

GIFTED*

A sample of the full-
length play

By
Rhiannon Ciara Vaughn

This is a copyrighted work submitted for review purposes only

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ROSA ALEXANDER, 34, a new age bruja type/wife of Marcus

MARCUS ALEXANDER, 35, super smart rising-star salesman/husband of Rosa

STEVEN MORRIS, 36, Marcus' Boss who knows exactly how things need to look to move ahead

EMILY MORRIS, 40, successful educator & card-carrying member of Mensa

SETTING

The home of Rosa and Marcus Alexander

PRODUCTION NOTES

There is no intermission.

ACT 1

SETTING: The home of Rosa and Marcus. We see the living room, kitchen, dining room, and bathroom on stage. It is clear that a 9 year-old child lives in the home from the art and toys in the living space. The dining table has long tapered candles in a candelabra and a fresh bouquet of flowers as the centerpiece. A large clock hangs on the wall. It is 6:30 PM.

They have many books and interesting art that represent their cultures including Mexican art and Harlem Renaissance style works. They have many records with lots of jazz and blues.

HOUSE OPENS: As the audience arrives, ROSA ENTERS from the hallway off Stage Right wearing a robe, slippers, and curlers and crosses to the kitchen to prepare dinner - she puts the enchiladas in the oven. She pulls out a salad bowl from the refrigerator. ROSA slices up an avocado, pops a piece into her mouth, and then throws the slices into the salad bowl. She seasons the salad.

ROSA straightens up as she makes her way to the bathroom and applies some makeup.

ROSA goes into the living room and begins lighting candles throughout the home. Some are regular pillar candles, others are 7-day candles with different images including Our Lady of Guadalupe. She lights some palo santo and wafts it around the house. She leaves it smoking on the dining room table. She EXITS to the bedroom.

AT RISE: ROSA ENTERS dressed up for a dinner party she's hosting. The curlers are gone from her hair. She stops in the bathroom to check her lipstick in the mirror and then crosses to the kitchen. ROSA washes her hands. She pours herself a glass of water, grabs an egg from the refrigerator, and pulls out a small box with supplies for her ritual and takes them to the Dining Room table.

ROSA lights the tapered candles on the table and then a bundle of sage. The lights begin to fade until there is just a spotlight on her. The rest of the stage is black except for the candles she has lit around the house.

ROSA pulls a journal out of the box and then metal container/bin. She ceremoniously tears a sheet of paper covered in writing from the journal. She holds it over the flame of the candle.

ROSA

I call to the energies of the full moon to grant your
cleansing power across all time, space, dimensions and
reality.

(ROSA lights the sheet of paper on
fire and drops it into the metal
bin. The spotlight dims as the fire
glows a brilliant blue and then
green and then back to yellow and
then smokes. Spotlight returns)

ROSA

Amen.

(ROSA picks up the egg and passes
it back and forth over the flame to
begin the Limpia de Huevo. She
makes the sign of the cross with
the egg at her crown as she
recites:)

ROSA

Our father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.

(ROSA sweeps the egg through her
aura starting at her crown working
her way down to her feet as she
continues:)

ROSA

Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done
on Earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespassed against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

(ROSA stands and holds the egg in front of her heart)

ROSA

Amen.

(ROSA cracks the egg on the table and drops the contents into the glass of water. She lifts up the glass to read her fortune when: ROSA suddenly covers her mouth)

ROSA

Ay Dios.

(ROSA runs into bathroom and slams the door behind her. She vomits loudly. Silence. ROSA returns to the table and picks up the glass to examine it again)

ROSA

Fuck.

(ROSA goes into the bathroom and opens the medicine cabinet and under the sink looking for something. She RENTERS the living room and checks a decorative box. She crosses to the kitchen and checks the drawers. She opens the pantry and voila! It's a Pregnancy Test. She takes it into the bathroom and closes the door behind her.

MARCUS ENTERS the front door carrying a bottle of wine.)

MARCUS

Rosa... Rosita! I have a surprise for you!

ROSA

I'll be out in a minute!

(MARCUS sniffs the air)

MARCUS

What's that smell?

ROSA

Enchiladas are in the oven!

(ROSA enters from the bathroom)

ROSA

Hi, baby. Maggie is already at Ana's for her little girls night so we can be grown ups.

(They kiss passionately until
MARCUS spots the ritual remnants.)

MARCUS

Damn, Rosa. Were you planning on scaring our guests with your bruja shit?

ROSA

I was about to clean it up. Everything is just about ready for dinner tonight.

MARCUS

It smells like magic in here.

ROSA

Thank you.

(MARCUS picks up the cup with egg)

MARCUS

No, I mean it smells like your voodoo.

(ROSA takes the cup from Marcus and
dumps the contents into the toilet
and flushes)

MARCUS

Can you just hold off on the kunda-meany shit until after my coworker leaves. You know we can't be scaring these white people.

(ROSA re-enters and clears up the rest of the ritual supplies)

ROSA

It's CU-RAN-DEIRA shit. And it had to be today. It's the full moon.

MARCUS

Oh, right. Silly me.

ROSA

Look. The room is clean. Your white people will never know.

(beat)

Marcus. I know how important this dinner is for you. You never have friends from work over.

MARCUS

I mean, I wouldn't call Steven a friend.

(ROSA gives MARCUS a peck on the cheek)

ROSA

I know.

(ROSA's timer goes off on her cell phone)

ROSA

Oh! Be right back.

(ROSA goes into the bathroom)

ROSA

(as she walks away)

Don't you need to get ready?

MARCUS

Damn, baby. Don't I look good?

ROSA (OFFSTAGE)

You know what I mean.

MARCUS

I might freshen up. Hey, I have a surprise for you.

(ROSA re-enters as though she's
seen a ghost)

MARCUS

You OK?

ROSA

Yeah...

(PAUSE)

MARCUS

Rosa...?

(ROSA snaps out of it)

ROSA

You had a surprise?

MARCUS

Oh. Yes.

(MARCUS pulls out the bottle of
wine in a big show. ROSA reads the
label)

ROSA

Awww it's the good shit.

MARCUS

Of course it is. I got you, boo.

ROSA

Why are you so good to me?

(beat)

We should hide it tonight so we don't have to share.

MARCUS

Or even better! Let's have a glass right now before they get here.

ROSA

But they're going to be here soon. I should really finish up...

(ROSA begins to set the table for four people)

MARCUS

All the more reason for us to have a glass.

(MARCUS takes the bottle into the kitchen and opens it up. He pours glasses of wine for them as Rosa prepares for dinner)

MARCUS

Oh. Rosa. I should also mention something. Remember how we talked about that school for Maggie? Willowbrook Academy.

ROSA

That crazy one that would take our daughter away from her family for no reason.

MARCUS

Well we send, they don't take. It's a boarding school. And it's for a very good reason - she would be around other gifted children. They help cultivate her and give her a leg up.

ROSA

I don't even get what that means. A leg up on what? She's doing great.

MARCUS

They just give her the attention she can't get at a public school. Maggie can focus on coding and they can help her get into schools that slide you right to the top on name alone.

(MARCUS hands ROSA the glass of wine. ROSA sets it down.)

ROSA

Yeah? Slide who?

(beat)

And at what cost? I don't want her to believe that she has to leave her family for advantages in this world. What kind of message is that?

MARCUS

It's not like that.

(MARCUS hands ROSA her wine glass again.)

ROSA

We went to great schools. From a *public school* education. Sure, we got saddled with debt but who hasn't? You know I read this great article in The Atlantic that said it's crisis that could be solved if politicians really--

MARCUS

Rosa. She doesn't have to worry about money the way we did.

(ROSA sets the wine glass down and walks away from it.)

ROSA

What about the education she gets from her cousins?

MARCUS

Who? Mari? Yeah she gets so much from the cousin who is for sure going to prison one day.

ROSA

Oh, yeah for sure. But just think of all the problem solving Maggie has to do with Mari. They are good influences on each other.

MARCUS

This is exactly why we should send her away.

ROSA

We'll talk about it, but now's not the time. We have company coming.

(MARCUS brings ROSA her wine glass again. ROSA sets it down.)

MARCUS

What's going on, Rosa? Why aren't you drinking the wine?

ROSA

I don't want any wine right now. It's not a big deal.

MARCUS

But it's your favorite.

ROSA

Jesus, you want me to drink so badly. Wait a minute. Are you trying to get me all buttered up? What's up, Marcus?

MARCUS

Well, here's the thing. That school. A member of the board is coming to dinner tonight.

ROSA

Marcus. What the FUCK. You said it was a friend from work.

MARCUS

Yes, that's true. But about that... Ok. Steven is my friend. He's also my boss.

ROSA

A la chingada!

MARCUS

But his wife, Emily, happens to be on the board of the school and Steven wanted to hook it up since I traded him my first round draft pick in our Fantasy Football League. Psssh. He wasted it on a wide receiver but at least-

ROSA

Aye, Marcus! You always do this.

MARCUS

But can't you see how I do this for my family?

ROSA

I'm not talking about your poor Fantasy Football strategy. I'm talking about how you hide things and then spring them on me at the last minute. What am I supposed to do?

MARCUS

Just listen. Hear them out. They're just coming over as friends and to talk about Emily's job. Can't we just talk?

ROSA

Well I don't have a choice now do I. They're going to be here in like five minutes.

MARCUS

Trust me, Rosa. It'll be super casual. It's just a dinner with new friends... But maybe you can try to be, you know.... Our daughter's future may be at stake.

(ROSA laughs)

ROSA

OK.

(ROSA takes a lap around the dining table while doing a deep breathing exercise. MARCUS braces himself. She grounds herself.)

ROSA

I'm just feeling a little outnumbered here. You have this thing that you want and now you're bringing in reinforcements to try to change my mind.

MARCUS

Why don't you have a little of the wine and just relax.

ROSA

Marcus. I'm telling you how I feel.

MARCUS

I hear you, Rosa.

ROSA

Well, it feels a little like you're manipulating me.

MARCUS

That's not my intention at all. It's just... sometimes you can be a little closed-minded.

ROSA

What?! I am the most open. I'm constantly around people who are different than me.

MARCUS

Yeah?

ROSA

What about Lisa? You know Lisa. She's my friend and I accept her. Sure, she won't stop wearing that pink pussy hat she knit like a whole president ago. I mean, move on! The rest of the world has! And I've mentioned racial issues of making it pink but I don't think she gets it. And even then, I still go to every march with her because she's my friend. I learn a lot from her *because* I'm open-minded. And even when she's always trying to talk about that show...the one on Tuesday nights...the one that's so obviously manipulative I don't know how people enjoy it. I can't even think of the name because it's so boring, but if I have to hear Lisa tell me *one more time* how I "just have to watch" because there's one Latina on the show... Oh. Wait. Maybe... maybe I don't like Lisa.

MARCUS

Exactly. You're a little judgemental.

ROSA

Marcus. Can you be on my side?

MARCUS

It's not even like that. I just mean that you can be stubborn. It's like you already made up your mind about this school and we're supposed to be *talking* about it.

ROSA

Yes. And we will *talk about it*. At the right time.

MARCUS

Right. When you decide it's the right time.

ROSA

I have to finish getting ready. Can you prepare the cheese plate? It's in the fridge.

MARCUS

Sure.

(ROSA circles the room straightening up whatever she can even though everything is set. MARCUS watches her for a moment and then moves to the KITCHEN to get the cheese plate)

MARCUS

You know, you might like Emily. She sounds like a cool woman.

(ROSA takes over preparing the cheese plate from Marcus)

ROSA

I don't care about that right now, Marcus. I'm mad at you.

MARCUS

I messed up. I should have told you. I'm sorry, baby.

ROSA

...

(MARCUS puts his arms around ROSA
and hugs her from behind as she
stands looking out at the audience)

MARCUS

And I will tell you next time. Even if it means you saying no
before you give it a chance.

(ROSA pushes away from MARCUS)

ROSA

Ay, Marcus. You were on the right track before that
statement.

MARCUS

I'm kidding.

ROSA

Don't play. I know it's true. I don't do all these moon
rituals to be ignorant about myself.

MARCUS

And that's exactly why I love you.

ROSA

....Apology accepted.

(ROSA gives Marcus a kiss.)

ROSA

And I'll be open to hearing these people out. I don't want to
embarrass you in front of your boss.

MARCUS

They'll see what a charmer you are and how prepared you got
Maggie to this point.

ROSA

I can keep it going, you know. If public school is that big of a problem I can homeschool again. You know I've got ideas for curriculum.

MARCUS

She's already militant enough.

ROSA

Aw. She is. I didn't even go through my militant phase until I was at least 16.

MARCUS

Oh, I've heard stories.

ROSA

Those were la raza days, man. Have you even gone through your militant phase yet?

MARCUS

You know it, baby. In college I was all about taking down the man.

ROSA

And now you are the man.

MARCUS

You gotta change the system from the inside. That's what maturity has taught me. And besides, I got to support my family. This boarding school ain't cheap.

ROSA

Another reason not to go.

MARCUS

Money will never be a reason she doesn't do something, okay. It's different for Maggie. I'll work more if I need to. I want her to have the best shot. She's so incredible and brilliant.

ROSA

She really is... and she's goofy like you.

MARCUS

And bold like you.

ROSA

We made her.

MARCUS

We did. We do great work.

(They kiss tenderly. After a moment
MARCUS pulls away and holds up his
glass of wine.)

MARCUS

Cheers to Maggie and her bright ass future.

ROSA

Cheers.

(MARCUS takes sip while Rosa
pretends.)

MARCUS

Damn, that stuff is good.

ROSA

It's because of the volcanoes.

MARCUS

Do you know why though?

ROSA

Because... You can taste the fire and drama of Mother Earth
herself?

MARCUS

That's part of it, for sure. And also it's a few things--
first the lava brings lots of minerals from Mama Earth with
it and leaves deposits in the soil. The lava deposits are
rich in magnesium, calcium, sodium, potassium, iron--

ROSA

Ooo I knew wine was good for me.

MARCUS

Ha! And that's why wines from this region taste a little like iron.

ROSA

And blood.

MARCUS

Exactly. Even though there's no evidence that the mineral content of the soil makes it to the grapes, this bottle has something to say about that.

(ROSA sniffs the wine like a pro)

ROSA

I'm not mad about it.

MARCUS

So you have this mineral-rich soil from the lava and then the volcanic ash comes in with the assist. You see, it's incredibly porous which optimizes water absorption in the soil. The roots can grow really deep which allows for more access to minerals. It's fertile because of the cycle of destruction and rebirth - kinda like the conditions that created life in the first place.

ROSA

I love that. And I love when you break shit down for me. It's sexy.

MARCUS

Oh yeah? Are you ready to get into the cult of Dionysus cause I can break it down!

ROSA

Oooo, you know I love a good cult story.

MARCUS

Oh I can give you a cult story.

(The Doorbell RINGS)

MARCUS

Damn. White people are so punctual.

ROSA

They are, what's that about?

MARCUS

Rosa. Do you think you could be open and, you know, not dramatic for a couple hours?

ROSA

I don't know Marcus. Do you think you can you not be patronizing and then maybe I'll go from there?

MARCUS

That's not a good start.

(The doorbell RINGS again)

ROSA

I'm open. Now open the door.

(MARCUS opens the door)

ROSE

Hiiiiiii! Welcome to our home! Come in!

(STEVEN and EMILY enter. Steven carries a BOTTLE OF WHISKEY. Emily carries a DISH)

MARCUS

Steven. Emily. I'm so glad you could join us for dinner tonight.

ROSE

I'm Rose. It's so nice to finally meet you.

EMILY

Emily. Lovely to meet you too.

STEVEN

A pleasure. Marcus! My man!