

MENORCA

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MENORCA

Cast:

THE WOMEN

OLLIE Mid 30s, forensic anthropologist. A native of Spain and of Basque heritage, but has lived abroad for years and any accent is barely noticeable, almost unidentifiable.

EM 20, student.

ABBY 21, student.

WIN 21, student. Asian Canadian.

CALE 19, student.

THE MEN

TERRY 22, student.

JAMES 40s, archaeologist.

BEN 26, grad student.

GEORGE Mid 30s. A Border Patrol agent. Parents immigrated to U.S. from Mexico before his birth.

Time: The Present

Locations: An excavation of a Roman fort near Ciutadella, Minorca, the residence for the students in Ciutadella, and the desert-dry land in both Minorca and the Southern California desert east of San Diego.

ACT ONE. In the darkness, the sound of a flute and a small drum, playing a simple and repeating melody. Amid shapes in the darkness, OLLIE enters, a woman in her mid-thirties, dressed in a t-shirt, shorts, and boots, as if for hiking. She wears a bandanna tied over her head, canvas bag slung over her shoulder, and carries a rubber basket.

OLLIE

Everyone thinks of time as a line. To them, it moves from here to here.

She illustrates with her hands.

In archeology, though, we must think of time like a cake. Layers, the oldest on the bottom and the newest on the top.

She sets her basket down.

Here, in many places, right on top of the ground, you find ancient pottery. Punic Ebusitan from Africa, Campanian from Italy, Tarraconenses from Spain...you can walk along and pick it up. Take it home with you. "Look at what I found." But we do not simply pick them up, even when they are so easy to find. Finding, you see, is easy. Finding, anyone can do. And it means nothing.

Lights shift, revealing an archaeological dig near Ciutadella, Minorca. Summer, late morning. Hot, dry, almost desert. WIN, TERRY, and EM are working on the site—digging with pickaxes, gathering pottery shards in rubber baskets, clearing dirt into a wheelbarrow. OLLIE kneels by a small trench near a gap in a low stone wall, where EM is working. She continues, speaking to EM.

OLLIE

Nothing, you see?

EM

I'm sorry, I—

OLLIE

Emily, a boundary between layers, or between features like this, that is a moment in time. This may be a cut, here, you see? A cut in the cake, where someone has dug into this site, a moment where the present broke through to the past. That's important. When you brush, you blur the boundary. We lose the moment.

Another student, CALE, enters. She wears a bandanna, like OLLIE.

CALE

He'll be right over.

OLLIE

Thank you, Cale.

OLLIE takes a camera out of her bag.

OLLIE

Cale, would you, please?

CALE

Sure.

She picks up a measuring stick and lays it alongside the trench. OLLIE takes photos of what is in the trench, EM watches

WIN

So, anyway. You have to use your legs.

EM

What?

WIN

What have we been talking about? Riding. English, you don't have much saddle, so you have to use your legs. Up and down.

TERRY

Like a pogo stick.

WIN

Oh yeah, Western, you might as well tie a chair up

WIN (cont.)

there, eh? Big rocking chair.

Mimics riding, like on a rocker.

"Howdy, Ma'am."

TERRY

Y'all go ahead and laugh. Just ignorant, is all it is. You want to chase a little fox, that little saddle's OK. You want to do some work, you want a little more under you.

CALE

Fox hunting sucks.

EM

Poor little fox.

WIN

I've never been fox hunting in my life.

TERRY

Never said you did.

CALE

Jesus, give it rest. It's too hot.

WIN

It's not that hot.

TERRY

West Texas, it'll get up around ninety at midnight.

WIN

Southern Alberta, too. It gets up around forty.

EM

Forty? That's all?

TERRY

Celsius, hon.

WIN

Like the rest of the world.

OLLIE

Now, now.

EM

Forty, what's that?

TERRY

Hundred four.

CALE

Can we stop talking about the heat, already?

EM

How do you know that?

TERRY

Times one-point-eight plus thirty-two.

EM

I didn't think it got that hot in Canada.

WIN

Hey, Alberta, Montana...the Badlands are the Badlands.
So this? Spain? Minorca? Not so bad, eh?

CALE

Our little island paradise.

WIN

Won't get much past thirty-five today.

EM looks at TERRY.

TERRY

Ninety-five.

CALE

Good, fine, can we stop this now? It's making me feel
even hotter.

WIN

This isn't hot.

TERRY

Ain't that hot.

CALE

Ollie...

OLLIE

Not getting involved.

Les paraules en la seva llengua són molt estranyes per
a mi. *(The words in your language are very strange to*

OLLIE (*cont.*)

me.) Half an hour, then we are finished.

CALE

Fine.

CALE takes off her bandanna and wipes her face. Her hair is cut very short.

EM

I've got to tell you, your hair is freaking me out.

CALE

Will you just...look, it's cooler, OK?

EM

Just, you know, a little extreme-

CALE

It's just hair.

She picks up a water bottle, drinks, offers it to OLLIE.

Ollie? Want some?

OLLIE

Thank you.

She stands, takes a drink.

CALE

So, what do you think?

OLLIE

We'll wait for Dr. Morgan.

EM

There's something in there.

OLLIE

Where?

EM

There. See?

She reaches into the trench after the object.

OLLIE

Careful, don't-

*JAMES MORGAN enters, trailing BEN,
a grad assistant, and ABBY,
another student.*

JAMES

So, what have you got?

OLLIE points to the trench.

Huh.

BEN

What's that, a step? It's right inside the threshold.

OLLIE

It looks like this was a cut, here.

Points at the edges of the trench.

We don't have the exact boundary, because-

EM

Still working in trench.

I said I was sorry.

WIN

To ABBY.

Sweeping with her hand.

ABBY

Jesus. A brush or clean trowel. They told us that the first day.

EM

I'm sorry, I forgot.

ABBY

Procedures, kind of important.

EM

OK.

ABBY

I'm just saying.

OLLIE

I have spoken to her about it.

JAMES

Calm down, it's all right. No harm done. Now let me-

EM

Just a second, I've almost got it.

ABBY

What?

EM

It's metal. I haven't found any metal yet, and I want to-
there.

She hands it to OLLIE, who examines it.

What is it?

OLLIE hands the object to JAMES.

BEN

Come on, Doc, what?

JAMES hands it to BEN.

Holy crap. A rowel. This is a rowel, right?

OLLIE

Yes.

EM

What's a rowel?

TERRY

Part of a spur.

JAMES

Where did you find this?

EM

Right here. Between the big piece and this broken one, here.

JAMES

On top of them, or in between them?

EM

Between them. It was wedged between them, there.

BEN

Damn, Doc.

ABBY

What's the deal?

TERRY

It's a Late Republic site. Second century B.C.? But rowel spurs weren't invented until-

WIN

Thirteenth century. A.D.

JAMES

Yes.

TERRY

I was gonna-(say that)

WIN

Dating problem, eh?

JAMES

Maybe, maybe not.

OLLIE

It could just be an intrusion. That's why it's important to know if this is a cut, so we can-

EM yelps, scrambles out of the trench.

BEN

Jesus, what the-

EM

In the hole. Under the stone piece. The little one, right there.

OLLIE

You moved it?

EM

I didn't mean to. It's not very big. I just-

OLLIE sees what EM has seen.

See? Is that-

OLLIE

Yes.

Dr. Morgan?

She points, JAMES looks.

JAMES

Oh, crap.

Lights begin to change as GEORGE, a man in his thirties, enters, wearing a Border Patrol uniform. JAMES and the STUDENTS do not see him, and he does not acknowledge them. The light holds us between worlds.

GEORGE

I just knew things were going to get complicated.

JAMES

OK, everyone, let's...we're done here for today. Go and, uh...wash your pottery and...just wash and mark and Dr. Osinalde and I will...figure out what to do here.

No one moves. They look into the trench.

Go on.

The STUDENTS trail out. EM is the last to go. JAMES stands, looking into the trench.

Damn it.

GEORGE

To OLLIE.

You really should step out of the area, here.

OLLIE

It's all right.

JAMES

OK, um...OK. I guess...I guess this means I need to go and make some calls.

GEORGE

I called it in. Now we have to leave it, OK?

OLLIE

Do you want me there?

JAMES

No, I-

OLLIE

Just for language.

JAMES

No, thanks, I...I'm responsible, I should...I'll be fine.
You...need anything?

OLLIE

Plastic sheeting. Just to protect it.

GEORGE

The M.E.'ll have someone out here as soon as they can.

JAMES

Damn it.

OLLIE

James. Do not worry. It's why I'm here, yes? Just
in case we—

GEORGE

Maybe you could just imagine a line of yellow tape,
right across there.

OLLIE

Please. I know what I'm doing.

JAMES

OK, just...OK. Find me when you're done.

*He exits, and the lighting change
is complete. It is night, in the
desert east of San Diego.*

GEORGE

Blows on his hands.

Gets cold out here at night.

OLLIE

Yes.

GEORGE

Wouldn't think it's going to be a hundred four out
here tomorrow.

OLLIE

No.

GEORGE

Got a jacket back in the truck. Official Border Patrol, I mean, Customs and Border Protection. Got that "C.B.P." sewn right on the back of it.

No response.

All official. Like this was actually my job or something.

OLLIE

I'm fine.

GEORGE

I'm serious, you've got to—

OLLIE

One minute.

Pause.

GEORGE

Forensics. Ugh. Not my thing, let me tell you. Had to watch an autopsy once, back in training. 'Bout lost my lunch.

Boy, the things you stumble on when you head off to pee, huh?

OLLIE

I almost missed it.

GEORGE

That's a pretty big piece to miss.

OLLIE

Pelvis. You see? From the iliac crest to the acetabulum and ischeal tuberosity. From here to here.

She points on him.

GEORGE

Ass-a-tabulum? That a real word, or you just make that up?

OLLIE

Acetabulum. The socket for the head of the femur.

GEORGE

The thigh bone.

OLLIE

Yes.

GEORGE

The thigh bone connected to the hip bone.

OLLIE

Yes. Do you have any gloves? Rubber gloves? I want to check-

GEORGE

Actually, you really have to step out of the area. You can't touch...you know that, right? "Ride-along" means "passenger." "Observer." "Not on the job."

OLLIE

All right, I won't touch anything. I just want to take a look at-

She takes out a flashlight, turns it on. He grabs it and turns it off.

GEORGE

Don't go waving that around. Jesus. Send up a rocket, why don't you?

OLLIE

I need to see the-

GEORGE

Look, if you want that job, it's not going to help you to go messing around here.

OLLIE

I just want to see the shape of...I want to know if it's a man or a woman.

GEORGE

We'll find out soon enough. Come on.

GEORGE walks off as lights begin to change and the residence is seen. The students are sitting around the table, dressed much better, ready for an evening out. They have drinks in front of them,

and are playing cards. OLLIE remains apart as light holds between two worlds.

BEN

Man or woman? What do you think?

TERRY

I don't know, what did it look like?

EM

A foot. That's all I saw. Part of a foot.

CALE

Hey Ollie, what do you think?

OLLIE

What?

CALE

Man or woman, what do you think?

OLLIE

I...I haven't seen enough yet.

She moves into the residence, and the lighting change is complete.

EM

It was little. I think it was a kid.

ABBY

Oh, no. Really?

TERRY

We playing or talking?

BEN

Five euro says it's a guy.

TERRY

Fine, you're on, let's play.

Turns a card.

Jack is back. That's you.

EM

Fine.

She drinks. WIN turns a card.

WIN

Three...is me.

She drinks.

ABBY

I hope it's not a kid. That would really be-

CALE

Yeah.

BEN

Hey, come on. It's not like it's a person. It's just bones, right Ollie?

OLLIE

Yes, but you still must-

CALE

It's still a person.

BEN

I was on this dig once, right after graduation, in the U.K.? Another fort, like the one here, but June, man, in the U.K.? Rain, all the time. Every day. So it was just like, wet, and you dig and it's muddy and the trench fills up with water and it's a pain in the ass.

TERRY

Your turn.

BEN

Yeah, yeah. So we're digging, and one day we find bones, like, you know, today. Human. But in the U.K., no matter what, you find remains of any kind, human remains, you have to call the police.

CALE

Really?

BEN

Yeah. Just ask Ollie, she used to live there. Isn't that right, Ollie?

OLLIE

Yes.

BEN

Doesn't matter if it's a thousand years old. So there's all this crap to go through, paperwork and all, and you have to wait and wait, and it was raining and the site was turning to mud, so the guy in charge, well, he told us to cover it up and pretend we didn't find it.

WIN

You're kidding.

BEN

Swear to God. I mean, it clearly had nothing to do with us, and it was kind of on the edge of our site, so why should we have to put up with all the...I mean, I'm not saying it was right or anything, but...

CALE

Have you heard anything from the Doc?

OLLIE

No.

TERRY

Your turn.

BEN

Turns a card.

Ace. Make a rule.

General disapproval around the table.

CALE

Your rules suck.

BEN

Yeah, but I turned the ace, so I get to make one.

Thinks a moment.

Pig Latin. You have to say your name and ask the person next to you theirs. First person to screw up drinks.

Turns to ABBY.

I-may ame-nay is-yay en-Bay, oo-hay are-yay oo-yay?

ABBY

This is so stupid.

BEN

It's the rule, come on.

EM

Yeah, Abby. Rules are rules. Come on.

BEN

Oo-hay are-yay oo-yay?

ABBY

Fine.

I-nay im-yay is-

Fuck.

General laughter.

BEN

And she even thought about it first.

ABBY

Yeah, yeah.

She drinks.

BEN

See, I was waiting for Win, here. "My, eh? Name, eh?
Is, eh? Win, eh?"

WIN flips him off. He laughs.

TERRY

To ABBY.

Your turn.

ABBY

These games are so stupid. People on my floor,
they're always playing these stupid games, and when
they get out of control I have to go take care of it.

CALE

Yeah, well, that's why R.A.s get free room and board.

BEN

Wait till next weekend. The fiesta. That gets crazy.

BEN (cont.)

People start drinking at 9 in the morning. Goes on all day, all night.

WIN

Is that when they bring out the horses?

BEN

The horses are all the time. The crowds...and the riders, all dressed up, all noble and all, and all around them everyone's just...wild.

TERRY

Abby. Your turn.

BEN

They ride these horses right into the houses.

ABBY

No way.

BEN

No shit. Right in the houses, rear up, spin around, back out again. Crazy insane.

TERRY

No sense.

BEN

Letting loose, bro.

TERRY

Crazy, is what it is. Now we goin' to play or what?

BEN

Why don't we just go? I mean, hell, Doc isn't back by now, he's probably staying over in Mahón. Might as well go out.

CALE

What do you think?

OLLIE

Yes, go, have a good time.

The students begin to gather themselves to leave.

CALE

Want to come along?

OLLIE

No, I-

EM

Come on, Ollie, you never come out with us.

OLLIE

Thank you, but I have some work here.

BEN

We're going.

ABBY

Bathroom.

She heads off. WIN follows.

WIN

I'm next.

CALE

Damn it.

TERRY

Use ours.

CALE

Thanks.

She exits to the men's bedroom.

EM

Me, too?

TERRY

Sure 'nuff.

She starts out, TERRY following.

EM

Light.

I can go by myself.

TERRY

My boots are in there. We're goin' out, I need something on my feet.

EM

Oh.

TERRY

But if y'all need any help...

She laughs. They exit.

BEN

He's sniffing.

OLLIE

What?

BEN

Terry. Little Emmy. He's sniffing.

OLLIE

Oh.

BEN

Shrugs.

She's cute.

So, Ollie. We're, uh, we're taking it out, right? The body.

OLLIE

Why do you ask? It is "just bones," yes?

BEN

Yeah, right, but we're excavating it, right? We're not going to-

OLLIE

Cover it up?

BEN

Yeah, well, that was-

OLLIE

Not the first time that has ever been done. And it will not be the last. But yes. We are going to excavate it.

BEN

You're going to be in charge of that, right? It's your thing.

OLLIE

Yes.

BEN

So, I want to be on your team.

OLLIE

Oh. Well, that is really up to Dr. Morgan.

BEN

Why? Isn't it your call? You're in charge now.

OLLIE

I should still respect-

BEN

OK, yeah, I know, but...you know, I'm just saying. If you put in a word or something.

OLLIE

It won't be very exciting.

BEN

Like what we're doing now is? Digging up pottery? I did that all last summer. Something new, you know, more experience, different...I could use that.

OLLIE

It's very...particular. There are procedures. Exacting.

BEN

I know, I took Baker's Physical Anthro. Got an A, too. I'm up for that. The detector got a lot of metal returns in there, when we swept it. There's got to be some cool stuff.

OLLIE

We don't-it will be slow.

BEN

Slow is cool. Look, I know this site runs pretty loose, I mean, even with Doc being all uptight and

BEN (cont.)

all, it's pretty slack, really. And that's OK, I guess, when you pretty much know what you're going to find. But when you find something new, that's... I've worked on some digs where it was tight. By the numbers, you know. Really anal. I can do that stuff. Tightening things up here...well, it wouldn't be bad, is all I'm saying.

OLLIE does not respond.

Look, Ollie, someday I'm going to have to have something that makes me stand out from the stack, right? More, different experience? The more I've done, you know, the better I'm going to look, and...that's important, isn't it?

Lights begin to change as GEORGE enters with a Thermos. He sits in the truck.

OLLIE

Yes, it is very-

BEN

So that's all I'm saying. I really want to do this.

Beat.

It's not like it's my first time or anything.

OLLIE

I know. I-if we get to...I will talk with Dr. Morgan. No promises.

BEN

Yeah, sure, of course, just, you know, if you could put in a word.

OLLIE

Yes.

GEORGE

Coffee?

BEN

Thanks.

BEN goes. OLLIE takes out her cell, dials. The call goes straight to voice mail, and she

hangs up. She picks up a beer from the center of the table, cracks it open. In the half-light, GEORGE speaks to her as if she is in the truck.

GEORGE

Hey. Do you want some?

OLLIE

How can you drink so much coffee?

GEORGE

You get used to it.

OLLIE

Too much.

GEORGE

Of course, I have to find a new spot to pee, now. I was going to go over where you were, but I guess that spot's occupied, huh?

Pause. GEORGE picks up a pair of night-vision goggles.

So you're a bone doctor.

OLLIE

No. That's an orthopedist. I'm an archaeologist. The bones they study are living. The bones we study are dead.

GEORGE

The ones in that autopsy I saw were pretty damn dead.

OLLIE

The body was dead.

GEORGE

Well, I hope so, 'cause the M.E. took the whole top of his head off with a saw.

Pause.

You know, the crime lab doesn't roll with us much. Like, ever. Us being feds and all.

OLLIE

I know, I just thought...if I knew more about the agencies in the area...it might make me a better

OLLIE (*cont.*)

candidate for the position. More experience,
different experience...

GEORGE

Good thought.

*GEORGE continues to scan the area.
OLLIE moves to the "truck" and
sits, setting her beer on the
ground next to her. Light shift
to the desert is complete.*

OLLIE

Bone, it is alive, you know.

GEORGE

Yeah?

OLLIE

Oh, yes. You see, living bone, it bends before it
breaks. It is as if you were to take a carrot and
break it. It would bend, it would warp, before it
broke. The edges would be distorted.

GEORGE

Huh.

OLLIE

Dead bone, it becomes brittle. It shatters. The
edges are sharp and clean.

GEORGE

Yeah?

OLLIE

That is how we can tell if a fracture is perimortem or
postmortem.

GEORGE

OK.

Beat.

So, like, do you follow sports or anything?

OLLIE

What?

GEORGE

Because if all we're going to talk about is bones, you know, it's going to be a long night.

OLLIE

Oh. I...sorry.

GEORGE

Just going to be a pretty one-sided conversation. Want to take a look?

OLLIE

All right, yes.

She takes the goggles.

GEORGE

OK, now look out about eleven o'clock, there. See those two rocks? That's the end of a little ravine. It's like a little highway. If they come through here, that's where they'll be.

OLLIE

I don't see anything.

GEORGE

It's early.

She hands the goggles back to him.

OLLIE

Futbol.

GEORGE

Huh?

OLLIE

Sports. You asked me...so, FC Barcelona. I used to live there.

GEORGE

Ah, so you're like, Spain Spanish. I thought you had a little accent, there. Entonces tu hablas castellano, verdad? (*Then you speak Castilian, right?*)

OLLIE
Sighs.

Yes.

There is the sound of keys, and the residence door opens. JAMES enters. OLLIE picks up her beer and moves up to him.

JAMES

Hey.

OLLIE

Hello. I was just trying to call you.

JAMES

I know, it's dead. I forgot to put it on the charger. Sorry.
I saw the kids. Heading out for the evening.

OLLIE

I was thinking about taking a walk, myself.

JAMES

It's a nice night.

OLLIE

We could go have a drink.

JAMES

I could use one.

OLLIE

Do you have a favorite place? From last year?

JAMES

No. We didn't have this apartment. We were down near Cala Blanca. The kids came into town for the fiesta, missed the bus, slept on the beach. Cost us a day of work.

OLLIE

I remember sleeping on the beach. The first time I was here. I was seventeen, I think.

JAMES

You don't remember?

OLLIE

It was for the fiesta. It is like Dr. Baker says, yes? About the Sixties? "If you remember, you weren't really there."

JAMES

Well, that's something to look forward to. Another lost weekend.

OLLIE

I was thinking you might stay in Mahón.

JAMES

It took long enough.

OLLIE

Well? What did they say?

JAMES

They said...that you were most likely right. That it was not recent, not a police matter.

OLLIE

It is an old, old burial. The staining on the bones. And the rowel. You saw the pictures from the internet? Thirteenth century, perhaps.

JAMES

Yes. Anyway. The excavation is now officially under the direction of our forensic archaeologist and I am to consult with her on all matters until the remains are extracted.

OLLIE

Oh.

JAMES

Fortunately, I think I have a cooperative partner there.

OLLIE

Smiles.

Of course.

JAMES

Is this going to totally fuck up our schedule?

OLLIE

I hope not.

JAMES

Good.

OLLIE

You know, this is not insignificant. This find, it might—

JAMES

Yes. I know. Silver lining. Look at us, we found something...interesting. Not in the context of my funding, mind you, not in the context of what I've been trying to get done here for going on two years now, but...interesting. I guess that's something, at least.

OLLIE

I didn't put it there.

JAMES

Oh yeah, I know, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to..

Beat.

I'm sorry. I'm just...I mean, it's a bad day, that's all. Another snag. Last year it was weather. And the kids, not being reliable...now we've got this thing, and then next week there's the fiesta...always another hurdle. It just feels like I'm not making any progress. Frustrating.

Beat. Brighter.

But hey, you...you finally got that crime scene you were always looking for, huh? After all the...

Genuine laughter from JAMES.

So, there is a bright side, I guess.

OLLIE

Should we go out there tomorrow?

JAMES

What, to the site?

OLLIE

Yes. The students, they have the day off, but we could—

JAMES

Oh, there's nothing for us to do, really. We're not set up for small work. Pickaxes, shovels, not real useful here, right? I've got some calls out to get you your stuff.

OLLIE

It's only coming from Mahón. Fifty kilometers. We could drive over in the morning and—

JAMES

I—I have to do some paperwork. Revised schedules, e-mail, and...figuring out how to convince people that this...is some wonderful thing. Interesting. In two languages, to boot.

OLLIE

I could do some of the—

GEORGE

In the truck.

Castellano.

JAMES

It's fine. Hell, maybe my Spanish will improve. Silver linings.

OLLIE

All right. Whatever you need, just let me know. I'm here to help.

GEORGE

*Exaggerated Castilian
pronunciation.*

"¿Dónde están las mayores ciudades en Valencia?"

JAMES

Thanks. I'll show you the Spanish version, so you can...

OLLIE

Fine, that's...whatever you need.

GEORGE

You know, when I was in high school, we could always tell which teacher the new freshmen had in eighth grade. Señora Ortega, she was Mexican and all her students sounded like, you know, normal. But Señor

GEORGE (*cont.*)

Perez, he was Cuban, and he taught everyone *castellano*. And they'd come in the first day, all lispy, it was the funniest thing. We'd say, "Hey, man, this is a Spanish class—what language are you speaking?"

He laughs.

I mean, we never heard anyone speak that way, except for those guys. I mean, when you think about it, it's...you know, the ones who were really speaking Spain Spanish were out of place in a Spanish class. Kind of funny.

I mean, all those kids, they were gringos, you know?

OLLIE

Why did you have to take Spanish?

GEORGE

My grandparents paid me to. Fifty bucks. Could have had a hundred, if I'd gotten an A. My folks, you know, they were all, "We have to know English," so they were English-only at home, which was no big deal by the time I came along, but *los abuelos*, they were all "Tu has perdido tu país, tu lengua," you know?

OLLIE

Oh yes, I know. I know very well.

GEORGE

Anyway, I said OK. I figured, you know, how hard could it be? But the teacher was into homework and tests and stuff, so I kinda tanked.

OLLIE

It's not my first language, either. Spanish.

GEORGE

Yeah?

OLLIE

I was born in Donostia. San Sebastian. It's in the Basque country, so that's my first language.

GEORGE

What, Basque-ish?

OLLIE

No, it's called...it's just Basque.

GEORGE

No Spanish.

OLLIE

There are people in the Basque country who will tell you that Spain doesn't really exist.

Beat.

We moved to Barcelona when I was eight. So we mainly spoke Catalan.

GEORGE

How many languages do you have in Spain?

OLLIE

How many do you have in America?

She turns back to JAMES.

You know, I am here to help. With the language, at least.

JAMES

I know. Thanks. I appreciate it. I just...I'm still responsible here and I can't...I still need to, you know, take care of things.

OLLIE

Just let me know how to help.

JAMES

I will.

Pause. JAMES fiddles with the playing cards.

GEORGE

Well, I've got to say, your English is great.

OLLIE

Yes, well, my doctorate is from the University of Sussex. I lived in the UK for seven years.

GEORGE

Yeah, well, that explains it, I guess.

Pause. JAMES is still collecting and arranging the cards. OLLIE moves back down to GEORGE and sits in the truck.

OLLIE

I'm taking classes. For my accent.

GEORGE

You can barely hear it.

OLLIE

You heard it. I started in the U.K. There, they called it "accent reduction." Here, they call it "accent modification." I think it's nicer. They just want to modify you a little.

She takes out a pack of cigarettes and a lighter.

GEORGE

Uh-uh. No smoking.

OLLIE

Sorry.

Shakes her head.

California. I'll step outside.

GEORGE

It's not that. Not just that. Cigarette shows up a long ways off at night.

OLLIE

Oh.

GEORGE

We don't want to be seen, OK? And the smell, huh? Basic ambush stuff. Don't let them see you first.

Elmer Fudd.

Be vevy quiet. Heh-heh-heh-heh.

She does not get it.

It's a safety thing, you know? And we don't want people just scattering off out there.

OLLIE

No. Of course not.

GEORGE

Run off out there, it's easy to get lost. I mean, a hundred four tomorrow? Stats show fifty percent mortality when it hits 104. One thing they don't carry much is water. Water's heavy.

OLLIE

I see, I think.

GEORGE

Lonely place, out there.

OLLIE

I just want to stretch my legs.

GEORGE

Don't go far.

He fishes a small box out of his pocket and hands it to her.

Here.

She takes it, reads.

OLLIE

Nicotine gum.

GEORGE

You're not the only one who smokes.

She takes a piece of gum, unwraps it, puts it in her mouth, and returns to JAMES.

OLLIE

So. I was thinking about a walk. Join me?

JAMES

Who do you want on your team?

OLLIE

Can we talk about this tomorrow?

JAMES

Everyone's going to want to work on the burial, you know that.

OLLIE

I don't think so.

JAMES

Mark my words. It's more romantic than sorting pottery.

OLLIE

Maybe.

JAMES

I need Ben to work with me.

OLLIE

All right.

JAMES

It's his committee. They want him to work with me.

OLLIE

Of course. I would really rather talk about this tomorrow.

JAMES picks up one of the liquor bottles from the table.

JAMES

Coconut rum. They actually drink this stuff?

OLLIE

With pineapple juice. They play a game with cards, and everyone has to drink. It's complicated.

JAMES

Kids.

OLLIE nods, picks up her beer, drinks.

You shouldn't drink with them. With the kids.

OLLIE

I wasn't. They were gone, and I was waiting for-

JAMES

Some of these kids...they come over here, they're legal all of a sudden, there's no controls...kids let these things just turn into a half-assed summer vacation. I went through that last year. And we're already short-handed. We had to take your little protégé the

JAMES (cont.)

English major for this to even make up.

OLLIE

Em is a hard worker.

JAMES

She's been fine, but that doesn't mean she...she's not here about archeology, she's here about...her "life experience" or whatever.

OLLIE

They're all here to-

JAMES

It's a different agenda, is all I'm saying. We need to make sure they follow our agenda, and that means we have to be their bosses, not their buddies.

OLLIE

I live with them. Here, in the same place. If I were living downstairs, for instance-

JAMES

You know I'd rather have you...we just need someone up here who can-

OLLIE

I know. This is fine, but...there's a difference between drinking with them and drinking near them, yes?

JAMES

I just don't want anything to start undermining your position here, OK? It matters to me, people's perception of you.

Pause.

OLLIE

I hoped we were going to be free of that for a little while. Over here.

JAMES

I know. Me, too. But...look, I just don't want to see you compromised. You know? Your position back home, your authority here, it's...once they see you as "my

JAMES (cont.)

girlfriend," that's all they see you as. Maybe it's just reflex, I don't know. The department is so political, sometimes I think that's the only way I can see things. When we're a little more established, then...

OLLIE

I understand.

JAMES

This here, it's...it's a structure thing. We need the structure. So. As a favor to me, OK? Just a little while longer?

OLLIE

All right.

JAMES

After this session here, we'll take a week and find a beach and just...OK?

OLLIE nods. Pause.

So. Thirteenth century? The Reconquista. The rowel, is it Spanish or Islamic?

OLLIE

Could be either. The photos I saw, some were identified as Spanish, some Islamic. There's more metal in there. When we find it, maybe we'll know more.

JAMES

I'm glad it's you. If I have to put up with, you know...at least it's you.

OLLIE

You're not angry?

JAMES

No, not...frustrated. That's all.

OLLIE

Ah. I'm sorry.

JAMES

Looking around the room.
They're all gone?

She nods. He kisses her. She smiles.

OLLIE

So. Your frustration. It concerns me.

JAMES

I...appreciate your concern.

OLLIE

They will probably be gone until very late.

JAMES

And they're off tomorrow. Probably sleep late.

OLLIE

Yes.

JAMES

Way my luck's going today, though, someone would come back early, looking for you.

OLLIE

And that might compromise my position.

JAMES

Still tempting. Have to think about it.
So, how about that walk first? Maybe a drink?

OLLIE nods.

Let me go splash off a bit. Driving with the windows down, I'm all sandblasted. Ten minutes?

OLLIE nods and JAMES goes.

GEORGE, in his truck.

GEORGE

So, how do you reduce an accent, anyway?

OLLIE

Oh, it's comical, really.
You repeat things over and over, poems, little...tricky things to say, what's the word?

GEORGE

Tongue twisters.

OLLIE

Yes, tongue twisters. Hateful things. So stupid.

She finishes her beer and sets the can down.

You say things over and over again until they can erase your old accent and give you a new one.

She sits in the truck next to GEORGE.

At least when I was in the U.K., they gave me a poem. It had all these...you know Spain has all these soft consonants and wants to put a vowel sound at the front and end of words, like you don't say "Spain" and you don't say "España," you say "Espaina." I still have trouble with this. So over and over again I would have to repeat:

Overpronounces.

"There's something ails our colt, that must, as if it had not noble blood, nor on Olympus leapt from cloud to cloud, shiver under the lash, strain and jolt as if it dragged road metal."

GEORGE

"The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain."

OLLIE

Exactly. And then you end up like me. Some of it is in your new accent and some in your old. The sounds, they are always...

I keep practicing. Maybe someday it will work.

"There's something ails our colt..."

Beat.

Where are they?

GEORGE

It's early yet. You know how they say that your awareness starts to drop around three in the morning? That's when things start to happen.

OLLIE

I meant the Medical Examiner.

GEORGE

Oh. I don't know. That case looks pretty cold, you know? Shift change, they'll send someone.

Ollie sits back, arms folded.

We're going to hang around until they get here.

You'll be able to see whatever, OK?

Pause.

Let's hear some Basque-ish.

OLLIE

What?

GEORGE

Get your mind off things. Pass the time. I don't have any idea what it sounds like.

OLLIE

It's just going to be noise to you. It's a language no one speaks. Except for the Basques. It's how they recognize each other. Like a secret handshake. I'll tell you, it helped in my accent class. The letter H, at the beginning of a word? Spanish people have a lot of trouble saying "How high is your house?" They don't have that sound. But in Euskera, Basque language, we do, so—"How high is your house?" Easy.

GEORGE

Man, that sounded just like English.

OLLIE

It...yes.

My grandmother says that I sound American now, that I don't sound native anymore. She's not happy about it.

GEORGE

"Tu has perdidio tu país, tu lengua."

OLLIE

Yes, so you see, I know what it is like with your grandparents.

GEORGE

So let me hear some.

OLLIE

Well, um.. "Hello," that's *kaixo*, "goodbye," that's *agur*. *Mesedez*, that's "please," and "thank you" is *eskerrik asko*. That's more than you'll ever need.

GEORGE

How about a sentence?

OLLIE

Fine, um.."Nire aitaren extea defendituko dut."

Catches herself.

Oh, that's a good one.

GEORGE

What's it mean?

OLLIE

Stupid.

GEORGE

It means—

OLLIE

"I will defend my father's house."

GEORGE

Well, that's not—

OLLIE

Stupid little melodramatic...God, why did I think of—

GEORGE

No, it's cool. "I will defend my father's house."
It's going to be my new motto. New Border Patrol
motto.

OLLIE

You have no idea. No idea at all. Those little
houses, those...there are people, you can still find
them, Basque people, who will introduce themselves by
the name of their house. Not by their family name,
but by the name of the building.

GEORGE

They name the building?

OLLIE

Oh yes. "Izena duen guria omen da." "That which has
a name, exists." Give it a name or it's nothing. You
did it too, in America. Mount Vernon. Monticello.
Estates, you can understand that. But there, these
little...I mean, *huts*...with names, carved right over the
door...

Beat.

That poem, it says "I will lose everything, but I will
defend the house of my father." "If they take away my
weapons, I will use my hands, if they cut off my
hands, I will use my arms, if they cut off my arms,
I'll use my legs..."

GEORGE laughs. OLLIE does not.

OLLIE (*cont.*)

Oh, it's all very serious. It ends, "I shall die, my soul will be lost, my decendence will be lost, but my father's house will be preserved."

My soul? And my decendence? Everything that comes after me? For what? I mean, it's a house. Four walls and a floor. For that?

A poem for the suicide bomber. Render my body into pieces. It's like a fucking disease.

Long uncomfortable pause.

GEORGE

"The rain in Spain..."

OLLIE

Falls mainly on the northern coast.

She walks away, composes herself. Standing in the residence, she begins to recite, trying to pronounce very clearly. Lights change, and EM enters during this.

OLLIE

"There's something ails our colt, that must, as if it had not noble blood, nor on Olympus leapt from cloud to cloud, shiver under the lash, strain and jolt, as if it dragged road metal."

EM

Yeats.

OLLIE

Oh. What?

EM

That poem. It's Yeats. "The fascination of things difficult has dried the sap out of my veins and rent spontaneous joy and natural content out of my heart."

OLLIE

I...I don't know the poem. That, it's...just something they gave me. To practice. My class, for my accent.

EM

Oh. I had to learn it for a class, too.

OLLIE

Where is everyone?

EM

They're coming.
You don't have much of an accent.

OLLIE

Oh, Emily, all I have is an accent. When I was a child I spoke Catalan with a Basque accent, then I spoke Castilian with a Catalan accent, then I went to England and had a "Spanish" accent, and now in America I have this... it's all jumbled up.

EM

Your boundaries are blended.

OLLIE

Oh, and we know that's bad, don't we? Yes, my stratigraphic context has been compromised. A terrible thing.
I wish I could just settle on one. A decent American accent, that's all I want.

EM

What's wrong with having an accent?

OLLIE

When I was looking for a job, I...they say that people like to hire people they can talk to, that they feel comfortable...so, I want them to be comfortable. With me. So I don't want to sound...alien.

EM

Well, you sound fine to me.

OLLIE

Thank you.

EM

You're welcome.
Beat.
Well, good night.

OLLIE

Emily. You will be working with me. On the

OLLIE (*cont.*)

excavation of the remains. You found them, you should help excavate them.

EM

Oh. Um, OK.

OLLIE

Is something wrong?

EM

No, I just...I thought you were mad at me. About the-

OLLIE

Oh. No. It is simply that these boundaries, they are important. They define a context, and context determines meaning. With context, what we find is an artifact. Without context it is just a trinket. So?

EM

So, I'll...be more careful?

OLLIE

Very good.

The door opens and the others return.

ABBY

Just be quiet, OK? Seriously, there are other people who live in this building.

BEN

Yeah, OK, fine.

CALE sees EM.

CALE

There she is. I told you.

ABBY

We were looking for you.

BEN

She thought you'd been kidnapped.

EM

I just came on home.

TERRY

I'd have walked you.

EM

It's OK. I've been here, like, two minutes.

ABBY

You could have waited.

EM

I didn't feel like standing around in front of the club while Win ditched the German guy.

WIN

He was Dutch.

EM

Whatever. He was just, like, totally into you.

CALE

She was playing him for drinks.

WIN

I was not.

EM

Oh, you so were.

BEN

Just one hot exotic babe, eh?

WIN

Bite me, eh?

ABBY

Half the guys in the place wanted to dance with her, but she wouldn't.

WIN

You're welcome to them.

ABBY

A couple of them were cute. Ish.

WIN

Yeah, well, they're called "standards," OK? Some of us have them.

CALE

Did the Doc come back?

TERRY

The car's out front, didn't you see it?

ABBY

What did he say?

BEN

Did you talk to him?

OLLIE

It's late. We'll talk tomorrow.

Beat.

CALE

Mysteries abound.

BEN

OK, then. 'Night, everybody.

HE goes off. Others ad lib good nights. TERRY, aside to EM.

TERRY

Seriously, you should have let me walk you.

EM

I'm fine. Next time.

TERRY

OK.

EM exits. TERRY watches her, then exits. OLLIE is alone in the residence.

GEORGE

"The rain in Spain falls mainly on the northern coast." Doesn't rhyme.

OLLIE

No. It's not good for practice.

Beat. OLLIE looks toward the bedrooms where the students have gone.

Do you like your work?

GEORGE

It's OK. I love the night life.

Hey, it's a government job. Enjoyment's got nothing to do with it. That's why you take a government job, right? So you can dig in like a tick. You get your job, you'll see. No one lays off law enforcement, and us, well, we're Homeland Security so, you know, we're as safe as it gets.

OLLIE moves down to GEORGE, sits in the truck.

OLLIE

What about the people, the ones who come across out here?

GEORGE

What about them?

I mean, you know, most of them are just people, right? Like everybody else. Trying to find a better life and all that. You sympathize, up to a point, but...

Pause.

You know, before long, they'll have a fence running from the Pacific to the Gulf of Mexico. Twenty-five hundred miles of fence. Tell me that ain't a waste of money. Not going to do a damn thing. Corrugated steel, chain link, barbed wire...I mean we're not talking about the Great Wall of China, here. And how well did *that* work?

OLLIE

In the end, not at all.

GEORGE

That's what I'm saying. Fence doesn't do anything. Only thing works out here is people out on the line.

Pause.

OLLIE

I'm not permanent yet.

GEORGE

Oh, yeah?

OLLIE

I'm trying to...I am applying to change my status. My visa, it is a...

GEORGE

Dual-intent thing?

OLLIE

Yes. I came here to study, now I have a specialty. That is supposed to...if I can get a job using it...besides teaching, which...university positions, they can be...difficult. Finding one. There is a woman, she was in my program. She works for the crime lab in San Diego. She said she thought I could get an interview. People tell me...they tell me it might help. If it works out. I don't know. It's what they tell me.

GEORGE

Sorry, I don't know anything about that. Probably couldn't hurt, though.

OLLIE

I just want to...settle. To have a place, a place that's...with...where I can be...settled. And I like San Diego. It reminds me of Valencia.

Beat.

You know, the Romans, if you served the state, in the army, you became a citizen.

GEORGE

Here, too. I knew a guy in the Army, that's how he did it.

OLLIE

Yes. So, the U.S. is like Rome, and so...we'll see.

GEORGE

What if you don't get the job? Are you going to have to-

OLLIE

I don't know. It depends on...well, who knows, really? Regulations. I'm not a lawyer.

OLLIE (*cont.*)

I have an offer to work on a dig this summer. A Roman fort on the island of Minorca. Spain.

GEORGE

Back home again.

OLLIE

It's almost ten years now. Home...I don't know if I would call it that.
If I don't get the job, I'll go...I hope they would let me come back.

GEORGE

Do me a favor. Don't come in this way, OK?

Pause. They look out ahead. We hear the flute and drums, as at the beginning of the play. OLLIE leaves GEORGE and moves downstage toward the sound. She stops.

OLLIE

You can feel them out there, can't you?

GEORGE

Yeah. They're always out there, so I'm always out here.

Lights fade on GEORGE, leaving OLLIE alone.

OLLIE

Nire aitaren etxea defendituko dut...

After a moment, lights fade on OLLIE. END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO. Lights up on OLLIE, who stands where she was at the end of Act One.

OLLIE

Sometimes, you stand out here and all you can see are edges. The edge of the land, as it drops off into the sea, the hard horizon between the sea and the sky... It's all very...defined.

Lights reveal EM, near OLLIE. TERRY and WIN are working in the trench. EM drinks from a water bottle.

EM

It's pretty out here.

OLLIE

Yes.

EM

In the mornings, when we come out here? Sometimes I just stop and look out there, and it's just so beautiful.

OLLIE

It is.

EM

Do you ever go watch the sun set? Out by the tower, by the port?

OLLIE

Sometimes.

EM

I was out there once, and there were these crowds. Like, everyone in town, it looked like. We just stood there and watched the sun, you know? Right down into the ocean. You can see why people thought the earth was flat. Like the edge of the world was right out there.

OLLIE

And just think of the soldiers in that fort. The Punic Wars have been over for twenty years, Rome is

OLLIE (*cont.*)

just beginning to colonize Iberia...for them, this was the edge of the world. Incredibly remote.

EM

Lonely.

OLLIE

Yes. Always looking for what might be right over that horizon. Just out of sight.

GEORGE, in the truck, eats from a bag of tortilla chips.

GEORGE

Cool Ranch Doritos and Dr. Pepper. Breakfast of Champions.

EM

So, we're done for the day?

OLLIE

Make sure that everything is covered.

EM walks back to the others.

GEORGE

With chips.

Sure you don't want some?

OLLIE shakes her head.

They told you to bring something, right?

OLLIE

I'm fine. In Spain, you eat dinner very late. It's one thing I've kept.

GEORGE

So, you still thinking about our friend out there?

OLLIE

I thought someone would be here by now.

WIN

From near the trench.

Ollie? We found something.

OLLIE returns to the trench.

TERRY

Ankle bracelet. Still around the leg.

He hands it to OLLIE.

That's Islamic. The engraving.

OLLIE

Yes.

WIN

We also found some glass beads. See? And these.

Hands OLLIE plastic bags containing items.

Buttons, eh?

OLLIE

Shank buttons, yes.

TERRY

Those weren't invented 'til the thirteenth century.

Dating criteria's getting pretty solid.

OLLIE

Yes, but...this bracelet, it is fairly common fashion of the time, but the buttons...a bit more unusual, perhaps.

Where did you find them?

WIN points to a diagram she carries.

And the beads? Interesting.

WIN

What?

OLLIE

Maybe nothing.

Holds up the bracelet.

You have a picture of this?

EM nods.

Good. Take these over to Dr. Morgan. Be very careful with them.

WIN

Yes, sure.

EM

I was just going to—

She holds a large sheet of plastic. OLLIE takes it from her.

OLLIE

I'll do it. Thank you.

The STUDENTS leave OLLIE stands, looking into the trench.

Who are you, anyway?

GEORGE

So, anyway...who named you Ollie?

OLLIE

It's Alé, actually. Alesandese.

GEORGE

Wow, you oughta call yourself that. That's a supermodel's name.

OLLIE

People would be disappointed.

She spreads the sheeting over the trench, using a trowel to weight it down with dirt.

In the U.K., people would call me "Alé." Even in Canada, "Alé." Once I came to America, it became "Ollie."

GEORGE

Hey, my parents named me "George," but everyone wants to call me "Jorge," so what can you do?

You know, if you'd come here back, you know, in Ellis Island times? They'd have changed it permanently. You'd have been...Alesandese what?

OLLIE

Alesandese Frantziska Maritxu Osinalde eta Etxebarrieta.

GEORGE

Wow. Anyway, by the time they got done with you, you'd just be plain old "Alice."

OLLIE

A good American name.

GEORGE

Long as you know they're talking to you, huh?

OLLIE

My ex-husband, his mother, she used to call me "her."

GEORGE

Yeah, got one of those myself. My wife, she's Anglo, so her parents? I just keep telling them I'm from Texas. Just something to say.

OLLIE

Something to say. That would have been nice.

Lights up in the residence. TERRY and WIN sit at the table, papers spread in front of them. EM stands near them. All have beers.

EM

I think she was murdered.

WIN

OK, big assumption.

EM

I think she was murdered, and someone hid the body.

OLLIE moves up to them.

TERRY

Hon, when someone wants to hide a body, they don't go to all that trouble. Cover it up, pile of rocks. That there's a pit. You've been digging in this ground for a couple of weeks, you think that was an easy job?

EM

I'm saying they really didn't want her to be found.

WIN

That doesn't mean she was murdered.

EM

She's bent in half and stashed in the middle of a ruin. That says something.

EM walks away, looks out front as if through a window. BEN enters.

BEN

Hey, it's the grave robbers.

WIN

We prefer "Tomb Raiders."

BEN

Yeah, well Doc and I just finished moving your safe into the Doc's place. Now you have a place to stash all your loot.

OLLIE

It's here?

TERRY

You could have said something. I'd have come down and-

BEN

No, you're busy with your important work. I'm honored to do your simple heavy lifting.

ABBY and CALE enter, carrying sacks from Burger King.

CALE

Hey.

ABBY hands BEN a bag.

ABBY

Here's yours.

They sit at the table and begin to spread out their food. WIN scoops up the papers.

WIN

Careful, eh?

BEN

Sorry. Thought we'd eat at the table, eh?

TERRY

Shoot, I don't believe you all. Come to Minorca and you go to Burger King? That just ain't right.

CALE

Want some fries?

TERRY

Yeah, sure.

OLLIE goes over to EM.

OLLIE

Emily?

EM

What do you think happened?

OLLIE

We don't have enough information yet.

EM

Don't you ever come up with a story, like, a narrative of what happened?

OLLIE

Eventually, yes. But not yet.

EM

If you don't have an idea of what happened, how do you know what to look for?

OLLIE

We just have to look for everything.

EM

I just want to know what the story is.

OLLIE

So do I.

ABBY

I hear you guys found some stuff.

TERRY

Couple of things.

WIN

A bronze ankle bracelet.

CALE

Neat.

Hey, show Ollie your "cool bag."

ABBY

Don't make fun. It is a cool bag.

CALE

It's a Burger King tote bag.

ABBY

But it's from Spain. You see? It says "España."

CALE

It also says "Burger King."

ABBY

That makes it ironic. Ironic is always cool, don't you know that?

CALE

Everything else was closed. Even the Internet café. They're setting up booths in front of all the stores.

OLLIE

It is for the fiesta.

ABBY

Yeah, and they're boarding up the windows. What goes on here, anyway?

BEN

Just our friendly neighborhood pagan celebration.

OLLIE

Now, don't start—

To the others.

It begins and ends with a mass, and a pilgrimage to the hermitage of the saint. And one of the riders, the *caixer cappellá*, he's a priest.

BEN

So? I mean, all these old festivals, these religious deals, were just a way for the church to take over the local customs, the local rituals. All the religious stuff, that's just putting a new coat of paint on it, but it's still pagan, baby.

ABBY

The whole sainthood thing, it was just a way to bring all the local pagan beliefs into the Catholic Church.

BEN

Yeah. So the fiesta is totally pagan. Totally.
Except for the masses. And the pilgrimage thing.

OLLIE

Thick accent.

Sorry, my English no is very good. "Totally" is mean
"everything," yes? But "except" is mean "no
everything." Ay, qué un idioma loco. Nadie sabe lo
que cualquier palabra significa. (*What a crazy
language. No one knows what any words mean.*)

*"Got you there" laughter directed
toward BEN. JAMES enters.*

JAMES

Getting a little loud up here.

BEN

Hey, Doc. The fiesta is really a pagan deal, right?

JAMES

This fiesta here?

BEN

Sant Joan, yeah.

JAMES

I don't know about this one in particular, but most of
these annual festival did have roots in pre-Christian
customs.

BEN

So, yes, right?

JAMES

Yes.

BEN

See?

JAMES

What is—?

OLLIE

Ben has a theory.

BEN

Look, when the Church put up churches, where did they put them? They put them in sites where there were already pagan worship sites, because people were used to coming there, they were already "holy" or whatever you want to call it, right? And when did they have their feast days? On the pagan holidays. Winter solstice, Christmas. Spring equinox, Easter.

JAMES

To OLLIE.

Dissertation topic.

OLLIE

If you look at the calendars, this does not usually work out so clearly.

BEN

We've had so many calendars--lunar calendar, solar calendar, name a month for the emperor, take away ten days because you feel like it. It's close enough.

CALE

To OLLIE.

Sant Joan's is at Midsummer.

BEN

And is there a more pagan holiday than Midsummer's Day? And so they put this Christian feast day right on top of it so the people can't celebrate their old religion. The thing is, though, they can't stamp out the old customs. People, they're still going to...their old customs, whatever they did. So what do they do when all their pagan stuff gets shoved off their day? They celebrate the day before. All Hallow's Eve. New Year's Eve. Midsummer's Eve.

ABBY

Mardi Gras.

BEN

Mardi Gras. Carnivale. All that. It's all the pure pagan spirit finding it's way out. So OK, inside the church, all that, the masses, the restrictions, OK, that's "holy." But outside? That's the real thing. The real pagan thing. Q. E. freaking-D.

*BEN slams his beer can down.
Applause.*

JAMES

Thank you, Mr. Lewis.

OLLIE

Yes, *fantastico*. I hope I can sit in on your defense.
Bring beer. It will help.

She holds up her can. A look from JAMES.
I was meeting with my team.

JAMES

Yes, well can we talk?

OLLIE nods.

Guys, I just came up to say it's getting loud.

BEN

C'mon, Doc. It's early.

JAMES

Other people live here, too.

ABBY

Yeah, a little consideration, huh?

EM

Hey, you guys, you know there are all these bonfires
outside?

OLLIE

It is for the fiesta. Tonight, there are bonfires,
and tomorrow, the processions.

EM

Let's go see them.

ABBY

We've seen them. We were out.

BEN

Yeah, let's go. I'll go with you, Emmy.

TERRY

Hon, we've got stuff to do here.

EM

Just for a little while.

OLLIE

Go on. We will finish later.

BEN

Yeah, let's leave these two alone. Let them..talk or whatever.

CALE

I'm not finished.

BEN grabs a handful of CALE'S fries.

BEN

You are now, Butch. Come on.

CALE

Hey, boundary issues.

ABBY

Grabby.

TERRY

Good Lord, will you all just please—

WIN

Let's go. Who wants to just sit around here all night?

TERRY

We need to get some food, here.

WIN

Yeah, well, Burger King, eh?

The students are out. For a moment, the silence is deafening.

JAMES

Ollie, I have a safe in my apartment.

OLLIE

Yes, they called from the museum. It is for the artifacts collected with the remains. And, of course,

OLLIE (cont.)

any other ones we think might have value.

JAMES

I think all the artifacts we find have value.

OLLIE

Well, yes. Of course. Is it in the way?

JAMES

No. It's not that big. Just-

He describes a small cube with his hands.

Heavy as hell. Took two of us to get it up stairs.

I didn't know it was coming.

OLLIE

Ben, he-

JAMES

I mean, I should know about these things.

OLLIE

I'm sorry, I meant to tell you, but you were-

JAMES

No, that's...I know, we're both busy now. I mean, they didn't call me. You would think they would, I mean, after all...

OLLIE

I think they were just-

JAMES

Yeah, yeah, I know. It's just...look, I really don't want to have this be a thing between...it's not between you and me. I want you to understand that, OK?

OLLIE

All right.

JAMES

OK. I want you to understand that I want you to have everything you need for this excavation, everything that you need to...but I also need...I'm responsible, here, and I need to be in the loop, is all I'm saying.

OLLIE

I'm sorry.

JAMES

You see my point.

OLLIE

Yes. Do you want me to have the museum call you instead of me?

JAMES

Who are you talking to?

OLLIE

Contreras.

JAMES

Oh, God. His English, my Spanish...no, you'd better talk to him. Could you keep me informed, though?

OLLIE

Of course.

JAMES

Thank you.

Pause.

OLLIE

I thought this was about the beer.

JAMES

Oh. Well, you know my feelings. But it's up to you.

OLLIE

Sometimes, a little...college...colleague...collegiality? Sometimes a little collegiality does not hurt. Open doors, yes?

JAMES

Like I said, it's up to you.

OLLIE

It's the fiesta. You should-

JAMES

Don't remind me. Two days of drinking. How long will

JAMES (cont.)

it take them to recover from that?

OLLIE

Ah, tu es un buen hombre, pero siempre estas un poco estirado. Comprendes? "Un poco estirado?"

JAMES

"Stretched out?"

OLLIE

Up tight. You are always a little up tight. You need to relax. That's what fiestas are for. You work, and then you relax.

JAMES

That's fine, if-

OLLIE

Two days. Two days, there is nothing to do. We are not working, and you are still worrying. You need to stop.

JAMES

I can't-

OLLIE kisses him.

OLLIE

Stop. For two days, stop.

JAMES starts to look around.

They are gone. Just...

She kisses him again, sliding into his lap.

JAMES

You're a bad influence on me.

OLLIE

I am the best influence on you. You must keep me around.

JAMES

I...I think you may be right. I think maybe I should.

They look at one another. After a moment.

OLLIE

So, tonight we go walk and look at the bonfires, and tomorrow night, *los caragoles*.

JAMES

The horses?

OLLIE nods.

We stand in a crowd and watch them ride horses.

OLLIE

No, it...tonight, they are putting sand in the streets, all through the old town. For the horses, so they don't slip. And tomorrow night, the streets will be filled with people, and then you hear the pipe and the drum, and through the crowd, parting the crowd like water, come the horses. The beautiful, beautiful black horses.

And in the middle of the crowd, in the middle of the street, the horses, they...rise up. On their hind legs, they...

JAMES

Rear.

OLLIE

Yes, rear. They rear. Up, over the heads of the crowd. The rider, in perfect control. And the crowd, they push in, they press against the horse as it rises, hands against its sides, trying to hold it up.

JAMES

Wait a minute, they try to lift the horse?

OLLIE

Yes. And then the horse settles back down again, because of course they cannot lift the horse, and the crowd falls back and shouts. And the riders move on.

JAMES

Does anybody ever get stepped on?

OLLIE

By the horses? No, the riders are all...it is a great honor to ride. But by the crowd? Yes, sometimes. But

OLLIE (*cont.*)

there is sand on the street, so...nothing serious.

JAMES

Try to hold up a horse, I don't think-

OLLIE

No, no you do not think. For me it was...the crowd, it moves like the ocean, back and forth, and then it parted and I was there, in front of the horse, and then it rose-it reared-up over me, this huge black horse, and the black sky above it. And I did not think. I reached out, and my hands, on the side of that horse, black, shining, flecked with sweat...for a moment it felt like I was holding up the sky. And then the horse settled and I flew back into the crowd, hands catching me, lifting me, putting me on my feet, carrying me down the street... I was...seventeen? And still, I can feel it in my hands... You must come with me. Tomorrow.

JAMES

I...I guess I kind of have to.

OLLIE

Yes.

She kisses him. GEORGE enters.

GEORGE

My daddy used to court my momma on horseback. Back when he couldn't afford a car.

OLLIE

Yes, you must.

GEORGE

And he had this horse, when I was real little? Before we moved to California. Big old dark bay horse, big white blaze on his forehead.

OLLIE

But tonight, the bonfires, yes?

*JAMES nods, kisses her, and exits.
Lights shift back to the desert.*

GEORGE

Big white blaze. Just like you'd draw a picture. Biggest thing I ever saw. I mean, I was real little, you know? Scared me to death, let me tell you. And he'd give me rides, you know, up on the saddle in front of him. Like a mile off the ground. We'd ride, and he'd tell me stories that his grandpa told him, about the Texas Rangers, and the banditos, you know, along the border, like Pancho Villa time...and I'd just imagine...

OLLIE

Who did you imagine you were?

GEORGE

Ah, sometimes the Rangers, sometimes the banditos. Depends on how Mexican Daddy was feeling, you know?

OLLIE

You got that from us, you know. Your horse culture. You got it from Mexico, they got it from us.

GEORGE

Los conquistadores.

OLLIE

Yes. And we got it from the Muslims. The famous horse culture of Spain, it's from our Muslim roots.

GEORGE

Yeah?

OLLIE

Arab poets call horses "drinkers of wind, dancers of fire." So passionate, so...lively. The famous Arabian horse.

GEORGE

Well, however they got here, they're ours now.

OLLIE

How long does that take? To become...native?

GEORGE

I think it's just something you are.

EM enters, with her laptop.

EM

Ollie?

OLLIE

Just something you are.

EM

Ollie?

OLLIE

Oh, yes?

EM

Mind if I sit out here? I can't get a connection back there.

OLLIE

Of course. It usually works for me over there.

She points to a corner.

EM

Cool. I wish I knew whose wireless this was. I'd send him a card. I haven't posted in like three days. Those bonfires were amazing. You could never do something like that back in the States. You'd need permits and everything.

OLLIE

Yes, I suppose you would. Everything is regulated.

EM

Regulated, yeah. But here, everything is just, wow. Breaking loose. I can hardly wait to see the horses. That's supposed to be really cool.

OLLIE

It is, yes.

EM

You know, I did a paper on horse imagery, human passions, the life force and all that. That's how I know that poem, the Yeats? "I swear before the sun comes round again, I'll find the stable and throw out the bolt." Let it loose, you know?

The door opens and BEN, ABBY, and CALE enter, shushing one another. BEN carries a bag with three 2-liter plastic bottles in it, one half-full. They close the door carefully, then burst out with laughter.

BEN

Jesus, I ever have to break into a bank, I'm taking you.

ABBY

Hey, I'm usually the one who stops people sneaking in. I know all the tricks.

EM

What's going on?

BEN

Sneaking past the Doc's door. Don't want to disturb him and..oh, hi Ollie.

CALE

To EM.

Where did you guys go?

EM

We saw the fires and came home. Where were you?

ABBY

Ben found these guys who were selling this stuff.

BEN pulls out the partly-filled bottle.

BEN

Pomada time.

CALE grabs cups for the drinks.

ABBY

Yeah, they were putting up a booth out on the plaza, and they were just selling this out of a cooler. I can't believe that's even legal.

TERRY enters from the bedroom.

TERRY

Hey, tryin' to sleep, y'all.

BEN

Have a glass, bro.

TERRY

Don't want to drink, want to sleep.

EM

Indicates back bedroom.

Oh, yeah, Win's back there, trying to-

BEN

Close the door, we'll be quiet.

Hands a drink to EM.

There you go. The official drink of Sant Joan.

EM

What is it?

BEN

Gin and lemonade. Good old Menorcan gin, huh?
Everybody'll be drinking this tomorrow.

OLLIE

Yes, and you must be careful. In the heat, it is easy
to drink too much.

EM

Well, maybe I shouldn't-

BEN

Come on.

TERRY

She don't want to.

EM

Indicates her laptop.

I'm kind of-

BEN

Come on, baby. Experience the experience. Give
yourself some material.

OLLIE

Ben, she doesn't want to drink.

BEN

Oh, come on Ollie. It's not like you're her mom or anything. Let her make up her own mind.

Beat.

Jesus, it's just a drink.

EM takes the drink.

Now, that's what I'm talking about.

TERRY drinks, doesn't like it.

TERRY

Man, that's sweet.

EM

I kind of like it.

BEN

Goes down easy.

Holds out a cup to OLLIE.

Have some. Loosen up.

OLLIE

Not tonight.

CALE

God, you're always working. Loosen up a little.

OLLIE

Tomorrow.

CALE

Tomorrow? You coming out with us tomorrow night?

OLLIE

If I can get my work done tonight.

CALE

Promise?

OLLIE

Yes.

CALE

All right.

TERRY

Don't know about y'all, but I want to be awake tomorrow.

OLLIE

Everyone should probably get some sleep.

GEORGE yawns.

GEORGE

God, when I was in college, I could stay awake for days.

BEN

Come on, who sleeps during a festival, anyway?

ABBY

Yeah, well, I don't want to miss anything tomorrow.

CALE

Ollie's coming out with us tomorrow night.

ABBY

I heard. 'Night, Ollie.

CALE

'Night.

GEORGE

Party all night long. Now I just tuck my little girl in, sleep all night.

EM

Closing her laptop.

I'll do this tomorrow. 'Night, Ollie.

EM starts out. BEN gestures with his drink, she downs hers, hands him the cup and goes. BEN watches her go, looks at OLLIE.

GEORGE

Age, I guess.

BEN toasts OLLIE, then leaves.

You got any kids?

OLLIE

No. We weren't...we...

It is very difficult in Spain, for a young married couple. Apartments, they are expensive. In the city, very expensive. We, of course, could not afford an apartment. We were young, and so we moved in with his family.

GEORGE

No privacy.

OLLIE

No. And we were not married long.

Beat. She looks toward where EM has gone.

Now I have students.

GEORGE

Well, that's good too, I guess. Won't have students in the crime lab, though.

OLLIE

Yes...but whenever you...move somewhere, you give up something, yes? It is hard, but...you must.

GEORGE

Yeah. I remember the day Daddy sold his horse. We were moving to California, and you know, couldn't take a horse, so...

Daddy walked that horse up into the trailer, stood there while they drove off. Got back in the car, went home...never said a word.

Adelante. That was his name. The horse, not my dad.

OLLIE laughs quietly.

You always have to give up something.

OLLIE

It would be nice to have a family.

GEORGE

You're still young enough. Who knows? Something might come along.

Lights shift as JAMES bursts in and sweeps OLLIE into an embrace.

JAMES

That was incredible.

OLLIE

Quiet, we don't know—

JAMES checks the bedrooms. They are alone.

JAMES

All clear.

He embraces OLLIE and they kiss.

What is it they shout, the crowd, when the horses...when everyone falls back?

OLLIE

"Molt be." It's Catalan.

JAMES

What's it mean?

OLLIE

"Very good." It's praise for the rider.

JAMES

It's not for the people lifting the horse?

OLLIE

It's for him, not allowing the horse to kill you.

JAMES

Oh.

OLLIE

I was very pleased that you remained undamaged.

JAMES

Molt be.

OLLIE

Very good.

They kiss.

JAMES

Want to come downstairs tonight?

OLLIE, surprised.

I mean, I figure they're going to sleep when they get back, and sleep late, and as long as we get up early...who'll know?

OLLIE

We'll have to wait until they all get back. It may be late.

JAMES

That's OK. I'm a patient man. Within limits.

OLLIE

I am glad to hear it.

Beat. JAMES looks at OLLIE.

JAMES

OK. So. I was thinking about what you said. How I should try to keep you around, and...OK, I have some news. This is...have a seat. I have a...thing, and I hope you'll...OK, anyway, I just got an e-mail. Baker's going on sabbatical next year. They were wondering if I could move up and take some of his upper-division stuff. You know, while he's gone.

OLLIE

That...congratulations, that is—

JAMES

That's not it, not what...OK, someone's going to have to take the stuff I'm doing now, the Intros, Classical Culture, that sort of thing. I think that's got you written all over it.

OLLIE

Oh.

JAMES

They know you, and I'll recommend...No, better, Baker will do it, if you talk to him. That avoids all the politics. Yeah, that's better because see, the thing is, they know you. They like hiring people they know.

OLLIE

And how do I live between now and then? A year? My visa, I have to have a job. They won't—

JAMES

Yeah, well here's where my proposal comes in. My grant? For my research? In the proposal, there's a part of it, it's funding for an assistant. Someone to

JAMES (cont.)

help me...to help organize the findings, write reports, and...you know, the housekeeping stuff. It's not a lot, but it's...I was thinking of Ben, thinking you were going to get the crime lab thing, but now... All I have to do is say who it is. And you're ultra-qualified. Over-qualified. It would be no big thing.

OLLIE

You want me to work for you.

JAMES

It's perfect. And then, once all that happens, once you get established, maybe we could...

Beat.

I mean, it hasn't been so awful, has it? Here? I mean, I've got to say you're great with the kids and all. A huge help.

OLLIE

Would I be credited in publication?

JAMES

Well, yeah, sure, I have no problem with...we can work all that out when the time comes. I mean, it's not really imminent or anything, you know?

OLLIE

But my name would be on it, yes?

JAMES

Yes. Somehow. I haven't worked it all out yet, OK? I just heard about it today. I mean, it's just to bridge the time.

OLLIE

Bridging time. I am tired of bridging time, like a student. I want a future. I want to have a home.

JAMES

Yeah, well, OK, I...it's not perfect, all right, but it keeps you in the States, keeps you in play for...and continuous employment in your field, that's got to count for something, right? That's all I'm saying, if you don't give up, if you stay in the game, then who knows?

The future, it's...still possible. Right?

OLLIE

Yes. Yes, the future is...thank you. It is a nice thought.

JAMES

I thought you'd be a little more-

OLLIE

Oh, I am, I...this is...it is wonderful news. Wonderful, yes. Thank you for thinking of me.

Pause.

So. When the students all come back, then I will...

JAMES

You're OK with all this, then?

OLLIE

Yes. Yes, of course. You go ahead, and I'll be...when they return...

JAMES

OK, well...see you soon.

JAMES goes. OLLIE is alone in the room. As the lights begin to change, she goes back and sits in the truck with GEORGE. He hands her a cup of coffee.

GEORGE

No cream and sugar, sorry.

OLLIE

This is fine.
Where is the frontier, exactly?

GEORGE

The frontier? You mean the border? About a hundred meters out that way.
Frontier. Like we're cowboys. Out on horseback, rounding up the herd.

OLLIE

Rounding up the herd?

GEORGE

Well, that's kind of what we do out here. Round them

GEORGE (*cont.*)

up, ship them back over.

OLLIE

Like cattle.

GEORGE

OK, yeah, maybe that didn't sound too good. Sorry.

Pause.

Though maybe it wouldn't be so bad if we, like, tagged them and tracked their migration. Sure make things easier, you know?

He laughs. OLLIE does not.

OLLIE

Do you know what we would see of America, when I was young? Old movies. Cowboys. Those old movies, with the huge sky.

GEORGE

Yeah, John Ford. I loved those.

OLLIE

Yes. And the cowboys would be riding along, and they would pass this...skeleton. Of a cow. Bones, a skull. Bleached in the sun. Lost in the desert when they...

She nods toward the remains.

Is that what happened out there? Did you miss someone when you were "rounding up the herd?"

GEORGE

Jesus, I didn't mean...

You think that's why I'm out here? Jesus, you don't have the faintest...that whole catch-and-release thing we do, it's a damn waste of...

Damn coyotes, that's who's treating them like cattle. We show up, they just run. Leave those people out there, don't care. We round them up, send them back, and who's there? Same son of a bitch, charge them all over again. We're just making these bastards richer.

Beat.

You think I carry a gun to stop people from coming in to pick oranges? Jesus, lady.

Most of these people, they're just people, you know? But some of these people, they're...

GEORGE (cont.)

OK, a border, see, a border is a dangerous place. You can never forget that. Someone's always gonna be working that line. Guys who run dope? Those guys'll shoot you, soon as look at you. We've had guys killed out here. And you, waving that flashlight out there so everyone knows where we are. It's not a damn joke. There's a reason you don't go to Tijuana after dark. Drugs. The border, drugs, and murder. Juarez, Mexico? Across from El Paso, Texas? Murder capital of Mexico. Why? The border. Drugs. You know they've had hundreds, no joke, hundreds of women, girls, murdered, raped, whatever. Find them in the desert, shallow graves, dug up by animals. People working that damn line. One thing you'd better know is, when a border's porous, it's dangerous on both sides. Bad people out there, and they don't wear name tags.

OLLIE

And everyone is under suspicion because of the actions of a few, yes, I know that very well.

GEORGE

Just the way it is.
Look, I've got nothing against these people. Most of them, they get here, they keep their nose clean, pay their taxes, work hard. Fine. But just because you keep the house clean don't mean it's OK to break in in the first place. But crossing that border like it's nothing? No freakin' way. This is my country, damn it, and you'd better you had better at least ask some damn permission before you think about coming in here. You don't, well, I'm going to sit out here every night to make sure you do.

OLLIE

Very heroic.

GEORGE

Hey, you don't control your borders, you don't even get to call yourself a country. If you can't draw a line and say this side's mine and don't come over here without permission, what are you? Not much.

OLLIE

Yes, well, I can only speak as an immigrant.

GEORGE

Hey, my grandparents were immigrants. So what? Jesus, you've got nothing in common with these people. You cross borders like most people cross the damn street.

OLLIE

Well, apparently everyone is under suspicion, so-

GEORGE

You a smuggler? A terrorist?

OLLIE

Do you think I have never been asked this? I was a Basque in Spain.

GEORGE

I don't care if you were a monkey in the zoo. The people out there, they're paying a year's wages to some sleazy bastard who'll hike them out into the desert, or stuff them in a shipping container or the back of some truck, and if everything goes well they get dumped in a big city to clean toilets, or they wind up, up in the Valley, working twelve, sixteen hour days so we can all go to the damn Albertson's and buy produce without taking out a damn mortgage. And they think that's a better life. And they'll give up everything to get it.

GEORGE indicates where they found the bones.
That poor guy out there, you up for that? Get in or die trying? Don't play the poor oppressed migrant with me, lady. They earn that.

Pause.

I mean, if they aren't moving fast enough on your application, why don't you just go marry someone?

Pause.

OLLIE

I need some air.

GEORGE

Yeah, whatever.

She starts to leave.

Stay close.

Lights fade on GEORGE. OLLIE is alone in the residence. The room is dark. OLLIE sits at the table. After a moment, CALE enters.

CALE

Um, Ollie?

OLLIE

Yes, Cale, what?

CALE

You're sitting out here in the dark.

OLLIE

Yes. Quiet. After tonight, quiet, it's...good, yes?

CALE

I was thirsty. It's hot.

She pours herself a glass of water.

It was fun, though. Tonight, in the street.

OLLIE

Yes.

CALE

The crowd, huh?

OLLIE

Yes.

CALE

And the horses.

OLLIE

Oh, yes.

Pause.

CALE

You want a drink? There's still some pomada in the fridge. Ben bought a lot.

OLLIE

Oh, I don't think...yes, thank you. I will.

*CALE gets the bottle and two cups.
She pours.*

CALE

I didn't think I'd like this stuff, but it kind of grows on you.

OLLIE

Yes, the more you drink, the better it tastes.

CALE

Cheers...no, what is it? Salud.

OLLIE

Yes, salud.
In the Basque country, we say "Topa."

CALE

Topa.

OLLIE

Topa, yes. Be careful where you say that. In many places, there are suspicions. About Basque people, Basque language.
What do you know about the Basque people?

CALE

Nothing, really.

OLLIE

Good. No, not good, you should know about...but people, if they know anything they know only one thing. Only one thing.

Pause. She drinks.

The flagship of Columbus, it was built and crewed by Basques. We are a famous seafaring people. Where others saw the ocean as an impassable barrier, we crossed it.
You did not know this.

CALE

No.

OLLIE

No. If any one knows anything about the Basque people, they know about ETA. ETA, and their bombs, they know. They have made us famous. When your

OLLIE (*cont.*)

building in Oklahoma City blew up. Everyone's first thought was, it was the Muslims. But when the subways blew up in Madrid, there, everyone's first thought was "ETA. The Basques did this."

It was my first thought.

So the state, it is always suspicious. So you, you must be very careful where you say anything in the Basque language. There are people who will have ideas about you.

CALE

I think people already have ideas about me. I mean, what the hell, huh?

OLLIE

What the hell. Indeed.

CALE

Topa.

OLLIE

Topa.

They laugh.

You know, my husband's mother would never have allowed that. A toast in Basque language.

CALE

Well, to hell with her.

OLLIE

Oh, even the devil should be spared such things.

Laughter.

My husband, his was an old family. Not wealthy, mind you, just...old. And old families like to think the Basques are uncivilized, you see. And the funny thing was, my great-grandmother? She thought I was becoming less Basque because Alberto was a Spaniard. Our children could never be Basque, because they wouldn't have four Basque grandparents. No one believes this any more, but she was very old, and...so you see? Of course, she said similar things to my father, too, when we moved to Barcelona, that we would lose our language and not be Basque any more. So you see? Walled out on every side.

CALE

I know how that feels.

OLLIE

I don't think so.

CALE

Why did he marry you, if his parents were so..

OLLIE

I like to think I was pretty.

CALE

You are.

OLLIE

And I was not...political. Nationalism, it has never been important to me. I think it is a drug, a poison. The greatest evils have been done in the name of God and country. You are an American, you must remember this.

CALE

Yeah, I know, that's...what can I say? I'm not political, either.

OLLIE

Yes, but you see, it does not matter if you are not political, because the world is political, and you live in it every day. Every day. You cannot avoid it, it follows you home. Every day. Even at Christmas time.

She drinks.

December, our first together, after we were married. I was working in a small museum, and Alberto, he was studying the law, and I came home from work and everyone was at home, which was unusual because it was early, and they all were sitting...and my..Alberto...his father, he...he did not stand up to greet me. It is polite to do so, it is correct, and he was always correct, but he did not. And the television was on. The news. There had been a bombing. On the subway. Six people were...six people. ETA. The Basques. I felt...ill.

And his mother, my husband's mother, she looked at me and she said, "You people have no respect for decency."

OLLIE (*cont.*)

And Alberto, he...my husband, he never looked up from his cup of tea. My husband of less than a year.

Pause.

I lost my job. I'm sure it had nothing to do with... And then I was in the house with her. All day, every day. It was...well, you see, if you believe that people have no respect for decency, well, you really have no reason to treat them with decency, do you?

No reason at all.

We divorced, I moved to the U.K. to study...and they had the marriage annulled. A document from the church, a piece of paper that said that in the eyes of God, I had never been...

There was a time that would have crushed me, but I know is was that day, that day when he would not even look up from his cup...that was when he erased me.

She drinks.

So be careful, speaking Euskera, Basque language, in Spain.

Pause.

CALE

You never heard from him again?

OLLIE

No. Why would he? I no longer existed.

CALE

Wow.

You know, I think about it, sometimes, what it would be like if, you know, my parents ever...

I mean, you'd think, if someone loved you...you know? They wouldn't say you were...indecent or anything.

OLLIE

When they say they love you, you expect many things. And expectations, they often lead to...

CALE

Yeah.

I...I think you're decent. I think you're a good person.

OLLIE

Squeezes CALE's hand.

Thank you. I think you are decent, too.

CALE

Thanks.

They sit in silence for a moment. CALE takes OLLIE'S hand, tentatively.

Ollie? I want to...I mean, you said I was...decent, and I was wondering if...I mean I just wanted to tell you...I-

OLLIE

Oh, Cale, no.

CALE

No, no, no, not...no, I wasn't...I didn't mean-

OLLIE

I really don't-

CALE

I just wanted to say, I mean you know how it feels to be-

OLLIE

I don't.

Beat. CALE stands.

CALE

I know. I wasn't-

OLLIE

No. It's not-

CALE

Forget it.

OLLIE

You're a student. You see?

CALE

Sure.

OLLIE

That's all.

CALE

Yeah.

They look at each other for a moment.
Boundary issues. I guess everyone's got them, huh?

OLLIE

Cale...

CALE turns and goes. OLLIE watches her leave. She stands in the dark, looking at the room. A sound from outside, then the door opens and BEN enters with EM. BEN carries a blanket over his shoulder. EM's hair is loose, and she carries her shoes in her hand. There is giggling and shushing. They can't see OLLIE from where they are. They share a long kiss, and EM weaves back to the back bedroom. BEN watches her, then goes into the men's bedroom. OLLIE stands silently in the dark, then turns and walks down to the dig. She kneels by the trench, begins to remove the plastic cover. Lights shift to early morning, dawn. GEORGE enters.

GEORGE

What are you doing?

OLLIE

What needs to be done.

GEORGE

I told you, they'll send someone when the shift changes.

OLLIE

Unless they have something more important to do.

GEORGE

Whatever. I'm not the one applying for a job, here. If they get pissed, no skin off my nose.

OLLIE

No skin.

Beat.

Tell me. If this were...a nicer area? Would they have waited for daylight? Would they be here now?

GEORGE

Everyone's got priorities.

OLLIE

Yes. Even in America, where everyone is equal, where anyone is welcome.

GEORGE

Yeah, provided.

OLLIE

Provided they...what? And if they don't?

Beat. She examines the bones.

You make promises to so many and you deliver so selectively. Better that you promised less and delivered more.

GEORGE

Uh-huh. And by that logic, if we promised nothing and delivered nothing, that would be the best thing of all.

OLLIE

Is it better to promise everything and deliver...so much less?

GEORGE

Look, I'm not going to argue with you. I'm too tired and it ain't going to change anything. But I will say that I'd rather try to do a lot and only do a little than try to do nothing and succeed.

OLLIE

Yes, well, perhaps you're right. I don't know. Your priorities.

This is a woman, by the way. In case that is of any interest.

GEORGE

Just bones now.

OLLIE

Yes.

She stops examining the bones.

You are right about one thing. I do not have to cross borders on foot, at night.

GEORGE

You're not that desperate.

OLLIE

No, I am not.

GEORGE

You have choices. See something you like, go for it. Like you like San Diego.

OLLIE

It reminds me of Valencia, yes.

GEORGE

There you go. You keep that in mind.

GEORGE moves away, but does not exit. JAMES enters, unseen. OLLIE stops working.

OLLIE

One thing I wonder. If I were in Valencia, would I think that it reminded me of San Diego? What do you think?

JAMES

I have no idea

OLLIE does not acknowledge him, but continues to work.

What are you doing here?

OLLIE

I felt like working. Do I need supervision?

JAMES

No, no, it's...the museum. They don't want anyone working on this alone. The extraction. The things that you found, the jewelry..

OLLIE

"Jewelry." Bronze ornamental...some glass beads.

JAMES

Enough to justify a safe.

OLLIE

Well you are here, so I am not alone now, am I?

JAMES

You didn't come down last night.

OLLIE

No. It was...the students, they were...and it was so late. You see?

JAMES

Yes. All right. So what happened to Em?

OLLIE

What?

JAMES

That's how I woke up this morning. Win knocking on my door, looking for you.

OLLIE

Is Emily all right?

JAMES

Sick drunk. Abby's there.
And Ben's down in my place right now with an ice bag.
A busted lip. Courtesy of Terry. Who won't say anything, of course. Win saw it and all she says is that he deserved it.

Pause. OLLIE stops working and looks at JAMES.

OLLIE

Yes. I suppose he did.

JAMES

So much for relaxing and enjoying the fiesta.

OLLIE

Tension is released in many ways.

JAMES

Not the most helpful thing you've ever said.

JAMES (cont.)

Two teams, that was the mistake. There's going to be competition. Animosity.

OLLIE

That is not why Terry and Ben-

JAMES

I know that. I'm not an idiot. This is exactly why I didn't want to encourage...
Look, we have to get back on the same page.

OLLIE

All right.

She takes a small wooden pick and resumes work on the skeleton.

JAMES

It feels like we're fighting.

OLLIE

Are we? I'm sorry.

She continues to work.

JAMES

Come on, Ollie.

Pause.

OK. The sooner you can get this wrapped up, the better.

OLLIE

And here I am, working.

JAMES

I'm not saying it's not important. It's just not for us.

OLLIE

You want me to simply gather the items and hand them to someone else to interpret?

JAMES

Well, that's what-

OLLIE

Like the students with the pottery.

JAMES

That's an oversimplification.

OLLIE

These are human remains, not shards of pottery.

JAMES

I said it was an...

Pause. OLLIE takes her camera, takes a photo of something in the site.

OK, I am prepared to put all our resources at your disposal. Everything, everyone works for you.

OLLIE

Look at this. I cannot put six people in this trench.

JAMES

Sweetheart, whatever it is you need to do, OK? Just...we need you to get this done.

OLLIE

How many pages do you want me to burn at once?

JAMES

What?

OLLIE

You know the example, that archeology is like reading a book, except that you must tear each page out of the book and burn it to get to the next one. Each layer, a page, destroyed forever.

You want me to go faster, so I am asking how many pages should I burn at once?

JAMES

I'm just asking you to work with me.

OLLIE

Oh? I thought you were asking me to work for you.

JAMES

I wasn't-

OLLIE

Wait.

She reaches in with her pick and carefully extracts a crucifix, strung with glass beads on a broken chain.

The beads we found. Part of this.

JAMES

A rosary?

OLLIE

I think, yes. For the safe.

She holds out a plastic bag, and JAMES puts the rosary inside it. She hands JAMES the bag

JAMES

A Muslim ankle bracelet and a rosary. There's a contradiction.

OLLIE

We do not know if that was hers. Does it go with the ankle bracelet, or does it go with the spur? Does it belong to her, or to whoever put her there?

JAMES

You are looking at this like a crime scene.

OLLIE

I am gathering evidence. The job is the same.

JAMES

You're trying to develop a narrative.

OLLIE

Eventually, yes, of course.

JAMES

We don't have time for...we're just here to gather the information and pass it along, and let someone else write the story.

GEORGE

Just bones, as far as we're concerned.

OLLIE

This nameless woman, here, in this hole...someone tried to erase her-

JAMES

You don't even know if she was-

OLLIE

And I will not allow that. Separating one part from another, that...may not be possible. So? Maybe that is the story.

JAMES

You know that's not sufficient to justify-

OLLIE

Then let me do my work.

Pause.

It is my work. I am not simply handing it over to someone else.

JAMES

Ollie. It's not why we're here.

OLLIE

It is not the reason you are here. This is my work, that is yours.

JAMES

We're drawing lines?

OLLIE

The boundaries are already drawn. I am simply recognizing them.

GEORGE turns and exits. Beat.

I'm sorry if you find them...incompatible.

Pause.

JAMES

Ollie-

OLLIE

This is what I have. Work, not promises. I have had enough of...promises.

Beat. JAMES exits. Lights up on the inside of a lab. The skeleton is laid out on an examining table. OLLIE moves up to the lab, slips on a lab coat, pulls on a pair of rubber gloves. ABBY enters, carrying her red canvas bag.

ABBY

Um, hi, Ollie.

OLLIE

Abby, hello.

ABBY

Your stuff. From the residence. Everyone's taking off, and I just thought...Shampoo, you know, that kind of thing. Stuff from the kitchen.

OLLIE

You did not have to do that.

ABBY

No, I wanted to...just...it's yours, you know? You should have what's yours.

OLLIE

Well, thank you.

So, everyone is gone, then.

ABBY

Yeah. Win and Terry are going to Madrid. I'm going to meet Cale in Barcelona.

OLLIE

Yes, well...please give her my regards.

Beat.

ABBY

Yeah. She'll be glad to hear that.

OLLIE

You must go to the Barri Gotíc, see the Roman ruins.

ABBY

I think I've seen enough Roman ruins for a while.

OLLIE

Perhaps.

Pause.

ABBY

You just left. That was...awkward.

OLLIE

Yes, well.

But with you in the residence, I think things were still in good hands, yes?

ABBY

Not what I signed up for.

Beat.

OLLIE

I'm sorry.

Beat.

ABBY

Em went home. Like, last week. She left early.

OLLIE

Did she?

ABBY

Ben's a dick.

Pause.

Men, huh?

Pause. OLLIE nods.

Yeah, well. The rest of the session sucked, really. After you left. The last thing that was fun at all was the fiesta.

OLLIE

Then I hope that is what you remember.

ABBY indicates the skeleton.

ABBY

So, is that it? Her?

OLLIE

Yes. Would you like to see?

ABBY

Sure.

OLLIE

Come here.

OLLIE hands her a pair of gloves.

This is the skeleton of a young woman, about twenty years old. Remarkably good condition, a little evidence of vitamin deficiencies, but otherwise—

ABBY

How do you know how old she was?

OLLIE

You see here, the ends of the bone? Our bones all start as cartilage, when we are in the womb, all very flexible. Then they start to ossify, first in the middle and then at the ends. This space gets narrower with age, until it fuses, different bones at different ages. The femur, here, is completely fused. She is at least eighteen. But the clavicle, here, the boundary has not. That starts at about twenty.

ABBY

I'm twenty. You mean I don't have all my bones?

OLLIE

Not yet. You are still flexible. That's nice to know, isn't it?

ABBY

How did she die?

OLLIE

I think, a fall. The break in the humerus, here, and the shoulder was dislocated. And the skull, here, a fracture.

ABBY

An accident?

OLLIE

We cannot say.

ABBY

Why was she buried that way?

OLLIE

We do not know. It is a mystery.

ABBY

It's sad.

OLLIE

Yes.

I call her "Barkarna." It is a Basque name, it means "the lonely woman."

They call her "the Ciutadella woman," but that seems a little...remote? For someone I see every day.

ABBY

Does it help, making her more of a person?

OLLIE

That which is named, exists.

Pause.

ABBY

Are you staying?

OLLIE

Nods, indicating the skeleton.

She and I have many things to discuss. Then, who knows? A friend is running a dig in Alava, a Neolithic mass burial, very good for me. And Alava is in the Basque country, so...perhaps I will finally have all my bones, as well.

ABBY

Yeah, well.

Retrieving the bag.

Here you go.

OLLIE

Looks at the bag.

Burger King.

ABBY

Yeah, well. I have enough souvenirs.

OLLIE

Never. An archaeologist never has enough souvenirs.

ABBY

Well, anyway. It was good to know you.

She extends her hand, they shake.

OLLIE

And you, Abby. Best of luck.

ABBY

Thanks.

She exits. OLLIE regards the bag in her hand. The sound of the drum and flute returns, as at the beginning of the play. She sets the bag down carefully and returns to the skeleton. She pulls on another set of gloves as the lights fade.
END OF PLAY.