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Family Plays

Sangre de un Ángel

(Blood of an Angel)

by Roxanne Schroeder-Arce

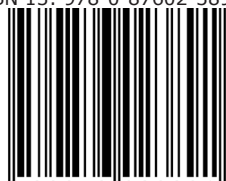
Sangre de un Ángel

(Blood of an Angel)

Drama. *By Roxanne Schroeder-Arce.* Cast: 6 to 7 m., 3 to 4w. This dramatic play illustrates how the choices we make can affect our relationships and our lives forever. While broaching issues of immigration, acculturation and identity, it tells the story of a Latino teenager who finds himself involved with a gang, leading him and his family to an unlikely tragic death. *Sangre de un Ángel (Blood of an Angel)* is inspired by the true story of Adam Chapa, who was shot in his driveway by a teen gang member in East Austin, Texas.

When a mother has had enough of her rebellious teenage son, Ángel, her older son, Juan, and his family offer to take him in. Juan hopes he can guide his brother to make stronger decisions about school and his future. Despite the efforts of a stable home and a loving family, Ángel resists the help, looking to his troubled friends and their gang family for approval. He is lured back to attending school by a caring auto-mechanics teacher who gives him responsibility and the opportunity to rebuild a classic 1957 Chevy. Eventually, Ángel begins to open up to his family and a hopeful future, but trouble follows him home when angry young men come looking for him—with a gun. *Production notes are available in the script containing details on set and music. Simple or elaborate set, as desired. Contemporary costumes. Approximate running time: 60 minutes. Music in book. Code: ST5.*

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Sangre de un Ángel

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By

ROXANNE SCHROEDER-ARCE

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ROXANNE SCHROEDER-ARCE

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“Produced by special arrangement with
Family Plays of Woodstock, Illinois”

Sangre de un Ángel is inspired by the life of
Adam L. Chapa, Jr.
The play is in his memory.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

SANGRE DE UN ÁNGEL (Blood of an Angel) was originally developed at the Emerson State Studio Series of Emerson College for a touring production. Its premiere was March 22, 2008 at the Max Mutchnick Campus Center of Emerson College.

Original Cast:

Evan Rhoda	ÁNGEL
Miguel Septién	JUAN
Linnea Rodriguez	JULIA
Andy Baustein	JAIME
Alyssa Gomez	ALYSSA
Abigail Vega	FABIOLA
Vinny Cueva	JOHNNY
Lucinda Harris	JESUS
Caitlin Green	PACO
Nathaniel Taylor	ALBERT

Original Production:

Chris McCoy	Director
Eliza Mulcahy	Stage Manager
Cheyenne Postell	Dramaturg
Christopher Willard	Sound/Lighting Design
Ian O'Malley	Master Carpenter
Molly Zervoulis	Costume Design
Nicholas Vargas	Tour Coordinator
Courtney Wrenn	Teacher's Guide Designer
Gina Colella	Workshop Manager

Play Script Layout & Design: Randy Blevins, jrbdesign

DIRECTOR'S NOTES-*Chris McCoy*

Sangre de Un Ángel is not a play about gangs, rather, it is a play about how the choices we make can affect our relationships and our lives forever. When I first read *Sangre*, I found the script to be cinematic in the way it covers many locations, follows numerous story lines and sub plots, and is centered in a time and place that is both specific and universal. Rather than heightening the cinematic quality of the story line, my job was to theatricalize it through minimal sets, costumes, and props. This allowed me to focus on the story presented and especially on the relationships and how these are affected by the choices made throughout the play.

At the end of the play, as in any tragedy, we are left with the sense of "what if...?" What if Fabiola hadn't gone to Mexico? What if Juan and Julia had not taken Ángel into their home? What if Ángel never associated with his gang? These questions linger in our minds, as I am sure it does for the real people upon whom this play is based. Every choice you make in life is significant, choose wisely.

FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT-*Roxanne Schroeder-Arce*

This bilingual play, incorporating both Spanish and English, is inspired by the true story of Adam Chapa, who was shot in his driveway by a teen gang member in East Austin, Texas. I have met several of the people who experienced this tragedy. I was able to conduct interviews with family members of Adam Chapa and also with family members of the two boys who were charged with his death. Several families lost their boys that night, and I hope to honor their lives and losses through this play.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Short Music Segment: Annotated music of a simple song line and chords is included with this script. The actor may recite the lyrics as poetry, if not a singer. Guitar accompaniment is suggested.

Setting: Although this play is inspired by a true story, its conflict is universal to the lives of many teens and their families. If desired, you may adapt the locale to a city or town that is meaningful to your audience.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ÁNGEL	MALE, 17, lives with brother's family, is tough and curious
JUAN	MALE, 26, Ángel's older brother, tries to make everyone happy, father of Jaime and Alyssa
JULIA	FEMALE, 25, mother of Alyssa and Jaime
JAIME	MALE, 8, wants to be cool, is bright and inquisitive
ALYSSA	FEMALE, 6, sweet and bright
FABIOLA	FEMALE, 50, mother of Ángel and Juan
JOHNNY	MALE, 18, friend of Ángel, slow, awkward, and easily influenced
JESÚS	MALE, 17, friend of Ángel, outgoing and care free, a born leader
PACO	MALE, 17, friend of Ángel, energetic and curious
ALBERT	MALE, 25, concerned teacher
TEACHER	FEMALE of any age, can be a voice-over or can be on stage
VOICE	MALE voice of young man, can be offstage

DOUBLING FOR CAST OF NINE ACTORS

Doubling for Nine Actors (3 F, 6 M)

ACTOR 1: ÁNGEL

ACTOR 2: JUAN

ACTOR 3: JULIA

ACTOR 4: JAIME

ACTOR 5: ALYSSA

ACTOR 6: FABIOLA/TEACHER

ACTOR 7: JOHNNY/ALBERT

ACTOR 8: JESÚS

ACTOR 9: PACO

(Teacher can be a voice-over, if desired. Albert can be played by the actor who plays either Johnny or Paco.)

Thank you to

Miguel Septién, Kris G. Andrews, Carlos J. Schroeder-Arce,
Robert Colby, Amy Czarnowski, Bethany Nelson, Christopher
Brindley, Julie Hennrikus, Melia Bensussen, Suzan Zeder,
Coleman A. Jennings, Joan Lazarus, Thomás Cruz, Jr., María
Rocha, Teatro Humanidad, Robin Williams, Chelsea High School,
McCallum Fine Arts Academy, Marilee H. Miller

SANGRE DE UN ÁNGEL (Blood of an Angel)

by Roxanne Schroeder-Arce

(SETTING: Mid 1990's. A humble home in Southern California sits stage right. There is a porch leading into a hallway to a dining area/kitchen, bleeding into center stage. A suggestion of a car sits in front. Raised and stage left is another car surrounded by tools representing the shop. Downstage left is beaten up furniture, the old hut where the boys meet. Down right, a platform where Fabiola resides through most of the play. The action of the play spans a month and a half, March through April, coinciding with public school spring vacation and the peewee baseball season.)

SCENE ONE

(Purple light fills the stage. Teacher speaks to audience as if it is her class.)

TEACHER: Welcome back, class. It's nice to see you all. I know you all did some very exciting things over the vacation, and I am eager to hear about it. But first, we are missing one of your classmates today. You might have heard about the— accident that happened in the neighborhood. *(Alyssa and Julia enter.)* Oh, hello. *Buenos días.* I wasn't expecting to see you back so soon, *Alyssa.* How are you doing, *Señora?* *(Julia nods.)* I was just talking about what happened. Would you like to tell us about it, *Alyssa?* *(The teacher turns to Julia.)* *Señora,* I just think it's important that everyone knows what really happened, as there are rumors— and it's going to come up anyway. It might be good for her... *(Julia nods again.)* *Alyssa,* would you like to tell the class? *(Alyssa shakes her head 'yes.' She stands still.)* *Está bien, mijita.*

ALYSSA: Well, you see... *mi Papi...* my Daddy, well, you see, they were looking for *Ángel.* But, well, he was getting something for Jaime, and...

TEACHER: *Alyssa,* maybe you could start from the beginning?

ALYSSA: It all started when my *Tío Ángel* came to stay with us because *mi Abuela,* she needed to go...

(Fabiola's lone voice is heard. As she sings from platform, a red light rises slowly around her silhouette, reflecting off from her

graying hair. Alyssa watches.]

FABIOLA: (Singing, actor may also recite as poetry if not a singer.)

*¿Por qué, por qué te fuiste
Sin decirme adiós?
No vi cuando caíste
Ya estás en los cielos.*

*Tú eras mi bebito
Y todo mi amor,
Le pido a dios que te cuide
Porque mi chance ya voló.*

FABIOLA: (Speaking) Mira, Fabiola, never leave your children alone. The minute you turn your back... (Fabiola stops and looks at Alyssa.)

ALYSSA: What, Abuela?

FABIOLA: They grow up so fast, just like you mijita. Run along.

(Alyssa exits. Red lights cross to lights upon house. Fabiola slowly walks up to the porch and looks out toward the road. Juan walks on, followed by Ángel. Fabiola looks at Ángel with disgrace. Ángel walks to the bottom of the porch and stops.)

FABIOLA: Well, go in, Ángel. I want to talk to your brother.

ÁNGEL: Can't we just go home?

FABIOLA: No, we can't. I have been waiting for you all day. You can wait for me now.

JUAN: Go ahead in, Ángel. You can turn the TV on if you want. (Ángel goes in the screen door.)

FABIOLA: So, how was it?

JUAN: Well, he's good and scared now, I think.

FABIOLA: I hope so. What happened?

JUAN: No big deal. The principal said it was not a big deal. He

hasn't been in trouble much, so they didn't call the police or anything. But those school cops sure try to look scary. I don't think he'll be repainting the school anymore.

FABIOLA: So, what's next? If he can't do it at school, he'll find another place.

JUAN: Well, we need to keep him off the streets.

FABIOLA: That's where he always is. That or watching TV. That's all he did all summer. I'd get home, he'd be there on the couch, and as soon as I walked in, he'd leave. "Goin walkin'," he'd say. Walkin', sometimes 'til one o'clock in the morning.

JUAN: I was serious when I said he could stay here.

FABIOLA: You don't know, *Juan*. He's a handful.

JUAN: I think I can handle it. I was his age not long ago.

FABIOLA: Age isn't the problem. I handled you fine when you were his age.

JUAN: And look at what a prize I am now!

FABIOLA: But, you weren't like *Ángel* when you were a kid, *Juan*. You didn't get into trouble.

JUAN: *Amá*, he tagged a building. He didn't hurt anybody. All the kids do that these days. *Ángel's* got the *Vázquez* luck... he just got caught.

FABIOLA: You can't get caught if you don't do anything wrong. Are you sure you'd want to keep him here?

JUAN: *Sí, Mami*. I think it would be good for him. And the kids would enjoy having an older brother of sorts.

FABIOLA: Maybe you're right. If you could get him acting right, I'd give you... well, I don't know what I'd give you, but something fabulous. It's so hard, *Juan*. I guess I wasn't prepared for this. You and *Yoli* and *Carmen* were so good, always doing what you were told. But *Ángel*... *Juan*, I don't understand. It's like he likes trouble.

JUAN: He just needs a little guidance.

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FABIOLA: I give him guidance, *mijo*, you should know. I didn't do anything different with you, and you were always a little angel.

JUAN: Mom, you are just as wonderful with him as you were with me, I'm sure, but it is different. The world is different. And you didn't work so much when we were kids. You know, I was thinking it might be good for him to be around a man. That's different, too... All my life I had people around, men, he hasn't: *Abuelo*,... *Tío Eddie*...

FABIOLA: He has people who love him, but he takes everyone for granted, *Juan*.

JUAN: *Pero, Mami*, I haven't really reached out to him and I want to now, before it's too late.

FABIOLA: I reach out to him, *Juan*. Lord knows I try. And I'm not the only one. Lots of his family want to reach out to him. Here and in *México*. But he has no interest in that. He has never been beyond *Tijuana*. Did you know that he's never even seen the interior? Insists on speaking broken English, but won't speak Spanish at all when I ask him to.

JUAN: *Papi* wasn't around to teach him.

FABIOLA: He taught him plenty, *Juan*.

JUAN: But he didn't teach him like he did us. He used to say everything in Spanish and then in English, and he made us repeat it. By the time *Ángel* came around, he was too...

FABIOLA: It's not so important now. They won't even let them speak it in school, you know, that new law... whatever.

JUAN: Proposition 227. *Yah*, I know. I have to insist that *Jaime* and *Lyssa* speak English a lot more now around the house.

FABIOLA: But don't let them lose the Spanish. *Mis nietos necesitan hablar en Español*. It's not right that everybody makes their kids speak in English here. Your *Papi* included. After we left *México*, every time I said a word in Spanish, your *Papi* would sing, "In English, please," *con su acento*. Then, after *Carmen* was born, all we spoke was English. *Usted no oyó bastante Español*.

JUAN: That's not true. I speak Spanish just as good as the next Mexican. (*Fabiola shoots him a doubtful glance. He speaks trying*

to speak with the most horrible American accent he can.) *Si, yo hayblow moy buy-en Espanol. (He shrugs) Well, Julia assures that the kids hear Spanish around the house, so you don't have to worry about them.*

FABIOLA: Funny how your father went back to Spanish in the end.

JUAN: He was a funny man. *Mami*, listen, maybe if *Ángel* is going to be with us, you'll be kinda on your own. Maybe you want to take a trip back down to visit *Tía Mari* and all.

FABIOLA: I can't leave *Ángel*... but, I really have been wanting to go. *Abuelo* passed so close to your *Papi*, and I knew I couldn't take *Ángel*. You know I haven't even seen his grave stone.

JUAN: Of course, *Amá*. You could even go for a while. Like a couple months. You haven't been in a long time. I know you wanna, huh? Huh?

FABIOLA: *Juan*, you trying to get rid of me?

JUAN: If that was the plan, I coulda done it years ago. No, I just think it'd be good for you. You've been taking care of kids and working for how many years, now? And since *Papi* died, even when he was— sick, it seems like all you've done is work.

FABIOLA: Somebody's gotta keep that boy in Levi's. He could have ten brand new pairs of jeans, but he'll wear the one pair of ragged, dirty Levi's. *No lo entiendo*.

JUAN: Wasn't I like that?

FABIOLA: No, *Juan*. You wanted simple things. (*Ángel enters.*) You wanted ice cream and Tootsie Pops. One birthday you wanted a Barbie. You remember?

ÁNGEL: Why'd you want a Barbie?

JUAN: You're thinkin' of the wrong dude.

FABIOLA: You don't remember? Your *Papi* thought it was weird, but I got it for you anyhow. Well, not a real Barbie, but a doll like a Barbie. And then you know what you did?

JUAN: (*Hopeful*) I threw her away?

FABIOLA: You put her under *Yoli's* pillow. You don't remember that?

JUAN: I think you made that up.

ÁNGEL: *(To Juan)* What'd you do that for?

JUAN: To mess with her, right...

FABIOLA: *(Admiringly)* Because he knew that she wanted it.
(Directed to Ángel) My oldest boy, always thinking of others.

ÁNGEL: Well, you should've given him my name.

JUAN: *Yah*, and called you *Diablo*. Hey, *Diablo*, we've been talking about you stayin' here for a while, get you outa *Mami's* hair.

ÁNGEL: *(To Fabiola)* I finally drove you crazy?

JUAN: We thought we'd get her out just in time.

ÁNGEL: *(Thinks for a second)* That's cool, I guess. But I don't want no eight o'clock curfew.

JUAN: I'm a reasonable man. Oh, man, it's quarter past five. I gotta get to the field. Those boys go crazy if I'm not there when they run out. I'll bring you home, Ma. *Ángel*, you want a ride?

ÁNGEL: Nah, I'm gonna hang out here.

JUAN: Gonna get used to your new home? Hey, if Julia comes back, don't mention it just yet.

ÁNGEL: She doesn't know? What if she doesn't want me?

JUAN: She will, don't worry. We can pick your stuff up later.
(Fabiola walks over to Ángel to kiss his head. He moves away and she slaps him on the back of the head.)

FABIOLA: See, *Juan*, see? See how hard I try and he just pushes me away. Are you sure about this? You can change your mind.

JUAN: I'm not changing my mind. You're concerned? *(He turns her toward himself.)* He'll be fine, I'll see to it. *(Juan and Fabiola start to exit, his hand on her shoulder. Fabiola walks forward, onto platform.)*

ÁNGEL: Whatever.

SCENE TWO

(A couple days later, night. The hut. The boys are on makeshift furniture, downstage.)

JESÚS: So, you moved in with your brother, that's cool. Maybe he'll be chill about you being out more.

ÁNGEL: Like my mother ever cared.

JESÚS: Your mother's mad strict.

ÁNGEL: When she's around.

JOHNNY: At least you got a *mami*.

PACO: Don't get too envious, *Martinez*. Remember his father?

JOHNNY: It's harder to get bottles now that he's gone, huh, *Vázquez*.

(Ángel shakes his head in disbelief.)

PACO: He obviously doesn't want to talk about it.

JESÚS: *(Changing subject)* So, what'd we get for fundage?

PACO: I got twenty.

JOHNNY: I found this old radio.

PACO: Sure you found it.

JESÚS: Nice.

ÁNGEL: I got fifty.

PACO: *Cálmala*. Where'd you get that?

ÁNGEL: My mom, she gave it to me before she went to Mexico.

JOHNNY: Your *Mami* went to Mexico?

JESÚS: Cool, *Vazquez*.

ÁNGEL: So, what are we trying to get?

JESÚS: Don't you worry, big surprise.

JOHNNY: Is it for the hut?

PACO: Something like that.

JESÚS: It's something we need, for sure.

ÁNGEL: I like to know what I'm buying.

JESÚS: Do you trust me?

ÁNGEL: Sure.

JESÚS: *(To Johnny) Martinez, you trust me?*

JOHNNY: Of course.

JESÚS: I take care of you, right. We take care of each other. Now, let's celebrate the funds. *(Takes bottle from under couch, to Paco) Castillo, you do the honors.*

PACO: To pulling together, to forming our own o-filiation when nobody else will take us.

JESÚS: They'd take us. We don't want those sorry Eastside Angels, right?

PACO: To the o-filiation, cause nobody else is good enough for us.

JESÚS: That's more like it.

(Paco drinks, passes bottle to Ángel as lights fade.)

SCENE THREE

(The kitchen/dining area. Juan and Jaime are sitting at the table doing homework. Julia and Alyssa are fixing dinner. There is a place set for Ángel, but he is not there.)

JULIA: *(Motioning to others to clear table) Aquí viene la comida.*

ALYSSA: *¿Vamos esperar a Ángel?*

JUAN: (*Singing*) In English, please.

JAIME: Are we going to wait for Ángel?

JUAN: Let her do it, Jaime.

ALYSSA: Are we going to wait for Ángel?

JULIA: *No. Va a aprender. Si no está aquí cuando debe, no come.*

JUAN: (*Moving papers from the table*) English, my dear.

JULIA: (*To Alyssa*) No. (*Smiles at Juan*)

JUAN: Sneaky. (*They are all busy fixing the table.*)

JAIME: Maybe we could wait like ten minutes.

JUAN: Your son is an angel, Julia. Maybe he's right.

JULIA: *Ya está la comida. (Realizing her Spanish)* The boy is late *otra vez.*

JUAN: I just want him to feel like part of the family, that's all.

JULIA: *Yo también, pero* is his choice. I'm trying, Juan.

JUAN: I know.

ALYSSA: *Aquí...* (*Realizes she is speaking in Spanish*) Here is the bread.

JULIA: *Gracias, Alyssa.* Thank you.

JUAN: I'll help you, little lady. (*Throws a book to Jaime, he catches it.*) Look at that, Champ. Hey, you all going to the game tomorrow?

ALYSSA: I want to go, *sí, mami?*

JULIA: *Sí,* we all go.

JAIME: *Ángel también?*

JUAN: Sure, if he wants to.

ALYSSA: *Dónde está?*

JUAN: He'll be home soon, *bebita*. I'm sure. You two like having him here?

JAIME: *Yah!* He's cool.

ALYSSA: *Pero, casi nunca está aquí.*

JAIME: *Está ocupado.*

JUAN: (*Sings, making up a tune*) *En Inglés, please!*

JAIME: He's busy. *Papi*, why do we have to speak English all the time?

JUAN: Your teachers say it's good for you. Like vegetables.

JAIME: We speak English all day at school.

ALYSSA: Not all day.

JAIME: How do you know? In first grade, you just speak it sometimes. In third, we speak English all day. You'll see.

ALYSSA: We speak English most of the day.

JAIME: But in third we speak all day.

ALYSSA: So what...

(Juan clears his throat.)

ALYSSA and JAIME: Sorry, *Papi*.

JUAN: We speak English because that is the language that we are expected to speak here. Spanish is in your blood, kids. You won't forget it.

ALYSSA: Spanish is in my blood?

JAIME: Blood is purple, I learned that today at school.

ALYSSA: So, Spanish is purple.

JUAN: Brilliant deduction, but I'm not so sure that's true.

JAIME: Can we go to *México* some time, like *Abuela*?

JULIA: You went to *México*.

JAIME: But I mean way down, like to where *Abuela* talks about.

JUAN: You went down there, (*Touches Julia's stomach*) in here.

JAIME: That doesn't count.

ALYSSA: Did I go, too?

JULIA: No, *bebita*. We have not gone since you were born.

ALYSSA: I want to go *a México*.

JULIA: *Fabiola se fue a México, Juan?*

JUAN: Not yet. She's leaving in the morning. Won't let me drive her to the bus, even. Stubborn, she is. She'll be independent 'til the day she dies.

JAIME: Where you suppose you go when you die?

ALYSSA: I know.

JUAN: Where's that?

ALYSSA: To every place you've ever wanted to go, but didn't get to.

JAIME: Is she right, *Papí*?

JUAN: People believe different things; I believe Heaven, but maybe that means wherever you've always wanted to go, but couldn't or didn't, *Lyssa*. (*Julia sits at table and smiles.*) Smells good. Let's give our thanks. Who wants to—

JAIME: I will, English? (*Juan nods. They all grab hands and bow heads.*) We thank you— (*Ángel runs on, entering from porch.*)

ÁNGEL: Oh, man, I'm sorry. (*He sits down.*)

JAIME: (*Pauses, smiles at Ángel*) We thank you, Father, for this food and for all of us being here, and for getting *Ángel* here so