

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

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SAMPLE - JARED NOBREGA

SCENE ONE

Lights up on the Cardoso apartment. Luiz is in the kitchen making some dinner for the family. He is enjoying himself and whistling the tune of “La, La, La”. After a moment, he steps away from the stove and begins to set the table; placemats, paper plates, plastic silverware etc. As he is doing so Gabriela opens the door in the kitchen. She is laying on the bottom bunk of the bed. She stares at Luiz until he notices.

LUIZ: Hey.

GABRIELA: *Hey...* you mind keeping the whistling down to a minimum?

LUIZ: Do you mind, well, minding your business?

GABRIELA: Yes, I do mind. It's pitchy.

LUIZ: It's whistling, of course it's pitchy.

GABRIELA: Yeah, well, it's going right through me. Giving me a *god damn* headache.

LUIZ: Hey, language.

GABRIELA: What?

LUIZ: What do you mean *what*?

GABRIELA: Oh come on, Gram can't even hear // me from here.

LUIZ: That's not the point, // Gabriela.

GABRIELA: It's not even // a swear.

LUIZ: Respect.

GABRIELA: Right. (*Beat*) Whatcha making?

LUIZ: Picadillo.

GABRIELA: Again?

LUIZ: Yes again... Why don't you help? Set the table or something.

GABRIELA: No can do.

LUIZ: Why not?

GABRIELA: I'm busy.

LUIZ: Doing what?

GABRIELA: Drawing.

LUIZ: *(Beat)* What're you drawing?

GABRIELA: Stuff.

LUIZ: Oh come on.

GABRIELA: It's private.

LUIZ: Private?

Luiz gives a disgusted look at Gabriela.

GABRIELA: What are you looking at me like that for?

LUIZ: Oh, *nothing*.

GABRIELA: *Oh*, you're so gross.

LUIZ: *What?*

GABRIELA: Get your mind out of the gutter.

LUIZ: What are you talking about?

GABRIELA: Don't try to confuse me, I know what you were thinking.

LUIZ: I wasn't thinking anything, you're the weird one here.

GABRIELA: Would you stop -

The smoke from the Picadillo causes the fire alarm to go off. Luiz takes a towel and starts to, unsuccessfully, fan the alarm.

LUIZ: SHIT.

GABRIELA: LANGUAGE.

LUIZ: GABRIELA, NOT NOW.

GABRIELA: TURN IT OFF.

LUIZ: I'M TRYING.

GABRIELA: NOT HARD ENOUGH.

LUIZ: WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?

GABRIELA: I DON'T KNOW, TAKE IT OUT OF THE WALL OR SOMETHING.

Luiz unplugs the alarm from the wall and takes out the battery.

LUIZ: Ugh.

GABRIELA: I don't know what sounds worse, your whistling or the fire alarm.

LUIZ: The fire alarm.

GABRIELA: Sure, we'll go with that. *(Beat)* I think it's your whistling.

LUIZ: Don't you have a drawing to get back to?

Luiz puts the fire alarm in the kitchen draw. Inez enters from the bedroom.

INEZ: Ó meu, Luiz, is everything alright?

LUIZ: Everything is fine gram, just... Gabriela made me burn dinner.

GABRIELA: Excuse me?

INEZ: Is it still edible?

GABRIELA: *No way*. It's gone. Done. Burnt to a crisp.

LUIZ: It's fine.

GABRIELA: Yeah to your standards, and we all know how low those are.

LUIZ: Wow... My standards are high, thank you very much.

GABRIELA: Right.

LUIZ: The food is fine.

INEZ: Bom, let's eat.

LUIZ: I'll make the plates.

INEZ: Sente-se... aqui, Gabriela.

Beat

GABRIELA: What?

INEZ: Sente-se aqui.

GABRIELA: You want me to sit?

INEZ: Yes... that is what I said.

GABRIELA: You couldn't say it in English?

INEZ: Bah.

LUIZ: You know what would make things easier, Gram?

INEZ: Quê?

LUIZ: If you taught us some Portuguese.

INEZ: No need.

LUIZ: No need?

INEZ: It's America.

LUIZ: (*Beat*) Okay and what does that have to do with anything?

INEZ: It has to do with everything.

LUIZ: That makes no sense.

INEZ: I'm your avó, it doesn't have to make sense.

GABRIELA: Isn't making sense, like, your only job as a grandmother?

INEZ: I make sense, just not in the way you think. Besides, if I teach Portuguese, then you understand everything I say and that's no good.

LUIZ: Gram likes to gossip.

INEZ: Not about you - Well... yes about you. But not Gabriela. Now come, sit, eat.

LUIZ: Where's pops?

GABRIELA: Where do you think?

LUIZ: Again?

GABRIELA: Probably.

LUIZ: Wasn't he just there this morning?

GABRIELA: Here, there, and everywhere. I can't keep track.

LUIZ: I swear he is the only one keeping that store open.

INEZ: Men cope in different ways.

LUIZ: It's no way to cope. (*sits*)

INEZ: Your avô did it.

LUIZ: Yeah, but he didn't let it run him to the ground, did he?

INEZ: No, but he let other things run him to the ground.

LUIZ: Gram!

INEZ: What?

GABRIELA: That's a little fucked up.

INEZ: Desculpa?

LUIZ: Watch it.

GABRIELA: Sorry. Messed up... that was... a little messed up.

INEZ: Oii, Gabriela, I've never heard you say such a thing.

GABRIELA: I've never heard *you* say such a thing.

INEZ: It's the truth, sometimes it's harsh. Besides, your avô would laugh at what I said, if he was around.

Luiz and Gabriela begin to eat.

INEZ: Que desrespeitoso!

LUIZ: What? -

Inez holds out her hands to pray.

LUIZ: *Heh.*

INEZ: Heh? We pray before every meal.

LUIZ: Pray to what exactly?

INEZ: LUIZ CARDOSO.

GABRIELA: Oh boy...

INEZ: Have you gone mad?

LUIZ: I haven't gone mad...

INEZ: Have you lost faith?

LUIZ: Not necessarily... it's just -

INEZ: Just...

LUIZ: I have many unanswered questions.

INEZ: Well, have you tried asking?

LUIZ: At first, yeah. But lately I feel like I've been talking to myself.

INEZ: Luiz...

LUIZ: And I've never gotten an answer. Not even a sign that someone or something was listening.

INEZ: Sometimes you have to -

LUIZ: And I deserve an answer, *we* deserve an answer, don't you think so?

INEZ: I'm sure we will get one.

LUIZ: When?

INEZ: I don't know when. But we have to keep our faith. We have to trust in him. We have to believe that he has a plan for us. And that plan -

LUIZ: A plan? I would love to know what this plan is. It's like, why ma? You know? That's it, that's one of the only questions I want an answer to. Why did our mom have to go through all of that suffering? Huh? Why did she have to be the one to go?

Why our family? Hasn't our family been through enough?

INEZ: I don't know the answer to your questions Luiz, but God has his reasons.

LUIZ: Yeah he has his reasons alright. I just don't understand why *we* have to be the ones to suffer now. Even before she passed, I felt like we couldn't get by. Living paycheck to paycheck, that was no way to live. No one should have to live wondering if they will be able to afford to put bread on the table. // Bread.

INEZ: We have plenty // of food.

LUIZ: And now it's even worse. With dad outta work, I've had to pick up second shift down at the shop and I'm looking into some freelance work -

INEZ: Nobody said life would be easy.

LUIZ: Yeah, no kidding. I just want to get ahead in life, you know? Get myself out there, get a degree. I don't know... I just want my life to mean something.

INEZ: Then go to school, make something of your life, if you want to.

LUIZ: Believe me, if I could, I would.

INEZ: Well, what's stopping you?

Marcos enters through the front door, holding a bottle in a brown paper bag.

LUIZ: Exhibit A.

INEZ: Aye.

LUIZ: You alright pops?

MARCOS: Is dinner ready?

LUIZ: I'm doing alright, too, thanks for asking.

INEZ: Yes, dinner is ready. Gabriela, why don't you go make your father a plate, por favor.

MARCOS: *(without looking at her)* Hi, Gab.

GABRIELA: Hey, dad.

LUIZ: So how much did you spend this time around?

MARCOS: Don't worry about it.

LUIZ: Right.

MARCOS: It's my money, I can spend whatever amount I want.

LUIZ: Hmm... I'm curious, I noticed a twenty missing from my wallet this morning -

MARCOS: You accusing me of // stealing?

LUIZ: I'm not accusing // you of taking anything I'm just making sure.

MARCOS: This is my home, and I'm not gonna have some kid // who doesn't know shit accusing me of taking money.

INEZ: Mar//cus!

LUIZ: Some kid? // I'm your son.

MARCOS: I have money of my // own.

LUIZ: Do you?

Gabriela hands Marcos the paper plate of food.

MARCOS: What's this?

GABRIELA: Dinner. It's burnt... but it's alright.

MARCOS: No, this floppy excuse for a plate. Go get me one from the cabinet.

LUIZ: No.

MARCOS: You're pushing it.

LUIZ: We can't dirty any more dishes right now.

MARCOS: It's a damn plate.

LUIZ: A damn plate that is gonna be sitting in the sink // until further notice.

MARCOS: Sitting in the sink? Just wash it, quit being lazy.

LUIZ: Lazy? Okay. How do you expect me to wash the plate?

MARCOS: Are you really asking me a dumb ass quest-

INEZ: Marcos, *please*. Listen.

Beat.

LUIZ: Water's out.

MARCOS: What do you mean, water's out?

Luiz opens a cabinet drawer and pulls out a letter and hands it to Marcos.

LUIZ: Check bounced.

MARCOS: Bounced.

LUIZ: Yeah... like no funds.

MARCOS: I know what bounced means.

LUIZ: Alright.

MARCOS: *(beat)* I have money.

LUIZ: Pops...

MARCOS: They're not taking it because -

LUIZ: Dad. It's alright. I paid it this afternoon. It should be running by tomorrow.

MARCOS: I... I have money.

LUIZ: I know dad.

Marcos tosses the plate of food on the counter and walks into the livingroom to lay down. Luiz stands there.

GABRIELA: I'm gonna go back to drawing. Thanks for the dinner Luiz.

Luiz begins to clean off the table. As he goes to grab Inez's plate, she grabs his hand and holds it tenderly as the lights fade.