

FLORITA

Characters: Jane
Bob
Paul
Flora
Miguel

Scene: a luncheonette where students often meet after the close of the school day. It is just now beginning to fill up with the Friday afternoon crowd. Three classmates, Jane, Bob and Paul, sit down at a table.

JANE: I'm really hungry. Could you get me a hamburger?
BOB: (*annoyed*) O.K., but next time will you pay for *my* hamburger?

JANE: Sure. Can I have french fries too?

BOB: O.K., O.K.! Hamburger and french fries. That's it!

JANE: (*happily*) Thanks.

BOB: You know, I've had a tough day.

JANE: I can see that. What's wrong?

BOB: Last period English class . . . that new guy . . . ah, you tell her, Paul.

PAUL: It's that Mexican, Miguel. He and Bob practically killed each other today.

JANE: What do you mean?

PAUL: Miguel starts in with Mr. Albert, y'know? Wants to know why we don't study any Mexican writers!

JANE: I didn't know there were any.



BOB: (*getting angry*) Well, there are! Anyway, Mr. Albert couldn't shut him up!

PAUL: So Bob starts shouting at Miguel. And so did a lot of the others. It was a really bad scene.

JANE: Miguel can be a pain. He's in my math class. He may be smart, but he never lets anybody forget it.

PAUL: (*getting up*) Listen, I have to run.

JANE: How come?

PAUL: I almost forgot. I have to get down to the Stereo Shack and pick up a new needle for Flora's stereo. You know, for her party tonight.

BOB: Right. We'll see you there.

PAUL: So long.

(Paul exits.)

BOB: Wow. That Miguel! If Albert hadn't held me back, I would have flattened him!

JANE: I know. (*She looks around.*) Where's the waitress? (Just now, Flora walks in and comes over to the table.)

FLORA: Hi! What's up?

JANE: Hi, Flora. Sit down.

BOB: Didn't you see Paul? He just left.

FLORA: No. I just got here.

BOB: Oh. Well, he went to get your stereo needle. (*laughing*) How come you're not home getting the place ready for us?

FLORA: (*smiling*) Oh, I did that last night. (*She takes a deep breath.*) Guess what? I have a surprise for everybody tonight. A special guest of honor!

JANE: You're kidding! Who?

FLORA: Well, I thought we'd welcome Miguel to this coun-

try, and to our town especially. I'm inviting him for tonight. (*Bob and Jane just look at each other, but say nothing.*) Hey, isn't that great?

JANE: Flora, you didn't!

BOB: If you want to have a party, you'd better forget about asking him.

FLORA: What do you mean?

BOB: Nobody likes him. He turns people off.

FLORA: I like him! I know he's been shooting off his mouth a lot since he came, but that's because he's lonely! And nobody has been friendly to him.

JANE: Except you.

FLORA: Well, why not? Why do you think he's the way he is? What must he think of Americans?

BOB: He's a Mexican!

FLORA: He's a Mexican-American now! And even if nobody else does, I'm going to make him feel welcome! I'm going to invite him for tonight!

(At this point, Miguel walks in, and stands by the door, looking around.)

JANE: Hey, there he is!

BOB: (*getting up*) Come on, Jane, we're leaving.

JANE: Wait! I'm hungry!

BOB: I said, we're going! (*He grabs her wrist and pulls her up.*) Flora, look, don't ask him. He'll come, and there'll be nothing but trouble.

FLORA: No, there won't!

BOB: And what do you think Paul will say? (*Flora is silent.*) O.K., we'll come. But I'm not saying we'll stay.

JANE: Bobby!

BOB: (*giving her a dirty look*) It depends on whether or not there's a good crowd there. (*to Flora*) You know what I mean.

(They begin to walk out.)

JANE: (*over her shoulder*) I'll call you later, Flora.

MIGUEL: (*to Bob and Jane*) Hello.

(But Bob and Jane ignore him, and make their exit.)

FLORA: (*waving*) Miguel! Hey, Miguel!

MIGUEL: (*coming over and sitting down*) Hello, Flora.

FLORA: Is—is something wrong, Miguel?

MIGUEL: To Bob and Jane I tried to be friendly now.

(*sadly*) But this did not work. Nothing works.

FLORA: (*upset, but trying to be cheerful*) Oh, Miguel, just keep trying! You'll see how friendly everyone will be!

MIGUEL: No. You, you are the only one. (*He smiles.*) It is like a desert I am in, and you are a flower in that desert.

FLORA: (*her head down*) Oh, Miguel . . . that's such a pretty thing to say.

MIGUEL: I think from now on, I call you Florita. Do you mind?

FLORA: Florita? What does that mean?

MIGUEL: Little flower—Florita.

(The two look at each other silently.)

FLORA: Miguel, soon there will be many flowers in the desert. You'll see!

MIGUEL: (*shaking his head*) No, Florita. People do not want to meet me as a person. For them, I am someone to laugh at, that is all.

FLORA: (*after thinking for a moment*) Miguel, there is something I want to ask you.

MIGUEL: Yes, of course. What is it?

FLORA: I know that some of our classmates have made life miserable for you up to now. I'd like you to have some fun for a change. Would you come to my party tonight?

MIGUEL: But who will be there?

FLORA: Lots of people from school. I'd like them to get to know you better—so you'll be one of us.

MIGUEL: Will Bob and Jane be there?

FLORA: Yes, but they're my friends too. Please come.

MIGUEL: _____