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Dramatic Publishing

LUNA

A Play for Young Audiences

by

RAMON ESQUIVEL



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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Luna was developed as part of Central Theatre Ensemble's New Plays for Youth Commissioning Project. It was workshopped and read at Central Washington University, Ellensburg, Wash., in January 2010.

Directed by Elise Forier Edie

SOLEDAD: Alyssa Boekel

LUNA: Ashlen Hodge

PAPA: Nick Brown

MAMA: Jessica Matheson

FRIDA: Christa Cesmat

EMILIO: Alex Smith

LUNA

CHARACTERS

SOLEDAD	.....	a girl
PAPÁ	.....	her father
MAMÁ	.....	her mother
LUNA	.....	the moon
FRIDA	.....	a quiet girl
EMILIO	.....	a quiet boy
GIRL	.....	various female children
BOY	.....	various male children
SHE-CLOWN		
HE-CLOWN		

CASTING NOTES

The play is written for six performers (4 female, 2 male) with some doubling. Actor playing FRIDA plays all GIRL characters, and actor playing EMILIO plays all BOY characters. Actors playing MAMÁ and PAPÁ assume the roles of SHE-CLOWN and HE-CLOWN.

SETTING

The present in the farmlands of eastern Washington state.

LUNA

(Dusk. LUNA, the moon, enters.)

LUNA.

The sun, *el Sol*, goes home to sleep
At last beyond the oceans deep.
The moon, *la Luna*, wakes to light
The world in dark and wond'rous night.

(Stars everywhere. LUNA addresses the audience as if they are stars.)

LUNA *(cont'd)*. Stars! Glorious stars! Friends from across the universe, thank you for coming from so far away. I see some old friends. And many new ones. To you, I offer a special welcome. I am Luna. I am a moon paired with this blue planet, Earth. Dear friends, your presence makes me shine and sparkle. *(LUNA smiles broadly with face and body.)* Dear stars, let me see you shine and sparkle. *(LUNA shows the STARS how to shine and how to sparkle with their teeth, faces, hands, bodies, etc. She ad-lib points out individual stars.)* By now you've heard strange and funny stories of the people on this planet Earth.

(SOLEDAD enters.)

SOLEDAD. Luna!

LUNA *(to audience)*. Like this one.

SOLEDAD. ¡Mira la luna!

LUNA *(to audience)*. Soledad. A child of farmworkers.

(SOLEDAD sees the stars in the audience.)

SOLEDAD. ¡Mira las estrellas!

LUNA *(to audience)*. She loves the universe.

SOLEDAD. Mamá! Papá!

LUNA. And she loves her family.

(MAMÁ and PAPÁ enter pulling a cart with farming tools, pots, suitcases and everything they own. They perform the Ritual of Migration, chanting as they circle the space. MAMÁ and PAPÁ repeat chant until they arrive at destination.)

MAMÁ/PAPÁ. *Otro día... Otra noche... Otro lugar...
Otra casa...*

LUNA *(overlapping)*. ...Another day...another night...another place...another home...

(SOLEDAD joins MAMÁ and PAPÁ in the Ritual of Migration. While they chant and walk, SOLEDAD points out constellations and stars she sees.)

SOLEDAD. The Big Dipper, part of Ursa Major...follow the Big Dipper to find Polaris, the North Star...which is part of the Little Dipper, part of Ursa Minor...which

pours into the Big Dipper, part of Ursa Major...follow the Big Dipper to find Polaris, the North Star... (*Etc.*)

(*MAMÁ and PAPÁ park the cart at destination. They set up items in the space to mark this as home. These items mark home throughout the play, as home continually changes location.*)

PAPÁ. Soledad.

MAMÁ. *Ayudenos, por favor.*

(*SOLEDAD helps MAMÁ and PAPÁ unpack. LUNA observes from afar.*)

SOLEDAD. *Mamá, necesita practicar tu ingles.*

PAPÁ. She's right, Mamá. Practice, practice, practice.

MAMÁ. Ay! (*A game they play.*) "Help us. *Please.*"

SOLEDAD. See? "You did that with *ease.*"

MAMÁ. "How you love to *tease.*"

SOLEDAD. "And eat lots of *cheese.*"

MAMÁ. "And eat..." —¿*Como se dice "miel"*? [How do you say "honey"?)]

PAPÁ. "Honey."

MAMÁ. "And eat *honey* from *bees* in *trees.*"

SOLEDAD. That was a good one!

MAMÁ. But yours are more *fun!*

(*They squeeze each other.*)

PAPÁ. It's so hot tonight.

SOLEDAD. Test your new invention, Papá!

PAPÁ. The Peecho fan? Good idea!

(PAPÁ and SOLEDAD ad-lib as they set up an elaborate contraption.)

SOLEDAD. The Peecho fan will make you lots of money.

PAPÁ. Then we can build a workshop.

SOLEDAD. And then we can build our spaceship. *(PAPÁ laughs.)* What was wrong with the first Peecho?

PAPÁ. You were right. Gears were too heavy for it.

SOLEDAD. I knew it.

(The Peecho fan comes to life.)

PAPÁ. El Peecho fan!

SOLEDAD. It works!

(MAMÁ joins them and basks in cool air.)

MAMÁ. *¡Gracias a Dios!*

PAPÁ. Time for bed! Tomorrow, we have work.

MAMÁ. *Y escuela.*

SOLEDAD. Do I have to go to school?

PAPÁ. If you wanna build a spaceship someday, then yes.

(MAMÁ, PAPÁ and SOLEDAD ad-lib good-nights and go to beds to sleep.)

LUNA. Night. This is my time. The ocean tides wave to me. The crickets and owls and wolves sing to me. It is a time of peace and rest. A time to think. A time to dream.

(SOLEDAD is restless. PAPÁ snores loudly.)

SOLEDAD. Papá! *(She shakes him until he rolls over. SOLEDAD sneaks out to look at stars.)* Constellation Orion, with stars Rigel and Betelgeuse... *(She waves to LUNA.)* *Hola, Luna.*

LUNA. Hello, Soledad.

SOLEDAD. I can't sleep. I start a new school tomorrow.

LUNA. Are you excited?

SOLEDAD. Is excited the same thing as scared?

LUNA. Sometimes. What are you scared of?

SOLEDAD. It's gonna be the same as every other school I've gone to.

LUNA. Everyone will be new to you.

SOLEDAD. I'm tired of being "The New Girl." All the time.

LUNA. It's okay to be scared. Or excited. Or both.

SOLEDAD. But this school is gonna be different. I'm gonna make it different. I'm gonna make a friend this time.

(A light shift signifies dawn.)

LUNA. Daytime. It's the sun's turn. Tomorrow night, you can tell me all about your first day of school.

(Morning. LUNA exits. SOLEDAD runs inside and throws together peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the whole family as MAMÁ and PAPÁ awaken. They gather tools for labor.)

PAPÁ. Work-work-work.

MAMÁ. *Trabaja-trabaja-trabaja.*

(SOLEDAD hands them lunch boxes.)

SOLEDAD. Here you go. Special power sandwiches for all of us.

PAPÁ. Mmm. Peanut butter and jelly. The best.

MAMÁ. *Gracias, mijita. ¿Estas listo?*

(SOLEDAD grabs book, The Complete Guide to the Galaxy: For Kids Who Ask a Lot of Questions.)

SOLEDAD. I'm ready.

MAMÁ/PAPÁ. *Vamos a escuela.*

(A school playground. It is empty as the family arrives.)

SOLEDAD. We're so early. Nobody's here yet.

PAPÁ. They'll be here. Loud kids everywhere.

MAMÁ. *¿Tienes tu libro?* [Do you have your book?]

SOLEDAD *(holds up her book)*. Always. I'll just wait.

MAMÁ. Okie-dokie.

(MAMÁ and PAPÁ watch SOLEDAD as she gains her bearings. When they turn to leave...)

SOLEDAD. Wait, don't go!

MAMÁ. *Un beso, hija.* [A kiss, daughter.]

SOLEDAD *(gives her mother a kiss)*. Love you, Mamá.

(Gives her father a kiss.) Love you, Papá.

PAPÁ. Love you, *mija*.

MAMÁ. "See you later, alligator."

(SOLEDAD takes a deep breath, smiles her bravest smile, and settles in with her book. Satisfied, PAPÁ and MAMÁ leave SOLEDAD and begin the Ritual of Work in the background.)

The Ritual of Work is a series of pantomimes that suggest work in fields, orchards, farms, etc. The chant is subtle but constant in the background during the school scene.)

MAMÁ/PAPÁ *(repeated)*. Work...trabaja...work...trabaja...

(SOLEDAD, alone, reads on the playground. Soon, BOYS and GIRLS enter. They become different kids through physicality and costume adjustments.)

SOLEDAD tries to introduce herself to kids, who regard her with a mix of curiosity, benign indifference, rudeness, anxiety, friendly but uninviting nods, apologetic hurriedness, etc.)

SOLEDAD *(suggestions only, ad-lib throughout)*.

(To GIRL I.)

Hello. My name is...

(To BOY I.)

—Soledad. That's me. Hi...

(To GIRL II.)

—Hi there. Will you...?

(To BOY II.)

—Hey there! Can you...?

(To GIRL III.)

—Wow, I really like your...

(To BOY IV.)

—Whoa, that's a great...

(Flustered, SOLEDAD sits down and goes back to reading. But she notices when GIRL V and BOY V meet. A scientist, SOLEDAD studies them from a distance.)

GIRL V. Hi.

BOY V. Hi.

(GIRL grabs BOY's hat and runs away.)

GIRL V. Thank you!

(BOY V chases GIRL V and grabs her hat.)

BOY V. No, thank YOU!

(GIRL V chases BOY V and grabs her hat back.)

GIRL V. No, thank YOU!

(BOY V chases GIRL and grabs hat back.)

BOY V. No, thank YOU!

(BOY V and GIRL V laugh and sigh.)

GIRL V. That was fun.

BOY V. Wanna play again?

(GIRL V grabs BOY V's hat and exits.)

GIRL V. Thank you!

(BOY V runs after her and exits.)

BOY V. No, thank YOU!

SOLEDAD *(to herself)*. Is that how you play the game?

(BOY VI enters.)

SOLEDAD *(cont'd)*. Hey! You! Stop!

(BOY VI stops in his tracks, stunned.)

BOY VI. Me?

SOLEDAD. Yeah, you. Stand right there.

BOY VI. Okay.

(SOLEDAD gets right in BOY VI's face.)

SOLEDAD. Hi.

BOY VI. ...Hi.

(SOLEDAD grabs BOY VI's hat and runs away.)

SOLEDAD. Thank you!

(BOY VI starts to cry. SOLEDAD puts on the hat and indicates that BOY VI should take it.)

BOY VI. No!

SOLEDAD. That's the way! "No! Thank ME! No! Thank ME!"

(BOY VI does the slow-motion cry walk. GIRL VI enters.)

GIRL VI. What's going on?

BOY VI. She stole my hat!

GIRL VI *(to SOLEDAD)*. Give him back his hat.

(Undaunted, SOLEDAD grabs GIRL VI's hat.)

SOLEDAD. Thank you!

(GIRL VI and BOY VI stand in shock.)

GIRL VI. Give it back! Right now!

BOY VI. I don't like her. I don't even know her.

(SOLEDAD incorporates the two hats into a "Thank-You Dance." It's pretty good.)

SOLEDAD. "Thank you! Thank you!" *(Realizing it isn't working.)* Thank you?

(SOLEDAD offers the hats back. GIRL VI and BOY VI grab hats and flee.)

GIRL VI. Let's go get her in trouble.

BOY VI. Then she'll be sorry.

(GIRL VI and BOY VI exit.)

SOLEDAD. What did I do wrong?