

A SPY AT AMOZOC

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GROUP: (As the curtain opens, a group of girls is chatting among themselves – in the “town square” setting.)

ANITA: COME ON, GIRLS! WE HAVE TO PRACTICE OUR DANCE FOR TEACHERS’ DAY.

BEATRIZ: WHY DON’T WE DO “LAS CHAPANECAS?” I LIKE THAT DANCE A LOT.

ANITA: ALL RIGHT! YOU GIRLS STAND OVER HERE (pointing) ... AND YOU (other) GIRLS STAND OVER THERE. READY?

DANCE *Las Chapanecas – (or : La Raspa)*

(Close curtain)

(Narrators at podium outside of curtain; Slides on projection screen)

MARIA: (Narrating with Slide #1)

BY THE NEXT MORNING, THE FRENCH FORCES HAD ARRIVED AND TAKEN OVER THE WHOLE TOWN. THEIR NEXT TARGET WAS ... PUEBLA!

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DORA: (Narrating with Slide #2)

ANITA'S FAMILY WAS AMONG THOSE WHO WERE FORCED TO GIVE THE FRENCH OFFICERS A PLACE TO STAY FOR THE NIGHT. IN THE MORNING, THEY FOUND THEMSELVES HAVING TO SERVE BREAKFAST TO THE INVADERS, WHETHER THEY LIKED IT OR NOT.

(Curtain opens to breakfast scene.)

FRENCH MAJOR: GENERAL, REMEMBER THAT THE MEXICANS HAVE TWO FORTS AT THE TOP OF GUADALUPE HILL. THERE'S FORT LORETO AT THE WEST END, AND FORT GUADALUPE OVER TO THE EAST. WE MUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO GET CAUGHT BETWEEN THEM.

FRENCH COLONEL: WHY DON'T WE ATTACK AT DAWN ON MAY FIFTH? HALF OF OUR FORCES CAN CIRCLE TO THE NORTH AND ATTACK THE WESTERN FORT, AND THE REST WILL CIRCLE AROUND TO THE SOUTH TO ATTACK THE EASTERN FORT. THE TOWN WILL BE ENTIRELY OURS BY NOON.

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GEN. LORENCEZ: GENTLEMEN, LET ME READ TO YOU FROM THIS LETTER WHICH I AM SENDING TO OUR EMPEROR, NAPOLEON THE THIRD. YOUR MAJESTY, ... “WE ARE SO SUPERIOR TO THE MEXICANS IN RACE, IN ORGANIZATION, IN DISCIPLINE, IN MORALITY AND IN REFINEMENT OF SENSIBILITIES ... THAT AS OF THIS MOMENT ... I AM THE MASTER OF MEXICO!” *(Actual quote from historical records.)*

FRENCH OFFICERS: (Applause, cheers, backslapping, etc.)

MARIA: (At podium) LITTLE DID THE FRENCH OFFICERS REALIZE IT, BUT ANITA WAS LISTENING TO THEIR CONVERSATION AND WAS ABLE TO LEARN WHAT THEY HAD IN MIND.

ANITA: MOM, I CAN UNDERSTAND MOST OF WHAT THEY’RE SAYING. THEY ARE PLANNING THE BATTLE TO CONQUER PUEBLA FIRST THING TOMORROW.

MAMÁ: OH, MY GOODNESS! DON’T SAY A WORD! IF THEY THINK WE KNOW THE SLIGHTEST LITTLE THING, THEY COULD REALLY HURT US.

ANITA: (In Spanish) Sí, MAMÁ.

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(Anita and family return to serving the French officers.)

(Curtain closes.)

DORA:

(At podium) THE QUESTION WAS ... NOW, HOW COULD ANITA GET WORD TO THE MEXICAN FORCES AT PUEBLA TO TELL THEM WHAT THE FRENCH WERE PLANNING TO DO? SHE DECIDED TO ASK HER BROTHER, JOSÉ, FOR ADVICE.

(Anita and José are outside the curtain, at the opposite end of stage from the podium.)

ANITA:

OH, JOSÉ, I DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO. I'VE HEARD THE PLANS BEING MADE BY THE FRENCHMEN, AND I BELIEVE THEY'RE GOING TO ATTACK PUEBLA FROM TWO DIRECTIONS WHEN THE SUN COMES UP TOMORROW MORNING.

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JOSÉ: BUT ANITA, THEY'RE WATCHING EVERYBODY VERY CAREFULLY. I DON'T KNOW HOW WE CAN GET WORD TO GENERAL ZARAGOZA. IT WOULD BE VERY DANGEROUS TO MAKE ANY KIND OF MOVE. DON'T DO ANYTHING ALL BY YOURSELF, PLEASE!

(Prepare projection screen; curtain is still closed.)

MARIA: (With slide of Ft. Loreto) SO THE PLAN WAS TO ATTACK PUEBLA FROM TWO DIRECTIONS. HALF OF THE FRENCH FORCES WOULD CIRCLE THE HILL AND ATTACK FORT LORETO AT THE WEST END, ...

(Slide of Ft. Guadalupe): AND THE OTHER HALF WOULD ATTACK FORT GUADALUPE AT THE EAST END. ONCE THE FORTS WERE CAPTURED – THE OFFICERS THOUGHT – PUEBLA WOULD BELONG TO THE FRENCH.

(Curtain opens to “outdoor” scene on a darkened stage.)

(In silence, Anita tiptoes carefully, looking around, holding a candle or lantern.

(She has a shawl over her head and carries a rope and a blanket.)

(After about 15-20 seconds, she swings the candle or lantern to the left and right in a 1-2-3 count. On “three,” a spotlight suddenly comes on as two French soldiers carrying rifles jump out and yell “stop” or “halt.” Simultaneously, all the girls backstage scream at the top of their lungs! (This is very effective with elementary school audiences!)

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SOLDIER #1 (Shouting) HALT! STOP RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE! DON'T TAKE ANOTHER STEP!

SOLDIER #2 WHO ARE YOU? WHY ARE YOU OUT SO LATE AT NIGHT? STATE YOUR BUSINESS!

ANITA: OH, MY GOODNESS! YOU'VE SCARED ME! WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME? I DON'T KNOW WHAT I CAN DO.

SOLDIER #1 (Grabbing her by the arm) YOU'RE UNDER AREST!

JOSÉ: (Running into the scene) JUST A MINUTE, YOU GUYS! GET YOUR HANDS OFF MY SISTER.

SOLDIER #2 WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT SHE'S DOING OUT AFTER MIDNIGHT LIKE THIS.

JOSÉ: ANITA! WHY AREN'T YOU OVER AT GRANDMA'S FARM HELPING HER WITH THE COW? DON'T YOU KNOW THAT THE COW'S GOING TO HAVE A CALF AT ANY MOMENT? THEY NEED HELP IMMEDIATELY!

ANITA: THAT'S WHAT I WAS TRYING TO TELL THESE SOLDIERS.

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JOSÉ: GENTLEMEN, PLEASE LET MY SISTER GO. IF SHE DOESN'T HELP OUR GRANDMOTHER, THE POOR COW MIGHT DIE.

(Curtain begins to close as Anita, José and the soldiers start to leave.)

DORA: (At podium) THE FRENCH SOLDIERS HAD THEIR DOUBTS, BUT THEY LET ANITA GO FREE. AFTER ALL, THEY HAD TO MOVE ON TO MORE IMPORTANT BUSINESS IN PUEBLA WITHIN A COUPLE OF HOURS. A LITTLE GIRL AND HER GRANDMOTHER'S COW WERE NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT.

(Curtain opens to 'Fort Loreto' scene on a dimly-lit stage.)

MARIA: (At podium) IT WOULD BE A GOOD FOUR TO FIVE HOURS' RIDE BY HORSEBACK ALONG THE ROAD TO PUEBLA, BUT ANITA KNEW SHE COULD MAKE IT. IT WAS NOT A SICK COW BUT A FAST HORSE WAITING FOR HER AT GRANDMA'S FARM, AND BEFORE DAYBREAK SHE ARRIVED AT FORT LORETO ON THE HILL OVERLOOKING PUEBLA.

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(Anita arrives at one end of the stage; “Mexican soldiers” run from the other end.)

MEX. SOLDIER #1 HALT! WHO GOES THERE?

ANITA: PLEASE! I NEED TO SEE GENERAL ZARAGOZA
IMMEDIATELY. I KNOW ALL THE PLANS FOR THE
FRENCH ATTACK.

MEX. SOLDIER #2 WAIT RIGHT THERE, YOUNG LADY.

(He goes to fetch “General Zaragoza.”)

(Soldier returns with “Zaragoza,” who appears to be talking with Anita.)

(As Anita and Zaragoza talk, all the boys for the Machete Dance arrive on stage.)

DORA: (At podium) IT TOOK JUST A FEW SECONDS FOR
ZARAGOZA TO SIZE-UP THE SITUATION. BY THE TIME
ANITA HAD FINISHED, THE GENERAL WAS READY FOR
ACTION.

ZARAGOZA: EVERYBODY UP, GUYS! WE’VE JUST LEARNED ABOUT
THE PLANS OF THE FRENCH. ARE YOU READY FOR THE
ATTACK?

BOY DANCERS: (Dressed as soldiers, waving machetes and shouting)
¡ OLÉ ! ¡ ARRIBA ! ¡ ÁNDALE ! ¡ VAMONOS !

Dance *Dance of the Machetes*

ZARAGOZA: ARE WE READY, GUYS?

BOY DANCERS: ¡ SÍ, SEÑOR ! ¡ VAMONOS ! ¡ ÁNDALE ! ¡ ARRIBA !

(As the curtain closes, they all run off stage, shouting with machetes raised. Backstage, they immediately deposit their “machetes” into a waiting box, under the supervision of an appointed adult.)

(Slides on projection scene for the following narration; recorded sounds of cannon-fire in the background as “Maria” and “Dora” tell the story.)

MARIA: (With Slide #1 – Cannon in position at wall.)

JUST BEFORE NOON THE NEXT DAY, CANNONS BOOMED AND SHOTS RANG OUT. THE FRENCH HAD BEGUN THEIR ATTACK AGAINST THE TWO FORTS AT THE TOP OF GUADALUPE HILL.

DORA: (With Slide #2 – Steep uphill view of Ft. Guadalupe.)

FOR SIX TERRIBLE HOURS, THE BATTLE RAGED ON AND ON. THREE TIMES THE FRENCH TRIED TO CLIMB THE HILL AT PUEBLA, AND THREE TIMES THEY WERE TURNED BACK. SUDDENLY, A FEROCIOUS, BLINDING THUNDERSTORM FELL OVER THE FRENCH TROOPS, INJURING SOLDIERS AND THEIR HORSES. ZARAGOZA HAD ALREADY TOLD HIS TROOPS TO SEEK SHELTER AND LET THE STORM DO ITS WORK.

MARIA: (With Slide #3 – Moat around Fort Guadalupe)

FINALLY, A FRENCH BUGLE MERCIFULLY SOUNDED “RETREAT.” MORE THAN A THOUSAND FRENCH SOLDIERS LAY DEAD ON THE HILLSIDE. THE REST OF THE FRENCH ARMY MADE ITS WAY BACK DOWN THE HILLSIDE TO A ROAD CROSSING JUST NORTH OF PUEBLA.

DORA: (With Slide #4 – Gen. Zaragoza and Cannon.)

GENERAL ZARAGOZA’S TROOPS HAD DEFEATED THE MOST POWERFUL ARMY IN THE WORLD IN A STUNNING UPSET. THE DATE: MAY FIFTH – “CINCO DE MAYO” – 1862.

(Curtain opens on “town square” scene; **remove** projection screen.)

MARIA: BACK IN AMOZOC, THE WHOLE TOWN TURNED OUT TO CELEBRATE WITH A GRAND FIESTA.

(Entire cast returns to stage, cheering and getting into place for two dances.)

Two Dances: *Jesusita en Chihuahua*

... and segue into

La Bamba

(Option: Gesture to audience to stand up, dance and clap to “La Bamba.”)

(The cast bows and waves goodbye as teachers escort students back to classes.)

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