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*Dramatic Publishing*



**AUGUSTA**

and

**NOBLE**

"IT'S  
CERTAIN TO  
GET SOME GOOD  
DISCUSSIONS  
GOING."

—CHICAGO  
TRIBUNE



**BY CARLOS MURILLO**

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"IT DESERVES LOADS OF CREDIT FOR BRINGING THE REAL-WORLD STORIES OF UNDOCUMENTED PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN TO THE ... STAGE."

—CHICAGO TRIBUNE



**Drama. By Carlos Murillo. Cast: 4 to 9m., 3 to 6w.**

In *Augusta and Noble*, we meet Gabi, a 12-year-old girl who has lived her whole life amid a vibrant Latino community in the West Town neighborhood of Chicago. Gabi is starting high school across the city at Northside College Prep, where she is quickly exposed to new people and possibilities. As Gabi begins asking questions about her heritage, including the truth about her parents' harrowing journey across the border to the United States, she struggles to discover exactly where in this world she belongs. Told in English peppered with Spanish, this play for young audiences celebrates the rich history and resilience of the many immigrants who call Chicago home. *Minimal set, flexible staging. Approximate running time: 85 minutes. Code: AL6.*

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# Augusta and Noble

By

CARLOS MURILLO



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“Commissioned by Adventure Stage Chicago, Tom Arvetis, Artistic Director.  
Premiered in April 2013.”

*Augusta and Noble* received its world premiere at Adventure Stage Chicago, the Vittum Theatre, Northwestern Settlement House, April 13 to May 11, 2013.

Cast:

Coyote .....	Miguel Nuñez
La Mujer Azul .....	Lisandra Tena
Gabi Castillo .....	Gabi Mayorga
Reymundo Castillo.....	Ivan Vega
Dolores Castillo .....	Isabel Quintero
Jesus Castillo.....	Tommy Rivera-Vega
Ricardo Wojciekowski .....	Kieran Kredell

Production:

Director .....	Tom Arvetis
Assistant Director/Dramaturg .....	Dani Bryant
Scenic Design.....	Simon Lashford
Costume Design .....	Laura Kollar
Lighting Design .....	Becca Jeffords
Sound Design/Original Composition .....	Robert Steel
Stage Manager .....	Morgan Gire
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Nathaniel Nesheim-Case

# Augusta and Noble

## CHARACTERS

EL COYOTE: also plays STREET THUG, the OLD MAN on the bus, VENDOR and others.

LA MUJER AZUL: also plays the CROSSING GUARD, CTA WORKER, MS. CHAN, BUS DRIVER and others.

GABI CASTILLO: a Mexican-American girl about to enter the 8th grade.

REYMUNDO CASTILLO: her father, Mexican born, in his mid-30s. He also plays the HUSBAND.

DOLORES CASTILLO: her mother, Mexican born, in her mid-30s. She also plays the PREGNANT WIFE.

JESÚS CASTILLO: GABI's little brother, aged 8. Also plays TEENAGE BOY #1.

RICARDO WOJCIEKOWSKI: GABI's classmate, age 13. Also plays TEENAGE BOY #2.

## SETTING

The play takes place in Chicago and on The Devil's Highway—a dangerous desert landscape that stretches between Mexico and Arizona. The Castillo apartment is located at the intersection of Augusta and Noble in the West Town neighborhood of Chicago, a community with a large immigrant population. Other Chicago locations include: Northside College Prep, a selective enrolment high school on the city's northwest side; various trains and busses of the CTA; and other locations in the neighborhood.



# Augusta and Noble

## EL COYOTE Y LA MUJER AZUL

*(Predawn at the intersection of Augusta and Noble in Chicago's West Town neighborhood. The street is deserted. Lights of the great towers of the Chicago skyline flicker in the middle distance. Sliver of a moon in the sky.)*

*Suddenly we hear music—synth pop, maybe with a Latin flavor. EL COYOTE enters, dancing. He's listening to the music on a smartphone, simultaneously absorbed in a video game, which, by his behavior, he's about to win. His dancing, playing and the propulsive music merge in a climax as COYOTE arrives at the intersection. He wins the game. Celebration ... He pulls the ear buds out of his ears, and the music becomes tinny sounding. COYOTE lets out a long, celebratory howl.)*

COYOTE. Check this out, mi gente!

Guess who's on the front page  
of the *Sun-Times* ...

*(He removes a rolled up, rumpled copy of the paper.)*

COYOTE (*cont'd*). Step aside crooked politicians.

Crime-ridden streets, crumbling schools,  
Jay Cutler throwing five interceptions ...  
Make room for little old Coyote ME!

*(He reveals the cover—a picture of a coyote in an alley taken with a camera phone.)*

COYOTE (*cont'd*). Front page of the *Sun-Times* ...

“I’m ready for my closeup!”

Bet you wondering ...

What’s a Coyote doing in the paper?

What’s Coyote doing in Chicago?

I got unfinished business

With a little rabbit that got away ...

But right now, I’m *starving* ...

Here’s not like *el campo*

Where farmers forget to lock up their chickens ...

Only chicken you find here? Bones of

Leftover Popeye’s in alleyway trash ...

*(Howl. Suddenly a flash of blue light. LA MUJER AZUL appears. COYOTE is startled.)*

MUJER AZUL. *Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!* Callate Coyote!

You’ll wake the whole neighborhood!

COYOTE. You scared me!

MUJER AZUL. *I scared you?*

Coyote roaming city streets middle of the night?

*That’s scary.*

COYOTE. Nah uh.

Flash of blue light, crazy blue lady appearing out of nowhere—

*Middle of the night—*

*That’s what I call scary ...*

MUJER AZUL & COYOTE. Go back to the desert where you belong!

MUJER AZUL. What are you doing here anyway?

COYOTE. Came here to get away from you

You don’t belong here either—

I bet you followed me—always up in my business.

MUJER AZUL. Have to keep my eye on you.

You're always up to no good.

COYOTE. You'd like everyone to think that ...

Coyotes always get a bad rap.

MUJER AZUL. What are you doing here??

COYOTE. Just payin' a little visit.

Spend some of my hard earned money—

MUJER AZUL. Hard earned—you ought to be ashamed of yourself—

COYOTE. Back in the desert there's nowhere to spend it

Gotta come up here, hit the Mag Mile—

Check it out—got me the new iPhone—

(*He opens his back pack.*) Also got me an iPad, PlayStation, Pokémon cards, *Spider-Man* comics,

Twizzlers, *Avengers* on Blu-Ray,

And some *very* rare *Star Wars* action figures ...

MUJER AZUL. That's a lot of junk to spend your stolen money on ...

COYOTE. Stolen!? *Hard earned.*

MUJER AZUL. There's nothing hard

About taking money from people

Making them promises you can't keep.

Putting their lives in danger—

COYOTE. People have dreams,

I make them come true.

If it wasn't me?

There's plenty of other coyotes on the border

Who'd be happy to do my job.

Plus I got an abuelita, a Mamá and Papá on the other side—

Someone's got to put food on their table.

MUJER AZUL. They eat “very rare *Star Wars* action figures?”

COYOTE. Very funny.

MUJER AZUL. You ought to be ashamed—

COYOTE. Ashamed? I’m proud, *Hermana*—

Check this out:

*(He pulls out the copy of the Chicago Sun-Times and waves it in her face.)*

COYOTE *(cont’d)*. You ever make the front page?

MUJER AZUL. I do my work quietly.

I don’t need the attention.

*(COYOTE pauses. Looks at her. He feigns seriousness.)*

COYOTE. Well, my lady, that is very August and Noble of you.

*(Pause. He cracks up wildly.)*

COYOTE *(cont’d)*. Get it? “August?” “Noble?”

We’re arguing at the intersection

Of “Augusta and Noble?”

I just called you “August” and “Noble”

*(He keeps laughing. She’s stone faced. He lets out a loud, long, celebratory howl.)*

MUJER AZUL. Shhhhhhhhhh!

You’ll wake the whole neighborhood!

COYOTE. What do you care about the neighborhood?

You don’t live here.

MUJER AZUL. Kids need their sleep. It’s the first day of school tomorrow.

COYOTE. I know.

MUJER AZUL. Wait:

How did *you* know that?

COYOTE (*sings, deliberately altering the lyrics*).

“I heard it through the grapevine—

Not much longer AND you’ll be mine—

Oh, I heard it through the grapevine

That little RABBIT’s gonna be mine—”

MUJER AZUL. No! Not the rabbit ... I won’t let you!

I got her across safe the last time, I’m not going to—

COYOTE. You!?! I got her across. *She didn’t pay*. She owes me.

I been waiting *thirteen years*. I want my RABBIT.

MUJER AZUL. I’m gonna make sure she keeps it.

COYOTE. She pay you last time?

MUJER AZUL. She did.

COYOTE (*insanely jealous*). What did she pay you?

She give you the rabbit?

Did the rabbit taste good?

Did you broil it? Barbecue it? Deep fry it?

MUJER AZUL (*very calm*). No.

She paid me by being kind.

Caring. Thoughtful. Loving.

By keeping her head on straight—

COYOTE. She ripped you off, girl.

*(He cracks up—howls again, long and aggressive and a little scary. It echoes through the night. The sound transitions us into the next scene.)*

## LIGHT FROM A REFRIGERATOR

*(GABI CASTILLO’s bedroom in the Castillo family apartment. GABI is asleep, clutching a stuffed rabbit close to her. The echo-y sound of COYOTE’s howl transforms so*

*it sounds like it's inside a dream she's having. She stirs as if having a nightmare and wakes suddenly.*

*Light in the kitchen. GABI's father, REYMUNDO CASTILLO, stands illuminated by the light of an open refrigerator. He packs food into plastic bags. On the floor nearby is a suitcase.*

*GABI leaves her bed, clutching her rabbit. She sneaks into the kitchen, where she finds her father.)*

GABI. Going to work so early?

REYMUNDO. Ay Dios Mío ...

You scared me!

What are you doing awake?

GABI. I had a bad dream, Papá ...

REYMUNDO. Go back to bed, m'ija ...

GABI. I can't sleep—

I'm nervous—about tomorrow.

REYMUNDO. Even more important you go back to sleep.

GABI. Are you going to work?

REYMUNDO. Yes, m'ija.

GABI. Are you *moving* to work?

REYMUNDO. What kind of silly question is that?

*(She goes to the suitcase, tries to lift it. It's heavy.)*

REYMUNDO *(cont'd)*. Gabi, go back to bed.

GABI. Not until you tell me why you have a suitcase.

*(REYMUNDO sees there's no way out.)*

REYMUNDO *(cont'd)*. I'm going on a trip.

GABI. Where?

REYMUNDO. Home.

GABI. Home? Home is right here.

REYMUNDO. Home to *México*.

GABI. *México*? That's not home ... you haven't been there in like a million years.

REYMUNDO. M'ija ...

GABI. Pero porque, Papá?

REYMUNDO. Preguntas, y mas preguntas, m'ija ... you always ask so many questions ...

GABI. You always say I should be a lawyer when I grow up ...

REYMUNDO. Pero de grande, m'ija!

GABI. But Papi—

What about tomorrow?

It's my first day at Northside Prep. You're supposed to take me—

REYMUNDO. Yo sé, yo sé ...

GABI. It's the most important day ever, and you're not taking me?

REYMUNDO. Believe me, m'ija—

If I could take you? I would ...

Nothing would make me prouder

GABI. Then why are you leaving? What's so important that—

*(REYMUNDO is choked up. He holds back his emotion.)*

GABI *(cont'd)*. Papá? You OK ... ?

REYMUNDO. It's nothing. Go to bed, m'ija ...

GABI. Papá .... What is it?

REYMUNDO. Your abuelo, Gabi.

GABI. Qué pasó?

REYMUNDO. He's sick. Your abuelo is very sick.

GABI. Is he ...

REYMUNDO. If I don't go to him? Now?

I may never see him again.

*(GABI swallows hard. She sees the pain in her father, which is a new thing to her.)*

GABI. Take me with you ...

REYMUNDO. M'ija ... estás loca?

GABI. Take me with you ...

That way you won't be so sad.

*(Moved by this, REYMUNDO kisses her on the top of her head.)*

REYMUNDO. You have more important things to do

Than to worry about me.

School. Now that is important.

I'm sorry I can't take you.

Your mamá, she'll take you.

GABI. Mami doesn't drive.

REYMUNDO. She can take you on the Blue Line ...

GABI. It's too far. She has to walk Jesús to school.

REYMUNDO. Maybe Jesús can be late.

GABI. She doesn't want me to go, Papi.

REYMUNDO. That's not true ...

GABI. Why would she hide the letter telling me I got in?

Why is she always saying,

"Gabi, go to the neighborhood school ...

Why do you want to go so far away?"

REYMUNDO. She just needs to get used to it ...

Let her take you.



GABI. No, Papá. I can do it by myself.

*(He notices the stuffed rabbit in her hands. He takes it from her.)*

REYMUNDO. You still sleep with this old thing?

GABI. Conejito? Of course!

REYMUNDO. But all the time I hear you say, “I’m too big for this, too old for that ...”

GABI. I can get rid of it if you think I’m ...

REYMONDO. I’m teasing, m’ija ...

You keep it. Long as you like.

You know who gave it to you?

GABI. Who?

REYMUNDO. Your abuelo.

GABI. But I’ve never met abuelo.

REYMUNDO. He gave it to your mamá before you were born.  
And you know ... Conejito’s magic.

GABI. Yeah, right.

REYMUNDO. De veras ... He’s just like you ... he can outsmart anyone ...

GABI. What do you mean?

REYMUNDO. How many kids get into Northside Prep?

GABI. Like 250.

REYMUNDO. How many apply?

GABI. Thousands ...

REYMUNDO. You applied. Got in. You didn’t even tell your parents ...

GABI. Papi ...

REYMUNDO. I’m proud of you, m’ija ...

*(Pause. GABI smiles.)*

REYMUNDO *(cont'd)*. Maybe you can let Mamá walk you to the Blue Line?

GABI. Maybe.

When are you coming back?

REYMUNDO. Soon, m'ija ... I promise ...

*(This does not satisfy her.)*

REYMUNDO *(cont'd)*. You promise me something:

You be good.

GABI. Promise.

REYMUNDO. With me gone? Mami will have to work more  
She may not have as much time for you and Jesús ...

Keep an eye on him. He's always getting himself in trouble—entiende?

GABI. I'll try ...

REYMUNDO. When you walk in that school, you keep your head up, OK?

GABI. OK ...

REYMUNDO. Northside's not like Peabody, where you know everyone ...

There ... who knows what kind of people you'll meet.

GABI. Smart people?

REYMUNDO. Sí ... pero there are people

Who only feel "smart"

By making people feel

Like you don't belong

GABI. I know I belong there, Papi.

REYMUNDO. Y otra cosa ...