

ct

# Green rage

de  
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traducción de  
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*(fragmento en inglés)*

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

Bernarda

María Josefa

Angustias

Magdalena

Amelia

Martirio

Adela

La Poncia

*The author of this play could be called Francesca Frederica García Goya. The play is like alchemy, combining history, intra-history, myth, the subconscious and the eye focused on the disquieting light of a future we already inhabit.*

*A woman keeps her left hand closed. A simple gesture that radiates secrecy.*

I.

AMELIA

What are you hiding in your hand?

MAGDALENA

Nothing.

AMELIA

Liar. Show me.

MAGDALENA

*(Evasive)* I climbed the cherry tree.

AMELIA

That cherry tree is dead.

MAGDALENA

No. It's just old. Like we are.

AMELIA

I'm dead. So are you. All of us are.

MAGDALENA

That's Adela, she's the one who's dead. You're mixing yourself up with the prettiest of us sisters.

AMELIA

Adela is only a little more dead than we are. How come she's still the prettiest when she's deader than we are. How do you explain that?

MAGDALENA

You always mix yourself up with her. You wore her green dress.

AMELIA

Green rage.

MAGDALENA

You're too flat-chested for that dress.

AMELIA

I used to wear it every night, in secret, in the moonlight, and I ate almonds and the soft centre of the bread because that makes your breasts grow and I used to say to the moon, Moon, make my moons grow like yours. But the moon didn't take any notice of me. Do you understand? She took notice of her.

MAGDALENA

She still takes notice of her. Even though she's dead. She's her daughter. We are just Bernarda's daughters.

AMELIA

I'll tell her you climbed the cherry tree and she'll break your back with a stick. A woman doesn't climb trees because her legs might show, you shameless girl, because she might rub herself up against the lichens and pleasure herself, slut, because she might imagine she's a squirrel or a bird and her thoughts might become so agile that her body becomes lithe and strong, you shameless girl, don't you see that you could end up flying, you shameless girl? And then she'd have two dead daughters.

MAGDALENA

We're all dead. (*Deliberately speaking low*) She's killed us because she has a right to do so, she's our mother.

AMELIA

Hush, be quiet! You know you don't have to pronounce that word if you don't want...

MAGDALENA

(*Interrupts her*) Pfff! She's hunting right now.

AMELIA

You know what good hearing she has. (*Brief pause. Urgently*) What did you find in the cherry tree? It's dry. Bone dry. Like your belly, like my eyes, like all of our bellies and eyes. It's a tangle of dead branches. It should be burned. What have you got there? Open your hand.

MAGDALENA

My hand's really small. Leave me alone.

AMELIA

You're frightening me with that closed hand. Bernarda forbids us from having secrets.

MAGDALENA

It's not a secret if we don't say it is.

AMELIA

But I'll say something.

MAGDALENA

Why?

AMELIA

Because it's my duty to protect you. Protect us.

MAGDALENA

Nobody can protect us, ever. Can't you see that it's us, we're the monster? Girls cry if they say our names in their bedrooms and look under the bed to make sure we don't attack them while they sleep. They wear scapulars round their throats so that we can't bite their necks when they come back from clubs in the early hours of the morning. Even men fear us.

AMELIA

Men? Do you think they still exist?

MAGDALENA

I don't know. Why don't we ask Adela?

AMELIA

Mother won't let us.

*Amelia covers her mouth immediately. The cry of hyena is heard.*

Sorry. It's so difficult to get away from that word when it's on the tip of the tongue!

MAGDALENA

Now she knows we're talking. Silence. Silence.

## II.

BERNARDA

Silence.

ALL

Yes, mother.

BERNARDA

What were you doing?

MARTIRIO

What we always do: one worked, one sewed...

ANGUSTIAS

And the youngest towards dreamland rode...

*Angustias giggles and the others join in quietly. The curtains that cover Adela's bed twitch.*

BERNARDA

Have you been playing with Adela?

ALL

No, mother.

BERNARDA

You, smiley face, what's so funny about your sister sleeping?

ANGUSTIAS

I like seeing my sister rest, mother.

BERNARDA

That's right.

ANGUSTIAS

It makes me happy.

BERNARDA

That's too much. That's not a healthy form of happiness. Why are you so unbalanced, Angustias?

MARTIRIO

Anyway when our sister sleeps, she's stops being a rival for us, Mother, understand that, that's why Angustias is happy.

BERNARDA

A sister is a sister. A sister should never be a rival. Leave Adela to sleep in peace. Don't you realize that you'll wake her by thinking so much about her? You always make so much noise, you're so careless...! banging about with the pots and pans, with the vacuum cleaner, with your hyena-like laughter. Your sister is the youngest and you should protect her.

AMELIA

She's been asleep for a hundred years.

BERNARDA

Maybe she needs another hundred. Sometimes tiredness lasts a very long time. She was in such a rush to grow up that it tired her out. She's young. You need to tiptoe round her and whisper. You can't take her out of her casket and dress her up like she's one of your dolls.

MAGDALENA

Martirio has made her a boyfriend.

MARTIRIO

Liar!

BERNARDA

What did you say?

MAGDALENA

She has, she's sewn her a boyfriend out of cloth, plastic and prostheses from the Pharmacy.

BERNARDA

Martirio, is that true?

MARTIRIO

Adela sleeps but Magdalena dreams, raves, she loved her little sister so much that she dreams Adela's dreams and she invents things, has visions. Mother, let the doctor come and give us all a pill.

MAGDALENA

While you were out hunting Martirio put the doll inside the little casket, like a husband for Adela.

MARTIRIO

Poor Magdalena...

BERNARDA

I don't go out hunting, I go out. (Pause) Magdalena, are you feverish?

MAGDALENA

No, mother. Everything I said is true. The doll has those green eyes, so vivid.

AMELIA

Brown in the green of the moonlight...

BERNARDA

Quiet!

ANGUSTIAS

She stole them from a wolf, mother. Magdalena's right.

BERNARDA

What about you, what do you have to say?

MARTIRIO

We're sick, mother. Call the doctor, a little round pill. Let us sleep like Adela, for a year, just a year.

ANGUSTIAS

Do you remember the wolf you brought a few days ago? Martirio went through the remains and stole the eyes, fangs and the blood that ran through its veins.

BERNARDA

I brought you lamb, you ate what all Christians eat on Sunday, lamb.

MARTIRIO

Don't you realize that it rhymes, mother? Martirio, all fingers and nails, went through the remains and stole its eyes, fangs and the blood that ran through its veins.

A nightmare ballad...

ANGUSTIAS

Martirio has been stealing innards and placing them on dolls to bring them to life. She gets bored with us, which is hardly surprising. It's an innocent game.

AMELIA

She would have been a scientist in another age.

MAGDALENA

In another galaxy she would have been God.

ANGUSTIAS

She wants to create something new; it makes sense.

MAGDALENA

It's not that, she wants to continue pretending that Pepe is coming to sleep with our little sister.

ALL

Shut up!

*Silence.*

BERNARDA

Have I told you about the cemetery?

ALL

Yes, mother.

BERNARDA

I have to do all the leg work for you and go out and look. It's forty-nine degrees centigrade out there.

ALL

It's hell, mother.

BERNARDA

It's hell and there's no shade whatsoever on route.

ALL

They cut down the fig trees, mother.

BERNARDA

All the trees have dried up, first there was hardly any rain and then it turned to acid rain.

AMELIA

The raindrops burned our skin, it was incredible.

MAGDALENA

The seventh plague of the Pharaoh.

ANGUSTIAS

And the nuclear power plant isn't even near our village.

BERNARDA

Then, the water in the wells was poisoned and the fig trees started producing strange fruit.

ANGUSTIAS

The fig trees were scary.

MARTIRIO

They looked like giants, with arms twisted in pain, with huge bloody pustules.

MAGDALENA

The Black Death.

BERNARDA

And finally the wells dried up, forever, and the insects that came out of the monstrous fruit started to devour the fig trees.

AMELIA

Poncia used to say that you could hear the cries of the fig trees as they were being devoured, they screamed like young girls.

MARTIRIO

Poncia's lucky because she can go to the supermarket and dirty her ears with the screams of those being tortured.

BERNARDA

Nobody is tortured in this village. We're suffering the ills of climate change. That's what the TV news says. That's why men came with axes and cut down the fig trees and burned the life out of them at the dump.

MAGDALENA

The bonfire burned for a hundred days.

AMELIA

And a hundred nights.

ANGUSTIAS

A hundred nights of fire and ash that blackened our whitewashed patios.

BERNARDA

And that's why there's no shade on the path to the cemetery and I have to walk up there under the fierce sun, feebly armed with determination and my parasol.

MAGDALENA

And what's the cemetery like, mother?

BERNARDA

It grows bigger every day.

ANGUSTIAS

You tire yourself out too much, mother.

BERNARDA

I tire myself out because it's my duty. Martirio, do you remember that good-for-nothing who came to court you? Enrique Humanes was his name. Well he's gone. You'd be weeping for him now. Do you realize the tears you've spared yourself? And the Flores, Benítez, Suarez, Calandria Benajení, Torres and López Hijada and Berenguer and Calatrava and Zurita and Tomelloso and Garrido and Duato and the Guadamenir families, all of them buried in the ground and that blonde woman Hermenegilda died on a Monday and her firstborn followed her on Tuesday and her second daughter on Wednesday, her third daughter on Thursday and so on, in descending order, one by one. All her daughters, all nine of them.

Such discipline in that family, such loyal daughters, lovely.

MAGDALENA

And what about... you know who?

BERNARDA

I haven't seen his name anywhere. I've searched all the tombstones, I've climbed up the step ladders to read the names on the top rows of the niches, but in vain, his name isn't written in stone.

MARTIRIO

I say he rode his horse to the sea and took a boat that carried him far away.

BERNARDA

The sea would have sent him back, bruised and naked, mauled by fish.

MAGDALENA

I say his horse took him to the furthest Northern peak, where he learned another language and how to forget us.

BERNARDA

The North would have sent him back, bruised and naked, mauled by the fangs of the snow.

ANGUSTIAS

I say he rode his horse to a hermitage, where he forgot our name and his own.

BERNARDA

The hermitage would have sent him back, bruised from the spiked belt and naked, mauled by the hunger of a thousand fasts.

AMELIA

I say is lying dead in a ditch.

BERNARDA

He can't be dead without me knowing it.

AMELIA

He's lying in ditch, in a jumble of other bodies, and our little sister is lying alone in her little casket. And there's no comfort for either of them.

BERNARDA

No. I'd know if he were breathing.

AMELIA

The paths are littered with graves, Mother, and rifle shots ring out at night in the threshing ground. You can't know everything.

BERNARDA

It feels like that.

ANGUSTIAS

Poncía says there're fireworks not shots, from a party which is going on somewhere far away, in a neighbourhood where people dance and eat candy floss, but we know that the screams are not screams of laughter and that the shots aren't coloured powder exploding.

MAGDALENA

Poncía insists that people have a good time going to the psychiatrist, then go and have a burger, but we feel the earth tremor every time a body falls to the ground.

BERNARDA

I'll never understand why you choose to look through Poncía's eyes and not through mine, what do you want to see? Do you think it makes you smarter? I know there are trenches in the fields that eat up the men shot at the nape of their necks. At night, while you're sleeping like lambs, I go about my business and I dig wherever the ground has been disturbed. My nails are black from searching for him there too, in a ditch without a tombstone or prayer for the dead. And I never find his face. I never find his green child face.

MARTIRIO

You don't know what his face was like, mother. You never looked at him like you should look at a man.

BERNARDA

And how should we look at a man, pray tell?

*Long, tense pause. A glass moves on the table without anybody touching it. The daughters notice it but try to hide their fascination. Bernarda doesn't register it.  
(...)*