

Pishtaco

by Avery Crozier

Playwrights Ink
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Five Actors)

MOCHE, a Peruvian tour guide

AUBREY, an American botanist

TERLE, a British artist, naturalized American

CARSON, an Australian web designer

OTHERS, played by one actor

PERUVIAN
DOORKEEPER
MASKED PISHTACO
POLICE OFFICER
LOCAL GUIDE
VENDOR
PILOT
PACHA MAMA
SERVER
KALLAWAYA

The action takes place in various locations in Peru. The time is the present.

SETTING: The set should be simple and flexible, possibly using projections to indicate locations. Five chairs or stools will be needed, as well as a table and a large ornate mirror. A background like Inca stonework would be ideal. The acting area could be thickly strewn with reeds or rushes throughout or just in the final scene.

NOTE: All of the characters may be played by actors of any gender. The Spanish in the play is written to accommodate casting different genders, with the character “@” representing both an “a” for feminine nouns and adjectives and an “o” for masculine. Similarly, the gendered “el” and “la” are indicated as “el/la.”

As lights dim, Andean instruments play *El Condor Pasa*. As lights come up, MOCHE, a very attractive Peruvian tour guide, appears wearing comfortable hiking clothes and carrying a bag or satchel of a traditional, brightly colored Peruvian design.

MOCHE

I apologize for my country. Traditional music is very beautiful, but soon you hate *El Condor Pasa*. We play in every restaurant, every plaza, in airport, on the train, and then we make you buy the CD. It is our revenge on Paul Simon for stealing our beloved folksong and making the words.

(To offstage musicians.)

¡Cállense ya! ¡Toquen otra cosa! [Shut up already! Play something else!]

(Music changes to a Beatles song with Andean instruments.)

This, too, is revenge. Soon you hate the Beatles, also. Welcome to the English Tour of Lima. Like your city of Los Angeles, is not beautiful. But is very historical—*not* like Los Angeles.

AUBREY, TERLE, and CARSON appear, all in sensible tourist outfits, and gather around MOCHE. AUBREY carries a guidebook and TERLE carries a camera.

MOCHE

(Spots a somewhat chubby PERUVIAN in traditional attire.)

Perdonen.

(To PERUVIAN.)

Buenas tardes.

The tourists look around with interest as MOCHE speaks with the PERUVIAN.

PERUVIAN

Buenas tardes, Moche. ¿Cómo estás?

MOCHE

¡Ay, como joden estos gringos! Dame una mano ¿quieres? [These gringos are wearing me out. Give me a hand will you?]

(Hands PERUVIAN a card.)

Ve a esta clínica. [Come to this clinic.]

PERUVIAN

¿Por qué?

MOCHE

Es una clínica especial donde te ayudan a perder peso usando las últimas técnicas americanas. [It's a special weight loss clinic. The latest American techniques.]

PERUVIAN

Después de tantos meses sin vernos ¿lo único que puedes hacer es llamarme gord@? ¡El/La gord@ eres tú! [I don't see you for months, and then you call me fat! Fat yourself!]

MOCHE

Muchas gracias. ¡Te va a encantar! [You will love it!]

PERUVIAN leaves with the card.

MOCHE

Sometimes there is work—*¿cómo se dice?*—on side. Tour guides, we do not make *mucho dinero*—ah, you know that word, do you? Unless tips are good, of course. My country is poor, it is true, there is no hiding it. But very, very safe. President Fujimori destroyed Sendero Luminoso, the Shining Path. Revolutionaries. They are gone, well, not gone, but very quiet with almost no violence. And now Fujimori is gone, but you are safe with me. Even during the kidnapping and bombing, I never lose one *turista!* Talking of Fujimori, here is new tourist feature of Plaza de Armas: Bell of Corruption. Come close to see.

(The tourists gather closer.)

This bell is a temporary feature. Only here in Lima for one month. It travels all of South America and any time government corruption is discovered—the Bell rings! In Peru it has been three days and rings two times. Already! We are very progressive in Peru.

AUBREY

(American accent.)

We need a Bell of Corruption in America.

MOCHE

In the US?

AUBREY

Yes, of course, I'm sorry. I mean the US.

MOCHE

Corruption is very bad in Peru. Even Fujimori—our best President—was corrupt. It is depressing, yes. My studies were for civil engineering, all classes, all examination tests, but when I finish I cannot get job. Too much corruption, I could not do it, do not know right people, cannot afford the bribe. I become—*¿cómo?*—depressed. That is how you say in English, very sad?

TERLE

(British accent.)
Oh, yes, that's it exactly.

MOCHE

Very bad depressed.

A VENDOR appears with a variety of
potatoes.

VENDOR

¡Compréme! ¡Compréme! [Buy from me! Buy from me!]

MOCHE

Ah, here are potatoes. You know potatoes first grow in the Andes?

(Picking up various potatoes.)

This one is sweet. This is dried, add water, eat. Lasts hundreds of years. Another sweet one. Taste.

CARSON

(Australian accent.)
Not such a good idea eating on the street.

MOCHE

Guidebooks are too frightened. Is okay.

AUBREY

In Inca times, potatoes were farmed in microclimates at different altitudes, cultivated for different flavors.

MOCHE

Is true! More than three hundred kinds before the Spanish. Now only one hundred fifty.

TERLE

(Picking up a potato that looks like a screwy pink carrot.)
Look at this funny one!
(Starts to eat it.)

VENDOR

No!

MOCHE

Oh, no, not that one!

TERLE

Why not? It's pretty, with that pink cast to it.

MOCHE

Is poison. Must sit in the sun ten days, then good to eat, very good. But right now—
poison. No patience, you die. When I was depressed, I try to kill myself by eating this
pink poison. But God save me my sin.

TERLE

(Puts the potato back.)
Gracias.

VENDOR

¡Compréme!

TERLE

Oh, no thank you. But they are very pretty.

MOCHE

(Waves away the VENDOR, who disappears.)
Are you a farmer?

AUBREY

I work for the natural history museum in Los Angeles.
(Glancing at TERLE.)
Well, I mean—

TERLE

Aubrey is a botanist.

CARSON

Specializing in potatoes?

TERLE

A very good one.

AUBREY

Fungus actually.

CARSON

Mold and mildew? Mushrooms?

MOCHE

Fungus?

AUBREY

All of those. Slime molds.

TERLE

More important to our ecosystems
than anybody realizes.

CARSON

(Snickering.)
Fungus! Bloody hell!

AUBREY
Fungus isn't funny. All plants need
it to function properly, for forests to
be healthy—yeast is a fungus. If we
didn't have mushrooms to break down—

TERLE
What's that odor?

MOCHE
That is Lima.

CARSON
I wasn't going to say, but—who dropped their guts? What is it? It's bloody awful!

AUBREY
Sort of like a paper mill.

MOCHE
Is fertilizer. Made from fish and sometimes guano.

CARSON
Guano? You mean shit?

MOCHE	TERLE	AUBREY
Excrement, yes.	Poop.	Bird shit, basically.

MOCHE
Is very important to economy of Peru.

TERLE
Is that why the air is so polluted?

MOCHE
Is not polluted. Is foggy. Lima is on the coast—
(Pointing.)
Pacific Ocean. Most of the year—

AUBREY	TERLE
Just like LA—June gloom.	LA on a bad hair day.

CARSON
It's nasty either way.

AUBREY
Terle, what about doing a piece on potatoes?

TERLE
Could work. Exotic yet familiar.

CARSON

What kind of piece?

AUBREY

Terle's an artist who uses, well, unusual materials, mostly from nature.

TERLE

We both study nature, in a way. It's very balanced.

MOCHE

You want to see galleries?

CARSON

An artist, fancy that! What kind of unusual materials?

TERLE

I like masses of things. Large numbers.

AUBREY

Plants, animals—

CARSON

Dead animals?

TERLE

No, I leave rot to Damien Hirst.

AUBREY

Very much alive.

TERLE

I like growth, reproduction. Just put them in an environment and see what they'll do.

AUBREY

One piece called *Topo Citta* was a model of Rome made of crackers, then Terle kept a colony of rats in it until they'd eaten St. Peter's down to nothing.

TERLE

I like to give up control. Let nature take its course.

CARSON

That's pointed. If not a little hostile.

TERLE

(Shrugs.)
We're not religious.

AUBREY

Speaking of hostile—look!
(Points at graffiti.)

TERLE

"Yanqui go home!"

CARSON

Nice thing about being Australian, nobody cares enough to protest you.

MOCHE

Not typical. Not typical at all. Just kids.

(Motioning them to follow.)

I have an arrangement especial for the next stop. Casa de Aliaga is one of the oldest homes in Peru—almost 450 years.

(Presses a button on a wall.)

Same family since the Conquistadores.

DOORKEEPER

(Appearing, somewhat formally dressed.)

Buenos días, Moche.

CARSON

Who *don't* you know?

MOCHE

Buenos días. No te preocupes, los voy a apurar. [Don't worry, I'll rush them through.]

DOORKEEPER

(Motioning for them to pass.)

Bienvenidos a Casa de Aliaga.

MOCHE

If I didn't know everyone, we would be lost!

TERLE, CARSON, AUBREY

Buenas dias. Gracias.

MOCHE

(As they pass the DOORKEEPER, who then disappears.)

Gracias. It is a great privilege to enter. Here is more than seventy rooms, and the family still uses most. A few are for private tours—

(Gesturing.)

You see paintings in *Cusqueño* style of *la familia* in the colonial period.

CARSON

(To TERLE.)

Is your art like that?

AUBREY

Hardly! Terle doesn't paint any more.

TERLE

Haven't done portraits in years.

AUBREY

Pretty sketchy—looks like they just dashed it off.

TERLE

But it is an interesting melding of indigenous and Spanish styles.

MOCHE
 Come see the staircase, very historic!

AUBREY
 You're not rushing us, are you?

MOCHE
 No, no. Take time, enjoy.

AUBREY
 Cause at the door you said you were gonna rush us.

MOCHE
 No—no rush!

TERLE
 Aubrey, for God's sake!

AUBREY
No te preocupes, los voy a apurar. [Don't worry, I'll rush them through.]

MOCHE
 You must misunderstand.

TERLE
 Aubrey doesn't really speak Spanish—

AUBREY
 But I understand a bit. Just thought you should know.

MOCHE
Lo siento mucho. [I'm very sorry.]

CARSON
 Bloody hostile!

AUBREY
De nada. You can't help but pick up a little in L.A. Plus I took a class when I knew we were coming to Peru.

They enter an area with a large antique mirror on the wall.

TERLE
 What's this room?

MOCHE
 Grandfather's bedroom. They leave it just so, when he died.

CARSON
 Out of respect?

MOCHE

Out of fear. Grandfather very powerful. He did not want to leave, so he is still here.

CARSON

His ashes? Or a ghost?

MOCHE

I have seen.

AUBREY

Oh, come on.

CARSON

I believe in ghosts!

TERLE

Aubrey! This is super. What did you see?

MOCHE

(To TERLE, perhaps a little too intimately.)
 Old man, old clothes. Standing—
 (Gestures to the mirror near CARSON, who jumps.)
 —There!

CARSON

Shit!

AUBREY laughs.

TERLE makes a subtle move away from
 MOCHE.

MOCHE

I am sorry.

CARSON

No, really, don't apologize! I seen ghosts—my own father visited me after he passed. We were real mates, both pilots, and I nursed him a bit at the end. He's why I'm on this trip—he always wanted to come to South America, left me the money so I could come in his stead. One night he showed up, all shroudy, and made me promise him I'd fly over the Nazca lines.

AUBREY

Maybe your father can get together with Señor Aliaga and have a drink while we're here.

TERLE

Aubrey is a scientist, don't forget.

AUBREY

You say that like it's an apology.

TERLE

Just an explanation. Sometimes I have to explain Aubrey. This is our honeymoon, so I rather hoped I wouldn't have to—

CARSON

Your honeymoon!?

MOCHE

What is a honeymoon?

AUBREY

Terle, we weren't gonna say!

CARSON

You're married?

TERLE

Just.

AUBREY

But we've been together eight years. A ceremony seemed—

TERLE

Superfluous—to Aubrey—but I wanted it. And we're going to be with Moche and Carson for two weeks, so darling, I thought they should know.

AUBREY

Fine. But it's no big deal.

MOCHE

They did not tell me.

CARSON

Congratulations, I guess.

TERLE

This is kind of a once-in-a-lifetime trip—we've been to Europe, of course, back home to glorious stinking Albion many times, Japan once, but South America is, well, not to contradict, but it is a big deal, at least for me. And although we can afford it, it's rather just barely, a bit of a splurge, really. So let's please embrace this trip, embrace this beautiful, polluted, teeming country, and yes, our fellow travelers as well—

(Embraces CARSON.)

—Thank you for the offer of a drink—I shall want it rather badly—even if they're eating poison potatoes and seeing ghosts, because after all isn't that why you leave home so things can be a little different for a while—

(Sees FIGURE and screams.)

A ghost! You see!

MOCHE

I understand. This is a wedding trip!

CARSON

Can I buy you dinner or something? A drink, at least?

AUBREY

Terle, jeez—of course I want this to be good. Why do you think I planned it so much, read all those guidebooks—

In the mirror a frightening MASKED FIGURE appears gesturing to mirror TERLE.

The others turn to look for the ghost but don't see it.

MOCHE
¡Dios mío!

CARSON
Where?

AUBREY
Now, Terle, stop it!

TERLE
Right there, in the mirror!
(The MASKED FIGURE disappears.)
It's clear as a bell. Don't tell me you can't—now it's going—look!

CARSON
I believe you saw it, but I didn't.

AUBREY
It's a mirror, you're seeing yourself!

MOCHE
I tell you is haunted.

TERLE
Not an old man—a hideous face! Sort of human, but not.

AUBREY
Terle, calm down—

TERLE
I am calm. I'm perfectly fine. I just saw a ghost and no one else did. Does that mean I'm marked for death like in the movies?

AUBREY
I would like to suggest we go elsewhere. Aren't we behind schedule?

MOCHE
Excellent suggestion! Excellent! Next on agenda is Museo de Oro, the Museum of Gold—

AUBREY
No, we don't want to go there.

TERLE
Why not?

MOCHE
Is full of beautiful Inca gold. Hidden from Conquistadores—

CARSON
Sounds great!

AUBREY
Why don't we go to Museo Larco instead?

MOCHE

You know Museo Larco?

AUBREY

(Taps guidebook.)
Inca, pre-Inca, Paracas culture, Wari, even Moche—the culture for which you are named.

CARSON

You're a culture?

MOCHE

Is—how you say?—*nickname*.

TERLE

Nickname.

MOCHE

Is lots of pots. Dusty and dull. Museo de Oro bright with gold—

AUBREY

It's fake! Okay, I wasn't gonna say it, but one of our anthropologists and—
(Taps guidebook.)
—This guidebook agree it's 98% forgeries.

MOCHE

No. I take *turistas* many years—

AUBREY

We're not your average *turistas*, are we?

TERLE

I don't feel particularly exceptional—

CARSON

Right. Above average, that's us.

MOCHE

Church! Let us go to church! Is nearby and on agenda: Monasterio de San Francisco.

CARSON

Would that be too spiritual for our above average *turistas*?

AUBREY

No, no, churches are culture. I've no problem with it. In fact, I hoped we'd go.

MOCHE

Ah, but there are *las catacumbas*....

What's that?

CARSON

The catacombs!

AUBREY AND MOCHE

Blackout and a Latin chant begin instantly. A light moves in the distance and comes closer until it is clear that MOCHE holds the flashlight. The chant decreases in volume as the light gets nearer, finally so faint it can barely be heard.

MOCHE

I apologize for my country. Electricity not always so reliable. I always bring torch or—how you say in American? Flashlight?

AUBREY

Sí, es bueno.

CARSON

Technology a problem in Peru?

MOCHE

Very much technology—you want Internet café to email friends?

CARSON

I don't read Spanish, but the Peruvian websites I checked out were *el primitivo*. Of course, that's what I do, web design, so I'm hypercritical.

TERLE

Design? Where'd you study?

CARSON

Nowhere, really. Just sorta absorbed it at night after delivering mail all day—I was a postie for years. Don't believe in going to school for things you can just pick up if you got half a brain. School's for no-hoppers.

AUBREY

Terle used to be a professor.

CARSON

Sorry, teach.

TERLE

But I don't have to any more—

MOCHE

(Pointing with the light.)
You see the bones stacked to save space, save money. The families could not visit, just monks, so they never see. Not so comfortable for departed ones. Crowded.

CARSON

You seen any ghosts here?

AUBREY

Again with the ghosts!

MOCHE

Not *see*.

TERLE

Hear?

MOCHE

No, not really.

CARSON

Feel?

TERLE

(Pointing.)
What's that?!

AUBREY, MOCHE, AND CARSON

What?

TERLE quickly snaps a picture, the flash illuminating the other three in various states of fear and curiosity.

AUBREY

Dammit, Terle!

TERLE

Thank you. That was excellent.

MOCHE

We must be respectful.

CARSON

I think I shat meself.

MOCHE

This was Lima's only *cementerio* until 1810. Many dead here, not all happy.

AUBREY

(Peering into a well or niche.)
I wouldn't be happy either, if all that was left of me was my skull and femurs.

CARSON

That's all you need for the resurrection.

TERLE

Super!
(Takes a picture, again with flash.)

CARSON

You might wanna stow the flash.

TERLE

(Starting to take another picture as they walk, MOCHE leading.)
I wouldn't get anything—what the hell?

AUBREY

What?

TERLE

Something's wrong with the camera. It just quit.

MOCHE

Maybe was too disrespect.

TERLE

The battery was new—

MOCHE

(Walking into a shaft of light from above.)
See through the bars into the sanctuary—

CARSON

(In terror.)
Oh my God! Help! They've got me!

MOCHE, AUBREY, and TERLE look
around for CARSON, who is somewhere in
the dark behind them.

MOCHE
 No panic!

TERLE
 Carson, quit that!

CARSON
 They won't let go! Lots of
 'em! Fuck!

MOCHE'S flashlight picks up CARSON
 struggling against something invisible.
 Once they see CARSON they know it is not
 a joke.

AUBREY
 We're right here!

MOCHE
 Give the hands, good!

CARSON
 Can you see 'em? The
 fuckers!

The others pull CARSON forward into the
 shaft of light.

MOCHE
 Come to the light.

TERLE
 There's nobody there.

AUBREY
 You're okay, you're okay!

CARSON

(Coming into the light.)
 They're all over me—hands—pulling—holding me back...won't let me...go....

CARSON relaxes and is still.

MOCHE

(After a moment.)
 They are gone?

CARSON

I...think so.

AUBREY

What was it?

CARSON

Lots of hands—

TERLE

Bony hands?

AUBREY
 Stop!

CARSON
 Kinda bony, yeah.

MOCHE
 This happen once before, on a big tour. Spirits disturb.

AUBREY

It's not spirits! Just the power of suggestion,
with Terle seeing things, Moche telling
spooky stories—

CARSON

It was *something!*

TERLE

Why don't we all go out into the light—

Immediate lighting change to brilliant
gallery illumination.

CARSON

This ain't the Museum of Gold.

AUBREY

This is Museo Larco.

MOCHE

Surprise! You want. You get.

AUBREY

Thank you very much. I do appreciate it. Terle, you're going to love this.

MOCHE

More than forty-four thousand ceramic vessels. Lots of pots. Saved before they can sell
to foreigners. Good Peruvians save culture. Bad Peruvians sell it. I study archaeology in
the rainy season and make private excavations to save—*¿cómo?*—cultural *patrimonio*
from corrupt officials.

AUBREY

I read a lot about this private collection and these fantastic pieces. They're biomorphic—

CARSON

Bio-whosis?

TERLE

Shaped like animals.

AUBREY

And categorized by type of animal, all the birds together, all the snakes together—

MOCHE

All the vampires together—

Oh, please, no more creepy stuff today!

AUBREY

(Pointing.)
What's that?

CARSON

(Reading a wall panel.)
Huacos? Is that—?

AUBREY

Is very special art. I wait outside.

MOCHE

Is that the erotica?

AUBREY

Erotica?

CARSON

Oh, you told me about that, the porno art.

TERLE

Let's get a gander at that!

CARSON

(Gestures.)
I have seen. You go ahead.

MOCHE

They enter a gallery while MOCHE disappears.

CARSON

Bloody hell, look at this!

AUBREY

Ancient fertility sculptures.

TERLE

Doesn't look too terribly fertile to me.

CARSON

Yeah, you don't get babies *that* way.

TERLE
No matter how hard you try.

CARSON
And he's trying *hard*.

AUBREY
I guess you're right. This woman's having sex with a dead man.

TERLE
A very happy afterlife.

CARSON
Any gay ones?

TERLE
Pardon?

CARSON
I don't see any homo art. Do you?

AUBREY
Now that you mention it, no.

CARSON
You'd think if they could do—
(Pointing.)
—*That*—they could gin up a little same-sex action, know what I mean?

AUBREY
Peru is a very conservative country—

TERLE
Catholic—

AUBREY
Maybe the Waris or the Paracas or whatever made same-sex *huacos* but the museum just doesn't put 'em on view.

CARSON
All the same, it hardly seems fair now, does it?

TERLE
I wonder why Moche didn't want to come in.

AUBREY

I can imagine how all this could be a little embarrassing.

TERLE

Prude.

CARSON

I love it! Some of these are pretty hot.

AUBREY

I am so not a prude.

TERLE

Here it is our honeymoon and the sexiest thing I've seen is this poor woman impaled on that skeleton's giant cock—

AUBREY

For God's sake, Terle!

CARSON

Crikey! Lucky stiff!

Embarrassed, AUBREY leaves.

CARSON

Eight years, eh?

TERLE

Sorry. We've just started this honeymoon, and it's obvious we're going to jam-pack every day with activities then drop into bed totally fagged without an ounce of energy for anything the least bit intimate. But that's not your problem. Sorry again.

CARSON

They say you get to know a lot about people very quickly when you travel.

TERLE

Sorry thrice—I don't mean to be so bitchy. Aubrey is wonderful—we're totally complementary.

TERLE

For instance, I'm totally dyslexic and Aubrey's a great editor. It's very sweet, actually, most of the time. Tender.

CARSON

No need to explain—

AUBREY

(Off.)

Terle, come here!

CARSON and TERLE join AUBREY and MOCHE.

AUBREY

Look at these sculptures.

TERLE

We've hardly seen the museum and you go straight to the gift shop.

CARSON

Who's she?

MOCHE

Pacha Mama.

AUBREY

Earth Mother.

MOCHE

Very good, you study.

AUBREY

She's half Virgin Mary and half mountain—

TERLE

Not exactly svelte, is she?

MOCHE

Most important ancient goddess of Peru. Created first Incas out of Lake Titicaca.

AUBREY

Whoa! Look at this one! You said you wanted to buy some folk art—

TERLE

But masks, not—whatever this is—what is it?

AUBREY

Some kind of diorama.

CARSON

Like a cute little stage set, except—shit!

MOCHE

Is Pishtaco.

TERLE
What are they doing?

CARSON
Fish taco?

AUBREY
Cutting people up.

MOCHE
Pishtaco. With “p.”

TERLE
I’m not buying a papier mache scenario of butchery. Devil masks are as far as I go.

AUBREY
What’s Fishtaco?

MOCHE
Pish, pish, pish! With “p!” P-p-p-p-p-p!

CARSON
So what is it?

MOCHE
Pishtaco is legend of monster kills for fat.

TERLE
I could imagine killing for ice cream, but not plain fat.

CARSON
Holy shit! They’re melting people down!

MOCHE
Legend says fat is used to make slick machinery, for smoothness, to—

AUBREY, TERLE, CARSON
Lubricate—

MOCHE
Yes, lubricate. And to make bells.

CARSON
Bells?

MOCHE
Very special bells. Perfect tone only comes with human fat.

TERLE
I don’t get that at all. How do you cast bells with fat?

It's a *legend*.

AUBREY

All I see is bloody parts, torsos and limbs and such. Where's Pishtaco?

CARSON

(Pointing.)
This.

MOCHE

They all lean in to look. TERLE gasps, then quickly leaves the room.

Terle?

AUBREY

What's up?

CARSON

Is frightening figure, Pishtaco.

MOCHE

Terle is so not squeamish.
(Disappearing after TERLE.)
Terle, wait up!

AUBREY

(Following with CARSON.)
Yes, you are above average *turistas*.

MOCHE

As MOCHE and CARSON disappear, a POLICE OFFICER appears and bars the way as AUBREY and TERLE approach, with MOCHE and CARSON close behind.

Está cerrado.

POLICE OFFICER

We just need to get to our hotel—

TERLE

Lo siento. Está cerrado.

POLICE OFFICER

MOCHE

¿Porque está cerrado?

POLICE OFFICER

Aquí ha ocurrido un crimen. Salga de aquí con sus turistas. [Crime scene. Take your *turistas* somewhere else.]

MOCHE

Pero tienen que regresar al hotel. [They have to get to their hotel.]

POLICE OFFICER

¿No ve que han matado a alguien y que la sangre todavía está fresca? [Can't you see someone's been murdered and the blood is still fresh?]

MOCHE

¡¿Sangre?! ¿Qué pasó? ¿Quién ha muerto? [Blood! What happened? Who died?]

POLICE OFFICER

No sabemos. Casi no quedan restos. [Can't tell. Not much left.]

MOCHE

(Crossing self.)

¡Dios mío! We must go. This way!

What's up?

CARSON

Someone has been killed. In very bad way.

MOCHE

AUBREY

Right by our hotel?

TERLE

It's just over there, and we need to get back—it's been a rough day—

AUBREY

Terle, what's wrong? Are you still freaked out about the mirror?

TERLE

I just need to lie down for a bit.

CARSON

You and me both!

AUBREY

I didn't realize we booked the special supernatural tour, did you? Faces in mirrors, grabby ghost hands—

TERLE

It's not funny, Aubrey!

AUBREY

Then what did you see?

CARSON

What kind of bad way?

MOCHE

I know nothing more. Let us go!

Instant blackout and loud sound of a small airplane. Lights up quickly on MOCHE, AUBREY, TERLE and CARSON seated in

two rows of two chairs, peering out of plane windows. MOCHE is sitting very close to TERLE. After a moment, sound decreases so voices can be heard. They lurch for a moment as the plane banks.

CARSON
Amateur!

AUBREY
Damn!

CARSON
I won't inquire about that bloke's pilot credentials.

MOCHE
Is often windy in the afternoon. If you have to vomit, I am happy to help.

TERLE
How does this compare to your plane?

CARSON
Same size almost, but mine's much spiffier. It's a King Air. This is just a Cessna 206. Engine needs a tune-up, too. I could do it in five minutes.

AUBREY
(Looking out the window.)
Economy must be terrible here. Half the houses aren't finished—rebar sticking out the top—

MOCHE
Is Peruvian law.

AUBREY
That houses have to be ugly?

MOCHE
No property tax until house is finished. So no one finish. Very helpful law.

AUBREY
But it makes the whole country look so ratty! If I were in charge, that would be the first thing I'd change. On the other hand, somebody could make a lotta money selling special ornamental flags to stick on the rebar.

TERLE
Aubrey, we're not in the U.S. Priorities are different here.

MOCHE
I apologize for my poor country.

AUBREY

It's not your fault. You just have a terrible government and no money.

MOCHE

What is like with so much money?

AUBREY

Wish I knew. We're not—

MOCHE

But you have house, yes?

AUBREY

More of a loft, but we own it.

TERLE

Careful, Aubrey.

MOCHE

With parking space?

CARSON

You can't win this one!

AUBREY

Two.

MOCHE

Air conditioning? Refrigerator?
Microwave oven? Your own car?

TERLE

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

AUBREY

Yes, of course.

MOCHE

I think you are very rich.

AUBREY

No, not really, when you compare—
I mean—we live in Los Angeles—
people there—

TERLE

Face it, darling. Here, we're rich.

MOCHE

Everybody is rich?

CARSON

You better quit. You're painted into a little corner of affluence.

AUBREY

(Pause.)
I don't *feel* affluent.
(Peering out the window.)
How soon before we can see the Lines?

MOCHE

First one is coming. Parrot.
(Pointing, as they all peer out windows. MOCHE touches TERLE.)
There. You see?

CARSON
Fantastic!

TERLE
That's so abstract.

AUBREY
Where? I can't see—

MOCHE
There! You see mouth—¿*cómo se dice?*—

AUBREY
This is a bit disorienting—

TERLE
Beak! It's "beak" in English—

CARSON
Look smart, we're banking—

They lean as the plane banks. TERLE
pushes MOCHE'S hand away.

AUBREY
I see lines, but no parrot—

CARSON
Too late.

AUBREY
Damn! Can we go back?

MOCHE
No. Plane schedule is very strict. Look better next time.

TERLE
But, Aubrey, those long triangles, the lines—you can see those—

AUBREY
Sure, but—

CARSON
Those are the landing strips.

AUBREY
Thank you, Erich von Daniken.

CARSON

You're a scientist. How can you think we're alone in the universe?

TERLE

Aubrey, we're on vacation—

MOCHE

Is true! I have seen.

AUBREY

UFOs aren't science—they're mythical monsters! Folklore! Tabloid!

CARSON

They're not monsters. They're just from somewhere else.

MOCHE

They mean no harm.

CARSON

They just seem like monsters because they're out of place.

TERLE

What have you seen?

MOCHE

Rainbow light. Very mysterious. Perfectly safe. No danger.

TERLE

Where?

MOCHE

In mountains between here and Ayacucho. Van of *turistas*, driver, me, myself. Many witness!

AUBREY

You saw a light in the distance—

MOCHE

No! Over the van. Direct! It followed almost a mile. After, other cars stopped to say they saw it too, and ask were we OK.

CARSON

Wacko!

MOCHE

Two *turistas* were in mental communication with the ship.

AUBREY

(Miming “mental communication.”)
Take us to your Pisco sours!

MOCHE

Is not necessary you believe. I am only your entertainment.

AUBREY

Hey, lighten up!

CARSON

I believe you, Moche.

TERLE

Aubrey, behave!

AUBREY

I’m sorry—!

MOCHE

Monkey!

AUBREY

Look, I apologized—!

MOCHE

(Pointing.)
Do not miss the monkey, too!

CARSON

(As they look out the windows and MOCHE touches TERLE.)
The monkey! That’s the one! That’s where I’m supposed to—
(Starts fumbling with a small container.)

TERLE

Can you see this one, Aubrey? There it is!

AUBREY

Yes! I see it. How cool!

CARSON

(Fumbling with the plane window.)
All right, Pater! Here you go.
(Roaring sound as the window opens.)

MOCHE

Close the window!

TERLE

That’s not safe! Air pressure—!

CARSON

I hope you appreciate this! I could get arrested and deported!

MOCHE

You are crazy!

TERLE

You’re dumping ashes?!

AUBREY

Jeez, it’s your father?!

CARSON

(Dumping ashes out the window. Much of it blows back in onto them.)
Ciao, mate! Now you're part of the Nazca Lines!

The roar of the plane, their protests, and the whoosh of the ashes increase in a blackout. Lights up suddenly. The chairs are gone. TERLE calmly brushes clouds of ashes from hair.

TERLE

I hope your Pater's good for split ends.

CARSON

Sorry. It was a stipulation in his will. Otherwise, I'd have to give up my plane.

MOCHE

Lucky I have money for the bribe.

TERLE

Yes, thanks, Moche.

AUBREY

That's why people hate tourists!

MOCHE

All is well. Let us now enjoy the museum of culture. Here is mummy bundles from Paracas culture. You see the shape of the skull, very tall. This was a prince—only royal heads were bounded.

CARSON

That's not the only reason.

TERLE

(Starting to take a picture.)
It's all right?

MOCHE

Is not US. Still okay to be free, take pictures.

TERLE

(Peering into digital camera.)
Oh, dear God!

AUBREY

What is it, Terle?

CARSON

Mummies are pretty creepy.

TERLE

I can't seem to get away from this. Can you at least see that, I hope?

CARSON

So it's been three places with us...

AUBREY

(Singing.)
We're being followed by a Pishtaco, Pishtaco, Pishtaco

TERLE

Aubrey, we're in a museum with dead
bodies—

MOCHE

Reverence, please!

AUBREY

If this is what we're seeing on Malarone, wait till we add the Diamox!

CARSON

What's that?

TERLE

For altitude sickness. You don't have any?

CARSON

Oh, I'm cool with altitude.

AUBREY

You might need it in Cuzco—it's eleven thousand feet.

MOCHE

Altitude sickness can be very bad. Once I had *turista* who got *soroche* but would not admit. Argued until she drop.

TERLE

She *died*?

MOCHE

No, but almost. You must take serious. Body out of balance.

AUBREY

(Singing.)
If I ever lose my fat—a little this—
(Grabbing TERLE'S love handles.)
—And a little that
If I ever lose my fat
Way, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey
I won't have to sweat no more
Cause I'm being followed by a Pishtaco
Pishtaco, Pishtaco!

TERLE

Aubrey, stop that! Leave me alone!

MOCHE

No singing, please!

TERLE just walks off, leaving AUBREY singing to CARSON. MOCHE follows TERLE.

CARSON

Well, aren't you a twat?

AUBREY

You're all taking this monster idea seriously! If there's any danger here, it's from remnants of the Sendero Luminoso or other *turistas*—!

CARSON

True or not, Terle's pretty broken up about it. I hope you plan to apologize.

AUBREY

Jeez, okay. But Terle needs a minute to calm down first.

CARSON

Shut your educated hole for a minute and look at these mummies. Dried up in the desert air. What if these monsters came back to life? No one's ever done a movie of that!

AUBREY

Somehow Peruvian mummies just don't seem as scary as Egyptian ones.

CARSON

What makes monsters scary?

AUBREY

I dunno. Embodiment of our fears, fear of death, they might hurt us—

CARSON

I've done a bit of analysis.

AUBREY

Analysis? Of monsters?

CARSON

Movie monsters, classic ones.

AUBREY

Frankenstein, the mummy—

CARSON

Vampires, werewolves—they've got a lot in common.

Such as? AUBREY

Basic human form— CARSON

Okay— AUBREY

CARSON
But somehow twisted, wrong, usually because they're alive when they're supposed to be dead. Mummies should just lie there, but run around chasing sheilas. Vampires, instead of resting politely in their coffins, need a midnight snack of human blood—not only alive when they shouldn't be, but dealing death to others. Frankenstein—cobbed together outta dead body parts. Werewolves, not ever dead really, but certainly a perversion of the normal human body, a deformation—like these elongated skulls.

AUBREY
The elongation was considered elegant, a sign of rank. Pretty pretentious analysis, but skewed—you're not familiar with the culture—

CARSON
Imagine one of these blokes showing up in LA—he'd be a monster outside his natural environment.

AUBREY
No one would notice in LA.

CARSON
Someone should do a Peruvian mummy movie—*The Ice Maiden Cometh!*

AUBREY
Freed from the ice to avenge herself on the priests who sacrificed her! Hey, don't you think Moche is pretty cute?

CARSON
Beg pardon?

AUBREY
I don't wanna sound like some erotic imperialist, but we could've done a lot worse for a guide.

CARSON
Ain't you on your honeymoon?

AUBREY

Well, duh! That's what made me think of it. Moche scuttled off after Terle pretty quick, don'tcha think? Let's go find 'em.

AUBREY leaves. CARSON shrugs and follows. Lighting change reveals MOCHE using a cell phone while TERLE watches with concern.

MOCHE

[in S] *Si. ¿Aquí? ¿En Ica? Léamelo.* [Here? In Ica? Read it to me.]
(To TERLE.)

He is read to me.

(Listening.)

¿¡Dos?! Dios mío!

(To TERLE, who touches MOCHE in alarm.)

They found two dead persons, here in Ica.

(Listening.)

TERLE

¿Lo dejaron sin pellejo? ¿Le quitaron la grasa? Dead bodies everywhere we go!
¿Sangró hasta morir? Igual que en Lima. ¿Qué dicen, que fue el Pishtaco? [No skin? No fat? Bled to death? Just like in Lima. Are they saying Pishtaco?]

TERLE

Pishtaco? Did you say Pishtaco?

MOCHE

Gracias. Puede que cambien nuestros planes. Adios. [Thank you. This may change our plans. Good-bye.]
(Shuts off the phone.)

TERLE

What was that? He sounded agitated.

MOCHE

Is perfectly safe.

TERLE

Safe? Not for the two dead people. What were you saying about Pishtaco?

MOCHE

I ask if they suspect Pishtaco.

Why?
 TERLE

The bodies, they have no skin.
 MOCHE

Flayed, oh how horrible!
 TERLE

And they die of no blood.
 MOCHE

Who would flay somebody alive?
 TERLE

No blood and worse—no fat.
 MOCHE

No fat?
 TERLE

The bodies have no—*¿cómo se dice*—adipose tissue. That is fancy words for fat, yes?
 MOCHE

Yes.
 TERLE

Like the body outside our hotel in Lima.
 MOCHE

Blackout and flourish of Andean music.
 The lighting becomes strange, surrealistic.
 TERLE appears, running from someone or something. Suddenly TERLE'S escape is blocked by a figure wearing the same frightening mask TERLE saw in the mirror. TERLE goes another direction and is blocked by another figure in a similar mask, who produces a bell. TERLE'S third escape attempt is blocked by a third masked figure brandishing a knife. As TERLE cowers, the three masked figures converge on TERLE. One by one they remove their masks revealing they are: MOCHE, CARSON, and AUBREY. As AUBREY raises the

knife, CARSON rings the bell. Instant lighting change isolates TERLE in light.

TERLE

Damn that Malarone!

AUBREY

(Appearing without mask or knife, but lugging some packages.)
What about it? Damn these stupid masks.

TERLE

I just remembered last night I had the most dreadful dream!

AUBREY

(Singing.)
I'm being followed by a Pishtaco,
Pishtaco, Pishtaco

TERLE

That's it exactly! It was about Pishtaco.
And you!

AUBREY

Me?

TERLE

And Carson and Moche. You were all Pishtacos.

AUBREY

Stop saying that. You're making me hungry.
(Singing.)
Fish taco, fish taco—

MOCHE

(Appearing with CARSON and life jackets.)
Maybe some fish will jump in the boat with us.

TERLE

(As they don life jackets.)
Probably caused by the mask I bought.

CARSON

Can I see it?

AUBREY

No! We're not unwrapping these and wrapping them up again. You've repacked them twice.

CARSON

What do they look like?

TERLE

Devil masks mostly, but I did get one Pishtaco.

MOCHE

You are carrying Pishtaco mask?

AUBREY

No, *I'm* carrying it.

MOCHE

Is bad luck!

AUBREY

Tell me about it!

TERLE

If it was bad luck, they wouldn't be selling them. Can I get something to drink on this boat?

MOCHE

I show you.

MOCHE and TERLE disappear as AUBREY and CARSON settle into their seats for the boat ride.

CARSON

So now you're stuck with the bad luck.

AUBREY

Terle always buys a lot of crap on trips. I don't buy anything, but I end up carrying it all.
(Motor sound—possible wind effect—they react.)
Here we go.

CARSON

I suppose you've read all about Las Ballestas?

AUBREY

(Correcting pronunciation.)
Las Ballestas are like the Peruvian Galapagos. Lots of birds, sea lions, even penguins.

CARSON

So have you had a root yet?

AUBREY

Had a root? What do you mean?

Consummated your honeymoon?

CARSON

Is that Australian slang?

AUBREY

If you don't want to talk about it—

CARSON

We're saving all the rooting for Machu Picchu.

AUBREY

I think you should root as soon as possible. Did you get married just to save your relationship?

CARSON

That's direct! No, we did not. Terle just likes ceremony.

AUBREY

That's good. Next you'd be getting a house—

CARSON

Already have a loft—

AUBREY

And a dog and a baby—

CARSON

No way! No baby. We can't afford a baby on just one—babies are expensive—

AUBREY

Just one what?

CARSON

One income. I was laid off at the museum.

AUBREY

Oh, that's the tension I'm sensing.

CARSON

There's no tension! I was laid off because the goddamn museum determined that fungus wasn't popular. Not like dinosaurs or tar pit mammals or African dioramas or other charismatic megafauna. Plants are too subtle, too reticent, nobody stands up for them. And mushrooms are the shrinking violets of the botanical world. An underground fungus

AUBREY (Cont.)

in Michigan is the world's largest living thing—bigger than an aspen grove or a sequoia. But how's a field trip of screaming second-graders going to get excited about the genetic analysis of something you can't even see in the real world? We can't all be Venus fly traps! That was a couple of weeks before our trip, so we decided to go ahead with our wedding and Peru. Supposed to make me feel better.

CARSON

God stone the crows! You are one mad scientist.

AUBREY

They're deaccessioning the botany collection.

CARSON

What's that mean?

AUBREY

Giving it away! I have to oversee it—root Botany out of the museum.

CARSON

What are you gonna do?

AUBREY

I dunno. Focus on Terle's career for a while. Going great guns, but needs a little management.

CARSON

Or you could take care of yourself.

AUBREY

Doing what?

CARSON

Stuff you can't do while working. After I quit the post, when I was a post-postie, a friend of mine got me liposuction.

AUBREY

For a gift?

CARSON

Couldn't've afforded it myself. I can very persuasive when required.

AUBREY

Maybe Terle could use a little liposuction, but not me—

AUBREY

Jeez! How can you be so self-indulgent?

CARSON

Careful, mate. You don't know me.

AUBREY

Sacrificing your father over the Nazca Lines—

TERLE

(Appearing with three Inka Colas.)
Oh, do stop fussing at each other. It's tedious.

CARSON

(Accepting a cola.)
What's this?

TERLE

Inka Cola. Number three drink in Peru after coca tea and Pisco sours.

MOCHE appears with another Inka Cola.

AUBREY

I've heard it tastes like—
(Tastes it.)
Yep—bubblegum. Yecch!

MOCHE

You do not like our national drink?

CARSON

That stinks!

TERLE

I believe that is the guano.

MOCHE

Excellent perception! Excellent! Yes, we are nearing Las Ballestas. Birthplace of the birds of the sea.

CARSON

Is Las Ballestas Spanish for the Islands of Shit?

AUBREY

No, that would be Las Islas de Mierda—

MOCHE

It mean "the arches."

MOCHE

Guano was important industry. The people did not see value till Spanish come. Very much value. So much it start a war.

TERLE

A war over guano?

MOCHE

The War of the Pacific. Chile was angry with Bolivia for charging too expensive for guano, so they declare war. Peru allied with Bolivia and both lost coastline. Is why Bolivia is—*¿cómo?*—earth prisoned.

AUBREY

Landlocked.

CARSON

So people died for fecal matter?

MOCHE

Very famous war. Many statues. The War of the Pacific.

AUBREY

Like any war, it was really about money—

CARSON

The War of Shit!

AUBREY

La Guerra de la Mierda!

MOCHE

Is disrespect!

CARSON

It just seems a bit silly, is all.

AUBREY

Any war is about shit—

MOCHE

War is not so far away like in your country. Not across the sea or back in many century. Sendero Luminoso is weak but still hides in hearts. Tourist are still kidnap—do not be so funny!

TERLE

Aubrey, please refrain!

AUBREY

What about Nine-Eleven? War right in our face, right at home—

Sound of roaring sea lions and bird cries can be heard in the distance.

MOCHE

Do not laugh at Pishtaco when people die and fat disappear. It is not—how you say?—quaint or like folklore. Is not like your rich home—is very real—is not the Disneyland. For you Peru is tourist attraction, a place for fun, to enjoy. But people live here, work here, die here! And there is fear here, of Sendero Luminoso, of Pishtaco, and you are not here unless you feel fear, too. You are not on spaceship or monorail high above the attraction, you are with me in it for real!

TERLE

That's quite enough, both of you!

CARSON

What's that noise?

AUBREY

I'm sorry! I didn't mean to—Jeez!

TERLE

Is that the sea lions?

The sound of birds and sea lions gets much louder.

CARSON

It's the birds!

AUBREY

Smell that guano! Makes you wanna start a war!

MOCHE

You listen to me?! It is for safety! You must listen!

Finally the roaring and the cries are so loud nothing else can be heard. Blackout. The animal sounds continue, then morph into jungle animal sounds: tropical bird cries, insects buzzing. Lights up on CARSON and AUBREY walking a jungle trail with back packs.

AUBREY

So these two-inch long bugs live in adobe walls and at night they crawl on you, biting you and defecating on your skin. In their saliva and feces is a tiny protozoan that gets into your blood and colonizes you. Eventually the protozoan causes so much nerve damage that you start to have intestinal disorders and even heart problems. People as young as 25, 20, even in their teens show up in emergency rooms with congestive heart failure—Chagas disease is an epidemic throughout South America.

CARSON

Our lodge isn't adobe, is it?

AUBREY

It's wood-frame, you saw it.

CARSON

So shut up.

AUBREY

I'm merely giving you the benefit of my scientific knowledge.

CARSON

Give me the benefit of your scientific silence. Listen to the birds, the bugs, the monkeys.

AUBREY

It wasn't my idea to hike. Terle thought we should do it to clear the air between us.

CARSON

The air remains dense, even murky. We shouldn't've come out without a guide.

AUBREY

I've got a great sense of direction. The lodge is that way.

A shadow flickers near them.

CARSON

What was that?

AUBREY

A bird or something.

CARSON

That was a big bird.

AUBREY

Forgive me, but I've got the impression you're extremely impressionable. Too many jungle tales around the campfire. I think you should be forced to listen to me—at length. You could use a little science. I could give you my latest fungus paper to read.

CARSON

Thanks, no.

AUBREY

Terle won't read it either. It's not *that* technical.

Another shadow. They stop walking.

AUBREY

Okay, you're right. That wasn't a bird.

Monkeys don't get that big, do they?

CARSON

As they peer in the direction of the shadow, a slightly chubby LOCAL GUIDE appears silently behind them.

AUBREY

Some birds do get pretty big—herons and egrets and eagles—

LOCAL GUIDE

(American accent.)
Pardon me.

AUBREY
Jeez!

CARSON
Who are you?

LOCAL GUIDE
I tried not to startle you, but you seem a bit edgy. Like you know you shouldn't be in the jungle without a guide.

CARSON
You've been sent to fetch us?

LOCAL GUIDE
That's right.

AUBREY
We're fine.

LOCAL GUIDE
Which way's the lodge?

AUBREY points. LOCAL GUIDE points a different direction.

CARSON
I'll be bugged!

AUBREY
We would have found our way eventually.

LOCAL GUIDE
If somebody else didn't find you first.

Everybody's obsessed with Pishtaco!
 AUBREY
 There are lots of other dangers.
 LOCAL GUIDE
 Sendero Luminoso?
 CARSON
 Rabid monkeys? Anacondas? Wild pigs?
 AUBREY
 Maracumbas.
 LOCAL GUIDE
 What are those?
 CARSON
 Once I was leading a tour and suddenly a shade stood in our path—
 LOCAL GUIDE
 We've been seeing shadows—
 CARSON
 Our way was blocked, so I asked the shade if it was a friend. It nodded. I asked if it had a message for us. It nodded again. A message of danger? A nod. Danger ahead? It nodded again. I left the group and went ahead and found millions of maracumbas right around the corner, all over the trail.
 LOCAL GUIDE
 What are maracumbas?!
 CARSON
 Army ants. They eat anything in their path.
 LOCAL GUIDE
 Like piranhas out of the water.
 AUBREY
 You're just trying to scare us.
 CARSON
 No, help you. Follow me, please.
 LOCAL GUIDE

CARSON

Who are you? You haven't answered. Why do you have an American accent?

LOCAL GUIDE

I went to college in Pennsylvania.

AUBREY

Carson, don't be so paranoid.

CARSON

We're lost in a jungle. Suddenly there's this inexplicable stranger. People are getting Pishtacoed all over the place—

AUBREY

We're not lost! It's been several days since there have been any more of those killings—

CARSON

Forget it! We'll find our own way home!
(Dashes off.)

AUBREY

Carson, don't be an idiot!
(Dashes off after CARSON.)

Lights out on the LOCAL GUIDE and up on MOCHE and TERLE drinking Pisco sours.

MOCHE

One Pisco sour is appetizer. Two Pisco sours to solve problems. Three Pisco sours can heal any sick.

TERLE

What about four Pisco sours?

MOCHE

Four Pisco sours—speak Japanese in five minutes!

They laugh, somewhat uncomfortably.

MOCHE

I have a dream. A dream that one day—

TERLE

That doesn't work on me. I'm only a *naturalized* American.

MOCHE

I want go to graduate school.

TERLE

To study what?

MOCHE

Psychology. It is interesting to me. And very expensive.

TERLE

Why? I thought you were interested in archaeology.

MOCHE

All Peru interest in archaeology. But I like psychology. How people think. Why people think. So many people put so much trust.

TERLE

Trust. What kind of trust?

MOCHE

In me. Is it foolish to put lives in hands of a stranger in a strange country?

TERLE

You're certified. Your company employs reputable guides. We pay for that trust.

MOCHE

But people tell such secrets. Do such things they would not want told. The guide knows everything. The guide is the guide.

TERLE

Remind me not to tell you about any murders I may have committed.

MOCHE

Is too late.

(TERLE looks quizzical.)

Psychology. Is very expensive.

Blackout on MOCHE and TERLE and lights up on CARSON in the jungle. A large shadow appears. CARSON is frozen.

CARSON

Are...you a friend?

The shadow nods.

CARSON

Can you speak?

The shadow shakes its head.

CARSON

Can you tell me where Aubrey is?

The shadow shakes its head.

CARSON

Are you warning me of danger ahead?

The shadow nods.

CARSON

Mariachis? I mean maracas. I mean mara—mara—ants. Army ants.

The shadow shakes its head.

CARSON

Pishtaco? Are you warning me about Pishtaco?

The shadow nods.

CARSON

Are you—you're not—Pishtaco, are you?

The shadow does not move. CARSON runs away. Lights up on MOCHE biting TERLE.

TERLE

(Sort of enjoying this and sort of not.)
Ow. Ow. Do all Peruvians bite?

MOCHE

Sí.

TERLE

I've a lot to bite, I'm afraid. I was hoping this trip would tone me up.

MOCHE

(Still biting.)
Los americanos son muy gordos.

TERLE

I'm naturalized! It's very different. I am one, but I can pretend not to be when it's convenient. And it's been quite convenient of late. Being English isn't much better though. I aim for Canadian. Ow!

Violent knocking. TERLE and MOCHE spring apart.

CARSON

Terle? Are you in there? It's Carson.

(Bursts in.)

Sorry, but it's a bit of an emergency. I lost Aubrey in the jungle! Oh, hello, Moche. Well. God stone the crows—bloody awkward this is!

Scream of a macaw or some other jungle bird simultaneously with a blackout. Other jungle bird sounds plus night-time insect sounds. In the darkness three flashlights can be seen. Sound of a paddle in water.

MOCHE

Acércate por la orilla. [Go along the edge.]

PILOT

Ya sé. [I know.]

MOCHE

Acércate más. [Closer.]

PILOT

Ya estamos demasiado cerca. [We're too close already.]

MOCHE

¡Más cerca! [Closer!]

PILOT

¡Mierda!

MOCHE

Do you see?

TERLE

Nothing yet.

CARSON

It's Buckley's chance we're gonna find anything.

Keep looking. You will see.

MOCHE

Aubrey.

TERLE

What?

CARSON

Aubrey.

TERLE

Where? MOCHE CARSON
Oh, sorry.

Aubrey, stop that!

TERLE

Stop what?!

AUBREY

The three flashlights focus on AUBREY, who is scratching furiously in the middle of a dugout canoe.

TERLE MOCHE CARSON
Stop that scratching. You'll get infected. The caiman are in the water, not in the boat. What are you doing?

AUBREY
My ankles are full of chiggers, if you must know. They're driving me crazy.

CARSON
You shouldn't've taken off like that through the bush.

AUBREY
You're the one who took off!

MOCHE
(Indicating with a flashlight.)
Look there.

All four flashlights focus toward the audience.

A caiman?
Oh, I see it. The eyes!
They're pink!
Where? I can't see a thing!
There!
Where?
Oh, poor darling, you must be blind.
Flapping sound.
What was that?
That is a bat. They wake up now.
Vampire bats?
Fruit.
What?
Flapping sound.
Fruit bats!
But aren't they eating insects? Catching them along the water's edge?

AUBREY

TERLE

CARSON

AUBREY

TERLE

AUBREY

TERLE

Flapping sound.

CARSON

MOCHE

CARSON

MOCHE

CARSON

Flapping sound.

MOCHE AND TERLE

AUBREY

CARSON

Not vampires?

AUBREY

Is there a species in the Amazon? I don't remember. I know they go as far south as Argentina.

TERLE

Would you leave off the vampires, please?

CARSON

Vampires are the perfect monster. They look just like us, a superior version of us, actually, because they're immortal. And they're very sexy. The best monsters are sexy.

AUBREY

Do you think it's the bloodsucking that makes them monsters, or the immortality?

CARSON

The immortality, definitely. They're still here when they should be dead.

TERLE

Or is it that they're too much like us? Godzilla's much more funny than scary.

MOCHE

Look—*¡caimán!*

Their lights focus.

TERLE

How adorable! A baby!

AUBREY

I can see that one.

CARSON

Finally.

AUBREY

The violence is important, though, don't you think? If they just lived forever they'd be freaks, but not monsters.

CARSON

So it's their behavior that makes them monsters?

AUBREY

Hitler looked like a normal human being—except for that moustache—but his behavior was monstrous.

CARSON

But not to him. He just thought he was saving Germany.

TERLE

I wonder did Hitler have a soul.

CARSON

Of course he did. He was human.

TERLE

But maybe he lost it. Maybe that's when he became a monster, when he lost his soul.

AUBREY

Then are all animals monsters, if they don't have souls?

TERLE

I think animals definitely have souls.

AUBREY

That's because you believe in souls.

CARSON

The human body loses a few ounces of weight upon death. Some people think that's the soul departing. Personally, I don't think animals have souls. I think the soul has a bit to do with the awareness of mortality—animals don't know they're doomed to die, so they don't have souls.

AUBREY

So a vampire that knows it won't die doesn't have a soul.

MOCHE

Pishtaco does not have a soul. And never grows old.

CARSON

Classic! A classic monster! People should know about this.

TERLE

Perhaps you should capture Pishtaco and take him to New York, displaying him in chains—

MOCHE

Cannot capture Pishtaco.

AUBREY

You're trying to scare us, like that guide you sent after us in the jungle.

MOCHE

What guide?

CARSON

With the American accent. Went to school in Transylvania.

AUBREY

Pennsylvania!

MOCHE

I sent no one. I do not know this guide.

AUBREY

Stop it!

CARSON

It was Pishtaco!

AUBREY

It was not! The guide wanted us to follow, then Carson freaked out and ran screaming through the underbrush—

CARSON

Like hell I did!

MOCHE

Pishtaco tells to follow. Then you are seen no more.

TERLE

Aubrey, this trip is haunted by Pishtaco whether there is one or not. Maybe we ought to think about cutting it short—

AUBREY

No way! We're only halfway through, we haven't even been to Machu Picchu, and we left those killings on the other side of the Andes. Don't let Moche scare you—

CARSON

(Training the flashlight.)
Um...what's that?

TERLE

I'm not scared. I'm just being practical. There's some kind of murderer somewhere in Peru, maybe Sendero Luminoso, maybe just a perv of some kind—

CARSON

Mates, can you see that?

MOCHE

In the water? Floating?

AUBREY

We're perfectly protected. We're *turistas!* *Turistas* are always protected!

(Focusing light.)

Is that—?

TERLE

CARSON

It looks like a body.

TERLE

It's all red. Why is it all red?

MOCHE

Arrímate. ¿Lo ves? [Pull up alongside. Do you see it?]

PILOT

Es mala suerte. Que se lo trague el lago. [It's bad luck. Let the lake have it.]

MOCHE

Tenemos que ver bien quién es. Podría ser un huésped del hotel. [We have to see what it is! It could be a hotel guest.]

CARSON

Do you think a caiman got him?

TERLE

It. It could be a woman.

AUBREY

I don't see it.

CARSON

Would a caiman kill a person?

MOCHE

The big ones can.

The only sound is paddling as they pull alongside the object in the water. They focus their light on it.

TERLE
My God! There's no skin!

AUBREY
Flayed. Whoever it is
was completely flayed.

CARSON
That's a victim! A
classic Pishtaco
victim!

We must take.

MOCHE

Take?!

TERLE

AUBREY
We can't haul it aboard!

CARSON
Can't we just call somebody from the lodge?

If we leave, a caiman will eat.

MOCHE

TERLE
Oh, my God. Eat! We can't leave him—her—it!

CARSON
Should we not—touch it? There might be some kind of disease.

AUBREY
It looks like perfectly healthy—dead—tissue. Almost surgically—

Aubrey, please!

TERLE

Who will help?

(To the PILOT.)
Que no se mueva mucho la lancha. [Hold the boat steady.]

MOCHE

PILOT
¡Deberíamos reportarlo, no recogerlo! [We
should report this! Not pick it up!]

AUBREY
I can do it.

MOCHE
El que manda aquí soy yo. Tú sólo rema.
[I'm the boss. You just paddle.]

TERLE
Me, too, I suppose. Poor thing.

PILOT
Hijo de puta!

CARSON
Sorry, I can't. I might be sick.

MOCHE
¡No hables así delante de los gringos! [No language like that in front of the gringos!]
(To the others.)
You get feet. You get arms. I get—middle.

They reach over the side of the boat while
CARSON trains a light on the body.

Carefully.

AUBREY

Ugh—it's slippery!

TERLE

I got. You got?

MOCHE

AUBREY
I think so.

TERLE
I've got a bit of a grip, I guess.

Pull in!

MOCHE

They pull the body aboard the dugout.
Briefly glimpsed in CARSON'S light as it
comes over the side, it is red and wet.

You got it. You got it! Jesus, God!

CARSON

The body disappears from view on the floor
of the boat with a thud. They focus their
lights on it in silence for a moment.

Now what?

CARSON

I've blood on my hands.

TERLE

TERLE washes hands in the lake over the
side of the boat.

Carson—? AUBREY

Yes. CARSON

Even without—skin— AUBREY

It's that guide. CARSON

What guide? TERLE MOCHE
This is no guide I know.

The one from the jungle. AUBREY

But much— CARSON

Thinner. AUBREY

Yes. CARSON

In school—biology—I dissected bodies, mostly animals, one human. And this is not normal. AUBREY

There's no— CARSON

There's no what? TERLE

Fat. There's no fat. AUBREY

An ominous flourish of Andean instruments
as they all look about them into the jungle
darkness. Blackout.

END OF ACT ONE

Act Two. MOCHE explains the site to AUBREY, CARSON, and TERLE. TERLE is noticeably thinner.

MOCHE

Sacsaywayman. Can you say?

CARSON, TERLE and AUBREY try to speak Quechua, but to no avail.

MOCHE

Like “sexy woman.” Sacsaywayman.

CARSON, TERLE AND AUBREY

Sacsaywayman.

MOCHE

¡Muy bien! Now you speak Quechua! Sacsaywayman was a temple complex turned to fort when Spanish come. Finally Spanish conquer and bury all Sacsaywayman, preserving in earth until the archaeologists dig it up.

MOCHE

Stonework is beautiful, no? Very tight stone upon stone and no mortar. Give me a credit card—

CARSON

What?

MOCHE

For demonstration. Give me credit card.
(CARSON does.)

You see—

(Poking at wall with card.)

Cannot even get thin card in the crack.

(Pockets the card.)

Some stones weigh 125 tons. See zigzag shape—

CARSON

Hey, what about my card?

MOCHE

Shape like teeth of puma, Sacsaywayman head of puma, Cuzco is body.

TERLE

Thanks for insisting, Aubrey.

AUBREY

I knew it would be okay. No monsters in Cuzco. No murders in the mountains.

TERLE

Must've been Sendero Luminoso.

AUBREY

Saving Peru by any means necessary. That must be how they see it.

TERLE

And I feel pretty safe with Moche, don't you?

AUBREY

We're safe in the bribery network. No Pishtaco's gonna get my fat baby.

CARSON
Give me back my card!

MOCHE
What card?

CARSON
Don't make me chuck a mental,
you bastard! Cough up the card!

CARSON
What the fuck is that?

MOCHE
Building Sacsaywayman took more
than 70 years—

CARSON
Isn't she—? Isn't that the Virgin Mary
sheila? Earth Mother. What's she doing?
Hey, are you watching, mates?

MOCHE
Under is secret river, water supply for
Cuzco. Were three towers, torn down
by Spanish, of course.

CARSON
Is anybody listening? Am I speaking
English? She's gonna—bloody hell—

TERLE
Not so fat anymore. You haven't
even noticed.

AUBREY
You're right! You're skin and
bones! Must've been all the
hiking!

PACHA MAMA appears with a can of
spray paint. PACHA MAMA looks like the
Virgin Mary trapped in an elaborate
pyramidal dress.

TERLE
It's certainly not cause I'm eating
less!

AUBREY
The food's been fantastic, hasn't it?

PACHA MAMA spraypaints on the
beautiful stonework of Sacsaywayman:
[current American President] *es asesino*.
Hijo de puta.

TERLE
I want to eat guinea pig while we're
here.

AUBREY
I think there's a restaurant in Cuzco
that specializes in guinea pig. In
Quechua it's called "cuy."
Moche, where can we get
cuy for dinner?

MOCHE
¿Cuy? Very adventurous turistas!

PACHA MAMA advances on CARSON, opening up the pyramidal dress into a kind of hungry mouth.

CARSON
Moche, I don't need the card, but keep her away from me! Moche!
(Tries to run, can't.)
I'm stuck, mates! Gimme a hand!

TERLE
What's the point in traveling if you eat nothing but fish and chips or hot dogs?

PACHA MAMA is almost upon CARSON but the others don't seem to notice.

CARSON
She's gonna swallow me! Moche!
This bitch means business!

AUBREY
You have to try local cuisines. I never get Atahualpa's revenge, Montezuma's, whoever's—I can just eat and eat and eat—

With a scream, CARSON disappears into PACHA MAMA'S dress. PACHA MAMA closes the dress and disappears.

MOCHE
There is restaurant, Kusikuy, that cooks guinea pig. But are you sure you like it?

AUBREY
We are enlightened *turistas*! And now we want to go back into Cuzco.

MOCHE
Oh, no. Qenko next, Tambo Mackay, Puca Pucara—all outside Cuzco.

AUBREY
What about the cathedral, the Coricancha—?

MOCHE
You are here to see Spanish sites or Inca? You want Spanish, go to Spain. Churches not on itinerary.

AUBREY
Yes, they are—look here!

MOCHE
Not on this itinerary.

AUBREY
Call your office—that's what we were promised—

TERLE
Aubrey, let's not make a fuss.

AUBREY
We paid a lot of money for this itinerary, can't get hijacked—

TERLE
What does Carson want to do? Carson?

CARSON appears from nowhere, looking disheveled.

CARSON
I'll be a stunned mullet.

AUBREY
Where were you?

CARSON
I don't know! I thought—I saw—didn't you see—?

TERLE
Did we miss something?

MOCHE
Did you hallucinate?

CARSON
No! I really saw—she ate me—

AUBREY
Moche, isn't this—?

MOCHE
Soroche. Altitude sickness.

CARSON
I fly all the time. I don't have altitude sickness—

TERLE
Could this be a reaction to the Malarone, like my dream—?

AUBREY
Headache? Loss of coordination? Thirsty?

MOCHE
Are you *nausea*? Can you breathe?

CARSON
Shut yer cakehole! I'm dry as a nun's nasty, but other than that—

AUBREY
Argumentative—isn't that a symptom?

MOCHE
Some water—

TERLE gives CARSON some water.

CARSON
 I ain't bloody argumentative!
 (Drinks—a lot.)

TERLE
 Should we go back to the hotel?

AUBREY
 This can be life-threatening, can't it?

MOCHE
 Is okay, if there is water. Just mild case.

CARSON
 It's my life force!
 (They stare.)
 It's stolen by Pishtaco. Life force stored in my fat—
 (Grips love handles.)
 —See how much I've lost—fat is life—it's slipping away! We're being consumed!
 We're all in danger of being eaten!

AUBREY
 You look exactly the same
 to me.

TERLE
 I'm the one who's lost
 weight—

MOCHE
 Drink more water.
 We get coca tea,
 welcome drink—

CARSON
 I Googled Pishtaco before I left Australia.

MOCHE
 Googled?

AUBREY
 On the internet. A search.

TERLE
 Before you came—?

CARSON
 I came looking for a monster and the
 monster found us! Everybody says Pishtaco
 steals your life force in your fat. Sometimes
 by cutting it out, sometimes by just absorbing
 it by I dunno, association—

TERLE
 You mean you've just been acting
 ignorant? You've been *looking* for
 Pishtaco? *Luring* Pishtaco? Are we
 the bait?

AUBREY
 Pishtaco invented the Atkins Diet?

CARSON
 I collect monsters and Pishtaco's a new one. But I think we got too close—

MOCHE

We must go back to hotel, drink coca tea, take the nap—

CARSON

How could I take a nap after coca tea? I'd be wired!

AUBREY

You're wired now!

TERLE

I could use a good lie-down as well.
I'm knackered.

CARSON

I don't wanna lie down. I wanna get
my money's worth outta this holiday!

MOCHE

Must relax, could be dangerous—

In the midst of this cacophony, a VENDOR
appears with touristic items like tiny stuffed
llamas or stone carvings.

VENDOR

Compreme! Compre—aaaeeeeiii!

(Pointing wildly and screaming.)

¡Dios Mío! Pishtaco! Hay Pishtaco en Cusco!

VENDOR

*¿Qué haces? ¿Cómo es que traes
a ese monstruo al pueblo?*

[What are you doing bringing that
monster into town?!]

MOCHE

*No es el Pishtaco. ¡Y calla, que
me estás asustando a los turistas!*

[It's not Pishtaco! Shut up!

You're scaring my turistas!]

VENDOR

*¡Han venido a robarse toda
la grasa! ¡Hay que esconder
a los niños! [Come to steal
all our fat! Hide the children!]*

CARSON

See! I told you! It's
one of us! One of us
is Pishtaco!

AUBREY

Nobody here is
Pishtaco!
No es Pishtaco!

VENDOR

¡Gringos malvados! ¡Todos ellos son Pishtacos!
[Evil gringos! They are all Pishtacos!]

MOCHE

Puedo hacer que le arresten ¡eh!
[I could have you arrested!]

MOCHE

To the hotel! We must go!

VENDOR

*¡Al nomás verlos sé que son
Pishtacos! [I know Pishtacos
when I see them!]*

CARSON

I don't have altitude
sickness. I wanna see
Qenko, Puca Pucara—

TERLE

Oh, what a wonderful
idea!

AUBREY

Carson, you're fine, but we have to get out of here before a mob forms!

MOCHE

No argument! Back to the hotel!

MOCHE, TERLE and AUBREY drag CARSON away.

VENDOR

¡Socorro! He visto Pishtaco! ¡Ayúdenme!

CARSON

You're silly as a bagful of worms! I'm fine!

TERLE

Carson, dear, for my sake, please, let's go—

Lighting focuses on VENDOR as the others disappear.

VENDOR

¡Socorro! Se escapa el Pishtaco. ¡Escúchenme! [Somebody help me! Pishtaco is getting away! Listen to me!]

Lights out on VENDOR and up immediately on CARSON, TERLE and AUBREY at a restaurant table. CARSON is practically in a state of collapse. On the table are three small national flags: Australia, England, and the United States. The 1980s song *Maneater* plays. No one speaks for a few moments.

TERLE

Don't these flags make you nervous?

AUBREY

It's how the terrorists know who to target.

TERLE

Do you know enough Spanish to ask them to take them away?

AUBREY

I don't think so.

TERLE

Maybe we shouldn't have given Moche the evening off.

AUBREY

(Playing with a flag.)
I'm sure at one time this was charming, but now—

CARSON

I need a beer.

AUBREY

We shouldn't drink until we're used to the altitude. You especially.

CARSON

(At a SERVER passing by.)
Beer!

TERLE

Let's at least wait till we've got some food in our stomachs.

SERVER

Sí, ¿cerveza? ¿Cerveza?

CARSON

¡Sí! Por favor.

The SERVER disappears.

CARSON

According to the natives, one of us is Pishtaco.

AUBREY

According to one hysterical vendor of miniature llamas.

TERLE

I got the impression we were all suspected as fat-eating monsters.

CARSON

I Googled you.

TERLE

Googled? Us?

CARSON

Yes.

TERLE

What in the world is there on the internet about us?

AUBREY

A couple of my papers, maybe. Reviews of your shows.

CARSON

Alva.

TERLE

Beg pardon?

What?

AUBREY

CARSON

I know about Alva.

AUBREY

Who's Alva?

CARSON

You don't know?

(To TERLE.)

Been playing funny buggers with poor old Aubrey?

AUBREY

What are you talking about?

TERLE

Here we are taking care of you—

CARSON

Taking care of me? Indeed you are. Like you took care of Alva.

TERLE

You read the articles obviously. You know how it came out.

CARSON

Squeaked by the inquest, but I'm still a bit suspicious.

AUBREY

Inquest? Did someone die? This Alva? Terle, what—?

TERLE

I lived with Alva in Bath. Alva died. There was an inquest. It was horrible and of course I haven't told you about it because it was the worst thing ever in my life. Please let that be enough.

Silence for a moment.

CARSON

But how did Alva die?

AUBREY
Shut up, Carson.

CARSON
Sorry. I can't let it be.

AUBREY
I can. When Terle's ready, I'm sure—

CARSON
Terle ain't never gonna be ready. Nobody's ready to talk about—

TERLE abruptly leaves the table and disappears. Silence for a moment.

AUBREY
I don't know what you've found out poking under rocks, but to reveal it this way—

CARSON
You don't wanna know?
(AUBREY is speechless.)
You're still here. I Googled you, too. And Moche.

AUBREY
What would Moche have on the internet?

CARSON
That's a rather racist question. Or perhaps just plain snobby. I thought America was a classless society.

AUBREY
Right now I'd say it was the Australians lacking class.

CARSON
Pishtaco has sex with its victims.

AUBREY
I thought we were talking about Moche.

CARSON
According to news accounts as recent as last year. Just like any classic monster. Seductive and deadly.

AUBREY
It's not a monster—it's a metaphor!

CARSON

As you wish. But I'd talk to Terle about Alva before spending another night in the same bed.

AUBREY

(Getting up.)
Better Terle than you! You came in search of a monster because of what? Special kinship? Cause you're the monster!

CARSON

Where you going? You already ordered.

AUBREY

You eat it!

AUBREY storms out. The SERVER brings out a roasted guinea pig on a plate and sets it before CARSON. The *cuy* embraces a *chile relleno* and has a small carrot in its mouth as well as a festive hat made of half a tomato and an herbal sprig.

SERVER

Aquí está su cuy. Espero que le guste. [Here is your cuy. I hope you enjoy it.]

CARSON

Bloody hell! The poor bastard's starkers!

Lights out on CARSON and up on TERLE kneeling in prayer. Church music. AUBREY appears behind TERLE and hesitates for a moment.

AUBREY

You always...run off.
(TERLE starts and turns around.)
That's what you do. You disappear.

TERLE

Sometimes one has to.

AUBREY

I won't ask about Alva. If you want to tell me sometime, of course I want to know. But I don't *need* to know, okay?

Okay.

TERLE

But I realized that's why you left England. You ran away. From whatever happened to Alva.

AUBREY

Yes, I suppose so.
(Silence for a moment.)

TERLE

You're...not going to tell me.

AUBREY

No.

TERLE

(After a moment.)
I'm suspicious about Moche.

AUBREY

Why?

TERLE

Carson thinks Moche is Pishtaco.

AUBREY

I thought Carson thought *I* was Pishtaco.

TERLE

Moche might be a member of Sendero Luminoso, but I don't think Pishtaco. I don't believe in Pishtaco at all. But Sendero Luminoso—who better to move around the country with impunity? A tour guide! Occasionally whacking a tourist or kidnapping a nun, then back to charming, bribe-dispensing—

AUBREY

I sincerely doubt—

TERLE

Interesting phenomenon, isn't it? In a foreign country, great potential for danger, and we put our lives in the hands of a total stranger. You love it, don't you? Like your art?

AUBREY

TERLE

Why don't we go back to the hotel?
We could get something to eat, since
Carson cheated us of our guinea pigs—

AUBREY

We've given up so much control,
so much freedom! I actually feel
a little guilty being in a church—

AUBREY

I just got to the cathedral. Can I look around? I've never seen so much silver in my life.

TERLE

There's a *Last Supper* painting over there with a guinea pig as the entrée.

AUBREY

That's so cool.

TERLE

The bells are famous also.

AUBREY

Courtesy of Pishtaco?

TERLE

Take your time.

(Starting to leave.)

You know the way back to the hotel?

AUBREY

I never get lost. Except in the jungle—but not for long! Wanna show me around the cathedral? I'd get much more out of your religious perspective.

TERLE

I may have a touch of altitude sickness myself.

AUBREY

Then I'll take you back—

TERLE

No, no, this is your only chance to see the cathedral. I wouldn't deprive you—

MOCHE

(Appears.)

There you are!

TERLE

Yes, Moche—Aubrey—

AUBREY

Are you stalking us?

MOCHE

No—I was—coming to pray. I am most religious.

AUBREY

I didn't know.

TERLE

I shall be going.

AUBREY

In fact, I thought you hated the Spanish, western culture, and the church is the cornerstone of oppression—Terle, don't—

TERLE disappears.

MOCHE

I am—*¿cómo?*—paradox.

AUBREY

You weren't gonna show us this, were you?

MOCHE

I tell you—is not on itinerary.

AUBREY

But I'm the customer and I want to see it. So here I am, no thanks to you. You're supposed to be selling us an experience, and I'm not having the experience I paid for. I had to sneak in here, Terle had to sneak in here—

MOCHE

You want I call the agency and get a different guide?

AUBREY

I feel downright naughty sneaking into church—yes!

AUBREY

Yes, I want a different guide! You're fired. How 'bout that? I can do that if I'm not satisfied and I'm not. In fact, tell your tour company they're fired! We don't need a guide at all!

MOCHE

No, you need some guide, even if not me.

AUBREY

I've got plenty enough Spanish to get by for the rest of the trip, we've got our vouchers for Machu Picchu, Lake Titicaca—

MOCHE

I call for you.

AUBREY

No, we've been taken care of quite enough! I can handle it by myself. *Mi Español es muy guapo. Vamos a Machu Picchu sin tu!*

MOCHE

¡Idiota! Ni siquiera entiendes lo que digo. Vete a saber cuantos errores tontos nomás vas a cometer. ¡Recuerda que todavía estás en los Andes! ¡En mi país! ¡No es como si Perú fuera una colonia de Los Angeles!

[You idiot, you don't even understand what I'm saying. Who knows what stupid mistakes you will make. You're still in the Andes! You're still in my country. Peru is not a suburb of Los Angeles!]

AUBREY

No lo necesito! Yo leo y hablo Español suficiente. Nuestro viaje es mejor con no Moche! Mas mejor! Eres diablo! Eres un diablo muy guapo, pero somos gratis sin tu!

[It's not necessary! I read and speak enough Spanish. Our trip is better with no Moche! Much better! You are devil! You are a good-looking devil, but we are free without you!]

Their voices are suddenly drowned out by the sound of many church bells. Lights out on MOCHE and AUBREY and up on TERLE seated on a plain chair. After a moment a POLICE OFFICER appears and seats AUBREY in an adjacent chair.

TERLE

Oh, thank God. They don't speak a word of English!

POLICE OFFICER

I speak the English little!

AUBREY

I've been trying, but I only know present tense. It's very hard to tell a story. But at least I got them to talk to us in the same room.

(To the POLICE OFFICER.)

Porque somos aqui?

POLICE OFFICER

No hables Español. Hablo Inglés. There is been—ah—*asesinato*—

AUBREY

See, I know that in Spanish, but you don't know the English. *Asesinato es "murder" en Inglés.*

POLICE OFFICER
(Delighted.)
Yes, murder. Is been murder in Machu Picchu.

TERLE
(Concerned.)
Murder? Another one?

¿Asesinato cómo?

AUBREY

¿Cómo? How, you mean?

POLICE OFFICER

¡Sí!

AUBREY

Es muy brutal.

POLICE OFFICER

¿Qué?

AUBREY

Same in English: brutal. There is no—ah!—*piel*—

POLICE OFFICER

Piel. I know that. *Piel.* Hair? There is no hair?

AUBREY

No—hair is *pelo*.
(Demonstrates on arm, stroking skin.)
No piel. Piel.

POLICE OFFICER

Skin?

TERLE

Skin! Yes! I woulda got it! *No es piel.* There is no skin!

AUBREY

TERLE
Aubrey, not again.

AUBREY
¿No piel en cuerpo?

¡Sí, el cuerpo! No skin!

POLICE OFFICER

TERLE
Pishtaco followed us here. See, it's

AUBREY
¿No grasa en cuerpo, también?

certainly not Moche!

POLICE OFFICER

(Delighted to be communicating.)
Sí, no grasa!
 (Suddenly serious and suspicious.)
 How you know?

AUBREY

Leo el periódico. Veo las noticias.

POLICE OFFICER

I no believe.
 (To TERLE.)
 You free. Go.
 (To AUBREY.)
 You stay. *Más preguntas.*

TERLE

Aubrey—should I—?

AUBREY

Go. At least one of us will be out. Try to find someone who speaks English.

POLICE OFFICER

I speak the English!

TERLE leaves.

AUBREY

¡No habla Inglés!

POLICE OFFICER

¡No hables Español!

Lights out on AUBREY and the POLICE OFFICER and up on MOCHE digging furiously. TERLE appears.

TERLE

This is horrible.

MOCHE

(Stops digging.)
 Ah! You appear! Like a vision! *¡Un milagro!*

TERLE

I am appearing because we made this arrangement two days ago. There's nothing the least bit visionary or miraculous about it. This is by far the worst thing I've ever done in my life.

MOCHE

(Touching TERLE.)
I buy us time.

TERLE

Not too much—poor Aubrey is playing elementary Spanish with Machu Picchu security.

MOCHE

They let go when I tell them.

TERLE

Aubrey suspects. That's why you were fired.
(MOCHE shrugs.)
Your hands are filthy.

MOCHE

I am digging.
(Returns to hole.)
Almost done. You stand guard.

TERLE

This is illegal, unethical, and immoral.

MOCHE

That is why you like. Ah!
(Pulls a small artifact out of the hole.)
Still here!

TERLE

What is it?

MOCHE

Inca charm. Ward off Pishtaco. Defeat evil!

TERLE

So you found it—

MOCHE

Here at Machu Picchu—private excavation!

And reburied it so that—

TERLE

So you can take.

MOCHE

You mean smuggle.

TERLE

I no know that word. You take. Put in pocket, very small. Gringos they don't search so tight.

MOCHE

Very well, I'll do it.

TERLE

My vision!

MOCHE

But that is the end. We can't continue this—carnal liaison—of whatever kind—beyond my vacation anyway—but I want it to end now!

TERLE

I decide when the end. I love you.

MOCHE

Oh, you do not. You're very sexy and certainly provocative, but I doubt you've a drop of sincerity in your little *corazón*.

TERLE

I would sad to tell Aubrey—

MOCHE

Yes, I would sad that, too, obviously, my little morsel, that's why blackmail works. But you gave me this power—I won't smuggle that Inca thing unless you leave us alone immediately afterward.

TERLE

You no believe.

MOCHE

My belief does not matter. I am with Aubrey. We have a commitment.

TERLE

MOCHE

I bite. You allow.

TERLE

I don't expect you to understand the nature of our commitment. That is between myself and Aubrey. I do expect you to understand that the—biting—must stop.

(Holds out hand.)

Give me the—whatever. I'll give it to you by the snack stand outside the park, then that's the last time I want to see you. It will be poignant but brief. Okay?

MOCHE

(Handing TERLE the artifact.)

Mi corazón!

TERLE

(Looking at the artifact.)

It's Pacha Mama, isn't it? Earth Mother?

MOCHE

She protect Peru.

TERLE

If I'm caught, I'm telling the truth. I'm tired of lying. I'd rather be punished, have it all over, than keep lying.

MOCHE

You lie good.

TERLE

Yes, I've frightened myself. Snack stand.

TERLE disappears. MOCHE peers after TERLE for a moment, then peers suspiciously in another direction. Finally, MOCHE follows TERLE at a leisurely pace. After MOCHE is gone, there is a disturbance in the undergrowth and CARSON stumbles out. CARSON peers after MOCHE, then bends down to examine the hole. There is another disturbance in the undergrowth and CARSON looks toward the sound.

CARSON

Oh, fuck. No, no, stay back—

(More disturbance in the undergrowth.)
Please, no—I've heard what you do—

CARSON runs off. After a moment
AUBREY appears.

AUBREY

Terle? Is that you? The concierge at the Lodge said you came out here. Terle?
(The disturbance in the undergrowth once again.)

Terle?
(Looking into the undergrowth.)

Jesus!

A flourish of Andean instruments and a
MASKED PISHTACO appears, dancing
toward AUBREY as the music continues.

AUBREY

Pishtaco!

(PISHTACO advances, dancing and gesticulating.)
You'll not scare me with your Andean underscoring and stylized movement! This is obviously a dream or hallucination caused by the Malarone. You can't hurt me as long as I refuse to acknowledge your reality. Terle said Malarone dreams were vivid, but—
(PISHTACO grabs a handful of AUBREY'S middle.)
Ow! Fuck vivid, that hurt!

PISHTACO brandishes a knife. AUBREY
runs off. PISHTACO follows.

AUBREY

Terle! Help! *¡Ayuda! ¡Ayuda!* Terle, where are you?!

Music continues. Lights up on TERLE and
MOCHE deeply involved in something
physical, making out, making love, making
something. It's pretty sexy.

AUBREY

(Off.)
Get away from me! Get away! You don't want me! I'm not fat enough! I'm a gringo.
Let go! *¡No gordo! ¡No gordo!*

PISHTACO drags AUBREY back into
partial view, but AUBREY'S face is
obscured. As PISHTACO makes fancy

preparations to use the knife, MOCHE and TERLE'S movements echo PISHTACO'S.

AUBREY

¡Tu asesines Indios solamente! ¡Soy gring@! ¡Soy gring@!

PISHTACO throws down the knife and starts to take off the mask, still holding onto the struggling AUBREY by one foot. MOCHE prepares to bite TERLE.

AUBREY

Please no, please no, please no!

PISHTACO removes the mask, revealing that AUBREY is PISHTACO. AUBREY/PISHTACO drops "AUBREY'S" foot.

AUBREY/PISHTACO

(Terrified and confused.)
Wake up! Wake up! Wake up!

MOCHE bites TERLE. TERLE reacts. Blackout as the music is drowned out by the sound of a train whistle, followed by the sound of a locomotive engine, which quickly diminishes. Lights up on CARSON seated in one of four chairs at a table on a train. There are several Pisco Sour glasses on the table, most of them empty. CARSON, already wasted, knocks back another Pisco Sour.

CARSON

¡Camarero! ¡Camarera! Whatever! Más Pisco, por favor.

SERVER

(Appearing. Slight accent.)
I'm sorry, we are out of Pisco.

CARSON

Out of Pisco! In Peru?

SERVER

On this train we are out of Pisco.

CARSON
No Pisco on an Orient Express train? Wine?

SERVER
Also out.

CARSON
Don't tell me no beer!
(SERVER just stares.)
No beer?!

SERVER
No beer for you.

CARSON
Fuck!

SERVER disappears as TERLE and
AUBREY appear from another direction,
helping each other walk.

AUBREY
(Also drunk.)
I don't get it. I thought we were acclaimed—occluded—acc—acc—

TERLE
(Not quite as drunk.)
Acclimatized!

They fling themselves into the chairs
opposite CARSON.

CARSON
I'm not acclimatized, but I was raped!

AUBREY AND TERLE
Raped?!

CARSON
By a llama.

AUBREY
No way!

TERLE
 Forgive me if I'm a bit skeptical.

CARSON
 At Machu Picchu.

AUBREY
 I missed all the fun at Machu Picchu. Stuck for half a day interrogated in pidgen English—

TERLE
 And pidgen Spanish—

AUBREY
 My Spanish is good!

CARSON
 Cooee! I was raped by a llama. I'm only telling you this 'cause I'm pissed as a fart.

TERLE
 Very well. How did this unfortunate coupling occur?

CARSON
 I saw it following me around the ruins, then when I had my back turned—

AUBREY
 A llama stalker!

CARSON
 He went up on his hind legs and wrapped his forelegs around my waist!

TERLE
 What did you do?

CARSON
 I walked away, briskly. I was afraid to turn around in case it decided to spit.

AUBREY
 Were you...safe?

CARSON
 I almost took a willy and you're poking borak at me.

AUBREY
 Somebody poked something! You're not preggers, are you?

CARSON
Here I am seeking some solace—

TERLE
Aubrey, take it down a notch.

AUBREY
Imagine the offspring—Llama Man! Able to spit over tall buildings in a single luge!
There's a new monster for you!

CARSON
Get a rat up ya!
(Jumping up.)
I'll get stuck into you!
You want a barney?

TERLE
Let's not provoke each other, please!
(Intervening.)
Without Moche, we're completely
dependent on each other!

AUBREY
This Pisco's good! I can't understand a word you're saying!

TERLE
Oh, I found out the most interesting thing about Moche!

CARSON
What?

AUBREY
Moche is out of our lives. I don't give a whit. Or a shit. Not one little bit.

TERLE
Moche makes such a big deal about
the Spanish this and the Spanish that—
how evil the Spanish were and
everything—but guess what?

AUBREY
So you can suck my tit.

CARSON
You silly git.

CARSON
What?

TERLE
Moche doesn't have a drop of Indian
blood! Pure criolla--

AUBREY
My left armpit.
Criollo—

CARSON
I didn't think Creole was pure anything.

TERLE
Criolla means born here of Spanish blood. Mestizo means of mixed blood. But Moche is
100% Spanish descent!

AUBREY
How'd you hear that?

CARSON
Pillow talk.

TERLE
In Cuzco. I forgot to tell you. Isn't that funny? Ironic, at least?

AUBREY
No, not a bit.

CARSON
Don't pitch a fit!

CARSON and AUBREY high-five each other.

AUBREY
(To CARSON.)
You're quite a wit!

TERLE
If you don't stop rhyming instantly, I shall leave.

AUBREY
You always leave. Terle always leaves. Terle left England. When Alva—hey!—you tell me. Terle won't tell me—how did Alva die?

TERLE
Aubrey, there's a reason I didn't tell you. Please just leave it alone.

AUBREY
Your reason, not my reason!

CARSON
It was suicide.

AUBREY
Really? How?

TERLE
Carson, there's nothing binding us together at this moment but distant genes. It's fragile as it is—

AUBREY
How, goddamit?

Self immolation.

CARSON

TERLE
It was an accident, not suicide!
It was horrible and I'm the one
who found the body, since you're
so avid to know!

AUBREY
Fire? Alva torched—

AUBREY
You found—?

TERLE
Yes. I was very young and came home to—

CARSON
Was there any—skin—left?

TERLE
No, there was no skin.

CARSON
No fat?

TERLE
There was no nothing. Nothing of Alva, just bare, bloody, flesh—

CARSON
Just like Pishtaco's victims—

TERLE
Yes, that's right, Carson, I'm Pishtaco! I lurk in the bushes raping poor little Peruvians
and skinning them alive! I steal their life force, I eat their fat in great gobs—

CARSON
Is Moche your next victim?

TERLE
Moche is halfway back to Lima by now—

CARSON
Since you always root with your victims—

TERLE
What are you talking about?

CARSON

Root! I think the American equivalent is “fuck.” You fuck with your victims.

AUBREY

Fuck? In the figurative or literal sense?

TERLE

Carson, do shut up.

CARSON

Fuck in the *clitoral* sense!

AUBREY

Terle doesn't *have* a clitoris.

TERLE

Not one word more—!

CARSON

Let me say this so you can grasp it:

(American accent.)

Terle's been fucking Moche the whole trip.

AUBREY

(After a moment of silence.)

And you didn't share?

TERLE

Aubrey, it's over, we're on holiday, we say that's okay—

AUBREY

We're not on holiday, we're on *honeymoon!* Which you insisted on taking! This is so—unbalanced!

TERLE

I insisted because you needed a distraction. Bitter about your layoff—

AUBREY

You used to admire me—admire!—was it just for my job? Saving the world one slime-mold at a time?

TERLE

We're on honeymoon to save whatever this is that we have, call it a marriage, call it a confederation—

AUBREY

Confederation! That's about right! There hasn't been passion for—

TERLE

Oh, I am so sick of hearing about passion, there has to be passion! We had tenderness! Passion is bullshit! It flares and it's over, fades to tenderness, that's natural—

AUBREY

And tenderness fades to nothing!

TERLE

Not nothing! I gave up a huge commission for this trip. The biggest yet, and when we get back it will be too late, but I gave it up for you—talk about sucking the fat out of a person—!

AUBREY

Don't lay that on me! You're the guilty party! Don't tell me about *your* sacrifice!

TERLE

For you, Aubrey—

TERLE

After Alva, I couldn't risk another suicide—

AUBREY

Suicide?

TERLE

You've been depressed—you sleep too much, you drink too much—*really* depressed—!

AUBREY

I sleep late because I no longer *have* to go to work! I drink because I *can*!

TERLE

It's harder and harder to take care of you—

AUBREY

Take care of me? By schtupping Moche?

TERLE

I have to do something to offset, counterbalance the bad energy—

AUBREY

Yeah, that'll keep me from contemplating suicide—counterbalance my bad energy?!

AUBREY hands TERLE an envelope.

AUBREY

Here, save yourself while you still can from my evil vibe. These are your vouchers for the rest of the trip. You don't even need Spanish—just shove them at the desk clerks—

TERLE

What are you doing?

AUBREY

Or call the agency and have them send Moche back to get you for a special one-on-one tour.

You're leaving me—

TERLE

TERLE
—Alone in Peru—

AUBREY

I'm leaving you, yes, that's right,
not just in Peru but leaving you
altogether and for good.

Go on, give it a burl!

CARSON

Shut up!

TERLE AND AUBREY

You opened this can of worms!

AUBREY

Did you want me to lie?

CARSON

How about just piss off? No need to make our life your business.

TERLE

Lives! Plural! Separate!

AUBREY

AUBREY runs off.

(After a moment.)
Are you chasing after?

CARSON

I don't...know what to do. *I'm* the one who leaves. Aubrey never—

TERLE

Can't get very far. We're on a fuckin' train. I'll help you.

CARSON

(Getting up.)
Like you've helped thus far? No thank you very much! Them as go looking for
monsters always find 'em! Look no further!

TERLE

CARSON

You're coming back, right?

(As TERLE lurches off.)

I'm not negotiating this bloody country without somebody! You redundanted the guide now you're stranding me in the never never!

Lighting change creates a pool of illumination for CARSON, who stands, staggers, then suddenly kneels. Andean music.

CARSON (Cont.)

Fuck! I'm rotten as a chop! I could very well spew. Abandoned! Rejected! Alone in the Andes! Now that Pater's gone there's no one. He's delivered to Nazca, but where am I? Thought if I found Pishtaco—confronted the monster—

(Produces a gun.)

Pishtaco's not invulnerable, so as long as I have this—you can buy anything in Peru—or should I just get a flight from Puno to Lima and home?

A KALLAWAYA appears and ceremonially scatters coca leaves on the ground. The KALLAWAYA is a folk medicine doctor of Aymara descent and is so elderly and ambiguously dressed that his or her sex is a mystery.

CARSON

(No longer drunk.)

Where should I go?

The KALLAWAYA kneels to study the coca leaves in silence. Lights up elsewhere on AUBREY viewing Catholic art, accompanied by Catholic music which overpowers the Andean music. AUBREY refers between a guidebook and the art. Suddenly MOCHE appears with AUBREY.

AUBREY

¡Vamos! You were fired.

MOCHE

I am not working.

AUBREY

I am at the tail end of the world's worst vacation and trying desperately to enjoy some particle of it in solitude with these bloody saints.

MOCHE

Santiago. The Moor Killer.

AUBREY

Almost as bloody as...Pishtaco!

(Singing.)

I'm being followed by a Pishtaco, Pishtaco, Pishtaco!

AUBREY

(Singing.)

If I ever lose my fat

A little this and a little that

If I ever lose my fat

Way-hey-hey-hey-hey-hey-hey

I won't have to sweat no more

MOCHE

Is not amuse! We are in a church!

Silence, please, and respect! You

will be remove! Deported! I am

not here to protect you. I am not

here at all! I never followed. You

only must know to find Terle!

AUBREY

What's wrong with Terle? No, I don't want to know. Sometimes you're best not knowing. Like Terle's art—no control. Not like science. We'll never find out who Pishtaco is, will we? It could be me and I wouldn't even know it.

MOCHE

I am to say you should find. Terle loves you.

AUBREY

Stop it. Don't! You're the last person

I want telling me that! Get out of here!

Now! Or I'll start screaming right here in church and get a stigmata or something.

Get out!

MOCHE

Loves only you. You must go back.

I know Terle's itinerary. You must to find Terle!

Defeated, MOCHE disappears. Deflated, AUBREY stares at the art without seeing. Lights up on a different area, with TERLE staring at something. MOCHE appears with TERLE.

MOCHE

Sacred rock.

TERLE

Yes, it looks sacred.

MOCHE

Name of Lake Titicaca comes from this rock. *Titi* is Aymara word for wild cat, and *caca* is Quechua for rock. The ancients saw the eyes of the cat in the sacred rock and the lake is *Titicaca*—

TERLE

Please stop. You're no longer my guide.

TERLE

Why are you following me? We're done.

MOCHE

Aubrey is gone.

TERLE

If I am alone, I prefer to be alone. I do not need someone. I wanted Aubrey, but very well, that hasn't worked out possibly due to my bad energy or somesuch curse. I neither need nor want you. I'm sorry, that's cold, perhaps even monstrous, but that's how I feel after my perfectly satisfying life has been drained away with deliberation and intent.

MOCHE

These are not words I know. You are at highest elevation on your trip—thirty-eight hundred meters. Take caution. Madness is a symptom of *soroche*.

TERLE

I'm not mad, I'm angry. Impatient, perhaps, that this should all be over.

MOCHE

Impatient, you die.

TERLE

Perhaps, so if you don't mind, I'd like a sacred moment alone with this rock. No one asked you to come calling.

MOCHE

Aubrey did.

They stare at each other a moment, then MOCHE disappears. TERLE sinks to the ground crying.

KALLAWAYA

Uro.

CARSON

Euro? I've got dollars and soles and bolivianos, but no Euros. I'm from Australia, not England.

KALLAWAYA

Las Islas de los Uros.

CARSON

Las—?

KALLAWAYA

Islas. De. Los. Uros.

CARSON

Sorry, but I'm not getting you. Is that a place?

KALLAWAYA

Islands. Uros Islands. *Las islas flotantes.*

CARSON

Flotantes? Flotante? Floating? Like the French?

KALLAWAYA

Sí. Islands of the Floating.

MOCHE appears in isolated light with AUBREY and hands AUBREY the Pacha Mama figurine from Machu Picchu. TERLE dries tears and stands.

CARSON

I should go there?

AUBREY

I'll shriek! I'll writhe! I'll have a seizure!

KALLAWAYA

Sí.

MOCHE

Have this. Terle ask that you take.

CARSON

Where are they? On Lake Titicaca?

AUBREY

What is it?

KALLAWAYA

(Pointing in the distance.)

Sí. Lago Titicaca. Es su destino.

MOCHE

Pacha Mama. Very sacred. guardian of Lake Titicaca. Terle smuggle for you.

CARSON

How do I get there? Hydrofoil?

KALLAWAYA
Hydrofoil. *Si.*

CARSON
And what is it called again?

KALLAYWAYA
Las Islas de los Uros.

The Floating Islands.

AUBREY
Terle smuggled? Goody-two-shoes
Terle smuggled?

MOCHE
Terle has two shoes...yes...

AUBREY
Where is Terle?

KALLAWAYA AND MOCHE

With a flourish of Andean music, a lighting change unites the three isolated areas into one large area with reeds thickly strewn upon the stage. The KALLAWAYA has disappeared. AUBREY, CARSON, and TERLE stand somewhat apart from each other, nervous. MOCHE is with AUBREY.

Together! Like old times!

MOCHE

CARSON
Let's hope this doesn't mean another Pishtaco murder like old times!

MOCHE
Pishtaco has no power on lake sacred to Pacha Mama. Islands made of reeds to float on Titicaca—

AUBREY
Quit!

CARSON
Leave well enough!

TERLE
Stop that, please!

AUBREY
I'm most grateful you brought me here if it means getting back with Terle, but you've been a barely competent tour guide this whole trip, contradicting my very comprehensive guidebook, taking us places of dubious authenticity—

VENDOR
(Appearing, with sale items.)
¡Comprenme! ¡Comprenme!

MOCHE
The islands float! No fake!

AUBREY

But indeed they are. They only exist to cater to tourists. The Uros Indians abandoned floating islands decades ago.

(Referring to the VENDOR.)

This poor soul doesn't live out here on these mats of rushes freezing at night, but paddles home to Puno or wherever and then beats the tour boats back here every morning after stocking up with *tchotchkes* from a factory in Lima or Juliaca.

VENDOR

Not from factory! I make!

MOCHE

(To VENDOR.)

No te preocupes. Yo me encargo de ellos. [Don't worry about them. I'll handle them.]

VENDOR

(Shrugs.)

¡Comprenme!

TERLE

But none of that's the point, is it?

(To AUBREY.)

You asked me to meet you, so here I am.

(To MOCHE.)

Thank you. That will do.

AUBREY

(Producing the amulet.)

And thank you for this.

TERLE

What's that?

CARSON

This is none of my affair, of course, just that everyone's all aggro with me and I'd just as soon see none of you again, so I wish you'd quit horning in on my vacation—

AUBREY

The amulet you smuggled for me.

TERLE

That wasn't for you. Moche took it. Give it back! It's hot property—cultural patrimony—the government'll nab it at customs—

AUBREY

Not for me?

(To MOCHE.)

Is this set-up? So we'd get stuck here—
so you could have Terle just a little
longer—

TERLE

This wouldn't be the first set-up,
you don't even know about Machu
Picchu!

AUBREY

You mean our arrest? Those *hours* of
interrogation were just a set-up?

Is this even real?

Yes. I excavate. Privately.

Illegally.

Yes.

Where?

At Machu Picchu. While you were being interrogated.

You're an absolute monster.

I am repent.

MOCHE

I intend for Aubrey from beginning—

CARSON

The Kallawaya told me to come—
something about my destiny—

MOCHE

No, is sincere gift. You want, you deserve!

CARSON

You know, I could've seen this kind of
donnybrook without leaving home—

AUBREY

MOCHE

TERLE

MOCHE

AUBREY

TERLE

AUBREY

MOCHE

AUBREY

Repent. You mean *repentant*. And I won't believe that for a second. Terle, this is just
another fake Pacha Mama like the millions of others in Peru! In fact, I bet we can find—
(Heads aggressively toward the VENDOR.)

VENDOR

(Shying away.)
¡Dios Mío!

AUBREY

Never mind, I'm sure it's instantly replaceable—

AUBREY suddenly throws the tiny figurine
as far as possible.

MOCHE
No, is real!

VENDOR
¡Madre de Dios!

TERLE
Aubrey, don't!

CARSON
Maybe it's not fake!

AUBREY

Too late!

They watch the arc of the thrown figurine.
A tiny splash is heard in the distance as the
figurine lands in the lake.

AUBREY

If it's real, it's back where it belongs, in the mysterious mists of mystery, the murky
history of Peru. If it's fake, it will amuse the giant frogs of Lake Titicaca.

MOCHE

It is real. I found it years ago at Machu Picchu. Kept it hidden. *Es auténtica.*

VENDOR

Es sagrada. Es la Pacha Mama.

Sound of distant thunder.

AUBREY

Then perhaps we're even. I threw away your priceless ancient artifact and you stole my
brand new marriage.

CARSON

Fair enough. Both were already lost.
(They all stare at CARSON.)

Am I wrong? I've been observing closely. Not by choice, mind you!

AUBREY

(Advancing on CARSON.)
You know, I've had just about enough Aussie wit—

AUBREY'S foot slips through the reed matting, getting stuck.

CARSON

Ready for a dust-up, are you? That's a laugh!

AUBREY

(Trying to wrench free.)
I've been ready for two weeks! And nobody's out here to stop me.

TERLE

Aubrey, be sensible. Fisticuffs?

CARSON

You gotta pull your plates outta the floor first, mate!

Suddenly AUBREY'S leg is pulled in even deeper, up above the knee. Thunder again, this time closer.

AUBREY

Hey! Terle, give me a hand, will you?

TERLE

Is that a storm coming? Isn't that dangerous on a lake like this?

CARSON

(Laughs.)
Yeah, rough as guts, you are! Can't even walk! Come on! Skin me! Take my fat!

MOCHE

Storm is deadly on Lake Titicaca, if you are not prepared.

AUBREY

Terle!

CARSON

(Singing.)
I'm being followed by a Pishtaco, Pishtaco, Pishtaco—

TERLE

(Heading toward AUBREY.)
Aubrey, for heaven's sake! Just pull yourself—

Suddenly there is a gunshot. For a moment everyone is stunned, then realizes that no one is hurt and the VENDOR has fired the shot.

Hey, where did—
(Pats self down.)
That's mine!

CARSON

No help. *Es sagrad@.*

VENDOR

What's sacred?

AUBREY

Tu.

VENDOR

Me?

AUBREY

Eres sacrifici@.

VENDOR

Thunder, closer still. As they stare at the vendor, AUBREY is jerked down further into the reed mat, as far as the waist. TERLE cries out.

VENDOR

Sacrifici@ del lago. Para Pacha Mama!

AUBREY

(Struggling to get free.)
Something's got me! Something grabbed me! Terle, help!

TERLE

(Heads toward AUBREY again.)
Just give me your—

VENDOR

(Firing the gun in the air again.)
No! *¡No lo ayudes!* No help!

TERLE freezes.

AUBREY

What do you mean, no help!? If I get sucked in any further, I could drown!

MOCHE

I cannot stop gun!

(To VENDOR.)

¡¿Estás loc@?! ¡Has baleado a mi turista, cabrón(a)! [Are you crazy? You actually shot my turista!]

VENDOR

(Looking confused.)

Otro sacrificio al Lago! [Another sacrifice for the lake!]

With a sudden jerk, only AUBREY'S head and flailing arms are visible above the reed matting.

AUBREY

Oh, Terle, please! Please, help me!
Moche, I'm sorry about the amulet—

TERLE

For God's sake, Aubrey, give me
your hand—

As TERLE reaches for AUBREY, the VENDOR aims the gun, but MOCHE jumps on the VENDOR and the shot goes wild. TERLE gets AUBREY'S hands.

AUBREY

Thanks, Terle, oh, thank
you! Quick, just pull--

TERLE

Missed! But I've got you!

MOCHE

¡A ese no! ¡A ese no!
[Not that one! Not
that one!]

AUBREY is pulled down out of sight and TERLE'S arms are pulled deep into the matting. MOCHE continues wrestling with the VENDOR.

TERLE

Aubrey, don't let go! Please hang on!
Moche, help! I can't do this alone!
Hurry, please! Aubrey's completely under
water down there!

VENDOR

*¡Tengo que detenerlos a todos! [I
have to stop them all!]*

MOCHE

*¡No, no, no, ese me gusta a mí! ¡Te
voy a matar! [No, no, no! I love that
one! I will kill you!]*

Another jerk and TERLE'S head and
shoulders disappear into the matting.

VENDOR

¡O todos los gringos, o ninguno! No está permitido salvar a nadie que se esté ahogando en el lago. [It's all the gringos or none! If one goes in the lake, then none can save them!]

MOCHE

¡No todos son Pishtacos! [They're not all Pishtacos!]

VENDOR

¡Si, todos son Pishtacos! ¡Todos son monstruos!

TERLE is pulled further into the island. The VENDOR stops struggling to watch in satisfaction.

VENDOR

Se los ha llevado a todos. [She has taken them all.]

MOCHE

(Turning to look.)
Terle! Not Terle!

MOCHE grabs TERLE'S legs and pulls.

VENDOR

Es demasiado tarde. Ya no hay remedio. [It is too late. It will do no good.]

MOCHE

Esto no es lo que tenía en mente.
¡En absoluto! [This is not what I intended! Not at all!]

VENDOR

La Pacha Mama ya tiene su sacrificio. Pasó lo que tenía que pasar. [Pacha Mama has her sacrifice. That's the way it should be.]

With a mighty pull, MOCHE pries TERLE from the hole. TERLE pops out with a soaking wet head and torso—and no AUBREY. TERLE gasps for air.

MOCHE

You're safe! Terle, you're okay.

TERLE

(Gasping.)
Aubrey! Where is—Aubrey—?

Shhhh. Shhh.

MOCHE

(Trying to reach for the hole in the matting.)
Aubrey's still—down there—!

TERLE

(Restraining TERLE.)
It's too late. Too late.

MOCHE

I felt—hands—cold hands—Aubrey slipped through mine—

TERLE

Lo siento. I am sorry, Terle.

MOCHE

We have to—try—

TERLE

The VENDOR goes to CARSON'S body
and studies it.

Aubrey is under the island where there is no air. Too long. Too late.

MOCHE

I tried—

TERLE

Yes, you do. You do all you can.

MOCHE

(VENDOR)
Nunca encuentran los cadáveres de los que se lleva la Pacha Mama. [They never find
the bodies Pacha Mama claims.]

VENDOR

Cold. So cold.

TERLE

Yes, the lake is too cold.
(Rubbing TERLE.)
You are cold. I warm you.

MOCHE

VENDOR

Pero este(a) haría una momia muy guapa ¿no crees? Si le—

(Gestures.)

—Aprieto la cabeza así— [But this one would make a good mummy, don't you think? If I—squeeze the head?]

The VENDOR covers CARSON'S body with a colorful native fabric.

MOCHE

I warm you and keep you safe. Take you back to U.S., to England, where no one believes in Pishtaco.

El Condor Pasa begins to play and the VENDOR begins to dance around CARSON'S covered body.

TERLE

It's me, isn't it? I'm Pishtaco. Everything happens around me, never to me.

MOCHE

You're not Pishtaco. There is no Pishtaco!
Just bad people. That is the truth!
You are the good one!

TERLE

I'm the one who should've been sacrificed. Not Carson. Not Aubrey.

MOCHE

I am sorry. This never happen. Never. I apologize for my country.

MOCHE strokes TERLE as the VENDOR dances.

The End