

Beverly and Nelson

How do I look?

DOLORES. A little overdressed for a delivery.

DAHLIA. Admit it. I look ten years younger.

DOLORES. Yes, Dahlia. But aren't you a little too old to look so young?

DAHLIA. Oh, give me that food.

DOLORES. Dahlia, por Dios. Leave Pancho alone. *(Dahlia starts looking through cupboards.)*

DAHLIA. Where did you put those pastelitos... Am I going to have to ask Ramon Novarro?

DOLORES. Please, Dahlia. Por Mamá. Don't you have any pride?

DAHLIA. Pride is useless, Dolores. *(Slamming cupboards.)* Useless! It's the reason you never got a husband.

DOLORES. That's not true.

DAHLIA. You put yourself on a little altar — too high for any man to get on top of you.

DOLORES. Okay, enough.

DAHLIA. You should have become a nun. At least that's marrying God. *(Stops searching.)* That's it! *(Turns eyes to "purgatory.")* Ramon! *(Says a quick prayer and continues her search.)*

DOLORES. I could have married.

DAHLIA. Who? Gonzalito Perez?

DOLORES. He was very nice.

DAHLIA. So nice that in seven years he never even touched your hand.

DOLORES. Times were different.

DAHLIA. Maybe. But even for those times Gonzalito was strange.

DOLORES. He was not.

DAHLIA. Patting his mother's stomach and saying, "Ay, Mamita. For nine months you were my casita." That's not strange?

DOLORES. He loved his mother.

DAHLIA. My children love me too. But if one of them called me "their little home" I'd smack them. *(Pounds on counter as she says this. Dahlia's pounding makes a counter door open ... and voila! The pastelitos appear. To purgatory.)* Thank you, Ramon.

DOLORES. Dahlia, por favor ... *(As Dolores tries to stop Dahlia from taking the pastelitos Nelson and Beverly enter.)*

BEVERLY. I love your home. *(The women stop struggling.)*

DAHLIA. Thank you!... Dolores, honey. Will you help me take these to the car? *(A reluctant Dolores smiles and starts helping Dahlia. Nelson gets a bag of chips.)*

NELSON. *(To Beverly.)* Some chips?

BEVERLY. Sure. *(Then seeing them.)* Oh. Don't you have any nachos or tortilla chips?

DOLORES. *(Overhearing.)* Tortillas.

NELSON. *(Emphatic. Looking at Dolores.)* No. *(He sets the chips in front of Beverly. Dahlia and Dolores exit. We can hear them moving their argument outside.)*

Start BEVERLY. I arrived at a bad time. Didn't I?

NELSON. Are you kidding? Everyone's real happy you're here. Especially me. *(He starts to kiss her, but is interrupted by more arguing. Eager to distract Beverly he hands her the windblown thesis.)* Hey. I almost forgot.

BEVERLY. You finished it! *(Reads.)* "The Effects of 'Leave it to Beaver' on a Melting Pot Civilization." *(Impressed.)* That ought to get you graduated.

NELSON. It better. And now that I'll have that diploma ... *(Getting down on one knee.)* will you marry me? *(He starts kissing her all over.)*

BEVERLY. Nels. It's been on my mind the whole way up here.

NELSON. *(Moving away.)* You didn't like them.

BEVERLY. What do you mean? I think they're great.

NELSON. No you don't. They gave you cold feet.

BEVERLY. They didn't. I've told you. I just feel we should — 'experience' a little more before we do this.

NELSON. What's wrong with experiencing after? *(He puts his arms around her. A car engine revs up.)* End

DOLORES. *(Offstage/emotional.)* And don't forget! Tell Nicolasa to put it in the oven twenty minutes before she serves! *(Car peels away. Dolores enters mumbling as if to someone in heaven. She's hard to ignore. Nelson follows her to kitchen. Beverly mumbles.)*

NELSON. *(Whispers.)* ...

DOLORES. No.