

TWO DEAD GUYS AND A BANJO
A Story of Mourning

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Characters:

Ansia Markby

Frata Markby

Jaime Fitzgerald

Dr. Bonanza Munera

Gladis, Jaime's.

The Ghosts:

Vicente Markby

Sandro Fitzgerald

SCENE ONE

A psychiatric hospital. Doctor Bonanza Munera's absolutely, sober consulting office with a desk and bookshelf. The office door has numerous bolts and a full-length mirror hangs from it.

Bonanza nervously paces across the room. She takes out a video camera from one of the drawers, turns it on, stands in front of the mirror, and films herself.

BONANZA

Today's the day. He won't be late. I know him well. He'll knock on the door in exactly two minutes.

A light knock.

BONANZA (CONT'D)

He's early. This sudden unpunctuality doesn't necessarily indicate he won't be ready to... to... face the outside world.

(lowering the camera)

Jaime?

JAIME

(from the other side)

Yup, me.

BONANZA

Are you there?

JAIME

(hesitating)

Yeah... Um, is that a trick question?

BONANZA

How?

JAIME

I don't know. Maybe you're expecting me to say... "I am not here," or something like that.

BONANZA

No.

JAIME

OK. Perfect.

BONANZA

Perfect.

JAIME

Then... Why ask me something so... obvious?

BONANZA

(Stunned by her stupidity)

Well, it's that sometimes... the most obvious component is the most ... difficult to discover. The most obvious allows us to participate in the ordinary world and leave the insane one behind, Jaime. So, when I ask you if you are there and you reply that you are then you know you are where you are and ...

JAIME

Then it was one of those questions.

BONANZA

Well, perhaps.

JAIME

Can I come in?

BONANZA

Yes, of course. Today is the day. The day when you leave us... How do you feel?

JAIME

Is there another meaning to that question?

BONANZA

No, not at all!

JAIME

Well, I just want to thank you and say goodbye.

BONANZA

Good.

She puts the camera aside, turns, unlocks the multiple bolts, and opens the door.

BONANZA (CONT'D)

Wait, wait, don't come in, yet. I need to record your exit interview.

JAIME

Record?

BONANZA

With a video camera. Now, come in.

JAIME

Good.

He enters and holds out his hand to greet her. Bonanza jumps back, startled.

JAIME (CONT'D)

I'm good. Gladis is under control. She won't touch you no more.

BONANZA

Don't call it Gladis. As we've talked at length, it's your hand, not an autonomous member with its own identity and consciousness. It's your right hand.

JAIME

Is it wrong if I still call her, Gladis? I got her under control. She's not going to -

BONANZA

Do what, Jaime?

JAIME

You know, do lewd things, like, lift your skirt, fondle your breasts, or, touch, "crudely and constantly, my genitals to emulate the sexual act." Hey, I totally get it, doc. The desire my hand instigated is nothing more than, than "unconscious sublimation" 'cause I didn't get enough "affectation and affiliation" on account of my "fragmentation..."

BONANZA

Stop, Jaime! It's called ... masturbation and ...

JAIME

Yeah, I know, doc. It ain't nothing but the "attachment-identification" process, between a patient and his psychiatrist. A process that kinda looks like... love... I understand it, I recognize it, I accept it.

BONANZA

Good. Understand it, recognize it, accept it. Let's say it together.

JAIME & BONANZA

I understand it, I recognize it, I accept it.

JAIME

Listen, doc. Did you invent this... cure for insanity?

BONANZA

Insanity is not a sickness. But yes, now that you're sane, I can allow myself an egocentric extravagance, and admit that, yes, the theory and practice of conscious acceptance is all mine.

JAIME

You should patent it.

BONANZA

Thank you, Jaime, for the unsolicited advice. And now, it's my turn to give you something that's yours.

JAIME

Give me something?

BONANZA

Is that a trick question?

JAIME

No, no... I -

BONANZA

(laughing)

Oh, Jaime. I'm just trying to be cordial. I joke, to be cordial.

JAIME

(Confused but faking understanding) Oh, I get it.

BONANZA

Good. Hold the camera.

She gives him the camera, runs to her desk, takes a key hanging from her neck, opens a drawer and pulls out a manuscript of considerable size. She approaches Jaime and offers it to him.

BONANZA (CONT'D)

Here, Jaime. Now, this is yours.

He gives the camera back to Bonanza, awkwardly.

JAIME

Doc... I...

BONANZA

How do you feel?

JAIME

Well... This is really -

He's genuinely moved to tears.

BONANZA

Your father would have wanted you to have it.

JAIME

I'll take care of it. I'll be worthy of this manual.

BONANZA

Now, you can perform all of your father's magic tricks. This is your legacy.

He cries and slaps himself to calm down. Alarmed, Bonanza runs for cover behind her desk.

JAIME

No, don't be scared. It's not Gladis. It's just me. I hate when I get teary-eyed. After all, I am a grown man.

BONANZA

Jaime, you were admitted here the day your father died. You couldn't handle the loss. More than some magical, transitional object, this book of magic will be a way to have your father nearby. He loved you.

JAIME

He loved me.

BONANZA

Understand it, recognize it, accept it.

JAIME

Yes.

Bonanza leaves the camera on the desk and holds Jaime's hand.

BONANZA

Let's say goodbye.

JAIME

Yeah.

He shakes her hand firmly. After a few seconds, Bonanza becomes uncomfortable and tries to break free. Jaime doesn't let go.

BONANZA

You can go now, Jaime.

JAIME

Yes. I ... love you... doctor. I understand, recognize, and accept how much you've helped me.

BONANZA

I understand.

JAIME

And recognize it?

BONANZA

And I accept it.

They let go. Jaime clings to his father's book. He smiles, shyly.

JAIME

Lookout world! Here comes a great magician.

BONANZA

Jaime... Remember. Without a doubt, your father loved you.

SCENE TWO

Dark night. Frata and Ansia Markby stand before a naked body hanging from a tree. They calmly and thoughtfully take in the reality of their dead father.

Ansia pulls out a banjo from its case, and plays a melody although intended to be mournful, sounds like a light-hearted lament due to the tone of the instrument. She then kneels before the body.

ANSIA

Our father...

FRATA

Who art in heaven...

ANSIA

He's not in heaven. He killed a prostitute.

FRATA

Weren't we going to pray?

ANSIA

I think. Therefore, I don't pray.

FRATA

But what about his soul?

ANSIA

Our Father, who's art was lawyering not parenting, hallowed be thine gift to lie. Thy will to swindle be done. On earth as it shall be at the law firm of Markby and Markby. Lead us to many scams, in the name of justice.

FRATA

Amen?

ANSIA

It is done. Let's go.

FRATA

You're forgetting what's important.

ANSIA

Oh, the ring.

Ansia tries to remove a ring from the cadaver, the only object remaining on the body.

FRATA

No! You forget. We got to bury him.

Ansia finally removes the ring and places it on her finger.

ANSIA

We're not going to bury him.

FRATA

Why not?

ANSIA

It's only fair.

FRATA

But the vultures will eat him.

ANSIA

We're in a garbage dump. There's only rats here.

FRATA

Please, Ansia.

ANSIA

The brothers of the prostitute warned us. If we cut him down, they'll hang us too.

FRATA

Papa!

Frata cries inconsolably before the corpse.

ANSIA

Please, little one, don't be naive. Father wouldn't have liked to see you cry. Besides, he picked death by hanging. The brothers of the prostitute offered him several methods of execution, and he chose this one.

FRATA

He got to choose?

ANSIA

It was all very legal, very civilized. As a result, we won't sue them.

FRATA

But he didn't want to kill the *pregnated'ho*.

ANSIA

No? Well I remember he arrived home early, sat down to dine with us, then stated, "Whereas, since I can not endorse anything illegitimate in my life, I just killed a whore who I impregnated. Now therefore, the brothers of the injured party are coming henceforth, in two hours, to hang me. I chose hanging since, as it is said, arsenic bursts internal organs and bullets splatter flesh, and I wish to die intact."

FRATA

I don't remember him saying all those *whereasses* and *therefores*. I only remember the *impregnant whore*.

ANSIA

You don't remember anything. I'm the one with the exceptional memory.

FRATA

But it seems like it was only yesterday.

ANSIA

It was four hours ago, idiot.

FRATA

That's right. We ate lasagna. I still have some cheese stuck between my teeth.

ANSIA

Whereas, that cheese gave me indigestion. Therefore, with your informed consent, I'm going home to eliminate the surplus.

FRATA

Wait. Don't you have any feelings?

ANSIA

About?

FRATA

You talk like you didn't love him.

ANSIA

Because I loved him, I follow his example. Fortitude was one of his greatest virtues. When mother died, he didn't shed a single tear.

FRATA

Yes but he went mad and locked himself up in his room for a month.

ANSIA

By the way, did you bring mother's letter?

FRATA

Yes.

ANSIA

Give it to me.

FRATA

We have to read it.

ANSIA

We're not going to read it.

FRATA

The dead are going to punish you. You're violating their wishes. Mom asked us to read the letter the day of father's death.

ANSIA

If you don't give it to me, I'll take it by force.

FRATA

Promise me you'll read it.

ANSIA

Request is overruled, promise denied! I hold such requests by and for the dead, repugnant. What was not said in life, shall never be said. Hand it over.

FRATA

I *ain't* giving it to you.

Ansia searches Frata roughly and
finds the letter.

ANSIA

In your panties? You hid it in your panties! Your excessive behavior has always been pathetic. But this borders on the perverse. You hid a letter in your twat!

FRATA

Only for safe keeping.

ANSIA

Clearly, that's the safest place you'll find. No one sticks their hand down there but you.

FRATA

Sis, you're standing in front of Father's naked body. Maybe you should show a little ... respect.

ANSIA

Now that I can see him clearly, he's not that imposing. Especially his... Did you ever imagine the size of his...? After all, we *came* out it.

FRATA

It's just like I imagined it.

ANSIA

Like I've said, you're sick.

FRATA

I'm not crazy.

ANSIA

Maybe not crazy, but you're one sick bitch.

FRATA

Maybe you're smarter but I got heart.

ANSIA

Granted. Like an animal who survives on instinct.

FRATA

I've helped you survive many times.

ANSIA

Can I ask?

FRATA

Yes?

ANSIA

That bundle you dragged here? ... Is that what I think it is?

FRATA

It was father's last wishes.

ANSIA

To bring a bundle of jars filled with his surgically-removed organs?

FRATA

He wanted to die intact.

ANSIA

Do you realize what the police could do to us if they found us carrying jars of organs in formaldehyde?

FRATA

He asked to be buried with his appendix, the omentum, his foreskin, his right kidney and a piece of intestine.

ANSIA

Imagine that. The most expurgated liar ends up whole.

FRATA

Despite everything, you admired him.

ANSIA

Of course I admired him! The facility to lie is a lawyer's notable attribute. I'm not speaking in terms of what's good or bad. I loved my father. He always wanted us to take over the business.

FRATA

Didn't you like his beard?

ANSIA

His hands. I liked his hands.

FRATA

Since he never let us touch him, I always imagined the feel of his beard much more better.

ANSIA

Little sister?

FRATA

Yes?

ANSIA

You talk out your ass. I don't see how you'll represent the law firm now that he's gone.

Frata removes her jacket to cover the cadaver.

FRATA

He's cold.

ANSIA

Leave that man in peace!

The rope sways and breaks, sending the corpse to the ground.

ANSIA (CONT'D)

Pick him up.

FRATA

How?

ANSIA

You made him fall, now pick him up.

FRATA

What if we take him on the sly?

ANSIA

Where will you stuff him? In your purse?

Ansia bows before her dead father.
Frata kisses him. They both exit.

Vicente Markby's dead body shakes,
and gradually, a ghost detaches.

Vicente Markby, ghost, sadly looks
at what's left of his body. He
looks where his daughters went and
exits.

SCENE THREE

Dark night. Jaime Fitzgerald
stands next to a wall outside Dr.
Bonanza Munera's house. He opens
his father's book of magic, flicks
through pages until he finds the
correct one.

JAIME

"Go through walls."

He holds the book in one hand, with
the other he touches the wall. He
reads.

JAIME (CONT'D)

"Loneliness does not invite guests, especially not in the ark
about to capsize in the great flood. But with my hand, I
comfort anyone who has stood by my side. Stone wall that
invites my caress, allow my steady hand to penetrate your
frigidity." Enter, hand. Enter.

Jaime puts his hand through the
wall.

JAIME (CONT'D)

Doctor, you're not alone. Feel my caress. It's not obscene. Gratitude, doctor, nothing but gratitude. I'll pat your back and comfort you. I'll just stroke your back and steer clear/away from any erogenous zones. Gladis is under control. She's under control. It's only my hand and...

Jaime feels that something's gone wrong. He pulls his arm out of the wall. His hand is missing and he's left with a stump.

JAIME (CONT'D)

Gladis! Gladis! Please, come back! God damn, rebel hand! Come back! Come back!

Bonanza leans out her window.

BONANZA

Jaime!

JAIME

Doctor... My hand! Gladis!

BONANZA

Jaime!

JAIME

Please, believe me! She could hurt you. She's... lascivious... Obscene... Bad hand, dirty hand.

BONANZA

You're clean, you're cured. You're a wonderful person.

JAIME

I may be wonderful but Gladis is a bitch.

BONANZA

I'll come down, Jaime. We must get you back to the hospital.

JAIME

No! No! You're wrong. She'll hurt you, harm you.

BONANZA

Don't move. I'll be right down.

Jaime quickly flees.

SCENE FOUR

Jaime at Ansia and Frata's home,
late at night.

ANSIA

Please be advised. Your case is not a simple one. It will require the well-versed handling of the laws, truculent rhetoric, and much more. How do you opine, sister?

FRATA

A pain in the arse case.

ANSIA

Brilliant deduction. Anything further to contribute than what I've previously, not expressed?

FRATA

Um, No.

ANSIA

Well, now. Let us recapitulate the facts of the case our good sir has cockily confided.

FRATA

Want me to read it?

ANSIA

If you would be so kind, sister.

FRATA

It being the two of April of the present year, mister ...
Jaime Fittz... Fitz...

JAIME

Fitzgerald.

FRATA

Did I write it correctly?

JAIME

You forgot the letter G... No, not there. Yes... There.

FRATA

It being the two of April of the present year...

ANSIA

It's past midnight, sister. It's not two but the second and not the 2nd but now the 3rd. Mister Fff... The present gentleman had the audacity to seek our counsel, at an hour when darkness, acting lawfully, breaks and enters the, so called, cerulean context, that blankets us all. That is to say, less I be misunderstood, one is usually sound asleep, at this ungodly hour.

JAIME

It's a matter of life or death. Only you can help me. I know that Mr. Markby ... that the daughters of the most honorable Mr. Markby ... I mean, the sisters, Markby and Markby, can convince anyone of anything.

ANSIA

Question. Couldn't you have waited until daytime? At this hour, the brain unwinds and is perfectly incapable of spinning respectable solutions. I hope your case is worth it.

FRATA

We should bury father.

ANSIA

Don't digress and air our intimacies.

JAIME

Miss Markby, please take my case.

ANSIA

I am already arguing it.