

## **The Tale Of Blanca Flor**

by

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# The Tale Of Blanca Flor

## DESCRIPTION

Juan is a good dancer but a lousy gambler. One day, tired of losing his shirt, he says to himself, "I would give anything to be able to win when I gamble." Just then, El Diablo shows up riding a black horse and says, "Tell me what you want." When Juan tells him his desire to have a little bit of money and a mountain of luck, El Diablo grants him his wish, with the proviso that in five years, he must come to El Diablo's hacienda and obey three commands. For five years, he has phenomenal luck -- but it comes time to pay the piper, and Juan sets off to find El Diablo. When he arrives, he meets Blanca Flor, one of El Diablo's three daughters, and with her help, he is able to complete the three commands. There is a moment when their love is in jeopardy because he forgets a command she gave him, but in the end they remember to love one another, and the story concludes happily.

## CHARACTERS

- NARRATOR, male or female -- will often participate in scenes as a character: "he" is used for convenience in the script
- JUAN, a basically decent fellow who is a good dancer but a lousy gambler
- EL DIABLO -- it would be good if the actor could do any sleight-of-hand tricks with coins or cards, but this is not essential
- BLANCA FLOR, one of EL DIABLO's three daughters
- FOUR UTILITY CHARACTERS: two men and two women -- they will play various other characters

**Note #1:** All actors must be able to move well, including dance.

**Note #2: Ethnicity/race** -- All parts are open to all actors except where indicated. A mix is more visually interesting -- just be careful about resonances, e.g., casting EL DIABLO with a black actor may carry unintended messages.

**Note #3:** While I make suggestions around lighting, sound, and movement in this script, the director is free to substitute at any point as long as the substitution moves the story along and is and visually and aurally striking. The sole purpose must be to keep the children in the audience thoroughly engaged.

**Note #4:** Actors are free to ad lib with the audience as long as it doesn't detract from the flow of the story. Again, the prime criterion is whatever keeps the children engaged.

## SETTING

- JUAN's village
- The hacienda of El DIABLO
- Other places

**TIME**

- No special time

**MUSIC**

Music is essential to the production. The ideal would be to have a single musician on stage who plays hand drums, guitar, and other instruments to accompany the action. If this cannot be done, then recorded music would be the only other option. The choice of music is left open to the director, the musicians, and others producing the show. In any case, it is best to keep it simple.

**MOVEMENT**

There is a great deal of movement in the show, and the choreographer is free to invent as needed. For instance, in the opening dance sequence, the choreographer can have the people dance something "traditional" but also throw in any moves that the audience would recognize: hip hop, "moonwalk," etc. Wherever possible, use movement that would be recognized by the audience as "theirs." Also, all movement in the play should, at some level, be choreographed -- there should be an economy of gesture and purpose for every movement the actors make.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

While certain effects are called for, there are no specific directions about how to accomplish them -- that will be left up to the imaginations of the director and others producing the show. The suggestion is to try to achieve the effects as simply as possible, using ordinary materials that can morph from one use to the next. The impulse should be to surprise and please the young audience with the ingenuity of the production as well as the interesting content of the story.

The play must be done in a space where the actors can have free access to the audience since much of the script has the actors moving through them.

## The Tale Of Blanca Flor

In JUAN's village. JUAN is a dancer and a gambler, but he is a far better dancer than a gambler. As the play opens, we hear dance music -- a slow, steady, enticing beat. The NARRATOR begins speaking from the back of the house and continues to enter through the audience.

NARRATOR

Nice music, huh? Music you can really dance to.

NARRATOR begins to dance as he enters.

NARRATOR

Music that makes your feet move. Can you all move your feet? Go ahead, move them -- let them move.

NARRATOR continues to move to the stage.

NARRATOR

It feels good to move your feet. In the small village of Buena Suerte, in Mexico, many people could dance really well, but none of them -- none of them -- could dance like Juan.

JUAN appears on the stage and begins to dance to the rhythm. The UTILITY actors appear and dance with JUAN.

NARRATOR

Juan was the best dancer of them all. Young, full of energy -- Juan loved life to the fullest. Watch how he moves. Watch how they all move. All full of life. Yeah, yeah, yeah. You move your feet, too!

By this time, NARRATOR should reach the stage; he begins dancing with the group, which ends the short ensemble piece on a strong button. Change in music, underscore. As NARRATOR speaks, JUAN gets on his knees to roll dice.

As NARRATOR speaks, the others gather around and mime what NARRATOR is saying. The movements should become more and more frenzied as JUAN keeps losing. Finally, he starts pulling losing lottery tickets from his pockets -- a veritable shower of them. The director, of course, is free to modify this in any way with movement and props as long as the central idea comes across, and the gambling sequence is well-choreographed.

NARRATOR

But -- Juan also liked to gamble, which was too bad because he was really terrible at it. When he held the dice in his hands, they would laugh

at him as he rolled them on the ground. If it was cards, the cards would change their colors and numbers right in front of him. At the racetrack, the horse he wanted would pull up lame or get a phone call or fall in love and come in last. Watching the greyhounds chase the rabbit, scratching ticket after ticket at the lottery, flipping coins for heads and tails, more cards, more horses, more dice, more dogs, more tickets, more cards, more everything -- Juan almost always lost. The truth? He was a rotten gambler. He had all the luck of nine dead cats.

(sees JUAN lose again)

Make that ten dead cats.

By this time, JUAN is prostrate on the ground, pockets turned out, shirt untucked, a complete loser. The four UTILITY actors walk off chatting and counting the money they have won. NARRATOR comes up to JUAN.

NARRATOR

Bad day today, huh?

JUAN

The only thing I didn't lose was my hair.

NARRATOR

I don't know -- looks a little thin to me.

JUAN

(sits up)

When's the next bingo game start?

NARRATOR

(to the audience)

The man has a problem.

JUAN

It wouldn't be a problem if I won.

(to the audience)

Right? I mean, who likes losing? Any of you like losing?

Takes various responses from the audience, ad libs as necessary. Tucking in shirt, pockets, etc.

NARRATOR

I didn't think so. I bet they would give anything to win. I know I would. I would give anything if I could have a mountain of luck. A big Mount Everest of really good luck. I would give anything to be able to win when I gamble.

NARRATOR

Did you say anything?

(to the audience)

Did he say anything? We have to check this out.

Ask him the question: Did you say "anything"?

NARRATOR gets the audience to ask JUAN, "Did you say 'anything'?" JUAN nods yes. The UTILITY actors come on just as there is some sort of lighting/sound/music effect that indicates trouble; they give JUAN a flip and a tumble. From the back of the house speaks EL DIABLO. Another flip and tumble. The two male actors rush to DIABLO to become his fine black horse. The female actors become a "tree" that JUAN hides behind.

DIABLO

Did you say "anything"?

JUAN

(stuttering)

Who are you?

NARRATOR

(to the audience)

I bet you can already guess who he is.

DIABLO

Who do you think I am?

JUAN

You ain't \_\_\_\_\_ (whoever is a performer the audience would know).

NARRATOR

Nope, he isn't \_\_\_\_\_ (whoever is named).

DIABLO

Guess again, Mr. Green Teeth.

JUAN

(a little pout)

Hey!

(remembering he's afraid)

You are --

(swallowing hard)

-- El Diablo.

DIABLO

I am El Diablo. And you said "anything."

NARRATOR

(to the audience)

Didn't he?

During the next lines, the two male actors lift DIABLO from under his armpits and spirit him quickly to the stage.

Acting bravely but clearly scared, peeking out from behind the tree.

JUAN

That's right --

(his voice breaks; he lowers it)

That's right: I said anything. Anything. What a fine black horse you are riding.

Hides behind the tree again. The tree keeps moving so that he has to move with it.

DIABLO lands. The two male actors go to one knee.

DIABLO

Faster than a falling star. Now, you said, any little thing.

JUAN

Anything.

DIABLO

You're absolutely sure?

JUAN

Can I have double or nothing on that?

DIABLO

Juan, Juan, you and your gambling. I am just going to have to make you an offer you can't refuse.

DIABLO touches the tree, which shrivels, and the female actors go to one knee as well. JUAN stands alone. If DIABLO can do it, he should do a few sleight-of-hand tricks as he speaks to JUAN. If he cannot do that, then DIABLO takes some gold glitter and sprinkles it in a circle around JUAN as he speaks.

DIABLO

Here's your offer.

NARRATOR

Juan listened very closely.

Music change. The UTILITY actors begin a synchronized movement to correspond to DIABLO's offer, that underscores the selling of the soul.

DIABLO

I will give you a mountain of good luck. You will win every game you play, even (*whatever is*

*the current big jackpot game) and (the name of a current scratch ticket) and Thursday night bingo and seven-card stud and Yahtzee.*

NARRATOR

Not bad.

JUAN

Not bad. But --

NARRATOR

Diablo does not give things away for free.

DIABLO

I don't give things away for free. Kneel.

One female actor comes in front of JUAN to become an altar, behind which JUAN kneels. The two male actors kneel on all fours in front of DIABLO; he steps up on their backs. The other female actor takes a gold cord or a length of gold cloth (if cloth, it should glitter) out of her pocket and hands one end to DIABLO. As DIABLO speaks, she uncoils it and ties it around JUAN's neck. When she is done, she goes behind JUAN and assumes a demon's face. As DIABLO speaks, she always moves in a way that shapes his words and makes them visual.

DIABLO

I am lending you the power to make gold, and you will make a lot of it, Juan. Hand over fist. Year after year. But at the end of five years --

NARRATOR

Here comes the hook and the bait.

JUAN

At the end of five years?

DIABLO

You will come and find me at my hacienda and do three commands.

JUAN

And if I don't?

DIABLO jerks the golden cord or cloth, and JUAN falls across the altar. The demon hisses.

JUAN

I just asked!

DIABLO

The gold and I know exactly where you live.

JUAN  
I don't suppose I could change my address?

DIABLO  
(shaking his head no)  
Not even to the moon.

JUAN  
Just thought I'd ask.

DIABLO  
It never hurts to ask.

The altar bucks her back and the demon grabs JUAN's hair. Together, they get him back into his kneeling position.

DIABLO  
Do you agree?

JUAN  
Three commands?

DIABLO  
After five years and a Mount Everest of luck.

JUAN hesitates.

JUAN  
(to NARRATOR)  
Should I take the gamble?

NARRATOR  
(to the audience)  
Should he?  
(gets responses)  
We have a split vote. You are going to have to make up your own mind, Juan. What are you going to do?

The demon hisses softly. DIABLO gives gentle tugs on the cord/cloth to keep JUAN focused.

DIABLO  
Lots of money. Lots of money.

JUAN  
(indicating the audience)  
Do I have to share it with them?

DIABLO  
Up to you.

JUAN

Will I get into trouble?

DIABLO

No more than you are in now.

JUAN

I mean, like a sin?

DIABLO

"Sin" is something you have plenty of. How much money do you owe people?

JUAN makes a gesture to show that he owes a lot, and he knows it.

DIABLO

How much money do you have in your pockets right now?

JUAN pulls out an empty pocket. The demon makes a "moth" with her hands, which flutters away; then she goes back to being the demon.

DIABLO

What's one more sin?

JUAN

I'd just like to think my soul is worth something.

DIABLO

Oh, it is to me. Can you really say no?

JUAN

Lots, huh?

NARRATOR

You're beginning to repeat yourself.

DIABLO

Make up what little mind that you have!

Lights flash, music rises, the altar bucks, the two male actors move as if the earth just moved.

JUAN

I agree!

DIABLO

Good. Finally. Now, pull.

JUAN pulls the gold cord/cloth out of DIABLO's hand. He unties it from his neck and wraps it around his waist like a belt.

DIABLO

Your five years begin now.

NARRATOR

So Juan gambled up a storm, a hurricane. Everything he touched turned to gold, to money, to land, to animals, to Gap clothes [or whatever the name would be for the audience], to more tacos than he could eat and more café con leche than he could drink.

Music change. The "demon" gets a bunch of clothes that are golden/yellow in color and brings them to JUAN. As JUAN gambles, he gets more and more golden as he puts on the clothes with the demon's help, all in coördinated movements. While DIABLO gets down from his "pedestal," the "altar" gets five placards, on which are written the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 and on the reverse, the letters "S-T-O-P-!" As JUAN gambles, the three UTILITY actors parade in front of him, each time holding up the year and saying it out loud, and after the fifth year, they hold up the reverse side of the placards, which spells "S-T-O-P-!"

DIABLO

We'll be seeing you.

Lights and music change. DIABLO exits. The UTILITY actors circle JUAN, with the "STOP!" facing him and the years facing outward. They then give the placards to the NARRATOR, who puts them aside, and the four actors kneel around JUAN as he speaks. JUAN starts taking off the golden clothes. As he does, he hands them to NARRATOR, who carefully folds and puts them to one side.

JUAN

The five years are up. I own land, animals, real golden arches -- I'm rich, people respect me -- I get invited to all the parties -- but --

(big crocodile tears)

-- alas, alack, oh woe is me, have mercy on me, my life is ruined --

ALL ACTORS

Oh, be quiet.

NARRATOR

A very little pity party.

JUAN

Well, I've got to go look for El Diablo's hacienda. How much fun is that going to be?

ACTORS

You made your bed -- now squirm in it.

JUAN

Big help you are.

(an idea strikes him)

Maybe -- maybe I don't have to go. Maybe he forgot. Yeah, yeah. I'll just -- skip it. Yeah, that's what I'll do.

Lights and music change: ominous, not a good idea.

ACTORS

Probably not a good idea.

JUAN

It was just a thought!

Lights and music back. By this time he is back to his original clothes.

NARRATOR

Time to go.

The actors begin to nudge him to move, but very light, funny moves: a slight nudge in the ribs, a finger against his arm, etc. JUAN is reluctant, but finally he gets moving.

JUAN

All right, I know I have to go. Any of you have any idea where I'm supposed to go? Mister Diablo conveniently forgot to provide a road map.

The UTILITY actors shrug. So JUAN begins his journey. The "journey" will be a coördination between NARRATOR's words and the movement work of the actors. What is written below is merely suggestive; the actors and director are free to modify the words and the timing so as to create the most comic effect. And they should not confine themselves to the stage -- the audience members can also become obstacles on the path, having to be stepped over, etc. Music and lights should change to reflect the journey.

As for the journey, the UTILITY actors become JUAN's "path": he has to walk over a rock, look behind a tree, perhaps even climb the tree as a lookout post, cross a bridge, come across someone and ask directions, etc. Also, JUAN can come up with appropriate comments to match the activities, e.g., "Where is this place?", "Ugh, that bug tastes terrible!", etc. Music and lights change to follow the "path."

NARRATOR

(while JUAN is traveling)

So Juan set out, not very pleased with the situation, but not having much choice, which sometimes happens in life. He had a few scrapes

--

JUAN

Oww!

NARRATOR

A banged toe or two --

JUAN

That hurts!

NARRATOR

He asked people for directions, who were a little put off by his bad breath (he'd forgotten to pack a toothbrush) --

ACTOR

Pee-yew!

NARRATOR

And had a few other unpleasant things happen to him --

(the actors demonstrate something funny)  
-- but he finally made it there in mostly one piece.

JUAN

Can this be the place? There's no sign at all. There should be a sign.

Three of the actors make a "gate": two of the actors hold the third horizontally.

JUAN

In the village they said that this ranch was owned by someone tall, dark, and handsome -- though I wouldn't call El Diablo handsome. (light and music change: not a good thing to say) All right! The guy is fussy. Hey, El Diablo! I'm here. What do you want me to do? Hey, is anyone home? I've come a long way to get here, with the --

(mimes these parts of his journey)  
-- bugs and the rocks and the trees and stubbing my toe and getting poked in the eye --

The male actor comes out as an old man, the KING OF THE BIRDS, who comes to the "gate" and opens it. He is holding a small drum. The actors make a creaking sound as the gate opens and closes. They then "dismantle" themselves and sit to one side.

KING

Who are you?

JUAN  
Do you own this place?

KING  
I live here.

JUAN  
Do you own this place?

KING  
I live here.

JUAN  
Look, I've come a long way. I've got blisters on my blisters and bruises on my bruises, and I just need to know if this is the hacienda of El Diablo.

NARRATOR  
Juan was a little cranky.

JUAN  
You bet I am.

KING  
(gently)  
And who are you?

NARRATOR comes over to help JUAN straighten his clothes and his manners.

JUAN  
I'm sorry -- I am forgetting my manners, and my parents taught me better. I am Juan, from the village of Buena Suerte, and as I said, I am looking for the hacienda of El Diablo. Could this be it?

KING  
I have lived in this forest for three hundred years --

JUAN  
(exaggerated politeness, as if to humor a crazy man)  
Oh, three hundred years, you say --

Makes a "crazy" sign to NARRATOR.

KING  
Give or take a few -- not so sure about the leap years sometimes --

JUAN

It can be confusing.

KING

And I've never heard of a place like that. El Diabolo, you say?

JUAN

Yes. El Diabolo.

KING

Well, let me ask the birds.

JUAN

The birds.

KING

Yes.

JUAN

Sure -- ask the birds.

KING

I am the King of the Birds.

JUAN

And I am Prince of the Pu Pu Platter.

NARRATOR  
(to JUAN)

Sssh! A little respect.

The KING begins drumming on his drum. Lights change, and the music should evoke a congress of singing, squawking birds. The three actors now become birds, as the KING calls them in, in rhythm. The actors do not necessarily need to become birds but more to suggest flocks of birds answering the KING's call.

KING

Birds of every shape and size  
Fly to me from distant skies  
Come to me, canary who sings  
Come the hawk on razor wings  
Doves as white as a summer moon  
Larks that trill the evening's tune  
Crows and gulls and kites and daws  
Help me with this young man's cause

JUAN is amazed at the collection of birds the KING has collected.

NARRATOR

Of every form and fit they came, of every color  
and cry, and they listened to the King as if he  
were God.

KING

(looking them over)

This young man needs your help.

ACTOR

What does he need?

KING

He has lost his way.

ACTOR

We'll find it for him.

KING

Do any of you know the whereabouts of the  
hacienda of El Diablo?

Music change: they do not like the name.

ACTOR

I don't know.

ACTOR

I don't know.

ACTOR

I don't know.

ALL

We don't want to know.

ACTOR

El Diablo -- awk!

ACTOR

El Diablo -- scree!

ACTOR

El Diablo -- caw!

JUAN

Well, I guess I can't get there from here.

JUAN turns to leave, but NARRATOR catches him and turns him back.

KING

Where is Eagle?

NARRATOR  
(to JUAN)

If anyone knows, it will be Eagle.

The KING pounds his drum even harder, and there is a music change.  
The birds disperse.

KING  
Eagle sharp as a hunting knife  
Eagle eye sees all of life  
Eagle, whether far or near  
Eagle, bring your wisdom here

One of the actors comes back as EAGLE. The other two actors lift him  
by the feet so that he/she stands above them.

KING  
Where were you?

EAGLE  
Oh, king, I am sorry I did not answer your call  
sooner. But I was far away at El Diablo's  
hacienda.

NARRATOR  
See, I told you.

JUAN  
Great.

KING  
This young man needs your help, since he seeks  
that same place.

EAGLE  
(to JUAN)  
Really?

JUAN  
Yes.

EAGLE  
Why?

JUAN  
I made a promise.

EAGLE  
To El Diablo?

JUAN  
Yes.

EAGLE

Only stupid or really stressed-out people do that.

NARRATOR

He's both.

JUAN

Hey!

KING

Eagle, I want you to help this man complete his journey. Tomorrow morning, you will carry him to El Diablo's hacienda.

EAGLE

I obey.

Lights and music change: night. The UTILITY actors kneel with their hands out and become JUAN's bed; he lays across them. As NARRATOR speaks, the "bed" tosses JUAN, to indicate his sleeplessness.

NARRATOR

Juan passed a hard night -- full of dreams, full of worry. He was thinking about going to El Diablo's hacienda and the three commands he would have to perform and about losing his soul and how hungry he was and how his blisters had blisters. Finally, the dawn came.

The KING crows like a rooster, and they dump JUAN out of bed.

KING

Prepare yourself for your journey. Climb on the eagle's back, and he will take you where you need to go. Good luck.

JUAN

Haven't had much of that lately. All right, let's get going.

Two actors lift JUAN as they had lifted EAGLE, and, with EAGLE leading, they take JUAN in a circle through the audience. The KING and NARRATOR wave good-bye. Music change.

NARRATOR

Off he went. Everything looked eenie-weenie, itsy-bitsy as Eagle carried Juan a mile, two miles, three miles above the earth. And before long they came to El Diablo's hacienda, deep in the mountains.

JUAN and EAGLE land.

EAGLE

Eagle has landed.

JUAN

Well, thanks -- I guess.

EAGLE

Most people wouldn't have come -- you are a decent fellow, even if a little loco for getting involved with El Diablo.

JUAN

Gracias, but my life is over now.

EAGLE

Not if you play your cards well.

JUAN

Cards?

EAGLE

Your luck can change if you want to take a risk.

The two actors and EAGLE join the KING while NARRATOR speaks. As NARRATOR speaks, BLANCA FLOR enters, wearing a colorful shawl. The two female UTILITY actors also get colorful shawls. The two male UTILITY actors unroll a piece of blue cloth, which will be the "lake." They then sit at either end as if they were stone figures.

NARRATOR

And here is what the Eagle told him. See that lake near El Diablo's home? In a little while, three beautiful doves will come to the water.

In coordinated movements, the three women come to the lake as if they were doves, using the shawls for their "wings."

NARRATOR

They are not really birds, though; they are El Diablo's daughters. When the first two women take off their wings to sun, do not bother them. But when the third daughter, Blanca Flor, arrives, you must talk to her.

JUAN

What will I say to her?

NARRATOR

You will know.

JUAN watches the lake. The two female UTILITY actors take off their shawls and spread them on the backs of the two male UTILITY actors and

sit on them, face up to the "sun." BLANCA takes off her shawl, and instead of sitting, she begins dancing with it. JUAN, ever the good dancer, is drawn to her immediately. He comes up to her.

JUAN

May I dance with you?

Stops for a moment to give JUAN a full appraisal.

BLANCA

Yes.

They begin to dance with music, reminiscent of the opening scene. As they dance, the four UTILITY actors take up the "lake" and retreat upstage.

NARRATOR

They danced and they talked. Juan told her about his good luck and his country and about his promise to her father. She told him that her name was Blanca Flor, which meant "white flower," and what it was like to live in her father's home and she didn't always agree with his stealing souls. The whole day they danced, and on into the night.

(lights change)

When the moon and the stars came out, she told him --

The four UTILITY actors bring out a moon and three big stars, each one attached to a stick, and hold them over JUAN and BLANCA.

BLANCA

I will help you with my father, El Diablo.

JUAN

You will go against him?

BLANCA

Yes.

JUAN

You are my best luck yet.

NARRATOR

As the sun came up, she told him what he had to do.

Lights change. The four UTILITY actors reverse their items: the moon becomes a sun and the stars become fluffy clouds. The clouds move through the sky as the sun rises.

BLANCA

Do not take anything my father offers you.

NARRATOR

Nothing at all.

BLANCA

Not a bed nor food nor anything else.

JUAN

He's going to know you're helping me!

BLANCA

No, he won't.

NARRATOR

He won't.

BLANCA

I am supposed to be locked in my room with seven locks on the door.

JUAN

Seven!

BLANCA

But my papa doesn't know that I can open them. Remember, take nothing, no matter how nicely my papa offers. I must leave now, but I won't be far away.

NARRATOR

And Blanca took up her wings and flew back to her room. Juan gathered up his courage --

JUAN

Not too much of that left --

NARRATOR

And walked up to El Diablo's house.

Lights and music change. Three of the four UTILITY actors form a corridor down which JUAN walks: they assume grotesque and scary shapes, and as JUAN passes each one, that actor goes down the line and assumes another shape, so that the effect is walking down an endless corridor. Finally, JUAN gets to the front door, which is formed by one of the UTILITY actors, with the left hand open and raised to shoulder level and the right hand held out like a doorknob at waist-level. The other three UTILITY go to one side of the stage and form a small cabin, which is going to be JUAN's "house." DIABLO comes out and stands behind the door. BLANCA is off to one side.

JUAN knocks on the upraised hand of the door; knocking sounds.

NARRATOR

Juan knocked on El Diablo's front door. The door also knocked on Juan.

Mock battle until the "knob" turns with a click, and the door pivots on one foot to open, revealing DIABLO.

DIABLO

You have arrived.

JUAN

Yep, just little old me.

DIABLO

Good. You've had a long journey. You can stay with us.

BLANCA

Remember --

NARRATOR

Should he accept?

Gets audience responses.

JUAN

No thanks. I'm happy with --  
(indicating the other actors)  
-- the little shed down by the lake.

DIABLO

Well, at least come in and eat with us.

NARRATOR

(to the audience)

And what did Blanca tell Juan?

Gets audience responses.

BLANCA

(with the audience)

Remember --

JUAN

Oh, no thanks. I'll just eat my dry stale tortillas.

DIABLO gives him a suspicious look.

DIABLO

You're sure?

JUAN

Very sure.

DIABLO

Then you had better get some rest because tomorrow I am going to give you my first command.

JUAN

I can't wait.

The door closes, and JUAN goes to his "house," where he finds BLANCA. BLANCA has a small bag. Music change.

NARRATOR

At his shed he found Blanca waiting for him, which lifted his spirits, and they talked and danced and fell very much in love. Though what she ever saw in --

JUAN

Hey, I'm a good guy.

BLANCA

And a wonderful dancer.

NARRATOR

Love is strange. The next day, Diablo gave Juan his first command.

DIABLO in his own light, BLANCA and FLOR at the "house." The UTILITY actors place themselves in a heap to become a "mountain."

DIABLO

Ready?

JUAN

Ready.

DIABLO

Do you see that mountain over there?

JUAN

Yes.

DIABLO

I want you to move it to over there.

JUAN

That's all?

DIABLO

That's all.

JUAN  
Just move the mountain?

DIABLO  
Just move the mountain.

JUAN  
There to there?

DIABLO  
There to there.

JUAN  
No hay problema.

DIABLO  
I'm glad you're enjoying this.

NARRATOR  
Which he wasn't.

JUAN  
But I keep a strong face.

Light out on DIABLO.

JUAN  
(to BLANCA, slumping)  
I can't do that!

BLANCA  
But I can.

JUAN  
(not really listening to her)  
If I shovel real fast, get a wheelbarrow --

BLANCA  
Juan --

JUAN  
No, no, a big old tractor --

BLANCA  
Have faith. Don't forget who I am.

BLANCA points at the mountain, and the UTILITY actors begin to shake and move until they fly apart across the stage and reassemble themselves.

BLANCA  
There.

JUAN

Talk about a mountain of good luck.

Light up on DIABLO. BLANCA hides.

DIABLO

Well?

JUAN

From there, to there.

(slaps his hands clean)

Like I said, no hay problema.

DIABLO pauses, a bit confused and very angry.

DIABLO

You did this yourself?

JUAN

Without even getting any dirt under my  
fingernails.

Shows the audience his fingernails.

DIABLO

Blanca!

JUAN is frightened by the shout. As BLANCA answers, the four UTILITY actors unpile themselves and act as echoes for BLANCA. NARRATOR is part of the voices as well.

BLANCA

(making her voice sound far away)

Yes, father?

ACTORS

Yes, father -- yes, father -- yes, father --

DIABLO

Are you in your room?

BLANCA

Of course, father.

ACTORS

Of course, father -- Of course, father -- Of  
course, father --

DIABLO

Let me hear the locks.

The UTILITY actors and NARRATOR make the sound of seven opening locks.

DIABLO

Now close them.

They do the same.

DIABLO

(clearly mystified)

All right. You must stay right there.

BLANCA

Yes, father.

ACTORS

Yes, father -- yes, father -- yes, father --

DIABLO

(to JUAN)

Well, señor magician, here's my second command.

JUAN

Pitch it right down the middle.

The four UTILITY actors get the blue cloth that had been the lake and spread it out.

DIABLO

Do you see that lagoon over there?

JUAN

Clear as clockwork.

DIABLO

It's empty. I want you to make it full of fishes.

NARRATOR

And his response?

Encouraging the audience to say it.

JUAN

No hay problema.

(Turning to BLANCA.)

Now what?

BLANCA

Relax, my love -- we're going fishing.

Lights on the "lagoon," which is empty. One by one, the UTILITY actors and NARRATOR bring in rods hung with mobiles of fish of all sizes, shapes, and colors and hang them over the "lagoon" and move them about as if they were fish. Lights up on DIABLO.

DIABLO

Well?

JUAN

(pointing to the lagoon)

See.

All the "fish" look up at DIABLO and smile.

JUAN

(to the audience)

Ready? No hay problema.

DIABLO waves his hand, and the "lagoon" disappears, along with the fish.

DIABLO

Blanca!

Same echo effect.

BLANCA

Yes, father.

ACTORS

Yes, father -- yes, father -- yes, father --

DIABLO

The seven locks.

The actors make the opening and closing lock sounds. DIABLO looks more suspicious than ever.

DIABLO

All right.

(to JUAN)

My third command. I have a black horse, in my stable, that has never known saddle, spur or bridle. I want you to tame it.

JUAN

(to audience)

Help me out here: no hay problema.

(to BLANCA)

I can do that without you! In my village, I am known as the best horseman. I can't bet on the horses very well, but I can ride them.

BLANCA

Gentle lover, this will be no ordinary horse: this will be my father.

JUAN

Oh.

BLANCA

Here is what you must do. In the stable you will find spurs, a saddle, and a bridle hanging on hooks. Throw away the spurs because they will be one of my sisters. Throw away the saddle because it will be my other sister. But be gentle with the bridle because that will be me.

The four UTILITY actors arrange themselves as NARRATOR separates himself to tell the story. One actor lays flat on the floor, the second actor on elbows and knees, the third actor on hands and knees, and the fourth bent over with hands resting on the knees. Completing the incline is DIABLO, standing upright.

NARRATOR

Juan went to the stable and, taking the bridle, mounted the horse bareback.

JUAN climbs the "steps" formed by the actors and "mounts" DIABLO by sitting on his shoulders.

NARRATOR

That horse tried every trick to throw Juan to the ground.

JUAN falls from DIABLO's shoulders into the hands of the other actors, and in a coordinated fashion, the UTILITY actors make it look as if JUAN is on a bucking bronco. DIABLO returns to his spot.

NARRATOR

It heaved, it bucked, it kicked its heels -- but Juan held the bridle tight, and soon the horse was as tame as milk.

They put JUAN down and retreat upstage.

DIABLO

(to JUAN, enraged)

I have lost your soul!

JUAN

(to BLANCA)

Uh-oh -- problemo. The first bet I win, and I'm in trouble. What do we do now?

BLANCA

Escape.

DIABLO

Blanca!

DIABLO turns upstage to go to BLANCA's room, and he mimes opening seven locks, the locks being created by the UTILITY actors. He finds her room empty.

DIABLO

Argghhh! Blanca, I will not let you escape.

Music for the escape. DIABLO is now upstage, and BLANCA, with her bag, and JUAN are downstage. DIABLO should be higher than the two of them. The UTILITY actors are in between them.

NARRATOR

Diablo hated to lose a soul, and it made him even more angry that his daughter helped him lose it. So he chased them.

DIABLO

When I catch you, you will never escape again.

JUAN

What are we going to do? He's almost up to us!

NARRATOR

Blanca reached into her bag and pulled out a hair brush. She threw it on the ground behind them.

BLANCA hands the brush to one of the UTILITY actors.

NARRATOR

Immediately, it turned into a huge thorn bush, and Diablo had to fight his way through it.

BLANCA and JUAN move to one side of the stage while the UTILITY actors form the thorn bush through DIABLO fights his way. If possible, the bush should include part of the audience so that DIABLO actually moves into the audience. Finally he breaks free. They are now on opposite sides of the stage.

NARRATOR

It slowed him down a little --

JUAN

It slowed him down a little --

NARRATOR

But before long he was almost up to them again.

JUAN

What now?

NARRATOR

Blanca reached into her bag and pulled out a handful of seeds and threw them on the ground.

BLANCA hands a UTILITY actor a packet of seeds.

NARRATOR

They immediately grew into a dense forest.

The UTILITY actors become the forest; DIABLO fights his way through.

JUAN

Look at that!

NARRATOR

Diablo fought his way through, the branches grabbing at him, the roots tripping him up, the leaves covering his eyes.

Finally DIABLO breaks free. BLANCA and JUAN move upstage and DIABLO is on one side of the stage.

NARRATOR

But it didn't slow him down. He was almost up to them again.

JUAN

Blanca, I hope you have a third trick.

NARRATOR

She did. She reached into her bag and took out a blue cloth and threw it on the ground.

BLANCA hands it to the UTILITY actors, who open it out. If possible, the ends of it could be handed to a couple of audience members, who could riffle it as if the surface of the water were being moved by the wind.

NARRATOR

It became a huge lake.

The UTILITY actors become rocks, but only half-way across. DIABLO walks out into the lake on the rocks. The three of them look at each other for several beats.

NARRATOR

Would Diablo swim the rest of the way? It was long way.

DIABLO

And I could drown.

JUAN

I'd lay odds on that.

A beat, then DIABLO retreats. Music stops.

DIABLO

There are a lot more like you in the world.  
Daughter, beware -- you may have great powers,  
but you don't know much about human beings.  
They're not a good bet. They'll break your  
heart.

JUAN

Not me! Not her! I love her.

DIABLO

(laughing nastily)

Oh, that's a good one! Have fun, you two!

DIABLO exits. Music begins.

JUAN

I don't think I like him. I'm sorry. He is your  
father.

BLANCA

Not my father any more. Now, it is you.

NARRATOR

Juan loved her very much for saying that.

JUAN

I love you very much.

The UTILITY actors gather up the "lake" and remove it from the stage.

JUAN

My village is not far from here. I will go there  
and tell everyone about you, and then return to  
bring you home in triumph.

BLANCA

Excellent.

NARRATOR

But she had something important to tell him.

BLANCA

But if you let another woman kiss you, even the  
smallest brush of the lips, you will no longer  
remember me.

JUAN

You're the only one I need to kiss.

NARRATOR

And with that they kissed and promised to see each other soon. Then Juan left to go to his village.

The UTILITY actors become the villagers welcoming him, and as they come up to greet him, there are a lot of "air kisses," done as broadly as possible, as JUAN tries to avoid kissing any of the women. They can also carry cards, dice, etc. to get JUAN to gamble again. He happily refuses.

NARRATOR

They greeted him wildly, having given him up for dead. And out of the crowd came his abuela, his dear grandmother, and in a flood of emotion he forgot his promise to Blanca Flor and kissed her.

The action freezes.

NARRATOR

And Juan forgot all about Blanca Flor.

BLANCA

But I did not forget about Juan -- I know that is hard to keep promises sometimes, and so I will give him a second chance.

Music change: festive. BLANCA gets the shawl she wore when she was the dove.

NARRATOR

Three days later, at a grand fiesta in his honor, a beautiful woman wearing a colorful shawl walked through the crowd, and she almost seem to float, she walked so gracefully. Juan noticed her.

JUAN

Who is she?

NARRATOR

And Blanca told the village the story of how Juan came to El Diablo's hacienda and the wild adventures that occurred there, and of her final words by the lake.

JUAN

I'm sorry, but I do not remember you.

GRANDMOTHER

(sobbing at the sadness of it)

He kissed me.

BLANCA

Abuela, do not blame yourself.

NARRATOR

Instead, Blanca smiled.

BLANCA

Would you dance with me?

NARRATOR

And they danced as they had danced the first time Juan met her, and all the memories flooded back into him.

JUAN

I remember you! I remember you! No one dances like you do. No one fits into my arms as you do.

They dance for a few moments, then face the audience directly, side by side. The lights stay up on them and dim everywhere else.

NARRATOR

Juan and Blanca got married and lived very happily. And, you know -- Juan never again had the impulse to gamble. Because when you're really happy --

JUAN

You've got all the luck you ever need --

BLANCA

And a lot more time to dance.

Dance music comes up as JUAN and BLANCA and the four UTILITY actors dance. Lights out.