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Preventive attack

de
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traducción de
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(fragmento en inglés)

DRAMATIC PUZZLE IN 31 PIECES FOR 6 - 8 ACTORS

This is a dramatic puzzle made up of 31 scenes connected by 6 main characters and the single space they share: the plane. The remaining scenes are flashbacks from the lives of these characters and show the lead-up to the events on the plane. The numbers in brackets next to the character names indicate the chronological order of the action, which is clearly different from the order of scenes. The current order, despite being the playwright's preferred choice, is merely one of numerous possible arrangements. Directors have the option of choosing an alternative order of scenes, according to their interests, motivations or personal whims.

The 16 supporting roles can be played by the same six actors who play the lead roles or by different actors. In either case, their characterisation should be markedly different from the main characters so that they are reduced, as far as possible, to abstract figures. This could perhaps be achieved by wearing masks.

There should be two spaces set up on stage: the first, a row of first class plane seats, side on or facing the public. Emma and Carlos should sit together while the others sit separately. The second space would be empty to begin with but later filled with the flashback scenes.

CHARACTERS

Main Characters

CLAUDIA, 29 years old

EMMA, 41 years old

CARLOS, 41 years old

LÓPEZ, 28 years old

RACHID, 30 years old

SONIA, 9, 16, 18 and 22 years old.

Supporting Characters

AGENT

SANDRA

MAN

ALLY

MANAGER

MUÑOZ

STRANGER

FATHER

MOTHER

BOY

FRIEND

LANDLADY

DEAF MUTE

WIFE

DOCTOR

DRUG TRAFFICKER

Plane Scene (1)

House lights are down but the stage remains dark.

CLAUDIA

(Voice-over) He's dead.

The characters on stage are gradually illuminated. We hear Carlos's heavy breathing, amplified at first and then finally reduced to normal breathing volume without amplification.

EMMA

(To Carlos) Relax. You won't solve anything by getting wound up.

CARLOS

There's nothing to solve. *(Continues breathing with some effort. Emma behaves as if this is perfectly normal.)*

LÓPEZ

(To Sonia, 22 years old, speaking very quietly and trying to sound familiar)
Don't worry. Everything's going to be fine.

SONIA

It's all going to be fine, is it? And how do you know?

LÓPEZ

I don't know. I just hope so.

SONIA

Well, don't lie then.

LÓPEZ

It helps me.

SONIA

Well, keep your lies to yourself then. I don't like people whispering to me. Leave me in peace.
(We then see the flight attendant, Claudia, who is staring at Rachid's dead body.)

CLAUDIA

So, what are we going to do?

CARLOS

The captain mustn't find out about this.

EMMA
Carlos...

CARLOS
Or the rest of the crew, or the other passengers.

SONIA
That'll be best...

LÓPEZ
(*To Claudia*) I hope you haven't told anyone ...

CARLOS
You'd better not have told anyone...

EMMA
Carlos...Calm down...

CLAUDIA
(*Covering the corpse with a flight blanket*) Don't worry. I'm here to help you.

Emma and Carlos (5)

EMMA
Have you packed the toothbrushes?

CARLOS
Yep...

EMMA
And the towels?

CARLOS
Those too...

EMMA
We mustn't forget anything. Can you imagine? Being stuck in the middle of Egypt and realising we've forgotten something.

CARLOS
Don't worry about that, Darling.

EMMA
No? Why not?

CARLOS

The pharaohs kept everything in the pyramids. I'm sure there'll still be some snake pâté or something, if you're desperate.

EMMA

Don't take the piss. I hate it when you take the piss out of me.

CARLOS

Look, I've got everything. I haven't forgotten a thing. It's all under control.

EMMA

I'm really looking forward to this trip.

CARLOS

Me too.

EMMA

To escape the real world for a while. Leave our everyday lives behind for a moment...

CARLOS

And fly. I like flying. I love planes.

EMMA

To be somewhere so different, so exotic, so far removed from everything we're used to...

CARLOS

You sound like a travel brochure...

EMMA

I mean it. It'll do us good to get away...

CARLOS

It does everyone good to get away.

EMMA

And give ourselves a holiday.

CARLOS

I love flying. Have I ever told you that?

EMMA

There's only one downside...

CARLOS

Coming down through the clouds, just like a bird...

EMMA

It's all over so soon.

CARLOS

Even birds have to land.

EMMA

Well, it's best not to think about the end...

CARLOS

Yeah.

EMMA

...when we haven't even left yet.

CARLOS

Yeah, you're right.

EMMA

Best not to think about coming home.

CARLOS

Yeah, you're right, best not to.

(Blackout)

Claudia (5)

CLAUDIA

Whatever it is, tell me now. I've got a flight in 15 minutes.

AGENT

You can come back. I've got an offer for you.

CLAUDIA

Who said I want to come back?

AGENT

It's been months since you've even set foot inside own front door.

CLAUDIA

I've got so much work.

AGENT

What are you running from?

CLAUDIA

I'll come back. But it's still too soon. I'm saving up.

AGENT

Are you going to paint again?

CLAUDIA

Yes, but when it's not a case of make or break with every painting I produce. I'm saving up as much as possible so that when I come back, I'll have some financial stability.

AGENT

Stability? You spend your life in the air. What do you need stability for?

CLAUDIA

So I can paint. Without feeling pressurised. Without fear.

AGENT

You realise you're running away.

CLAUDIA

I'm not running away. I just want to fly for a bit. I'll be back soon, I'm just saving up enough money.

AGENT

By the time you land you'll have forgotten who you are.

CLAUDIA

I've got to go.

AGENT

Claudia, wake up. Real life is here, on earth. The world's yours to conquer, but only if you want to.

CLAUDIA

They're waiting for me.

AGENT

Where are you going?

CLAUDIA

Cairo. I'm coming back to Madrid tomorrow, but only to fly straight to Berlin. I'm sorry, I can't stay longer.

AGENT

I hope to see you soon. Down here.

CLAUDIA

Yeah, see you. Bye.

(Blackout)

Sonia (5)

(22 years old. Speaking on the phone)

SONIA

I'm going home (...) Yeah, I've already decided, and there's no going back. (...) It was Diana. I told her that I wanted to stick to the itinerary (...) She wanted to take us down all sorts of alleys and I refused. (...) It's dangerous. Not keeping to the route and separating from the guide is dangerous, and Diana is old enough to know better. (...) I got angry. I refused to back down. Diana wouldn't take me back to the hotel. Sara took me back instead, but very reluctantly. And now I'm on my own. And I'm going home alone. What's the point in having friends for that (...) Fine. (...) Fine, until then. (...) I don't know... (...) I don't remember the names of all the pyramids. I couldn't tell you. The best? (...) Yeah, I'm still here. There was a guy. (...) No, stupid, just from a distance. A guy with dark skin but really blue eyes. (...) Yeah, Egyptian, but not your typical Egyptian (...) I don't know. Like an angel. (...) Yeah. He looked at me. And then I think he followed me. (...) Yeah, I had my spray with me. But I didn't have it in my hand, and, I don't know why but I didn't even dig it out of my bag. I wasn't afraid of him. I don't know how to explain it. As I said before, he was like an angel. (... Laughing) You idiot... Can you imagine? (...) No. It's dangerous to leave the guide when you travel, especially in countries like that (...) No. I don't feel comfortable. I feel unsafe and alone. I wish I were already on the plane home. Flying. Away from everything.

López (5)

(At the airport)

VOICE-OVER

Iberia Flight IB4755 to Madrid departing from gate 11. There is an estimated delay of 2 hours. We apologise for the inconvenience caused.

LÓPEZ

Fucking morons.

STRANGER

Oh well. Never mind...

LÓPEZ

What a joke. Two hours wasted... Now what do I do?

STRANGER

Relax. Can't you do some work?

LÓPEZ

No, I fucking can't. I'm out of battery on my laptop.

STRANGER

You can read a bit...

LÓPEZ

I haven't brought anything to read. I thought I could work on my laptop. How can I read when I have so much work to do? Shit.

STRANGER

Relax. Take a break.

LÓPEZ

How am I going to relax when I know how much time I'm wasting?

STRANGER

I didn't know they did business in Egypt. I thought it was just a place for tourists.

LÓPEZ

That's globalisation for you. (Silence) Fuck, what am I going to do now?

STRANGER

Why don't you sit down and think?

(The stranger opens a newspaper and starts to read. There's a pause.)

LÓPEZ

Think? (Pauses) Excuse me!

STRANGER

What...?

LÓPEZ

What shall I think about?

STRANGER

(Starting to get impatient) I don't know. Think about your life, about something nice in your life.

LÓPEZ

In my life...? (Pauses. The stranger goes back to reading but López interrupts again.) Nothing ever happens to me...

STRANGER

There must be something you can think about... You must have some kind of dream?

LÓPEZ

Yeah, sure I do.

STRANGER

Exactly. So what is it?

LÓPEZ

The future.

STRANGER

Grand projects?

LÓPEZ

Yeah. I want to live without having to work. Like a king. Yeah. Like a king. I'm going to have a house by the sea and spend my time fishing.

STRANGER

That's more like it!

LÓPEZ

It's what I've always wanted to do. To see the sea every morning while I'm having breakfast...

STRANGER

Good idea. Going for a stroll along the sand...

LÓPEZ

No.

STRANGER

No?

LÓPEZ

I'll allow myself the luxury of not stepping on the beach for days, weeks, just because I'll know that it's right there in front of me and I can go whenever I like. Whenever the desire really takes me. But I'll always be in company. Always. Always in the company of a beautiful woman with green eyes.

STRANGER

That's a nice idea. And when will all this happen?

LÓPEZ

I've done the maths... And I reckon I'll be able to retire at 59. From then onwards, I can live off my income and my pension.

STRANGER

When you're 59?

LÓPEZ

Yeah, I don't have time now.

STRANGER

You don't have time? How old are you, if you don't mind me asking?

LÓPEZ

28.

STRANGER

You're right. You haven't got time.

LÓPEZ

In my line of business you can lose everything if you get distracted for a single second. But one day, the time will come.

STRANGER

You're going to get bored, waiting so long.

LÓPEZ

No. I never get bored. I've got far too much work for that.

(Blackout)