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Dramatic Publishing

HARVEST MOON

A Full-length Play
by
JOSE CRUZ GONZALEZ



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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*"But even if it were so,
if it were true that suffering is our only lot,
if things are this way on earth,
must we always be afraid?"*

*For we live on earth,
there are lords here,
there is authority, there is nobility,
there are eagles and tigers.*

*And who then goes about always saying
that this is the way it is on earth?
Who is it that forces death upon himself?
There is commitment, there is life,
there is struggle, there is work!"*

— Aztec poem

*"All my life, I have been driven by one dream, one
goal, one vision—to improve the conditions of farm
workers and create a lasting environment of justice."*

— César Chávez

From the Playwright

I wrote *Harvest Moon* for lots of reasons but mostly as a tribute to the people I knew growing up. I was raised in a small agricultural town whose whole existence was growing food. My earliest memories were of working alongside my family. We'd get up before the sunrise and my grandmother would have already prepared our breakfast and packed our lunches. She'd sit quietly sipping her dark coffee while we ate. A *Mayo* Indian drinking Columbian coffee in a place called America. The hiss of the radiator heater brought instant comfort and warmth providing us our only tranquillity. Soon after we'd pack ourselves off into my grandfather's old station wagon and head to work. I'd peer through the back window while the night sky filled me with wonder. *Las estrellas* glimmering a million miles away from me. We'd greet the morning sun bent over working some fertile vine. Our daily ritual of stooping and standing repeated itself all day. Our labor provided sweet fruit and fresh vegetables for the tables of this nation. Pennies were all it took. The constant rhythm of tumbling fruit or vegetables landing in our sacks became music. The syncopation of movement and sound would stop only at noonday for lunch. Afterwards, we'd begin again. We were warriors seeking the magenta berry or the scarlet apple. These fields became my schoolyard. My Ph.D. They taught me mathematics, science and history. I learned to tell time by reading the sun. The long hours were nourished by my grandfather's history lessons. He'd speak of epic tales from a far-off land called *México*. On weekends we would clean offices at the packing shed for extra money. Working alongside my parents I saw how the sun and weather aged them like the dry fruit we collected. I felt their silent pain too. Their brown skin became a target for injustice and inequality. But their deeds and actions were heroic to me because they did triumph over so much adversity. I always wanted to tell their story.

Harvest Moon is also about an artist who had painted a beautiful mural in our town. I remember being so moved by its beauty; by its scope of history and pride for our community that I would stop there every time I had the chance. Soon after the mural was completed I learned that the artist had died leaving behind a young family. Over the years the mural slowly faded away. Its once vibrant images became dulled by weather and neglect. What is our responsibility to the past? The young son in *Harvest Moon* seeks to claim back something of himself through his mother's mural. And what is the past's responsibility to the future? Mariluz, the muralist, seeks to teach her son about his own family history. These are questions I wanted to explore in *Harvest Moon*. I can't think of a better place than here with you.

— José Cruz González

Special Thanks

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Harvest Moon was first developed by the Seattle Group Theatre's 1991 Multicultural Playwrights Festival. The play received its world premiere at the Seattle Group Theatre in April 1994. Tim Bond, Artistic Director.

CAST

Cuauhtemoc	RAMON MCLANE
Mariluz	VILMA SILVA
Rubén/Jaguar Warrior	WINSTON ROCHA
Gloria	OLGA SANCHEZ
Henry	JOSE CARRILLO
Lupe	MEG SAVLOV
Soto	ALEX BALDERRAMA
Manuel	NICETO FESTIN
Mrs. Noguchi/Jennifer/Female Calavera Doctor	NIKKI LOUIS
Mr. Matterson/Father Kelly/Doctor	BRIAN SENTER

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director	LAURA ESPARZA
Stage Manager	TINA SHACKLEFORD
Dramaturg	NANCY GRIFFITHS
Mural Artist/Designer	CECILIA ALVAREZ
Set Designer	REX CARLTON
Costume Designer	PAUL LOUEY
Lighting Designer	DARREN MCCROOM
Sound Designer	STEVEN M. KLEIN

Harvest Moon was first produced by American Southwest Theatre Company at the Hershel Zohn Theatre, New Mexico State University on February 10, 1993. The production was directed by José Guadalupe Saucedo.

HARVEST MOON

A Full-length Play
For 6 Men and 4 Women

CHARACTERS

CUAUHTEMOC. Mariluz's teenage son.

MARILUZ. a Mexican-American woman.
She ages from six to her late 30s.
She is Rubén and Gloria's daughter. She is a muralist.

RUBEN a Mexican-American, early 30s.
He is a field laborer. He is married to Gloria
and father to Mariluz and Manuel.
Doubles as the **JAGUAR WARRIOR**.

GLORIA a Mexican-American woman, 29 years old.
She is mother to Mariluz and Manuel.

HENRY Rubén's father. He is Mexican.
He is in his early 50s and married to Lupe.

LUPE. Rubén's mother. She is Mexican, early 50s.

SOTO a Mexican-American. Mid-40s.
He is a close friend of the family.

MANUEL Mariluz's older brother.
He ages from nine to early 40s.

MRS. NOGUCHI a Japanese-American woman.
A landowner. She is in her mid-30s.
Doubles as FEMALE CALAVERA DOCTOR
and FEMALE DOCTOR.

MR. MATTERSON . . . a landowner. He is in his early 40s.
Doubles as FATHER KELLY, the parish priest;
RUSTY, Mariluz's husband;
MALE CALAVERA DOCTOR;
and ZOOT SUITER/YOUNG PACHUCO.

Glossary

Abrazo: An embrace or hug.

Barrio: A Latino neighborhood.

Cabron: Something like son of a bitch; sometimes used affectionately, “cabroncito.”

Chingao!: Something like, “Fucking-A!”

Chisme: Gossip.

Cochinada: Junk.

Compa: Compadre; friend.

Cruz: A crucifix.

Finchas: Bottle caps.

Huelga: Strike. Rallying cry by the United Farm Workers (UFW).

Jefe: Father, or “My old man.”

Mano: Short for hermano (brother, bro).

Masa: Dough, used in making tamales and tortillas.

Mija/Mijo: My daughter or my son.

Mojado: A “wetback,” undocumented person from Mexico in the U.S.; any undocumented person in the U.S.

Pendejada: Stupidness, Nonsense.

Pinch: Lousy.

Raza: Race; La Raza includes all Latinos; literally means the “race of the people.”

Travieso: A brat.

Troque: A pickup truck.

“No Nos Moveran” is to be sung to the tune of “We Shall Not Be Moved,” which is public domain. To the best of our knowledge these words in Spanish have not been attributed to any individual. We are providing the Spanish lyrics and the English translation of this song for information only. It is essential that “No Nos Moveran” be sung in Spanish during the performance of the play.

No Nos Moveran

<i>(Coro) No, no, no nos moveran</i>	(Chorus) No, no, we shall not be moved
<i>No, no, no nos moveran</i>	No, no, we shall not be moved
<i>Como un arbol</i>	Just like a tree
<i>Firme junto al rio</i>	Standing near a river
<i>No nos moveran!</i>	We shall not be moved!
<i>Que viva nuestra lucha!</i>	Long live our struggle!
<i>No nos moveran</i>	We shall not be moved
<i>Como un arbol</i>	Just like a tree
<i>Firme junto al rio</i>	Standing near a river
<i>No nos moveran!</i>	We shall not be moved!
<i>Hasta los contratos!</i>	Until we get fair contracts
<i>Etc.</i>	<i>Etc.</i>
<i>Que viva César Chávez!</i>	Long live Cesar Chavez!
<i>Etc.</i>	<i>Etc.</i>

HARVEST MOON

SETTING: *Dusk. A large mural dominates the upstage area. It has faded from weather and neglect. Graffiti has now replaced the mural's once-vibrant images. Weeds grow alongside the mural wall.*

AT RISE: SOUND: *Urban music. Lights rise as CUAUHTEMOC, a teenage youth, enters. He carries a backpack and a small tree seedling wrapped in burlap. He looks at the mural. He searches for a place to plant the tree seedling. He begins digging a small hole but discovers something.*

CUAUHTEMOC. *It's her paintbrush. My 'amá's paintbrush. She used to paint late at night when everything was still. Under the moon's watch. My dad said it inspired her. (He waves the paintbrush into the air like a conductor. Smiling:)* Her brush strokes seemed to dance through the air. Bold strokes, light touches and fluid stops. Her every gesture confident. Guided by years of discipline. Dad says I'd watch her paint for hours, but I don't remember her too well. I wish I could. But I remember this paintbrush.

(MARILUZ appears under the moonlight. She is a Mexican-American woman in her late thirties. She stands out-

side the mural sketching on a notepad. She is Cuauhtemoc's mother.)

MARILUZ. *Cuauhtemoc ...*

CUAUHTEMOC. *'Amá?*

MARILUZ. Don't be frightened.

CUAUHTEMOC. Where did you come from?

MARILUZ. From here.

CUAUHTEMOC. But how?

MARILUZ. Sometimes under a moon's glow anything is possible. Between the dusk and dawn magical things can still happen.

CUAUHTEMOC. Magical things?

MARILUZ. Things wished for.

CUAUHTEMOC. Why have you come?

MARILUZ. To prepare you.

CUAUHTEMOC. Prepare me?

MARILUZ. For your journey.

CUAUHTEMOC. Well, I don't know—

MARILUZ. There's nothing to be afraid of.

CUAUHTEMOC. I'm not. Well, maybe just a little.

MARILUZ. I'll be right here.

CUAUHTEMOC. ... Okay.

MARILUZ. Look how handsome you've grown. Like your father.

CUAUHTEMOC. He says I look like you.

MARILUZ. Do you know I named you *Cuauhtemoc* after the famous Aztec emperor who stood up against the Spanish *conquistadores*?

CUAUHTEMOC. No.

MARILUZ. I thought by naming you *Cuauhtemoc* it would be extraordinary, side with my Mexican roots and make

a political statement. (*Proudly.*) How many children do you know named *Cuauhtemoc* Anderson?

CUAUHTEMOC. I don't know any...

MARILUZ. There's something I've been waiting to give you.

CUAUHTEMOC. What is it?

MARILUZ. This... (*She shows CUAUHTEMOC her drawing.*) This is only a sketch but when I'm through with it, it'll be a beautiful painting on a wall somewhere. And it will be your mural.

CUAUHTEMOC. Mine?

MARILUZ. Yes. It'll be about you and me and our ancestors. I'll paint their stories and when you come to look at them, they will come alive before you, transcending time and space just like the ancients did long before Einstein!

CUAUHTEMOC. It came to you one night.

MARILUZ. You remember?

CUAUHTEMOC. The whole mural did.

MARILUZ. It was right there in front of me.

CUAUHTEMOC (*remembering*). You awoke me one morning and we went searching for a site.

MARILUZ (*searching*). We first have to find a wall. Something massive! And it has to be where everyone can see it. I want the whole town to see your mural!

CUAUHTEMOC (*remembering*). It was near a harvest field...

MARILUZ. This place is perfect!

CUAUHTEMOC. A valley filled with dozens of farms...

MARILUZ. People will be able to see it from that road there.

CUAUHTEMOC. You painted it on a wall...

MARILUZ. Your mural will greet the farmworkers on their way to work and on their way home. They'll see themselves in it and take pride! But most of all, it's for you.

(MARILUZ crosses to the wall. The WHISPERING VOICES begin coming from the mural.)

WHISPERING VOICES.

My cinnamon angel...

Ga, ga, gallito ...

Andale, muchacho ...

MARILUZ. Do you hear them?

CUAUHTEMOC. Yes.

WHISPERING VOICES.

Where's *Rubén* ...

Sayonara, little sister ...

Look at those stars, *Soto*, they're welcoming us home ...

CUAUHTEMOC. Who are they?

WHISPERING VOICES.

Aguantate ...

You like *Cantinflas* movies ...

The only place one should die is in bed.

MARILUZ. *Tu familia.*

CUAUHTEMOC. But I don't see anything.

MARILUZ. They're in the mural. You just have to look... there.

(Lights rise on LUPE, a fifty-year-old Mexican woman holding an ax in her hand. She is Cuauhtemoc's great-grandmother.)

LUPE. *Ga, ga, gallito? Ga, ga, gallito?* (LUPE steps out of the mural.)

MARILUZ. That woman with the ax in her hand is your great-grandmother, *Lupe*.

LUPE. I've got something for you, *Flaquito*.

CUAUHTEMOC. What's she doing?

LUPE. *Ga, ga, gallito?*

MARILUZ. Searching for a rooster.

(Lights rise on HENRY. He is a fifty-year-old Mexican farmworker. He is Cuauhtemoc's great-grandfather. He steps out of the mural.)

HENRY. *Manuel? Manuel?*

LUPE. *Flaquito?*

HENRY. *'Donde chingao se fue ese niño? Manuel?*

(Lights rise on MANUEL carrying several comic books. He is twelve years old. He is Cuauhtemoc's uncle.)

MANUEL. I'm hurrying, Grandpa! I'm hurrying!

MARILUZ. That young boy is my brother, your Uncle *Manuel*. And he's your great-grandfather, Henry.

CUAUHTEMOC. What's he got under his shirt?

MARILUZ. Comic books.

LUPE. Stupid rooster!

CUAUHTEMOC. Why is he carrying comic books?

MARILUZ. He loved reading them. That's how he first learned to read.

LUPE & HENRY. There you are, *cabroncito!*

(Lights rise on SOTO and RUBEN. SOTO is a Mexican-American farmworker in his forties. He carries a wooden crate of extremely large tomatoes. RUBEN is a Mexican-American farmworker in his early thirties. He is very handsome. He is Cuauhtemoc's grandfather.)

SOTO. *Hijo*, these *tomates* are huge! They must use some heavy-duty *mierda* to grow this big!

MARILUZ. That's *Soto*, a *compa*. A friend of the family.

RUBEN. Let's go, *Compa!*

(RUBEN and SOTO step out of the mural.)

MARILUZ. And there's my father, *Rubén*.

HENRY. I've been looking all over for you! Where were you?!

MANUEL. Reading...

LUPE. *Flaco?*

HENRY. Again? It's getting late and we still haven't finished the field.

MANUEL. Sorry, *Tata*.

RUBEN. Dear *Gloria*...

(Lights rise on GLORIA. She is a Mexican-American woman in her late twenties. She reads a letter on her way from work. She is Cuauhtemoc's grandmother.)

GLORIA. *Rubén...*

CUAUHTEMOC. Who's she?

MARILUZ. That's my mother, *Gloria*. Your grandmother.

RUBEN. ...we're an army of laborers. Hundreds of men attack the harvest each day. There's not enough work for us all and yet we still come by the truckload.

SOTO. Tell *Gloria* the *tomates* are the size of grapefruit!

RUBEN. *Soto* says the *tomates* are the size of grapefruit!

GLORIA. *Rubén*, I thank God you're well and the harvest is good.

LUPE. It's a surprise, *Flaquito*.

MANUEL. *Tata*, it's Batman...

HENRY. Do hardworking people read *cochinadas* when they're supposed to be working?

MANUEL. No...

LUPE. There you are, *Flaquito*! Come here. I have a surprise... *de veras*...

GLORIA. I miss you terribly, *amor*.

HENRY. Batman, *que conchinada!*

MANUEL. It's not trash, *Tata*! Batman *es un* good guy. He fights off all these evil dudes...

HENRY. Shhht! *Este* Batman and evil dudes *no tienen lugar en este campo, me entiendes?*

MANUEL. Yes, sir.

LUPE. Stupid rooster.

GLORIA (to RUBEN). The children miss you a lot. *Mari-luz* is still having nightmares. Come home soon, *mi amor*. *Gloria*.

RUBEN (embracing GLORIA). I love you...

SOTO. *Rubén?*

RUBEN. Yeah?

SOTO. Let's go, *Compa*. We got lots to do before the harvest is over.

RUBEN. Yeah, okay.

(*RUBEN, SOTO and GLORIA exit.*)

MARILUZ. I've got to paint!

(*MARILUZ begins painting the mural. With each brush stroke her family comes to life.*)

LUPE. *Rubén* and *Soto* are coming home today, *Flaco*. It's been months since they were home. We're gonna have a party to celebrate and guess whose dinner!

HENRY. If we finish today, we'll go to *Señor Choy's* liquor store and get you and *Mariluz* anything you want. Even something for your *papá's* welcome-home *fiesta* tonight!

LUPE. *Flaco?*

MANUEL. Can I have some more Batman comics?!

HENRY (*taking the comic books away*). *Andale, muchacho. Que cochinada!* Batman!

(*HENRY throws the comic books down onto the ground as he and MANUEL exit.*)

LUPE (*exiting*). Ah, there you are messing with the hens, *cabron!* (*A rooster is heard dying.*) *Mariluz*, start boiling water!

MARILUZ (*exiting*). Okay, Grandma!

CUAUHTEMOC (*unsure*). Wait, *'Amá*, they're my family?

MARILUZ. Yes! The whole *bolada* of them!

(A flurry of Meso-American music is heard. Lights rise on the JAGUAR WARRIOR.)

CUAUHTEMOC. Who are you?

JAGUAR WARRIOR. *In lak'ech...*

CUAUHTEMOC. What does that mean?

JAGUAR WARRIOR. *In lak'ech...*

CUAUHTEMOC. What do you want?

JAGUAR WARRIOR. *In lak'ech...*

CUAUHTEMOC. Stay away from me!

(Lights fade on the JAGUAR WARRIOR. GLORIA enters wearing a dress.)

GLORIA *(picking up the comic books)*. Manuel, you little pig! I just cleaned!

(LUPE enters wearing a new dress. She carries a plate of food wrapped in foil.)

GLORIA. *Lupe*, everything is ready for the *fiesta* tonight.

LUPE. I've been cooking chicken all day. *Rubén* loves how

I cook Mexican chicken. You look very pretty, *Gloria*.

GLORIA. Thank you.

LUPE. What do you think of my new *vestido*?

GLORIA. *Ay, Lupe*, it's beautiful.

LUPE. I bought it at *la J.C. Penney*. Layaway! *Que nice, no?* You should shop there too. Get some *credito*. Oh, I'm so happy *Rubén* and *Soto* are coming home from the harvest today.

GLORIA. *Señora Gutierrez's* husband, *Andres*, came home yesterday.

LUPE. I love celebrating.

GLORIA. There'll be lots of people.

LUPE. There'll be lots of *chisme!* What's a party without gossip, *tú sabes?* Where's Henry?

GLORIA. Out front, setting up.

LUPE. I finally got *Flaquito* and all his *primos!* (Yelling.) Henry!

GLORIA. Did you?

LUPE. Got him by the neck while he was making love to a hen and *sass* off came his head, *asi!* (Yelling.) Henry!

GLORIA. Did you marinate him in beer?

LUPE. Of course. When they're old you marinate them in beer. (Yelling.) Henry!

(HENRY enters carrying two cases of beer.)

HENRY. *Me gritas como si fuera un pinche perro!*

LUPE. What have you got there?

HENRY. *Soda ...*

LUPE. *Mentiroso*, I told you I want no drinking in my house.

HENRY. *La Señora Noguchi* dropped this off for the *fiesta*. Am I to refuse her?

LUPE. I want no *borrachos* in my house, especially you! *Recuerdate que dijo el Doctor Smith*. The booze and your heart *se van hacer asi*. (Making and exploding sound.) *Recuerdate!*

HENRY. *Ya, ya, ya!*

(SOTO enters carrying a crate of extremely large tomatoes.)

SOTO. Where's the *Noguchi* beer?