I can hardly breathe.

BEGGAR WOMAN. (*Whimpering*) Oh!
 FIRST YOUNG MAN. Did you hear that?
 BRIDEGROOM. Go take a look.
 FIRST YOUNG MAN. This is like a hunt.
 BRIDEGROOM. A hunt indeed. The greatest of all. (*The First Young Man exits. The Bridegroom goes quickly in the other direction and stumbles over the Beggar Woman: Death.*)
 BEGGAR WOMAN. Oh!
 BRIDEGROOM. What do you want?
 BEGGAR WOMAN. I'm cold.
 BRIDEGROOM. Where are you going?
 BEGGAR WOMAN. (*Still whimpering, acting the beggar.*) Far away ...
 BRIDEGROOM. Where do you come from?
 BEGGAR WOMAN. Far away ...
 BRIDEGROOM. Did you happen to see a man and a woman on horseback, riding fast?
 BEGGAR WOMAN. (*As if awakening.*) Wait ... (*She looks at him.*) Beautiful man. (*Rising.*) But you'd be so much more beautiful, asleep.
 BRIDEGROOM. Answer me! Did you see them?
 BEGGAR WOMAN. Wait ... What broad shoulders! Now wouldn't you prefer to lie down, on them, on the ground, rather than walk on the soles of your feet? They're so small!
 BRIDEGROOM. (*Shaking her.*) I asked you if you'd seen them? Did they come this way?
 BEGGAR WOMAN. (*Sharply.*) They did not; but they're leaving the hills at this very moment. Can't you hear them?
 BRIDEGROOM. No.
 BEGGAR WOMAN. Come along. I know this land well.
 BRIDEGROOM. (*Impatient.*) All right, let's go! Which way?
 BEGGAR WOMAN. (*Grave.*) That way. (*They exit quickly. Distant sounds of the two violins which represent the forest. The woodcutters reappear, axes on their shoulders. They walk slowly through the trees.*)
 FIRST WOODCUTTER.
 Oh, rising death!
 Death of the great, big leaves.

SECOND WOODCUTTER.
 Don't open the gates to the blood!
 FIRST WOODCUTTER.
 Oh, lonely death!
 Death of the dry leaves.
 THIRD WOODCUTTER.
 Don't cover the wedding with flowers!
 SECOND WOODCUTTER.
 Oh, sad death!
 Leave one green branch for love.
 FIRST WOODCUTTER.
 Oh, evil death!
 Leave one green branch for love!
 (*They exit as they speak. Leonardo and the Bride enter.*)
 LEONARDO. Quiet!
 BRIDE.
 I'll go on from here. Alone.
 Go! I want you to turn back!
 LEONARDO. I said be quiet!
 BRIDE.
 With your teeth,
 with your hands, with anything,
 tear from my honest neck
 the metal of this chain,
 and leave me in a corner
 of my house all made of earth.
 And if you won't kill me now,
 as you'd kill a tiny snake,
 place in my bride's pure hands
 the cold barrel of your gun.
 Oh, what a cry, what fire
 rages through my head!
 What glass splinters in my tongue!
 LEONARDO.
 We took the step; now hush!
 Because they're coming up fast
 and you're coming with me.

BRIDE.

You will have to force me then!

LEONARDO.

Force you? Who ran down
the stairs first?

BRIDE.

I did.

LEONARDO.

Who reined the horse?

BRIDE.

I did. True.

LEONARDO.

And what hands

fastened my spurs?

BRIDE.

These, your hands now,
which at the sight of you
would crush the blue branches
and murmur of your veins.

I love you! I love you! Step aside!

I would kill you if I could

and wrap you in a shroud

edged in violets for my grief.

Ah, what a cry, what fire

rages through my head!

LEONARDO.

What glass splinters in my tongue!

Because I tried to forget you

and put a stone wall between

your house and my own.

It's the truth. Remember?

And I saw you from afar

and threw sand up to my eyes.

But I rode my horse that night

and the horse went to your door.

And my blood turned black

in a dream of silver pins

and in my sleep I planted

poison herbs into my flesh.

Not my doing, it's the earth

and the scent that flows so freely

from your hair and from your breasts.

BRIDE.

This is madness! I don't want

a bed, or bread with you,

but there's no minute of the day

I don't crave to be beside you,

because you pull me and I follow

and if you push me back I come again

like a blade of wind-blown grass.

I have left a stern man

and his family and friends

in the middle of our wedding

with the wreath still on my head.

They will punish you alone,

and I don't want it to be so!

Leave me here! Run away!

You have no one on your side.

LEONARDO.

Morning birds are breaking

with the sun across the treetops.

The night lies slowly dying

on the stone edge of the wood.

Let us go now to that dark place,

where I will always love you,

where the world means nothing,

nor its poison, nor its blame.

(*He embraces her passionately.*)

BRIDE.

And I will sleep at your feet

to guard your dreams every night.

Naked, facing the fields

like the bitch in heat I am,

as your beauty brands my flesh.

LEONARDO.

Fire with fire burns.

And the same small flame
will destroy two blades of wheat.

Let's go!

(He drags her away.)

BRIDE.

Where are you taking me?

LEONARDO.

Where those after us can't go,
and I can look at you once more!

BRIDE. *(Sarcastic.)*

From fairground to fairground
for an honest woman's sorrow.
For the world at large to gawk at me
in my wedding sheets still flying
like white banners in the wind.

LEONARDO.

If I'd thought the way one must,
I should want to leave you now.
But I go where you go.

And you too. Take one step. Try.
Moonlight nails have cleaved forever
your wide hips tight to my waist.

(This whole scene is violent and full of sensuality.)

BRIDE. Did you hear that?

LEONARDO. People are coming.

BRIDE.

Run!

Let me die here, it is just,
feet in water, head in thorns.

And let the green leaves weep for me,
a lost woman, and a maid.

LEONARDO. Quiet! They're here.

BRIDE. Go!

LEONARDO. Silence. They won't hear us. You in front. *(The
Bride hesitates.)* Let's go, I said!

BRIDE. Both of us, together!

LEONARDO. *(His arms around her.)*

As you wish!

If they part us it will be
because they've killed me.

BRIDE.

And me with you.

*(They exit, arms around each other. The moon appears very slowly.
The stage is flooded in her intense blue light. The two violins are heard
again. Suddenly, two tearing screams and the violins abruptly stop. At
the second scream, the Beggar Woman appears, her back to the audi-
ence. She opens her cloak and stands center stage like an enormous bird
with immense wings. The lights fade in the midst of absolute silence.)*

LAST SCENE

*A white room with arches and thick walls. Right and left,
white flights of stairs. Great arch up center and wall of the
same color. The floor should also be a dazzling white. This
simple room should have the feeling of a monumental church.
No grays, no shadows of any kind, not even what's necessary
for design perspective. Two girls dressed in dark blue are
rolling a great skein of red wool.*

FIRST GIRL.

Wool, skein of wool,
what would you make?

SECOND GIRL.

A dress made of jasmine,
and glass made of paper.
To be born at four
and to die at ten.
To be thread of wool,
a chain at your feet
and a knot that will tighten
round the dry laurel tree.

THIRD GIRL. (*Very young. Enters singing.*)

Did you go to the wedding?

FIRST GIRL.

No.

THIRD GIRL.

Well, I didn't either!

What happened

in the vineyards?

What happened

in the grove?

What did happen,

that no one came back?

Did you go to the wedding?

SECOND GIRL.

We said, no!

THIRD GIRL. (*Walking away.*)

Well, I didn't either!

SECOND GIRL.

Wool, skein of wool, what

would you sing?

FIRST GIRL.

Wounds made of wax,

Grief made of myrtle.

To sleep in the morning

and watch up all night.

THIRD GIRL. (*At the door.*)

The thread stumbles over

the flint on the road.

The blue silent mountains

are watching it go.

And it runs, runs, runs,

it's about to arrive,

to put away the bread,

with a knife in its hand.

(*She exits.*)

SECOND GIRL.

Wool, skein of wool,

what do you mean?

FIRST GIRL.

A lover without speech,

A bridegroom, blood red.

by the mute river bank

both lying dead.

(*She stops, looking at the skein of wool.*)

THIRD GIRL. (*Young girl. At the door again.*)

And it runs, runs, runs

the thread up to here.

All covered in mud,

I hear them approach.

Their bodies laid out

on an ivory cloth.

(*She exits. Leonardo's Wife and Mother-in-Law enter. They are in anguish.*)

FIRST GIRL. Are they coming?

MOTHER-IN-LAW. (*Sour.*) We've no idea.

SECOND GIRL. What about the wedding?

FIRST GIRL. Tell me.

MOTHER-IN-LAW. (*Sharp.*) There is nothing to tell.

WIFE. I want to go back. I want to find out.

MOTHER-IN-LAW. (*Taking over.*)

You will go to your house.

Brave, alone in your house,

there to get old and weep,

With the doors always shut.

Never. No one. Dead or alive.

We will nail the windows shut.

And let the rain and the night fall

on tall, bitter grass.

WIFE. But what happened?

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

It doesn't matter.

Throw a veil over your face.

Your sons are yours alone

and no one else's. On your bed

place a cross of ashes

where he used to rest his head.

(They exit. The Beggar Woman appears at the door. The girls, frightened, come together.)

BEGGAR WOMAN. Give me a piece of bread.

THIRD GIRL. Go away!

BEGGAR WOMAN. And why?

THIRD GIRL. Because you whine: go away.

FIRST GIRL. Girl!

BEGGAR WOMAN.

I could have asked for your eyes!

A cloud of birds follows me, shall I give you one?

THIRD GIRL. I want to go home!

SECOND GIRL. *(To the Beggar Woman.)* Don't pay any attention.

FIRST GIRL. Did you come by the river?

BEGGAR WOMAN. Yes, I did.

FIRST GIRL. *(Very timid.)* And ... may I ask...?

BEGGAR WOMAN.

I saw them. They're coming: two torrents

still at last among the bristling rocks,

two men at the feet of that horse.

Dead, in the beauty of the night.

(In ecstasy.)

Dead, yes, dead!

FIRST GIRL. Hush, old woman, hush!

BEGGAR WOMAN.

Their eyes broken flowers,

their teeth, hardened snow.

Both felled with one knife-stroke,

and the bride walking back,

hair and skirt soaked in blood.

And covered in blankets, the dead are approaching

They are carried aloft, on the shoulders of youth.

That's what happened. That's all. It was just.

The bloom of spun gold, under the dirty sand.

(She exits. The girls bow their heads and exit rhythmically.)

FIRST GIRL.

Dirty sand.

SECOND GIRL.

Over a bloom of spun gold.

THIRD GIRL.

Over spun gold in bloom

they're bringing the bridegrooms.

One dark,

dark the other.

And a dusky nighthingale flying and weeping

over the bloom of spun gold!

(She exits. The stage is empty. The Mother and the Neighbor enter.

The neighbor is crying.)

MOTHER. Enough.

NEIGHBOR. I can't!

MOTHER. Enough, I said! *(At the door.)* Anybody home? *(She*

puts her hands to her forehead.) My son would have answered. But

my son is now an armful of dried flowers. My son is already a dark

voice behind the mountains. *(Furious, to her neighbor.)* Will you

stop? I don't want any tears in this house. Your tears are tears of the

eyes, that's all. Mine will come when I'm alone, from the soles of

my feet, from my roots, and they will burn hotter than blood.

NEIGHBOR. Come to my house. Don't stay here.

MOTHER. Here. This is where I want to be. In peace. They're

all dead now. And at midnight I'll sleep, I'll sleep without fear of

gun or knife. Other mothers will look out their windows into the

night, the rain in their eyes, to see the faces of their sons. Not me.

Out of my sleep I will fashion a cold ivory dove to carry camellias

of frost to the graveyard. No, not a graveyard, not a graveyard: a

bed of earth that covers them and cradles them in the sky. *(A*

woman in black enters, crosses right and kneels. To her Neighbor.)

Take your hands off your face. Terrible days will come. I don't

want to see anyone. The earth and me. My tears and me. And

these four walls. *Abi! (She sits in anguish.)*

NEIGHBOR. Have pity on yourself!

MOTHER. *(Pushing her hair away from her face.)* I must be calm.

Because neighbors will come and I don't want them to see me so

poor. So poor! A woman without a single son to take to her lips.

(The neighbor notices the Bride who appears at the door.)

NEIGHBOR. *(Furious.)* Where do you think you're going?

BRIDE. Here.

MOTHER. *(To the Neighbor.)* Who is it?

NEIGHBOR. Don't you recognize her?

MOTHER. That's why I ask. Because if I recognize her I'll sink my teeth in her throat. Viper! *(She advances towards the Bride in a threatening manner. She stops. To the Neighbor.)* Do you see her there? Crying? And I stand here and don't claw her eyes out? I don't understand myself. Did I love my son at all? Or his honor? Where is his honor now? *(She strikes the Bride who falls.)*

NEIGHBOR. *(Pulling her away.)* For the love of God!

BRIDE. *(To the Neighbor.)* Let her. I came so she can kill me and I can join the others. *(To the Mother.)* But not with your hands; with steel hooks, with a scythe, until it breaks against my bones. Let her! I want her to know I am clean. I may be mad, but they will bury me without a single man having ever seen his own reflection in the whiteness of my breasts.

MOTHER. And what's all that to me?

BRIDE. Because I went off with the other one! I did! *(Anguished.)* And you would have too. I was a burned up woman, blistered inside and out, and your son was a little water from which I expected children, land, health! But the other one, he was a dark river, under thick branches sending me the rustle of his reeds with his song between their teeth. And I ran to your son, who was a cold little boy, made of water, but the other one, oh, the other one . . . he sent hundreds of birds across my step leaving frost on my wounds, my poor, withered woman's wounds, the wounds of a woman caressed by fire! I didn't want to! Listen to me! I didn't want to! Listen to me! I didn't want to! Your son was my haven and I never betrayed him, but the other one's arm dragged me away like a rip tide, like a mule kick, and would have gone on pulling me always, always, even if I'd been old and all the sons of your son had been there to hold me down by the hair! *(Another neighbor enters.)*

MOTHER. It's not her fault. Or mine. *(Sarcastic.)* Whose, then? Weak, useless, ill-sleeping woman is she who throws away a wreath of orange blossom for a piece of bed warmed up by another woman!

BRIDE. Stop it! Stop! Avenge yourself, here I am! My neck is soft, it'll be easier than cutting a dahlia from your garden. But this: honest and clean as a newborn girl. And strong enough to prove it to you. Light the fire. Let's put our hands in it: you for your son,

and I for my body. You'll have to pull yours away first. *(Another neighbor enters.)*

MOTHER. What do I care if you're pure? What do I care if you die? What do I care about anything? Blessed be the wheat because my sons lie under it; blessed be the rain because it washes the faces of the dead. Blessed be God who will lay us all together so we can rest. *(Another neighbor enters.)*

BRIDE. Let me weep with you.

MOTHER. Weep. But at the door. *(The Third Girl enters. The Bride is at the door, the Mother center stage.)*

LEONARDO'S WIFE. *(Entering, crossing Left.)*

The rider was handsome,
now a heap of snow.

He ran through woods and fairs,
and many women's arms.

Only night moss is now
the sole crown on his brow.

MOTHER.

Sunflower of your mother,
mirror of the earth.

Bitter oleander
cross your silent breast;

Sheet of dazzling silk
cover your sweet body

and let the water weep
through your sleeping hands.

LEONARDO'S WIFE.

Look at those four youths
with the tired shoulders!

BRIDE.

Look at four fair youths
bear cold Death aloft.

MOTHER.

Neighbors.
THIRD GIRL.

They're coming.

MOTHER.

It's all the same.

The cross, the cross.
WOMEN.

Sweet nails
sweet cross
sweet name
of our Lord.

BRIDE. May the Cross protect the living and the dead.

MOTHER.

Neighbors, with a knife,
just a little knife,
on a fateful day, between two and three,
two men killed each other for love.

With a knife,
just a little knife
that barely fits the grasp
but plunges fast and deep
into the astonished flesh,
and there it stops, and finds
all tangled and trembling
the dark root of a scream.

BRIDE.

And this is a knife
Just a little knife
that barely fits the grasp;
a fish without scales or a river,
and one fateful day, between two and three,
with this little knife
two men are left rigid
with yellowing lips in the reeds.

MOTHER.

And it barely fits the grasp,
but it plunges cold and hard
into the astonished flesh
and there it stops, and finds
all tangled and trembling
the dark living root of a scream.

End of Play

PROPERTY LIST

Sewing things (WIFE)
Baby (MOTHER-IN-LAW)
Pitcher of lemonade and glasses (WIFE)
Pocket watch (BRIDEGROOM)
Two trays, one with glasses, one with sweets (MAID)
Box (MAID)
Small hand mirror (BRIDE)
Comb (MAID)
Orange blossoms (MAID)
Cups and trays (MAID)
Axes (WOODCUTTERS)
Great red skein of wool (TWO GIRLS)

SOUND EFFECTS

Hooves of a horse in full gallop

Knocking at door

Guitars

Guitars, tambourines, palillos

Guitars, dancing, chatter

Two violins

Two tearing screams