

**LOS OCHOS  
A DANCE WITH DEATH**

**By Reid Conrad**

*(Excerpts may be used royalty free for auditions.)*

**AUDITION 1- 3 m, 4 w**

*In this scene, visitors arrive to the quiet village.*

*(DOMINGO begins making his way to ROSITA. EVELYN and BRADLEY move down.)*

**EVELYN:** It's a good thing we found this place before the storm hits.

**BRADLEY:** No thanks to you. I can't see a thing.

**EVELYN:** Is that a house? There are no lights on.

**BRADLEY:** Looks like a barn. *(Steps forward into the darkness and stumbles over terrace floor.)*

**EVELYN:** Careful! *(Moves to BRADLEY.)*

*(DOMINGO makes a dash to ROSITA.)*

**EVELYN:** *(Cont'd.)* Did you see that?

**BRADLEY:** See what? Your knobby knees?

**DOMINGO:** Rosita. I am here.

**ROSITA:** Stop acting so childish, Dom.

**EVELYN:** Did you just hear voices? Brad, I'm scared.

**BRADLEY:** Big surprise. Evelyn Bassett, spoiled rich girl afraid to be away from her pampered lifestyle. Where are you going?

*(EVELYN heads for bridge.)*

**ROSITA:** Hello, welcome. *(Pause.)* Hello.

**BRADLEY:** I have the distinct feeling we're not in Kansas anymore, Toto.

**EVELYN:** Is somebody there?

**ROSITA:** Under the big tree. Follow my voice.  
**EVELYN:** *(To BRADLEY.)* That's English! *(To ROSITA.)*  
Hello, hello? *(Crossing.)*  
**ROSITA:** Almost here. A little farther is all. Hello.  
**EVELYN:** Hello.  
**ROSITA:** I am Rosita.  
**EVELYN:** You speak English!  
**ROSITA:** A few of us do. Not much need here, but it will be  
fun to practice. This is Domingo, my brother.  
**EVELYN:** Hello. I'm Evelyn.  
**ROSITA:** He is shy. Say hello, Domingo. In English.  
**DOMINGO:** Hello. In English.

*(EVELYN laughs.)*

**BRADLEY:** *(Who has joined them.)* Look, Ev, natives.  
**EVELYN:** *(Embarrassed.)* Bradley.  
**BRADLEY:** So dazzle us with your command of their  
language and ask if we can get a hot meal.  
**EVELYN:** Bradley, you are being rude. First of all, I speak  
French, not Spanish. It was your idea to cross the border,  
drag me over the mountains...  
**BRADLEY:** This is becoming boring, dear.  
**EVELYN:** And secondly, if you're so eager for a meal, ask  
yourself.  
**BRADLEY:** Now look who's being rude. You haven't  
introduced me to your friends here.  
**ROSITA:** Hello. My name is Rosita.  
**BRADLEY:** Hmm. And the Neanderthal?  
**EVELYN:** Bradley!  
**ROSITA:** This is my brother, Domingo.  
**BRADLEY:** Of course. *(To ROSITA.)* Well, you seem the  
civilized native. You speak the master tongue at least. Do  
you suppose you could manage to fetch me a drink? A little  
Pinot Grigio or a Chardonnay, as long as it's not too fruity. I  
seem to be a bit parched from the day's trek.  
**EVELYN:** Bradley...  
**ROSITA:** Excuse, me?  
**BRADLEY:** *(Miming.)* A drink. Could you get me a drink?

**ROSITA:** Oh, yes. Something to drink. *(To EVELYN.)* Have you been on your trip many days?

**EVELYN:** Eight days. No baths, no toilets-- feels like forever.

**ROSITA:** Oh yes, I too would have a difficult time without those things.

**BRADLEY:** Hello, Spanish girl, you seem to be suffering from a case of selective hearing. I asked for a drink.

**ROSITA:** Yes, you go to the inn. They fetch your water. *(To EVELYN.)* And you say you walk from France? It must be difficult journey through the mountains. You are lucky the snow has melted in the passages. But we have early spring this year. It will be a hot summer.

**BRADLEY:** *(Grabbing EVELYN by the arm.)* Come on, Evelyn, I'm done jawing with ignorant locals. I need sustenance! *(Pulls HER along towards the inn.)*

**EVELYN:** Well, nice to meet you. Hope to talk with you later. Adios!

**ROSITA:** I will be right here.

**DOMINGO:** *(Softly, to Rosita.)* She is pretty.

*(BRADLEY and EVELYN are on the terrace. LIGHTS change to show the sky has cleared.)*

**EVELYN:** Oh, Bradley! This is so quaint!

**BRADLEY:** *(Giving HER a look.)* Are you kidding me? I feel like I just stepped onto the set of *Viva Zapata!*

**EVELYN:** This is Spain, Brad, not Mexico.

**BRADLEY:** A little humor, my dear. To lighten the mood. You sure this is Spain?

**EVELYN:** Oh, let's not start that again! I happen to be a very good map-reader and navigator.

**BRADLEY:** You have been known to make mistakes.

**EVELYN:** Which you are so kind to remind me every chance you get, thank you very much.

**BRADLEY:** Hey! Did I say anything? *(Looks around.)* Now, where do you suppose the wine steward is? Perhaps he spied the great white hunter emerging from the savanna and high-tailed it to his hut. Hello! Anyone home?

*(EVELYN sits and removes boot. She rubs her foot and moans.)*

**BRADLEY:** *(Cont'd.)* What's wrong, my dear? Tired of the hike? You swore to me up and down you could handle this trip.

**EVELYN:** I could use a bath.

**BRADLEY:** City girl not used to roughing it?

**EVELYN:** Stop it, Bradley. You're as much a city boy as I am a girl. You said this trip would be fun. And relaxing! You said that we would take our time, wander the back roads, rub elbows with the locals. Bradley! I wanted this so much. I wanted to do this with you. But you've turned our hike into a competition—

**BRADLEY:** So, turn around and go home. I'm not stopping you.

*(PAPA comes out of the door.)*

**PAPA:** *(With nervous excitement.)* Hello! Hello, my friends!

**BRADLEY:** Oh great, Pancho Villa.

**PAPA:** We were expecting you. I can explain everything. You want food or drink? I will be right back.

**BRADLEY:** What did he say?

**EVELYN:** I took French, Brad, not Spanish.

**ROSITA:** That is my Papa. He is welcoming you. Sit, please. Domingo, fix the chairs.

*(DOMINGO moves to the terrace. He watches EVELYN as he places chairs around tables.)*

**PAPA:** *(Returning with a bread basket, calls back into café.)* Mama! They are here! They are here! *(To BRADLEY and EVELYN.)* We are so happy you are here, honored guests. I will bring drinks. *(Exits into café.)*

**BRADLEY:** Odd man.

**EVELYN:** He seems happy to see us.

**ROSITA:** He thinks you are not you.

**EVELYN:** He thinks we are someone else?

**ROSITA:** Sí.

**EVELYN:** You were expecting someone? I hope we're not imposing.

**ROSITA:** No, please, you are welcome here.

*(PAPA returns, pushing MAMA and MARIA, who bring wine glasses and wine.)*

**PAPA:** Welcome! Welcome, my friends! Everything is ready for you and your friends. But where are the others?

**MAMA:** *(Examining BRADLEY.)* Papa, you fool. These are not The Eights!

**PAPA:** What do you mean?

**MAMA:** Excuse me. My husband is old and feeble. We are expecting visitors today, just not you.

**ROSITA:** These are Americans, Mama.

**BRADLEY:** *(Taking HIS cue from ROSITA.)* Americans, yes. Do you speak English?

**MAMA:** Americans! Mother of God! What have I done to deserve this? *(SHE moves away to inn door.)*

**BRADLEY:** What's wrong with her?

**PAPA:** Mama, wait. *(To BRADLEY and EVELYN, slowly, as if practiced.)* Welcome, friends from America.

**EVELYN:** Thank you.

**BRADLEY:** So you do speak English? Well then, can we get something to eat here? And not this junk you've set out for the crows. Real food.

**MAMA:** *(Calling to TOWNSPEOPLE inside inn.)* They are Americans!

**PAPA:** Food? You want food? *(To MAMA.)* Mama, they are hungry.

**MAMA:** No! They must leave now. Before The Eights arrive. Before it is too late!

**AUDITION 2- 2 m, 4 w**

*In this scene, the fiesta is happening before the vote.*

*(AT RISE: MUSIC up. EVELYN sits alone at center table. THE TOWNSPEOPLE dance a formal Spanish dance. It ends and THE EIGHTS immediately join in, sweeping the townspeople up into a lively salsa or merengue. When the music ends there is laughter and applause. MARCO moves down to ROSITA.)*

**MARCO:** *(Out of breath.)* You don't like to dance?

**ROSITA:** You are not funny.

**MARCO:** *(Sits.)* Well, I would say just about everyone is having a good time.

**ROSITA:** Like the calm before the storm—

**MARCO:** Eh?

**ROSITA:** Or the last supper?

**MARCO:** This is what people do. To forget the bad, they escape to good feelings.

*(DOMINGO enters from the inn with a large vase. He also holds slips of paper and a couple of pencils. He places them on the center table, then exits.)*

**ROSITA:** So much for your good feelings.

**MARCO:** All good things must come to an end. And where some things go badly, in other places they go well. There is balance in this world, Rosita. For you and your people it has gone well for quite some time now.

**ROSITA:** I see. Time to pay the piper.

*(OBELLA, ROZ and ALVARITA cross downstage.)*

**OBELLA:** So, we are agreed. If we all vote together, it will go our way.

**ROZ:** Are just three votes enough?

**OBELLA:** We must convince Gustavo, Julietta, and the others to vote our way.

**ALVARITA:** Gustavo and Julietta are voting for the American.

**ROZ:** Maria too, I think.

**OBELLA:** Bah! Why did those stupid Americans have to come here in the first place? Go, talk to the others. We can still rid this town of that worthless girl.

**ALVARITA:** He seems to favor her.

**OBELLA:** Good! We use that to our advantage. Tell the others how he likes to be alone with her.

**ROZ:** Yes, that will work, Obella.

**OBELLA:** It will, sister. We will have it our way.

*(ROZ and ALVARITA disperse into the groups of TOWNSPEOPLE. OBELLA steps to the center table, writes a name on a ballot and holds it up.)*

**OBELLA:** *(Cont'd.)* The first vote is cast! Do justice, good people. Do what is right for the town. *(Moves away with head held high.)*

**MARCO:** Rather dramatic, wouldn't you say? *(Pause.)* We both know whose name is on that one.

**ROSITA:** And more to follow of the same.

**MARCO:** You seem resigned to your fate.

*(ROZ approaches the table, followed by two TOWNSPEOPLE. They fill out ballots one by one and return to the crowd.)*

**ROSITA:** I am to be blamed for Tomaso's leaving. I rejected him.

**MARCO:** Yes, and when he tried to kiss you, you ran...

**ROSITA:** *(Looking away, lying.)* And fell.

**MARCO:** It is Tomaso's fault for not being able to accept your rejection.

**ROSITA:** And my fault for not wanting him. Who else was there in the village for him, but me?

**MARCO:** And so, the votes will go quickly against you, no? It is not written in stone yet, Rosita. You see, there are the Americans.

**ROSITA:** The Americans?

**MARCO:** Oh, yes.

**ROSITA:** Both of them? No.

**MARCO:** The man, it is obvious why he makes for a good candidate. And, beauty and kindness in one can bring about great jealousy in others, so you can't count her out either. It is for balance that I brought them here today.

**ROSITA:** You?

**MARCO:** Yes. They would've passed right by this town, never even noticed it, but for the little show in the sky I put on for them.

**ROSITA:** You really think voting for a complete stranger is something a person would do?

**MARCO:** For some, it is much easier to vote for a stranger than for someone you know, even if you don't like that person.

**ROSITA:** How unfair! To Evelyn and Bradley.

**MARCO:** You know how unfair life can be, Rosita. Tell me now, you have never longed for another life, never yearned to be far gone from this little valley? Tell me that and I will leave you and your town in the next instant. *(Pause.)* The world is filled with such grandeur. Why waste your life sitting on a bench only wishing?

**ROSITA:** Death is so much better than this?

**MARCO:** Who said anything about death? I was talking about seeing the world.

**ROSITA:** You are playing some cruel trick. I'm not—

**MARCO:** Is this a trick? *(Leans in and kisses ROSITA gently.)*

**ROSITA:** The worst kind.

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