

Volver Volver Volver
a play
by Leonard Madrid

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Characters

- Junie- Male. Forties. A dead man. Good looking (despite the burial).
- Dolores- Female. Sixties. Junie's Mother. A Bruja. Best in Roosevelt County. She's always dressed for the kitchen.
- Sirena- Female. Forties. Junie's Wife. Another Bruja. Always dressed for La Baila.
- Socorro- Female. Twenties. Junie's Daughter. Always dressed for cleaning house.
- Refugio- Male. Sixties. Junie's Father. An offstage voice.

Setting

Present day. Three front porches in Portales, NM.

I VOLVER A DOLORES.

THE FRONT PORCH OF DOLORES AND REFUGIO OLGUIN IN PORTALES
NEW MEXICO.

Dolores is standing on her porch. She
waits.

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

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

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

REFUGIO'S VOICE
He aint got nothing to come home to.

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

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

DOLORES
He aint gonna be hungry, is he? You know he aint.

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

DOLORES
No.

REFUGIO'S VOICE
What?

DOLORES
The chicken.

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

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

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

DOLORES
Read the pinche instructions.

REFUGIO'S VOICE
How many?

DOLORES

Eight.

REFUGIO'S VOICE

Ok.

DOLORES

But check it after six.

REFUGIO'S VOICE

Ok.

DOLORES

On high.

REFUGIO'S VOICE

Ok.

DOLORES

Dear God. I know that me and you aint been the best of friends, but please let my son come home to me first. Before nobody else.

(Pause)

DOLORES

I know he's going to want to see everybody else, because a grown man has so many things on his brain and his Mama is last on the list.

REFUGIO'S VOICE

God aint gonna listen to you, Bruja. You sold your soul to the devil.

DOLORES

I did not. I still go to church.

REFUGIO'S VOICE

So he might give you a cooler seat in hell.

DOLORES

Calle lo sico, Viejo.

(pause)

DOLORES

Bring me an egg.

REFUGIO'S VOICE

No.

DOLORES

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

REFUGIO'S VOICE

I aint gonna let you waste no egg to cast no spells. You aint the one who brought him home. Let him go there first.

DOLORES

Fine. Is the chicken done?

REFUGIO'S VOICE

You didn't pray that long.

DOLORES

Bueno. Check it at six minutes.

REFUGIO'S VOICE

I know, Vieja.

Dolores pauses and sniffs the air. She spits on the ground and moves her toe around in it.

DOLORES

He's coming. He's turning down J and walking down Ivy.

Junie enters.

JUNIE

Hiya, Mama.

DOLORES

Hola, Hito.

JUNIE

How are you?

DOLORES

I'm good.

JUNIE

Don't you want to know how I am?

DOLORES

Pues, I already know.

JUNIE

I came home.

DOLORES

You were home. Now you're here.

JUNIE

I needed to come back.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

I had to come.

Why?
DOLORES

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

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

JUNIE
Cuz, maybe you wanted to see me.

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

JUNIE
Brujas don't go to heaven.

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

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

DOLORES
Fugio! Your baby boy is out here.

REFUGIO'S VOICE
What does he want?

DOLORES
He wants to talk to you.

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

DOLORES
He didn't know that yet, Cabron.

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

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

REFUGIO'S VOICE
Yes.

DOLORES
You heard him.

JUNIE
What?

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

JUNIE
The dead part.

DOLORES
Chite. somebody screwed up.

JUNIE
...

DOLORES
Hijo. You been dead.

JUNIE
You lie.

DOLORES
Nuh uh.

JUNIE
Why you lie to me, Mama?

DOLORES
Have I ever lied to you?

JUNIE
I aint dead.

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

JUNIE
No.

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

JUNIE
I aint dead.

DOLORES
I aint never spent no time lying, it's too hard. I got too
much to think about than to worry what lie I told somebody.

JUNIE
Oh, God. I'm dead.

DOLORES
Watch your mouth.

JUNIE
How long?

DOLORES

Three years dead. Three years today.

JUNIE

How?

REFUGIO'S VOICE

Axe him if he want some chicken?

JUNIE

I aint hungry, Dad.

REFUGIO'S VOICE

Axe him if he want some tamales.

DOLORES

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

REFUGIO'S VOICE

Fine.

DOLORES

You really want to know?

REFUGIO'S VOICE

Axe him if he want a beer.

JUNIE

No thank you.

REFUGIO'S VOICE

Dije, Because you don't know. Sometimes a dead guy only want to eat and drink. He only want what he can't have here. Aint no good food when You die, I guess.

DOLORES

He don't remember being dead.

REFUGIO'S VOICE

Chite. What kinda bruja bring him back without no memory?

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

Mama.

DOLORES

Bueno. You want to know?

JUNIE

Si.

DOLORES

You were with some puta and her husband found you.

JUNIE

Linda.

DOLORES

Was that the puta's name?

JUNIE

Yes.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

Don't call her a puta.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

She's my girlfriend.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

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

DOLORES

Two.

JUNIE

In the front?

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

What?

DOLORES

...

JUNIE

What're you talking about, Mama?

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

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

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

I do not. How would I know that?

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

No.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

Maybe I brought myself back.

DOLORES

You can't.

JUNIE

I could.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

Then who did it?

DOLORES

Finally, he axed the right question.

JUNIE

Sirena?

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

No. Maybe.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

I don't think so.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

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

DOLORES

You should have been like Henry and married a hairstylist.

JUNIE

You always want me to be more like Henry.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

I was like me.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

I was who I was.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

I wasn't afraid of nothing.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

Bullshit.

DOLORES

Refugio Holguine Junior, I never lied to you. Not once. But you lied to me all the time. You lied to me every time you talked to me. And you thought you tricked me. When you became a cholo and when all the cholo's died so you became a gangsta. I don't even understand what a gangsta is. A cholo, I understand. A cholo comes from us. Your tio was a cholo, he had the prettiest car in Portales. But what the hell is this gangsta? With your trying to pretend you're someone else and still can't and then calling the people vendidos for having jobs and going to school.

JUNIE

I only called Henry a vendido once.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

That's what you thought of me?

DOLORES

That's what I knew.

JUNIE

And why didn't you say anything?

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

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

DOLORES

Is that what you think?

JUNIE

...

DOLORES

Look at me. Is that what you think?

JUNIE

...

DOLORES

When did you forget everything I taught you?

JUNIE

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

DOLORES

I shoul'da known you were going to be a fight. Everything about you has been hard. I was in labor with you for thirteen hours. I remember counting each hour and giving each one to an apostle. Ok, saint Luke, that one was your hour. Ok, Saint James, all

DOLORES (cont)

that suffering was for you. You're welcome. Alright, Saint John, If he's born in your hour, I'm going to name him Juan after you.

But you waited until the very last hour, Until the hour of Judas to be born. If you had waited one more hour, that would have been for someone else, but NO. You were born on the hour of Judas. And you were thirteen pounds. That's How I knew that you were going to be someone who aint never going to have it good. Because you fought me until the Judas hour to be born.

And I wasn't going to name a baby Judas. So I named you after your father.

REFUGIO'S VOICE

Pinche Mentirosa.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

You brought me back from the dead.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

Oh.

DOLORES

And You know, I already brought you into this world, and we had to pull you out by the grenias. Aint no way you would have come if I had called. Would you?

JUNIE

...

DOLORES

Would you?

JUNIE

No.

DOLORES

See?

JUNIE

Then who called me?

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

No.

DOLORES

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

REFUGIO'S VOICE

Si, Mujer. It was a bad poem.

DOLORES

Cabron.

(to Junie)

Try your mujer.

JUNIE

Sirena?

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

Can't I just go back now?

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

Ok, Mama.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

Yeah?

DOLORES

It was good to see you, eh?

JUNIE

Yeah.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

You too, Mama.

DOLORES

Wait. Here. Take this.

She hands him a medal.

JUNIE

You gonna waste a spell on little dead me?

DOLORES

It aint no spell, baby.

JUNIE

Then what?

DOLORES

A prayer.

JUNIE

Thanks, Mama.

DOLORES

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

JUNIE

...

DOLORES

Aint right for a woman to bury her child. It aint right to see every day of your son's life, beginning to end.

JUNIE

I'm sorry, Mama.

DOLORES

Don't be sorry.

JUNIE

I gotta go.

DOLORES

I know.

JUNIE

Bye Mama. Bye, Daddy.

REFUGIO'S VOICE

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

DOLORES

Bye, Baby.

Junie exits.

REFUGIO'S VOICE

What are we going to do with this chicken?

DOLORES

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

Dolores exits.

II VOLVER A SIRENA

SIRENA'S FRONT PORCH.

Sirena stands on her front porch. She smokes.

She blows out a huge puff of smoke. Traces her finger through it.

SIRENA

(she sings)

Away. Away. Away.
 a place too far to walk
 some day some day some day.
 He'll return to talk.
 My Man My Man My Man
 Never was good to me
 I plan I plan I plan
 To make him come back to me
 My song my song my song
 Will bring him back this way
 not long not long not long
 I'll hear what he has to say

Junie enters.

JUNIE

What does he have to say?

SIRENA

I'm sure there are plenty of things. You never lacked for things to say. It was silence you never had enough of.

JUNIE

You look good.

SIRENA

Why shouldn't I? I'm still young. You think, just because you left, I have to sit here and dry up like a prune?

JUNIE

That's not what I meant.

SIRENA

Then what did you mean, Junie?

JUNIE

I meant that you look good. Real good.

SIRENA

Thank you.

JUNIE

Not everything I say is to start a fight.

SIRENA
Since when?

JUNIE
Since I been back.

SIRENA
The smoke tells me alot of things, Junie. You don't remember nothing about being gone. If you can't remember that, Then you couldn't learn nothing.

JUNIE
I've been back in Portales for almost three hours. Maybe I learned enough in that time.

SIRENA
Like what?

JUNIE
They closed the Wagon Wheel. La Hacienda moved to the other side of the tracks. Mama bought a microwave.

SIRENA
Yeah.

(pause)

SIRENA
You look good.

JUNIE
Dressed in only the best.

SIRENA
You're welcome.

JUNIE
Thank you.

SIRENA
And you saw your Mama?

JUNIE
I went there first.

SIRENA
Ah. So, she told you.

JUNIE
Yup.

SIRENA
She tell you I got a new man?

JUNIE
No. Who?

SIRENA
You don't know him.

JUNIE
What's his name?

SIRENA
It don't matter. You only got a day, right?

JUNIE
It matters to me.

SIRENA
Why?

JUNIE
Because, I'm your husband.

SIRENA
Ex husband.

JUNIE
We never got no divorce.

SIRENA
We said til death do us part, Junie. When you died, we got a divorce.

JUNIE
Is that what you think?

SIRENA
Yes. And does it matter? You died because you were sleeping with that puta... what's her name...Lisa?

JUNIE
Linda.

SIRENA
So, you weren't paying attention to the vows anyways. I coulda had me a man long before that and I would have been playing by the rules.

JUNIE
Did you?

SIRENA
No. But what kind of fool do you think I am? Like driving to Lubbock to sleep with a puta was going to keep me from knowing? I knew everything you did, even when I didn't want to know.

JUNIE
My mother told me to never marry a bruja.

SIRENA

And who would know better than her? You damned well know that your Daddy never cheated on her. She would have made is wee wee dry up.

JUNIE

He never cheated on her, because he loved her too much.

SIRENA

And I guess you didn't love me enough not to.

JUNIE

That's not what I meant.

SIRENA

But it's true.

JUNIE

I'm sorry.

SIRENA

No, you're not.

JUNIE

I really am.

SIRENA

Oh yeah?

JUNIE

Yeah.

SIRENA

Ok. Let's see.

She blows a large puff of smoke. Again she runs her fingers through it.

SIRENA

Oh.

JUNIE

What?

SIRENA

I guess you did learn something being dead.

JUNIE

Maybe I did.

Pause

SIRENA

You never been sorry before.

JUNIE

Sure I have.

SIRENA

Yeah?

JUNIE

Just never been smart enough to tell you. I knew you weren't dumb. I know the difference between dumb and polite.

SIRENA

Eh. I never shoulda expecting you to be something you never could be.

JUNIE

What?

SIRENA

A husband. Someone I could love.

JUNIE

I tried.

SIRENA

No, you didn't. But neither did I. I married you, because you were easy.

JUNIE

Easy how?

SIRENA

I wouldn't never have to teach you nothing about who I am. I wouldn't never have to train you to not be afraid, and train you when you should be afraid.

JUNIE

Afraid of what?

SIRENA

See? You don't even see it. Not every one can do what I do. Just because your mama can do more, don't mean it's normal.

JUNIE

The only reason you married me was because my mother was a bruja?

SIRENA

Because your mother was a better bruja than me. And if I married you...

JUNIE

You'd be in the family.

SIRENA

When you're the two strongest, you're either enemies or allies, Junie. And your Mama's scary.

JUNIE

...

SIRENA
They weren't the only reasons.

JUNIE
Like what?

SIRENA
Look at you.

JUNIE
Yeah?

SIRENA
Portales is a small small place, Junie. And I wasn't going to marry an ugly man. Not only did I want to marry someone good looking, but I wanted someone just as pretty as me.

JUNIE
So, you used me.

SIRENA
I think we used each other about the same, eh? You were the envy of every man at the midway, and I was the envy of every woman. And everyone respected us. And if they didn't they were too afraid to say anything.

JUNIE
So the princess had a prince.

SIRENA
Yes. But you know you married me for the same reasons. Or close to the same.

JUNIE
I married you, because I wanted you.

SIRENA
But you didn't love me.

JUNIE
No. But you pull on a man. The way you smell. The way you walk. Every step's got hooks in it that dig into a man's front.

SIRENA
I was something.

JUNIE
Are. A man can't look at you without wanting to eat you, and smell you and touch you. Like chocolate with red chile. Something sweet that burns your tongue. Makes all the taste buds in your mouth buzz at the same time.

SIRENA
Like a man named Junie Holguine.

JUNIE

Who else was going to have you? Aint no one in Portales who would even know what they got. No mouth in Portales got enough taste buds to really taste all of you. It would have taken four men, and you woulda broken em in a month.

SIRENA

So, we used each other.

JUNIE

You aint even sorry for any of it, are you?

SIRENA

No. I played by the rules. We both knew what the other had, and we both got what we needed. It was a fair trade.

JUNIE

And when I cheated on you?

SIRENA

That wasn't part of the deal.

JUNIE

No.

SIRENA

But at least you got some love out of that bitch.

JUNIE

You don't have to still be mad.

SIRENA

No, I aint mad. You were never the man your father was, hell you were never the man your Mother was, But you weren't bad. I didn't want you to die that way. Maybe robbing a bank in a rain of bullets or an old man with his grandkids around him. But to die in your mistresses house... I was sad for you. And that got rid of the anger.

JUNIE

If you aint mad, and I don't got to apologize, why did you call me back?

SIRENA

Me?

JUNIE

Yeah.

SIRENA

I didn't call you back.

JUNIE

Sirena. There's only two brujas in Portales strong enough to bring me back. And Mama didn't do it.

SIRENA

No. No. She didn't.

She walks around him.

SIRENA

If she did it, you would still smell like her. She smells like nutmeg, and cafe, tortillas, and pinon.

JUNIE

And you?

SIRENA

You don't smell like me. Like cigarettes , and rosas, and incense, and music.

JUNIE

Then who do I smell like?

SIRENA

Kind of like me...I smell the rosas and the music, and the pinon...but also..

JUNIE

But what?

SIRENA

Hmm. I don't know this lady. There's more water in her. She smells like fresh grass and drums and rain.

JUNIE

Who is that?

SIRENA

Like you said, there are only two brujas in portales strong enough to bring you back. And we don't smell like rain. this one's young. Did your Linda...

JUNIE

No.

SIRENA

Of course not. Why go to the river to dry off?

JUNIE

Then who?

SIRENA

I don't know who. Shouldn't you?

JUNIE

I don't.

SIRENA

Aint too many brujas in Portales.

JUNIE

Mama said she can't be that good.

SIRENA

No. No. You would remember more. Here. Maybe I can help.

JUNIE

How?

SIRENA

Your Mama used to tell me. You can't reverse another woman's spell, but you can help it.

(she sings)

Rosa Rosa come to me.
and fire in the air.
spice of earth and pinon tree
come and tell us where.

She blows smoke on him.

Pause

JUNIE

How is our daughter?

SIRENA

She's good.

JUNIE

Is she married?

SIRENA

Socorro? No. She has a little boyfriend, though.

JUNIE

Is he good to her?

SIRENA

He would have to be. He'd be shitting worms for a month if he didn't.

JUNIE

Where is she?

SIRENA

She moved.

JUNIE

Where is she?

SIRENA

Over by the high school. As far from my house as possible.
Ah.

JUNIE

What?

SIRENA

You don't see it, do you?

JUNIE

No.

SIRENA

It's Socorro. Go to her. She'll now who brought you back.

JUNIE

Socorro. But she's not a bucket, she's a well.

SIRENA

No, but she's who you're thinking of. She's gotta know the answer.

Pause

SIRENA

Go, hombre. You don't have much time.

JUNIE

Sirena.

SIRENA

Refugio.

JUNIE

I'm sorry.

SIRENA

For what?

JUNIE

That I didn't love you.

SIRENA

We did what we did, Hombre. We didn't break each other.

(pause)

Come here.

(she sings)

Bring it back
 into your head
 bring it back
 this day
 Bring it back
 That's what I said
 Bring it back
 To stay

(she kisses him. A long one.).

SIRENA

Now, do you remember?

JUNIE

...

SIRENA

How you spent your last three years?

JUNIE

Uh huh.

SIRENA

Good. Now, find your daughter, and go home.

JUNIE

Don't you want to know what death is like?

SIRENA

No. I got plenty of time for that.

JUNIE

Where is she?

SIRENA

Back where you started. Over on Kilgore. As close to the cemetery as you can get.

SIRENA

Go.

(he begins to exit.)

SIRENA

And hey.

(he turns)

SIRENA

I'm sorry too.

Lights fade.

III Volver a Socorro

SOCORRO'S FRONT PORCH.

(Socorro is standing on her porch.
Junie enters)

(there is a loooooooooooooooooong pause)

JUNIE

Hey, girl.

SOCORRO

Hello.

JUNIE

You look good.

SOCORRO

Thanks.

JUNIE

How you been?

SOCORRO

Good. I've been well. Fine. You?

JUNIE

I been good.

SOCORRO

Good.

JUNIE

How come you never dress up?

SOCORRO

What?

JUNIE

I don't mean you have to get all dressed up like your Mom.
But you should take care of yourself. You're pretty, and all
you wear is sweatshirts and jeans.

SOCORRO

I like to be comfortable.

JUNIE

There's comfortable pretty clothes.

SOCORRO

I don't own any.

JUNIE

Well, next time you're in the store looking at sweatshirts and jeans, walk around a little.

SOCORRO

Ok.

JUNIE

Are you sure?

SOCORRO

Yes.

JUNIE

You're the daughter of two of the prettiest people in Portales and Clovis and you waste it.

SOCORRO

Junie.

JUNIE

I mean it. And get your hair out of your face. Have some confidence.

SOCORRO

I'm plenty confident.

JUNIE

You're mama just pretends to be as pretty as she is. She's ok pretty, but she tells everyone she's prettier and they believe her.

SOCORRO

Oh yeah? How?

JUNIE

You walk around like you're the prettiest person in the room...suddenly you're the prettiest person in the room.

SOCORRO

What if I don't want to be pretty?

JUNIE

Too late. You are pretty. Now you just have people wondering why you hide it.

SOCORRO

Junie?

JUNIE

Yeah, hija.

SOCORRO

You're dead. You know that, right?

JUNIE

I know that.

SOCORRO
Did you come back just to tell me to dress better?

JUNIE
No.

SOCORRO
Then why?

JUNIE
You flossing?

SOCORRO
Yes.

JUNIE
Taking vitamins?

SOCORRO
Yes.

JUNIE
Not eating junk food?

SOCORRO
No. I don't even eat meat.

JUNIE
Wow. I knew I had a revolutionary in my house.

SOCORRO
Did you? How would you know that?

JUNIE
I knew I had something. We were the only family on North Avenue B with a compost heap.

SOCORRO
First time we ever got singled out for something mundane.

JUNIE
What's that?

SOCORRO
What's what?

JUNIE
Mundane.

SOCORRO
Like normal, everyday. We were the house with the two hot people. We were the house with the man cheating on his wife. We were the only family with two brujas. It's about time that we got singled out for something normal.

JUNIE

You call a compost heap in your back yard normal?

SOCORRO

Yes, Junie. I do.

(pause)

JUNIE

When did you move in here? You used to live over by the college?

SOCORRO

Not long after we buried you.

JUNIE

Could you move any further from your Mama's side of town?

SOCORRO

This was old Mr. Burnworth's house.

JUNIE

Willy's Daddy?

SOCORRO

Uh huh. I was waiting at his table, and he said I could have it. Because he didn't want it anymore.

JUNIE

Have it?

SOCORRO

I know, huh? He gave me the keys, and his daughter came down to sign all the papers and he moved with her.

JUNIE

Somebody gave you a house?

SOCORRO

I know, huh?

SOCORRO

Are you a ghost?

JUNIE

No. Yes. I don't know. You tell me.

SOCORRO

You look real.

JUNIE

I feel real too. Skin. Blood. Hair.

SOCORRO

And it's all working?

JUNIE

Yep. Heart beating, hair growing. You never notice how much is going on just when nothing is going on.

SOCORRO

Whah?

JUNIE

Even if I'm not moving. Not talking. Not kissing. Not fighting. Not voting. A million things are happening just inside my body. My bones are balancing things, heart is pumping, Lungs are breathing. Spleen is doing...whatever a spleen does. And the skin is holding it all together. And I don't even have to try. It's alot of noise.

SOCORRO

Death is different?

JUNIE

Quieter.

SOCORRO

Quieter?

JUNIE

This world is made up of stuff that's just noise. When it's just you...the real you...things can really be quiet.

SOCORRO

Doesn't sound so hard.

JUNIE

No. I don't know what I was afraid of for so long.

SOCORRO

Good.

JUNIE

Yeah?

SOCORRO

Yeah. I was kind of afraid you were just there...over there in the ground. Listening to the traffic and the kids at the high school.

JUNIE

No.

SOCORRO

Not that you wouldn't deserve it.

JUNIE

Nope. Not like that. I would deserve it.

SOCORRO

So... what is it like?

JUNIE

You really want to know?

SOCORRO

I'm asking.

JUNIE

It's... It's like. You ever been running through the fields at night?

SOCORRO

Yeah.

JUNIE

When everything's blue and the moon's bright enough to read by?

SOCORRO

Yeah.

JUNIE

It's like that. Quiet and blue. Except when you run, there's no noise. No wind, no hard breathing, no crickets. Just running.

SOCORRO

What're you're running to?

JUNIE

Dunno. Or don't know what from. I just kept running and running. It seems that somewhere I could hear someone laughing or someone talking. Out there. But it's like I don't want to hear that. I just want to run because I forgot something.

SOCORRO

You ran for three years?

JUNIE

Maybe. It felt like one night.
(pause)

JUNIE

Then...I heard a voice and I remembered. I remembered what I forgot.

SOCORRO

What?

JUNIE

You.

SOCORRO

Me?

JUNIE

Yup.

SOCORRO

You heard my voice?

JUNIE

Yup. So, I followed it. I ran through cotton, and peanuts, then the broom corn. On the other side of the broom corn, was Kilgore, right by the high school.

SOCORRO

And the cemetery. Right there.
(pause)

SOCORRO

Everyone was so mad at you when you got killed. No one cried.

JUNIE

I broke the rules.

SOCORRO

Yes. The stupid rules. Grandma can make a goat come out of a chicken's egg and all we do is worry about the rules.

JUNIE

She can do that because she always played by the rules.

SOCORRO

I don't care. They were so mad they didn't even get you a tombstone. They barely buried you at all.

JUNIE

Always the fighter for those being mistreated.

SOCORRO

But...

JUNIE

You're poor old man didn't get no head stone. So, you make your house into my headstone.

SOCORRO

No.

JUNIE

Instead of a big ol chunk of rock telling people that I used to be alive. Instead of an engraving to tell people about me they got you.

SOCORRO

It wasn't fair.

JUNIE

It isn't fair.

SOCORRO

There should be room for forgiveness.

JUNIE

That's not what I'm talking about. You can't make your life a monument to mine. You can't be my headstone.

SOCORRO

No.

JUNIE

Baby. I wasn't even a good father.

SOCORRO

I know, but You didn't have it good.

JUNIE

I didn't have it bad. I could have made it better for you. But I didn't. I was too busy thinking about me.

SOCORRO

So...

JUNIE

So... I broke those rules.

SOCORRO

The rules again.

JUNIE

These aint the rules your Grandma and Mama Play by so they can keep all their power. It aint even the rules that your Grandpo plays by so he won't go to hell. It's the rules that every man has to play by when he has a kid.

SOCORRO

What rule?

JUNIE

That he aint the most important person in the world no more. And I should have asked you for forgiveness. But I never did. I was too busy thinking about how bad I had it. And how bad is that? A mama who can take care of any problem. A daddy who loved me like a Daddy should. A Beautiful wife who could sing like an angel...and a you...

SOCORRO

I aint nothing special.

JUNIE

Me neither. Baby.

SOCORRO

That's not true.

JUNIE

But when you're surrounded by bright suns who pays attention to the moon? A little special looks like nothing when everyone around you is alot special.

SOCORRO

Right.

JUNIE

But it don't mean the moon aint giving off light too. She's gives off cool, sweet light that don't burn nobody. You can't compare yourself to that.

SOCORRO

Is that why you came back? To tell me that?

JUNIE

Is that why you brought me here?

SOCORRO

Not me.

JUNIE

Yes, you. Smell me.

SOCORRO

No.

JUNIE

I don't smell like dead guy. I smell like you. Like your magic. Tortilla, and Rosas, and Grass, and Rain.

SOCORRO

Me? I smell like rain?

JUNIE

I done ready been to your Welita's and your Mama's. They didn't call me back. They're ok having me dead.

SOCORRO

Because it's the rules.

JUNIE

Because it's the rules.

SOCORRO

But I don't know how.

JUNIE

So.

SOCORRO

Grandma checked ... A long long time ago. Grandma checked to see if I was going to be able to do stuff like that, and She said no.

JUNIE

She's been wrong before.

SOCORRO

She said I was a well and not a bucket. I don't even know what that means.

JUNIE

It means you got it in you, but you can't use it.

SOCORRO

See?

JUNIE

Well, now you're a bucket.

SOCORRO

I am not a bucket.

JUNIE

You're a bucket. Me being here is proof that you're a bucket.

(pause)

SOCORRO

Is it possible that if I ask for something everyday for so long, the same wish. Every day....a Thousand times a day... that the wishes just added up and became something else?

JUNIE

I don't know. But I heard you. And it's the rules. If I want to come back, I come back. If I think there's something we can fix, then I can come back. It's by the rules.

SOCORRO

So, I won't go to hell?

JUNIE

Baby. There aint no hell.

SOCORRO

Oh.

JUNIE

It don't make no sense, does it? It's easy not to sin, if you got it easy. If everything's handed to you, you don't have to worry about sin and hell and punishment. But why punish people who aint never had it easy? Sin is for doubters and explorers and people who don't understand themselves. People who struggle. You don't punish people for struggling.

SOCORRO

No. It doesn't make sense.

JUNIE

No. Them are the rules too.

(pause)

SOCORRO
Where are your tattoos?

JUNIE
Huh?

SOCORRO
You used to have a tattoo, right here.

JUNIE
So.

SOCORRO
Daddy, it's gone.

JUNIE
Yeah.

SOCORRO
It was a snake.

JUNIE
Right here on my wrist.

SOCORRO
And here

JUNIE
The lady.

He unbuttons his shirt. to show a
tattoo that says "Socorro")

JUNIE
But here.

SOCORRO
I never saw that one.

JUNIE
Your name?

SOCORRO
No.

JUNIE
It was probably lost in all the other ones.
I got this the day you were born. You were born at 4 am, and
I had your name on my arm by nine. Would have been earlier,
but I had to find Fernie and wait for him to get sober so he
wouldn't screw it up.

SOCORRO
They said you were in Clovis the day I was born. That you
didn't come home for a week.

JUNIE

No, I was there. You're tio Henry had to find me and give me a ride. I snuck in when Your Mama was asleep, but I saw you. You were so small. Seven pounds three ounces.

SOCORRO

I wonder what apostle that was.

JUNIE

You were so small. I was going to hold you, but... I was afraid I was gonna break you or something. I just kept looking at you thinking how amazing it was.

SOCORRO

You? Were afraid?

JUNIE

Yeah. I was afraid. Big old me was afraid of little you. Every face you made, every noise. I was terrified. Then you were a little girl, and so smart. So much smarter than me. And I was afraid I was going to look dumb. And then you were a woman. I told your Welita that I wasn't afraid of nothing, but that's wrong. I was afraid of you.

SOCORRO

You shouldn't have been.

JUNIE

Yeah, but then I was afraid you were going to be mad.

SOCORRO

I wasn't mad. I made you up. I made up this father who was always there, but was just too busy. Every time you were due home, I would think that you couldn't wait to see me. And every time you were gone, I would think how much you missed me. And every time you promised me something... I would believe you. I really would. You could have picked up being my father at any time, and I wouldn't have noticed.

JUNIE

I owe you a childhood.

SOCORRO

No.

JUNIE

I owe you a father.

SOCORRO

Dad...

JUNIE

No, Baby, don't let me off easy on this one. I owe you. And I owe me too. All of those things. Maybe this stayed because it's what I wish...

SOCORRO

Maybe it stayed because it's what you truly are. I called you back, right? It was you that was called. The real you.

JUNIE

I'm gonna always be your Daddy, even if I'm dead.

SOCORRO

Yeah.

JUNIE

Shame I had to die before I got it.

SOCORRO

It happened, though. You figured it out.

JUNIE

Yep.

SOCORRO

And that's ok by me. If that aint a rule, then it should be.

JUNIE

I think it is.

(pause)

JUNIE

I'm sorry, Baby.

SOCORRO

You don't need to...

JUNIE

I want to.

SOCORRO

Then I accept.

JUNIE

Thank you.

SOCORRO

So, is that it? Are we done?

JUNIE

I guess so. You got to put me back to sleep.

SOCORRO

How?

JUNIE

I don't know. Kill a chicken or something.

SOCORRO

No.

JUNIE
Como que no?

SOCORRO
I don't even eat meat.

JUNIE
Your Grandma would cook something. Your mama would sing something.

SOCORRO
Then how about this?

(she hugs him. A long bone crushing hug).

SOCORRO
Daddy. You can go home now.

JUNIE
And you too. You can go home now too.

SOCORRO
Ok.

JUNIE
I'm gonna go.

SOCORRO
I'll see you again.

JUNIE
Yes. And don't make it for a long, long time.

SOCORRO
Ok.

JUNIE
And you better have some kids. Alot of kids.

SOCORRO
Ok.

JUNIE
Unless you don't want no kids.

SOCORRO
Ok.

JUNIE
And I don't care if you marry a geek, so long as he loves you and treats you right.

SOCORRO
Ok. Daddy. OK.

Ok. Bye.

JUNIE

Bye..

SOCORRO

(Junie walks off stage)

End of play.