



Carolina Mérida plays Menga

Jinxed:

or, The Capital Commission

by

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translated by Jason Yancey

relocated to St. Augustine, 1823, by Ben Gunter for Theater with a Mission (TWAM)

TORIBIO

NATIVE APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

MENGA

PADRE

NOTARY

SHERIFF

Musician(s)

Native enters humming, to gather willow leaves and bark.

She returns thanks to the willow tree with tobacco.

Sheriff blows his whistle offstage and Native exits behind willow tree.

European music starts.

Sheriff swaggers on to look left.

Notary flutters on to look right.

Padre processes on to look center.

Menga circles the triumvirate, distributing herbs.

Their eyes, then their heads, then their bodies follow her.

Toribio materializes to witness this tableau from down right and speak/sing about it.

~~~~~ scene 1 ~~~~~

TORIBIO

¡Que me muero, señores, que me muero  
de amores de una Menguilla, esa picaña  
anajarra, cruel tigre de arcaña,  
oh más dura que el Martes a mis quejas!  
¿Por qué a Toribio sin amor le dejas?

Dead man talking/singing, folks – that’s me:  
deep-fat fried by hot desire  
to stake my claim to our local fire-  
ball, this fox who rocks, little Miss Menga.  
She’s ripped through my hopes like a Florida panther!  
Why do you hate me, Menguilla – why?  
Your breast’s so bullet-proof I should just go die ...

The Padre calls, and you’re all ears.  
The Notary notes – you say, “Dish, dear!”  
The Sheriff puts that whistle to his lips  
and you surrender, heart, head, and hips.  
These three eat it up – all your adoration ...  
but me? I just get aggravation.

¿Quien supiera cantar tan dulce y tierno  
como aquel frío que bajó al infierno,  
para poder con ansias fatigadas  
estar diciendo enaguas enamoradas?

Yet what sweeter song to dress you  
in the language of desire than one  
sung from hell with a tender voice  
refreshed by your cool breeze?

Could I but speak what I’ve just sung,  
You’d burn for me like a thousand suns!

[*APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER sings offstage.*]

But someone’s coming! I’d better scat  
Till I figure out who’s squalling like that!

Mas gente llega; quiero retirarme,  
porque 2sí de quién es sabré informarme.

~~~~~ *scene 2* ~~~~~

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

Up all night again, harvesting herbs.

[*yawn*]

Since it’s no longer safe to let them know you’re Native,
we tradition-keepers are having to get creative
to keep our medicine secret, deep under cover ...

Shhh!

To cure my headache, born of moonlighting.
Time for medicine: willow tea ...

[hums while she starts to sip]

TORIBIO

What kind of apparition's this? God, help me!
Better rustle me up a hymn to sing ...

Rock of Ages, cleft for me ...

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

Willow broken, brewed to help me sleep,
I thank you – Mwdo! – with this breath I blow
and with these leaves of tobacco –
and with this lullaby for tea to steep.

Rock a bye, baby

TORIBIO

Who could that be? What a brouhaha!
Watch me transfix her with my eagle eye.
¿Quién va?

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

¿Quién es?

TORIBIO

Apártese 2llá,
mas, ¡vive Dios!, que ésta es bruja!

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

Es Toribio?

TORIBIO

Don't ask – don't stay –
Be gone I say! Wait—
Why are you so covered up ...
all dressed to sweat in Florida's heat
draped from top to toe, ...

I know!

I bet you're not even mestizo –

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER
He knows?!?
With me working so hard to pass?!

TORIBIO
Dr. Simmons! Dr. Simmons!
Come take a look and you'll see
your Apprentice is / Housekeeper's
a Native, and a bruja!

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER
No me quites el honor,
mi desatención pregona.
My father was from Spain!

TORIBIO
Dr. Simmons! Dr. Simmons! Come see –

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER
Shh!
Toribio, keep your voice down!

TORIBIO
– an escapee from the Treaty
of Moultrie Creek!
A bruja and an Indian!

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER
Toribio!
Hold
your
tongue!
(tongue freeze)
Let me keep my business mine,
and I'll make a mighty piece of medicine for you.
Whoever reads it will love you. True!
An official commission – sealed and signed.

TORIBIO
An official commission?

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER
[nods]

TORIBIO
Full of Native fire?

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

[nods]

TORIBIO

Guaranteed to give me my heart's desire?

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

nods

TORIBIO

Ay, bruja mía!

Help me out with my Menga

(she hates me like the plague!)

and I promise not to tell anyone

about your little secret,

cross my heart and hope to die.

You're saving my life –

You're Florida's version of Pocahontas!

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

Behold your commission!

Medicine so powerful

whoever reads it

falls desperately in love with you.

TORIBIO

I'd give anything

for medicine that strong!

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

Then not a word ... to anyone.

TORIBIO

Not a soul –

except maybe

tomorrow in church ...

during High Mass ...

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

Indian giver!

Use it with a good heart, Toribio,

That's the way this medicine works:

Mvto! (**Mud-DOH**)

TORIBIO

My dough?

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER
MUH-do!

TORIBIO
Meadow?

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER
Muh-DOH!

TORIBIO
Me-duh! Sure – I’ll play dumb!
It’s a small price
to pay for Menguilla’s love.
I’m doing her a favor, really,
saving her all that time
spent getting to know me.
Can’t wait to try it out.

[music]

*Ave Menguilla
Pulchritudinis plena
She’s one Hot Mama!*

Hold on—here she comes now!

[APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER exits while MENGUILLA and SACRISTÁN enter.]

~~~~~ *scene 3* ~~~~~

PADRE  
*In nomine peninsulis,  
et Floridianis,  
et Simmons pseudo-sanctis,  
A-Menga!*

MENGUILLA  
O Padre – you great big Sugar-Daddy ...

SACRISTÁN  
Speak, inspiration of my soul  
*Domina mea!*

*[TORIBIO approaches.]*

TORIBIO  
Hold up, hold on!

Don't speak – take this!

MENGUILLA

What do you want, you  
hideous toad?  
Échale por la escalera.

TORIBIO

Take, read, love, my lady.  
I'm carrying a commission  
that makes it your mission  
to long for the missionary position  
with me.

MENGUILLA

Me, in love with a repulsive troll like you?

*[big laugh]*

TORIBIO

I swear, it's all right here in black  
and white. Read it for yourself.

MENGUILLA

Read it?! I don't know how to read—  
Haven't you been keeping up with  
the latest laws from the Florida legislature?

TORIBIO

Let the Padre read it then.

SACRISTÁN

Give me that. [*He snatches the paper.*]  
It says:

“Nichis nochis,  
floridano fornicationis.”

*[bell]*

Sun of my soul!

TORIBIO

Yep – she sure shines.  
And soon she'll be mine.

SACRISTÁN  
Beauty divine!

TORIBIO  
You mean ... me?  
Está borracho!

SACRISTÁN  
Bella imagen de mi idea,  
ay, que me llevas el alma.

Exquisite vision of my dreams,  
You must take me here and now!

TORIBIO  
¡Ay, que los diablos te llevan!

Let the devil take you!

SACRISTÁN  
Let me give you a holy hug!

MENGA  
¡Jesús, is this really happening?  
Help! Someone call the police!  
Justicia!

MUSICIAN  
Justicia!

[*ESCRIBANO enters.*]

NOTARY  
Ju-ju-justicia!

MENGA  
Mr. Notary, get down here!  
Come take notes:  
Something notorious is going on

[*music during cross*]

They're swearing everlasting love  
And they're both men ...

[*faint*]

SACRISTÁN  
Dearly beloved, we are gathered here  
in the sight of God and these witnesses ...



~~~~~ scene 4 ~~~~~

ESCRIBANO

Witnesses!

Repórtense, ¿qué es aquesto?

[Priest and Toribio start to talk at the same time – Notary points to Toribio]

You! Toribio!

Raise your right hand and

repeat after me!

I, state your name

TORIBIO

I, state your name

[dum-dum]

ESCRIBANO

Do solemnly swear ...

TORIBIO

Do solemnly swear ...

[dum-dum]

ESCRIBANO

To tell the truth,

the whole truth,

and nothing but the truth,

[shave and a haircut]

so help me God.

[six bits]

TORIBIO *[handing over the commission]*

Mr. Notary, I swear to God

I've got a commission

that gives me permission

to claim Miss Menga

as my one & only lady-love.

SACRISTÁN *(heartbroken)*

I'll love you till death do us part!

ESCRIBANO *[fondling the commission]*
A commission!
Signed ...
with a Seal!
Notarized!

TORIBIO
Yes, sir –
But take care, sir ...

[ESCRIBANO reads the commission.]

ESCRIBANO
“Nichis nochis
floridano fornicationis.”

[bell]
... Letter-perfect loveliness!

TORIBIO
That well-written – really?
I knew the penmanship was pretty, but ...

ESCRIBANO
 Written all over your face.

MENGA
Justicia!

[starts to faint]

ESCRIBANO
This wins the seal of my approval.
Perfect! From A to Z!

TORIBIO
I swear to C-h-r-i-s-t ...!

MENGA
Llame la justicia!

[faints – Toribio catches her – sees Sheriff approaching & runs upstage toward ...]

ESCRIBANO
I'll go to L for those luscious lips

TORIBIO

You can kiss my A —

MENGUILLA

Everybody! Please!

Help me call the police!

Justicia!

[echo: Justicia!]

Louder!

Justicia!

[echo: Justicia!]

Higher!

Justicia!

[echo: Justicia! OFFICER enters.]

~~~~~ scene 5 ~~~~~

SHERIFF

Did somebody call for Justice?

Here I am.

Break it up, boys!

Again, Toribio?

MENGUILLA

Thank goodness you're here, Mr. Sheriff.

Señor Alguacil ... acuda ... *[secret]*

Que tres hombres se requiebran.

SHERIFF

Say what?

MENGA

se requiebran.

SHERIFF

Say, now,

no hablo the española, Señorita.

Can you say that again, in English, por favor?

MENGA

All three of these guys are ...

*[kissing hands gesture]*

SHERIFF

Drunk and disorderly?

Yes, ma'am we've got a citation for that!

MENGA

No, no!

They're ...

All three of them.

*[“Steam Heat” gesture] ...*

SHERIFF

Adoring you inappropriately?

Well, it's easy to see why, but

yes, ma'am, we've got a citation for that, too!

MENGA

No, no, no!

You see ... these three are all ...

*[hands clasped overhead, pelvic wiggle gesture]*

SHERIFF

Hogtied and horny ...

... in some kind of three-way?!!!

*[Sheriff starts to faint – Menga props him back up]*

¡Cómo! ¡Vengan a la cárcel!

Hands up!

ESCRIBANO

H is for his hands—so handsome,  
like everything else about him!

TORIBIO

How about an F for my fist – !

SACRISTÁN

You're my cross to bear –

T for Toribio!

TORIBIO

Téngase allá con el Diablo.

SHERIFF

Incredible – with the Sheriff of St. Augustine  
as eyewitness!  
All three of you horndogs is headin' for the hoosegow!

TORIBIO

But Sir, I have this commission!  
It gives me permission to claim  
Menga the love-smitten miss  
as the new capital of my bliss!

SHERIFF

Rhyme one more time ...  
A commission, you say?  
Written evidence?  
Let's have a look.

TORIBIO

No! Don't read it!  
Let me buy you a beer instead ...  
A whole barrel of beer ...  
For the love of God, stop!

SHERIFF

[*He reads.*] "Nichis nachos

*ALL* "nochis!"

SHERIFF

No cheese? On nachos?!  
That's un-American!  
Nichis nochis ...  
floridano fornicationis."

Nice commission!  
Everything seems to be order ...

[*bell*]

Give me an Order!  
I'll play the rookie – You be my Capitán Commissioner.  
Yes, sir! Anything you say, sir! May I please have another, sir?

ESCRIBANO

Such shapely feet and legs!  
Like capital L's in *italics* ...

SACRISTÁN

Love that boyish chinny-chin-chin  
where just a hint of a beard begins –  
let me put you on a pedestal  
with a rack of candles flickering ...

TORIBIO

Just try it – I'll huff and I'll puff  
and I'll blow your lights out!

SHERIFF

You blow me away with that nose –  
    like the beak on Andrew Jackson!  
And that noble, manly brow –  
    with a furrow as deep as Osceola's!

TORBIO

You're demon-possessed!

SACRISTÁN

Charming little ears – to hear my prayers!

TORBIO

They're big as Balaam's ass – saying NO to your sass!

ESCRIBANO

His lips are all mine!

TORBIO

I told you last time!

MENGUILLA

Help, people!  
Neighbors, help!  
Someone,  
    anyone,  
        please intervene!

[*APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER enters.*]

~~~~~ *scene 6* ~~~~~

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

¿Qué es aquesto? Tengan, tengan.

Freeze! What's going on here?

TORIBIO

The enchanted commission you committed to me—
it's out of control!

MENGUILLA

Hotke, you entrusted Toribio
with an enchanted commission?

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

Hotke, I did.
To undo the enchantment,
decommission the commission!

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER and MENGUILLA

Mvdo.

[APPRENTICE/HOUSEKEEPER and MENGA rip the commission in half. Bell]

SACRISTÁN

[Seeing TORIBIO disenchantedly.]
Dear God in heaven, what's that –
a gargoyle?

[APPRENTICE/HOUSEKEEPER and MENGA rip the halved commission in half. Bell]

.

ESCRIBANO

Yeesh! What a hideous monstrosity!
Like an inkblot on a will!

[raggedy X]

[APPRENTICE/HOUSEKEEPER and MENGA rip the quartered commission in half. No disenchantment for the Sheriff, so they start ripping the shreds into smaller pieces. Bell]

SHERIFF

It's a crime against nature, if you ask me.

SACRISTÁN

Wait...was this the one we...?

ESCRIBANO

Did we really...?

OFFICER

We'll teach you to—!

SACRISTAN

Vengemos nuestro enojo!

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

Freeze, este española!

Step back ... relax.

TORIBIO

Typical love story:

first they throw you rose petals, First you're hot – then you're not
then you get the pricks!

First it's roses with their petals,

Then it's thorns with their pricks.

[both undercover Natives bond – over willow tea]

MENGA

Amiga, you had these three menguados
drooling all over Toribio!

APPRENTICE / HOUSEKEEPER

Shhh!

Native medicine works like a charm:

MENGA

a greedy heart always comes to harm!

APPRENTICE/HOUSEKEEPER

Mvto!

MENGA

Mvto!

APPRENTICE/HOUSEKEEPER

Do it with a good heart!

MENGA

Mvto!

APPRENTICE/HOUSEKEEPER

Mvto!

~~~~~ bows ~~~~~

lines relocating action to St. Augustine © TWAM 2023