

Scene only

THE CEMETERY CLUB

by Ivan Menchell

Queens - Present - Ida (50-60) - Lucille (50-60)

Ida - A widow
Lucille - A widow

Ida and Lucille are two widows who, along with their friend, Doris, make regular visits to their husbands' graves. On one such occasion, Ida and Lucille take a moment to chat while waiting for Doris to arrive.

LUCILLE: Son of a bitch!

IDA: What's the matter?!

LUCILLE: A guy follows me all the way from Queens Boulevard, undressing me with his eyes, and she asks what's the matter.

IDA: Again someone was following you?

LUCILLE: Can I help it if men find me attractive?

IDA: Who was it this time?

LUCILLE: I didn't get a name. He had blond hair, six one, six two, about a hundred seventy pounds—a very nice build—with green eyes and a cleft chin—

IDA: What were you, walking backwards?

LUCILLE: I happen to have an excellent memory... So what do you think?

IDA: I think you should just forget the whole thing.

LUCILLE: I mean about the coat. Look at this how she doesn't even notice.

IDA: Oh Lucille, it's beautiful. New?

LUCILLE: Have you seen it on this gorgeous body before?

IDA: You should wear it in the best of health.

LUCILLE: You ready for the best part? Guess how much.

IDA: A coat like that you must have paid at least three thousand.

LUCILLE: Nope.

IDA: Less?

LUCILLE: Much.

IDA: What, twenty-five hundred?

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(LUCILLE joyously shakes her head.)

IDA: Don't tell me it was under two thousand.

LUCILLE: *Nineteen fifty.*

IDA: I'm fainting.

LUCILLE: Is that a steal or is that a steal?

IDA: Where did you find it?

LUCILLE: Well, I was walking in Manhattan down Fifty-seventh Street when I pass the Ritz Thrift Shop. Usually, I would never even look in the window. I mean, *what* could they have - garbage, right? This time I happen to look and what do you think I see?

IDA: That coat.

LUCILLE: No. I see a full length brown fox you could die from. I go in, try it on and my mazel it's a little too tight— (*She's about to say "tight" but stops herself.*) —short. Then as I'm walking out, I'm looking down the rack and what do you think catches my eye?

IDA: That coat.

LUCILLE: A leopard jacket that made my heart stop. But for how often I'd get to wear it, it didn't pay.

IDA: Lucille, we're not getting younger. Where did you find the mink?

LUCILLE: So, as I'm about to leave I see them bringing in a new rack and what do you think is the first thing I spot?

IDA: Who knows?

LUCILLE: This coat.

IDA: Thank God.

LUCILLE: There's only one thing that bothers me.

IDA: What?

LUCILLE: Knowing it was someone else's. I mean, who knows who this person is? All I know is that she's tall, terrifically slim and probably didn't look half as good in it as I do.

IDA: So what are you worried? You got a gorgeous coat at a great price.

LUCILLE: Ida, why would she give this coat up?

IDA: Who knows? Maybe she died.

LUCILLE: Oh my God. I didn't even think. This poor woman could

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be dead. For all I know, she could have died in this coat. The poor thing could've been wearing this coat, crossing the street and got hit by a car. It's not marked anywhere, is it? (*SHE turns around to show Ida the back of the coat.*)

IDA: It's perfect. Not a scratch on it...except for that one tire mark down the back.

LUCILLE: Oh!

IDA: I'm only kidding. There's nothing on it. Let me try it on.

LUCILLE: My pleasure.

(*LUCILLE takes off the coat and gives it to Ida. SHE puts it on.*)

IDA: How do I look?

LUCILLE: Do the words "Lana Turner" mean anything?

IDA: Let me see.

(*SHE runs over to the mirror and looks at herself. LUCILLE stands behind her.*)

LUCILLE: What becomes a legend most!

IDA: (*Embarrassed.*) Oh...

LUCILLE: Maybe I'll take a look, see if they have another one. Picture the two of us out on the town, fur from head to toe.

IDA: It's not me.

LUCILLE: All the more reason.

IDA: I don't need it. (*SHE takes off the coat and hangs it up.*)

LUCILLE: Ida, no one buys a mink because they need it. You buy support hose because you need it. You buy a mink because you want it.

IDA: I don't want it. Besides, I couldn't afford it. Where did you get two thousand dollars?

LUCILLE: One of Harry's Municipals Bonds came due.

IDA: Well, congratulations. How about some tea?

LUCILLE: Love it.

IDA: I'll put the water up.

(*SHE exits to the kitchen. LUCILLE hangs the coat in the closet.*)

LUCILLE: I want you to know I broke a pretty hot date to come here today.

IDA: (*Offstage.*) Who you got now?

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LUCILLE: His name's Donald, Ida, if I tell you.

IDA: Good looking?

LUCILLE: *Gorgeous...* (*Nonchalantly looking through Ida's mail.*) and a gentleman. Opens the door, pulls out the chair, picks up the check. We had a night Friday you wouldn't believe. Dinner, dancing, a handsome cab ride through Central Park.

IDA: (*Reenters.*) How romantic.

LUCILLE: And he didn't leave me alone all night. Hands ever y- where.

IDA: No.

LUCILLE: Yeah.

IDA: So when do I meet him already?

LUCILLE: You'll meet him.

IDA: You never stay with one long enough for me to meet them.

LUCILLE: I'll tell you what—if we're still together next week I'll have him stop by during canasta. And what about you? When am I going to start hearing about a little romance, a little excitement?

IDA: When it happens you'll hear about it.

LUCILLE: I'm all ready to start double dating. I can't keep taking out two men by myself.

IDA: Why, they get tired?

(*THEY laugh.*)

LUCILLE: I'm serious, Ida. I'm waiting for you to join me. God knows Doris is never going to start.

IDA: I wonder where she is. It's after eleven. I figured she would've been here early. Today's an important day for her.

LUCILLE: It's always important to Doris. This is the high point of the month for her. She thinks about it for two weeks after and starts getting ready two weeks before. It's like a vicious cycle.

IDA: Sometimes a cycle is important. You know what to expect.

LUCILLE: Well, my cycle ended more years ago than I care to remember and that hasn't stopped me.

IDA: I just hope today goes well, I can't believe it's already her fourth anniversary.

LUCILLE: *Today's her fourth anniversary? I completely forgot.*

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IDA: How could you?

LUCILLE: I can't keep up with the dates anymore.

IDA: You really should try.

LUCILLE: Sometimes I think we should stop this whole business altogether.

IDA: Lucille.

LUCILLE: I do.

IDA: ...I don't know myself anymore.

LUCILLE: You see.

IDA: So why do you keep coming?

LUCILLE: Don't think I haven't asked myself.

IDA: I'm serious.

LUCILLE: I like this time together.
(*Idá smiles.*)

LUCILLE: But I'm sure there's other ways we could spend the afternoon.

(*The DOORBELL rings.*)

IDA: (*Going to the door.*) Well don't bring it up today.

LUCILLE: I wouldn't say a word. Whatever she wants to talk, we'll talk.

IDA: You're a good friend.

LUCILLE: The best.

LA CHUNGA

by Mario Vargas Llosa

translated by David Graham-Young

Piura, Peru - 1945 - La Chunga (40-50) - Meche (20's)

La Chunga - A bar owner

Meche - A naive young prostitute

Meche has been brought to La Chunga's bar by her pimp. La Chunga desires the young woman and pays for her use for the evening. The two women retire to La Chunga's room, where the older woman warns Meche that her "boyfriend" will soon tire of her.

MECHE: (*With a nervous little laugh*) So now what happens? What's the game, Chunga?

(*The cold woman of the previous scenes suddenly seems charged with life and sensuality.*)

LA CHUNGA: It's not a game. I've paid three thousand soles for you. You're mine for the rest of the night.

MECHE: (*Defiantly*) Do you mean I'm your slave?

LA CHUNGA: For a few hours, at least. (*Handing her the glass*) Here. It'll calm your nerves.

(*MECHE grasps the glass and takes a gulp.*)

MECHE: Do you think I'm nervous? Well, you're wrong. I'm not afraid of you. I'm doing this for Josefino. If I wanted, I could push you aside and run out that door.

(*LA CHUNGA sits on the bed.*)

LA CHUNGA: But you won't. You said you'd obey me, and you're a woman of your word, am I sur... Besides, you're just dying of curiosity, aren't you?

MECHE: (*Finishing the glass*) Do you honestly think you're going to get me drunk on two vermouths? Don't kid yourself. I've got a strong head for drink. I can go on all night without getting in the least bit tipsy. I can hold even more than Josefino.

(*Pause.*)

LA CHUNGA: Do to me what you do to him when you want to excite him.