

A ROSE IN FLAMES

An Opera in Three Acts

Libretto by

Mark Medoff

Music by

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CHARACTERS

ROSE WINGATE	Mezzo soprano, late 20s
DIEGO DELAROSA	Tenor, doctor, late 30s
FLORENTINO RALSTON	Baritone, outlaw, 40
JOHN WINGATE	Baritone, Sheriff, Rose's older brother, early 30s
LUCIA DELAROSA	Soprano, Diego's daughter, mid-teens
FRANKLIN PICKARD	Baritone, mayor, store owner, mid-40s
CECELIA PICKARD	Soprano, Franklin's wife, mid-40s
BUD TREON	Baritone, cowhand, handyman
FATHER SALAZAR	Bass, Catholic priest
CHORUS	Townspeople

SETTING

Most of the story takes place in Vida Nueva, a fictional small town in the American Southwest.

TIME

The late 1870s.

ACT I

Scene 1	The town plaza	Day
Scene 2	Rose and John's balcony	Night
Scene 2	The town plaza	Night
Scene 3	The cemetery	Day
Scene 4	The cemetery	Evening

ACT II

Scene 1	The town plaza	Day
Scene 2	Doctor's office	Day
Scene 3	Doctor's office	Night
Scene 4	The town plaza	Day/ Evening

SCENE 1 - TOWN PLAZA. - DAY

(A small town, Vida Nueva, in the Southwest in the 1870s. TOWNSPEOPLE are onstage. Forward are MAYOR FRANKLIN PICKARD, 45, and his wife CECILIA, 45.)

MAYOR PICKARD

Does anyone see them yet?

TOWNSPEOPLE

We see someone coming.

It could be them!

BUD TREON

Could be them, or could be outlaws.

CECILIA

Por favor, no bandidos today!

TOWNSPEOPLE

With that we all agree.

We've had enough of outlaws,

But now there'll be a change.

We wait for someone inside the Law

Who'll banish those outside of it.

(LUCIA DELAROSA, 16, runs on.)

LUCIA

Our waiting's done! Here they are!

(ROSE and JOHN WINGATE enter.)

TOWNSPEOPLE

Welcome, welcome, welcome to Vida Nueva!

Vida Nueva -- it means New Life.

Sun a shining, fine for sowing,

Good for grazing, fine for growing.

Bienvenidos, welcome to Vida Nueva.

Welcome to New Life.

MAYOR PICKARD

Welcome, welcome. I'm Mayor Pickard and this is my wife Cecelia.

Everyone, this is our new sheriff John Wingate and his sister Rose.

TOWNSPEOPLE

Hoorah! Hoorah!

JOHN

Thank you, muchas gracias.
We're mighty glad to be here.

MAYOR PICKARD

And we're so glad to have you here, indeed.

(Lucia steps forward with some wild flowers for Rose.)

LUCIA

Fresh picked, for you.

ROSE

What lovely flowers! Thank you.
May I ask your name?

LUCIA

Lucia Delarosa.

(While Rose is singing to Lucia, DIEGO DELOROSA, her father enters and watches.)

ROSE

(to Lucia)

Lucia, in your dear face, I see
The reason for our journey.
To keep your smile in place is what
My brother must be given to.
I will remember always, my dear,
How you greeted me as I began my new life.

(addressing everyone)

I am so happy to be here.
Thank you all for this welcome.
Thank you all for your kindness.

(Diego joins Lucia, which Rose notices.)

MAYOR PICKARD

Doctor, come meet our new sheriff.
Sheriff Wingate, this is Doctor Diego Delarosa.

DIEGO

It's good to meet you, Sheriff.
Let me know if I can be of service to you.

JOHN

Thank you, Doctor. This is my sister, Rose.

DIEGO

A pleasure, Miss Wingate.

ROSE

Mine as well. Is Lucia...?

DIEGO

My daughter.

ROSE

She's charming. You and your wife must be proud.

CECILIA

The doctor's a widower, dear.

ROSE

Oh, I'm sorry for your loss.

DIEGO

Thank you. Lucia, perhaps later you can show Miss Wingate around?

LUCIA

Oh, I'd love to! I know everyone.

ROSE

I'd like that. Thank you, Doctor.

DIEGO

De nada.

MAYOR PICKARD

Now, Sheriff, let's go swear you in!

TOWNSPEOPLE

Vida Nueva, it means New Life
Sun a shining, fine for sowing,

Good for grazing, fine for growing
Bienvenidos, welcome to New Life!

(As the crowd moves off, Father Salazar
passes near Diego.)

FATHER SALAZAR

Perhaps this man is the answer to our prayers.

DIEGO

He seems confident, Father.

FATHER SALAZAR

A good sign.

(Father Salazar exits.)

BUD TREON

Well, I'm confident I need a drink.

DIEGO

Bud, drink some water, not more whiskey.

BUD TREON

Water don't ease my pain none.

DIEGO

Your snake bite healed a year ago.

BUD TREON

Sometimes it throbs like the devil.
And, hell, it's so dry here,
I'm always thirsty.
I don't think this sheriff will stay long here.
He looks plenty tough,
But his rosy sister
Will wilt in this heat.
And when her lips start to crack,
Then she'll whine and pack.
And I'll bet you a whiskey,
She'll drag her brother with her.
Women! They make men weak, Doctor.

(Bud and Diego exit.)

SCENE 1

(EVENING)

(Rose and John are enjoying the evening air.)

ROSE

What a lovely evening.
It cooled down quickly.

JOHN

I should walk the plaza,
Make sure all is calm.

ROSE

Isn't Lucia the sweetest young woman?
She reminds me of the girl I was...
Before what happened.

JOHN

Rose, we moved here to forget.
We have a new future here.
Don't dwell on the past.
I need to go. I'll be back soon.

ROSE

Should I come with you?

JOHN

No, I should do this alone. I'll be fine.

ROSE

I know. I just worry.

JOHN

Rose, when we were young,
why did you spend so much time learning to shoot?

ROSE

I wanted to hunt with the boys,
Not sit around in a dress.

JOHN

Remember when Dad made you wear a dress
And entered you in shooting contests?

ROSE

Those were fun to win.

JOHN

Dad made money betting on you
Until you won too often.
Then few would bet against you.

ROSE

It was all instinct by then,
And I still liked to win.

JOHN

Rose, you're better with a gun than I am,
But I'm more than good enough to handle this job.

ROSE

I know. Just be careful. You're all the family I have
left.

JOHN

I'm always careful. And I'll always be here for you.
(John exits.)

ROSE

As a child I dreamed my glorious life to come,
All things seemed possible in my girlish dreams.
A child who was all she seemed, and more.
What madness to be so bold!
Men came, they rode, they ran,
Swinging sabers, shooting guns.
I had always felt protected,
But my world came apart.
The life I knew was lost.
Gunfire chattered, rifles roared,
Shattered windows, splintered doors,
And so much... and so much more.
I lost sight of those I loved.
The walls turned red, red around me ev'rywhere,
So many, many dead.
They came, these men;
They screamed their bloody rage!
I was torn, torn and bent—
Innocent child grown suddenly old.

(John returns)

JOHN

Everything was quiet and peaceful. The trouble-makers must be passing no-accounts. They'll be easy to handle.

ROSE

I'm headed to bed. I'm exhausted.

JOHN

It's been a long day. Sleep well.
(Rose exits.)

JOHN

From North Carolina to Texas,
and now New Mexico.
The first time we moved,
Her memories traveled with us
And haunted her dreams.
This move will be diff'rent,
This is the right place,
The place we can stay.
We'll buy a farm here,
Rose can plant a garden.
Her nightmares will fade,
And Rose will blossom
And become the woman
She was meant to be.

(John exits.)

SCENE 2 - THE PLAZA - EVENING

(That evening. Townspeople dance. John and Rose are swept up into a waltz as night falls. Diego and Lucia enter.)

CECILIA

Oh, Doctor, are you dancing tonight?

DIEGO

Sí, of course.
Save a dance for me.

CECILIA

You can have them all.

OTHER TOWNSWOMEN

Don't be selfish, Cecilia.
We wish to dance as well.

(Cecilia and the Women dance Diego in
and out of their arms.)

DIEGO

I will try my best
To dance with you all.

TOWNSWOMEN

As you always do, dear Doctor.

(John turns Rose out and she ends up in
Diego's arms. Diego hesitates, then
begins to dance with Rose. Diego
abruptly stops and steps away)

ROSE

Is something wrong?

(Diego steps out of the action and
seems isolated. Other stage action
either freezes or continues in the
background.)

DIEGO

Dios mío, mi corazón.
Estoy cayendo.
Destino. Cayendo.
She dazzles my eyes like a star,
She transforms this humble square,
Her face a mask, delicate but bold,
A mystery untold.
I am torn apart and born anew.
I dare not go on;
Surely she would hear my heart
Lend percussion to the night,
I should take flight!
Yet here I stand,
Swaying behind a wall of years,
Years of feeling safe,
Safe from feeling passion.
Years ago pasión

Led to sorrow
 And a torrent of tears!
 I refuse to suffer again,
 Here I will stay. Safe!
 I'm turning away from her flame.
 Destino! I reject this fate!

(John walks over to Diego.)

DIEGO

Your sister dances well.

JOHN

As does your daughter.

DIEGO

Lucia is growing up too fast.

JOHN

At least she grows up in a time of peace.

DIEGO

What drew you to be a lawman?

JOHN

Need, Doctor. After the war I needed work.
 I've proved good at ,
 But my first love is farming.

DIEGO

Did you farm before the war?

JOHN

Farmed our place in North Carolina,
 Beautiful place. Beautiful.
 But the war changed all that.
 My older brothers died in battle.
 Then our parents were killed,
 And our home burned to the ground.

DIEGO

How tragic! How did that happen?

(Rose looks their direction.)

JOHN

Doctor, I've said too much.
 The past is best left behind.

(FLORENTINO RALSTON, 40, enters. He moves straight to Rose. John watches, but does not come nearer.)

FLORENTINO

Ah, there you are!
A los pies, Belleza.
At your feet I submit.

ROSE

Why?

FLORENTINO

After watching you from afar,
I had to see you closer.

ROSE

And who are you, sir?
Are you perhaps a rancher,
Or do you have a business here?

FLORENTINO

Oh, none of those, Señora.
I am not "another," but the other.

ROSE

The other *what*, sir?

FLORENTINO

The *other* than all of these.
All that you imagine that they are,
I am not. ¡Bienvenido!
Welcome to your new life.

(Lucia, curious, moves closer. Diego starts to move, but John stops him.)

FLORENTINO (CONT'D)

(to Lucia)

Como se dice, chica?

LUCIA

Está bien. Gracias.
Will you join our fiesta?

FLORENTINO

Muchas gracias, and why not?

A million stars light the sky,
 But none compare
 To the light in your eyes.

(Lucia relishes a chance to flirt.
 John begins to approach.)

LUCIA

I have heard sweet words before, Señor.
 But, go on, amuse me,
 What do you see in my eyes?

FLORENTINO

Ah, infinidad.
 I see all that has yet to happen,
 And all that we dream will be,
 But have not yet dared to seek.

LUCIA

Are you seeing your dreams or mine?

FLORENTINO

Ah, mi señorita dulce,
 If you dare tell me your dreams,
 Then I will dare tell you mine.

(Florentino reaches for Lucia, but Rose
 places herself between them.)

ROSE

Lucia!

FLORENTINO

(to Rose)
 I already know what you dream, Belleza.

(John is quickly there. Rose moves
 Lucia over to Diego.)

JOHN

Sir, I must ask you to leave.

FLORENTINO

No. I think I must stay.
 Elsewhere the night cuts cold,
 But here two beauties burn with desire,
 And I wish to bask in their warmth.

JOHN

You, Sir, are a scoundrel.
I insist you leave.

FLORENTINO

I decide, not you.

JOHN

I am the law.

FLORENTINO

I am Florentino Ralston.
I make my own laws.
Amigo, I admire your pistol.
I hear the Schofield
Is unerring in its aim.

JOHN

The aim, my friend, depends on the user.

(The townspeople begin to move back.)

FLORENTINO

Then perhaps I should test your aim.

(Rose starts to step forward, but Diego
holds her back.)

JOHN

You, Sir, drop your gun belt.

FLORENTINO

And because you wear a badge,
You expect me to obey?

JOHN

Sir, comply or die.

FLORENTINO

Alas, I am so full of desire that I must live,
So it will be you who now must die.

(Florentino is faster, and he shoots
John three times. Diego falls to his
knees beside John, as does Rose.)

TOWNSPEOPLE

(The townspeople's music is a quiet

background for the rest.)
 Gunshots resound.
 Our new sheriff, is he dead?

ROSE

Johnnie!

TOWNSPEOPLE

See how he lies there in a sea of red.

FLORENTINO

(to Rose)

We will meet again, belleza.
 You are my soul mate,
 And I have fallen in love.

TOWNSPEOPLE

He lies so still.

DIEGO

Mayor, I need help.

(Mayor Pickard rushes forward.)

TOWNSPEOPLE

Our poor sheriff!
 No, no! He just arrived!

FLORENTINO

Who next becomes your sheriff
 I will likewise retire.

TOWNSPEOPLE

Is he dying? Is he dead?
 Will this bloodshed never end?

FLORENTINO

(to Rose)

I'll return for you, mi amante.
 Hasta leugo.

(Florentino exits.)

TOWNSPEOPLE

Must this be the way of it?

ROSE

Tell me, Doctor.

DIEGO

(wanting to spare Rose)

Cecelia...

ROSE

No, I'm staying!

TOWNSPEOPLE

Sangre del Cristo,
Sangre del hombre.

ROSE

Doctor, save my brother!
I'm here, Johnnie, right by your side.

TOWNSPEOPLE

Misericordia.

(John dies. Diego stands and motions
for Father Salazar.)

ROSE

No! Why have you stopped?

TOWNSPEOPLE

Too late, too late.
Sangre del Cristo,
Sangre del hombre.

DIEGO

There was nothing more I can do.

ROSE

You can't just let him die!

FATHER SALAZAR

(to Rose)

He's already gone.

ROSE

No! No!

FATHER SALAZAR

You'll meet again
If our lives are God's
And not our own.

TOWNSPEOPLE

Gunshots echo into silence,
Darkness lays down upon the mesa.

ROSE

I lose sight of those I love,
White turns red,
My brother dead.

(Rose exits.)

TOWNSPEOPLE

Men are born into life here passing,
God takes Sheriff Wingate to life everlasting.

SCENE 3 - CEMETERY

(Townspeople have gathered to bury John
Wingate.)

TOWNSPEOPLE

Por los siglos de los siglos.

FATHER SALAZAR

En el nombre del Padre,
Del Hijo, y del Espíritu Santo.
Amen.

TOWNSPEOPLE

Jesus los valga.
God is good. Amen.

MAYOR PICKARD

For his devotion to our welfare,

MAYOR PICKARD/CECILIA

We bid John Wingate farewell,
And Godspeed to his eternal rest.

TOWNSPEOPLE

Qué Dios le oiga.

MAYOR PICKARD/CECILIA

We will care for his dear sister
All the days of her life.

ROSE

No. I don't want that.
 I won't have anyone care for me.
 How can you say that God is good?
 Could I spit the fury from my throat,
 I would laugh at that monstrous lie.
 Here in this foul world
 Cruelty reigns and always will.
 Savage brutes rip bodies apart,
 And you still say, "God is good?"
 My brother was good:
 A good man,
 And he was killed by scum.

The man that killed him
 Should be shot like a rabid dog.
 So which one of you "good" men
 Will do that for me?
 Which brave man will avenge his sister?
 None of you? You pious cowards!
 Your god won't strike him down!
 Ralston will go on killing
 Until someone guns him down.
 Do not grieve for my brother;
 Grieve for those of us who live on.

(Rose exits.)

FATHER SALAZAR

Que Dios te vendiga, Señorita Wingate.

TOWNSPEOPLE

Jesus los valga. God is good.

(Everyone exits except Diego and Lucia.)

LUCIA

Papa, is it my fault
 Sheriff Wingate was killed?

DIEGO

No, cariña, it's not your fault.
 Ralston wanted a fight.
 The sheriff was brave,
 But Ralston was too fast
 And too eager to kill.

LUCIA

What will Rose do now?

DIEGO

I don't know.

LUCIA

I want to go talk with her.

DIEGO

She may not want that.

LUCIA

I know. But I have to try.

(Lucia exits.)

DIEGO

What *will* Rose do now?
 Who *is* this woman?
 Why am I so drawn to her?
 And where does such fury come from?
 What haunts this woman?
 What sorrow does she harbor in her past?
 Her parents were killed,
 And their home was burned:
 John told me that.
 But where was she?
 Was she gone?
 Was she there?
 Had they hidden her away?
 What horrors did she see?
 But how could I ask such things?
 And if I knew, what could I do
 To calm such wrath?
 She haunts my dreams.
 I am drawn ever forward,
 Though I will myself to step back.
 Yo no sé qué hacer.
 I am lost.
 I am lost.

SCENE 4 - THE CEMETERY - EVENING

(Rose is at John's grave.)

ROSE

Forgive me, Johnnie.
 You weren't meant to be a lawman.
 I know I pleaded with you to move,
 To leave the horrors of our past behind,
 But you should have said, "no."

You saved my life,
 When I wanted to die.
 You tended my wounds,
 And made me feel safe.

You never wanted to move,
 You wanted to stay.
 We buried our dead,
 Surrounded by ruin.
 I begged you to move,
 But you should have said, "No."
 With you I felt safe.
 Now you're gone.
 Now I'm alone with my nightmares.

FLORENTINO

(emerging from hiding)

You are never alone, bellezza.

ROSE

You! How dare you come here!

FLORENTINO

I will dare anything to see you—
 Your face haunts my dreams.

ROSE

I dream to see you dead!
 I will avenge my brother!

FLORENTINO

No, my love, soon we'll be as one.
 With time your heart will soften,
 And as you forgive me,
 You will be drawn to my arms.

ROSE

My God! You cannot believe that.

FLORENTINO

I know we belong together, as one,
We are meant for each other.
We are the same. Somos lo mismo,
We are twins of the Spirit,
Twins of the wounded heart.

ROSE

You don't have a heart!

FLORENTINO

Oh, but I do have a heart,
So full, as I look at you.
I am your soul. Somos lo mismo.
I am venom and sorrow.
La vida takes its toll.
But like you I must play my part.

ROSE

Don't touch me.

FLORENTINO

Of course not. But be fair, amada.

ROSE

Be fair?

FLORENTINO

Ojala!

ROSE

Look into my eyes
And see my hate!

FLORENTINO

Mira en mi corazon.
See my adoring eyes.
And the arms that would enfold you.

ROSE

You're insane.

FLORENTINO

I *am* insane,
Insane with desire for you.
Is it me you fear,
Or who you are?

ROSE

I fear no one.

FLORENTINO

You are danger and beauty.

ROSE

You should fear me.

FLORENTINO

I knew you on sight.
I hunger for danger,
And you are beauty and danger.

ROSE

Far more than you know!

FLORENTINO

If you had a gun, belleza,
Would you shoot me now?

ROSE

You would be dead.

FLORENTINO

Ah, your fire still smolders,
And I am the air you need to live.
I can make you blaze again.
I'll keep myself chaste for you.
And sometimes I will come near you,
And I will breathe.

(He breathes near her face.)

FLORENTINO (CONT'D)

Ah!

ROSE

God! No! Leave me alone!

FLORENTINO

You know I can make you burn again.

(Florentino exits.)

ROSE

(shaken, moving aimlessly)
Thank God that he left.

Is no place is sacred to him?
He's deranged!
How can he imagine
I would ever fall in his arms?
He killed my brother!

This mad man means to possess me.
As long as he is alive
I can never feel safe.
But I will never let him take me.
I would rather die!
There are fates worse than death.

(near John's grave)

This anger gives me life again.
Rest in peace, John.
I *will* defend myself,
And I will avenge you.
Now rage sustains me.
The man who killed you lives,
And threatens me.
He will come back.
He will come back for me,
He said he would.
When he dares to come,
I'll kill him.
I will avenge you, John,
I swear I'll kill him.

End of Act One

ACT TWO

SCENE 1 - THE PLAZA - DAY

(Bud Treon holds Mayor Pickard in his
clutches, a knife to his throat.)

LUCIA

(running into the plaza)

Help! Bud may kill the Mayor!

TOWNSPEOPLE

Do something someone.
Do something before what's done
Is done too late!

(Diego enters.)

TOWNSPEOPLE (CONT'D)

Doctor, surely you can help.

DIEGO

Stay calm! Now then, what happened?

BUD TREON

He called me a liar.

MAYOR PICKARD

He is a liar, and a thief!

BUD TREON

I am not!

MAYOR PICKARD

He stole a sack of rice,
Took it right to his wagon.

DIEGO

And your version, Bud?

BUD TREON

My money was in my wagon.
I needed it to pay him.

DIEGO

Bud, you've been drinking,
And whiskey makes you loco.
Turn the mayor loose,

And then we'll sort this out.

TOWNSPEOPLE

That makes sense, so why not turn him loose?

BUD TREON

I won't be called a thief!

Rose emerges from the crowd and puts a
pistol to Bud's temple.

ROSE

You are a thief!

I was in the store, and I saw you take the rice.

BUD TREON

No, you got that wrong!

I told the store gal I had to get my money.

ROSE

Lucia, did he mention money to you?

LUCIA

No, ma'am. He didn't speak to me.

BUD TREON

Damn! I sure thought I did.

DIEGO

Bud, you're drunk. You're mixed up.

Mayor, what if Bud pays you now?

ROSE

Doctor, stay out of this.

DIEGO

Don't give me orders, Miss Wingate!

ROSE

This man stinks of liquor and deceit. He's lying.

DIEGO

You're wrong!

You don't know Bud!

He is fine when he's sober.

Let me handle this.

ROSE

No, there's been enough talk.

(to Bud)

Mister, I'll count to three.

Either let the Mayor go,

Or I *will* put a bullet in your head.

One...

(Bud lets go of Mayor Pickard.)

BUD TREON

All right!

(moving off)

But I am not a thief.

I'll go get my money.

DIEGO

(to Rose)

Are you insane?

ROSE

I just saved the mayor's life.

Someone had to do something.

DIEGO

I *was* doing something.

I have dealt with Bud before.

If you had been more patient,

Then I would have calmed him down.

ROSE

If I had been more patient,

Then the Mayor might be dead.

DIEGO

You can't just put a gun to someone's head.

You are not the law here.

ROSE

No one is,

That's the problem.

No one is the law here.

TOWNSPEOPLE

She's right! Mayor, we want action!

We want action!

MAYOR PICKARD

One at a time!

TOWNSPEOPLE

Find a new sheriff!

MAYOR PICKARD

I've tried!

TOWNSPEOPLE

We want to prosper while we live.
We don't want to live in fear.

MAYOR PICKARD

Please, I'm doing the best I can!

TOWNSPEOPLE

Do better! Or folks will be moving on!

MAYOR PICKARD

I need more time.

TOWNSPEOPLE

We want action! We want action!

DIEGO

Enough! Silencio!
How can we act when we all speak at once?
When will we have a sheriff, mayor?

MAYOR PICKARD

I've tried, I have. I've sent telegrams,
And I've raised the salary twice.
So, unless Providence intervenes,
I am prepared to resign.

(Bud returns, now wearing a gun.)

ROSE

If I were a man, I would ask to be sheriff.
I'm faster with a pistol than John was,
And I've sworn to put his killer in the ground.

DIEGO

Thank God, you're not a man!
You're too hot-headed to be a lawman.
We just saw how reckless she is.

ROSE

You need someone reckless to deal with trash like Ralston.

BUD TREON

Hey, lady! Words are cheap.
Let's see how fast you are.

(Bud's hand hovers over his pistol.
Townspeople scatter out of the line of
fire.)

ROSE

You're drunk. You're no test at all.

DIEGO

Bud, give me your gun!

BUD TREON

Hell, no! Draw down, lady!

(Bud goes for his gun, but Rose shoots
it out of his hand.)

BUD TREON

Damn!

(Diego rushes to look at Bud's hand.)

TOWNSPEOPLE

Did you see that? My God!

BUD TREON

Ah, Hellfire! Fancy shootin' won't help her face no
real killer.

ROSE

I have killed men before.
I can do it again.

TOWNSPEOPLE

She says she has killed men.

ROSE

Spread the word.
I challenge Ralston to a gunfight.
If he won't come to me, then I will hunt him down.
Either way, I swear I'll put him in a coffin.

(Rose exits.)

BUD TREON

She's dead.

DIEGO

Let's look at this in my office.

TOWNSPEOPLE

All our hopes of peace has fled.
 Now we're filled with fear and dread.
 This woman full of hate and fire
 Will raise that devil's ire.
 She has made a fatal mistake,
 She has prodded a rattlesnake.

SCENE 2 - DIEGO'S OFFICE -
 AFTERNOON

(A few weeks later. Lucia and Rose
 show Diego a dress pattern.)

LUCIA

This is the pattern I like.
 Isn't it wonderful?
 Rose has a sewing machine.
 She says I can use it,
 And she would help me.
 Can I buy fabric and make it?
 Please, Papi, please.

DIEGO

(to Rose)

Are you sure you want to help?

ROSE

I would dearly love to help.

DIEGO

(looking at the pattern)

Are you sure it's not too old for you?

LUCIA

Oh, no. Cecilia thinks it perfect.
 And so does Rose, don't you Rose?

ROSE

It's not my place to say,
But, since you asked,
I think it's beautiful.

LUCIA

So can I go ahead?

DIEGO

Of course you can.

LUCIA

¡Oh, gracias, gracias, Papi!

Lucia exits.

(Rose and Diego seem unsure of each other.)

DIEGO

Thank you for helping Lucia.
That's kind of you.

ROSE

Oh, it's my pleasure.
I enjoy spending time with her.

DIEGO

As she does with you.

(Bud enters.)

BUD

Good mornin', Doc.

DIEGO

Buenos días, Bud.

BUD TREON

Miss Wingate, you want me fix that window today?

ROSE

That would be wonderful.

BUD

I'll get right to it then.

ROSE

Thank you.

(Bud exits.)

DIEGO

Having Bud do work for you, I still find that surprising.

ROSE

We worked things out.
 You were right, I misjudged him,
 And I want him as a friend.
 No one else in town has the gumption
 To back me in a show down.
 I know he's a bit of misfit,
 But then so am I.
 We get along just fine.

DIEGO

I'm glad you've given him
 A chance to redeem himself.

(a pause)

ROSE

I should go.

DIEGO

Stay a moment, please.
 At the fiesta next week...

ROSE

Yes?

DIEGO

There will be dancing.
 Perhaps we might dance together.

ROSE

You are welcome to ask, Doctor.

DIEGO

Thank you. I will.
 Miss Wingate,...

ROSE

Doctor, in private, you may call me Rose.

DIEGO

And you may call me Diego.

Rose, your brother said...
 About selling your farm...
 Your parents, how did they die in the war?

ROSE

What did John tell you?

DIEGO

That they were killed,
 And something about a fire.

ROSE

He should never have spoken.
 What I long for now is to bury my past.

DIEGO

Forgive me, I regret that I asked.

ROSE

But now you have asked,
 So my past continues to haunt me!
 Very well, I will tell you.
 Marauders raided our farm.
 They killed my parents
 And burned our house and barn.

DIEGO

And you? Did the marauders hurt you?

ROSE

No, I hid from them,
 They never found me.

DIEGO

I should pretend to believe you,
 But I know that's not true.
 The scars are your wrists are faint,
 But I recognize their cause.
 They tied you with rope,
 And you tore your skin raw
 Trying to free yourself.

(Distressed, Rose moves away from
 Diego.)

ROSE

What do you want from me?
 Why must you probe my past?

DIEGO

I am trying to be your friend.

ROSE

If I tell you more,
I fear you may shun me.

DIEGO

That will never happen.

ROSE

Marauders came, swinging sabers,
Shooting guns.
A young girl watches in horror.
Her father is struck down.
Her mother, too,
Is struck until she's dead.
The girl hides,
Her screams buried in her throat.
A door flies open.
The girl is found!

DIEGO

Santa Maria!

ROSE

She cringes before a smirking man
Who reaches for her...

DIEGO

Por Dios!

ROSE

She points her pistol and shoots him.

DIEGO

¡Jesucristo!

ROSE

Other hands tear her gun away,
Rough hands reach for the girl,
Her mouth, breasts, thighs,

DIEGO

¡Dios mío!
What happened next
I can see in your eyes.

ROSE

John had gone to town.
 He saw the smoke—
 He rode hard and
 Found me in my shame.
 They had tied me in our barn,
 And set a fire there.

DIEGO

Pobre niña.

ROSE

John saved me from the fire,
 But he could not undo the hurt
 They had done to me.

DIEGO

I am so sorry.
 What happened to the men who did this?

ROSE

John and I tracked them down.
 They thought they were safe,
 And we surprised them.
 We shot two dead,
 And wounded four more.
 Then they surrendered.
 Four men stood tied to trees,
 Their eyes uncovered.
 I stepped to each man,
 Stood face to face,
 And one upon another
 I put a bullet in each man's forehead.

DIEGO

Madre Maria! What barbaric justice,
 How savage!

ROSE

It was just.
 Revenge is the salve to soothe
 The wounds that are my history.

DIEGO

Revenge is not the answer.
 Revenge won't heal your wounds.

ROSE

My epitaph will be revenge,
Written in blood from the veins of evil men.

DIEGO

No! To shed more blood
Will not change your past.
Nothing we do, Rose, can alter our past.
Think of the future.
Not only time, but love can heal.

ROSE

My fate is to be alone.
That is my destiny.

DIEGO

Rose, you are wrong.
You are not meant to be alone.
Look into your heart,
As I have looked in mine.
Oh, Rose, let us walk side by side.
It is our fate to love each other.

ROSE

No! Not now! No, the nightmare is not undone.
The man who killed my brother
Cannot be allowed to live.

(Rose exits.)

SCENE 3 - DIEGO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

(Diego is at his desk. His office door
opens, and Florentino steps in.)

FLORENTINO

You should lock your door, Doctor.

DIEGO

I can see that.

(Florentino walks calmly around the
office.)

FLORENTINO

I admire you, Doctor, you are a brave man.

DIEGO

Not really.

FLORENTINO

Sí, you tend the wounded,
The sick, and the dying.
You grapple with Death,
Hoping to slow his arrival.

Myself, sometimes I help La Muerte.
If I wish him to visit someone,
My bullets open his entryway.
I am seldom a violent man,
But when pushed, I push back.
So I warn you, do not cross me.
You have been seen with Rose—
Be aware I have claimed her,
And soon I will take her away.

DIEGO

Perhaps Rose would choose to stay.

FLORENTINO

Her future is mine to decide.
Do not place yourself between us—
I would not enjoy killing you.
This town needs a doctor,
And your daughter needs a father.
If your daughter lost her father,
Who would take care of her?
Perhaps it would be me.

DIEGO

¡Bastardo!

FLORENTINO

Stay away from Rose, Doctor.
She is mine.

(Florentino hears a sound and indicates
Diego should be silent. Florentino
positions himself behind Diego, his gun
pointed at him.)

ROSE

(from behind the door)

Diego?

(Rose enters and stops.)

FLORENTINO

That gun belt becomes you,
But you must take it off—
Otherwise I will shoot the doctor.

ROSE

No, don't shoot. I'll do as you say.

FLORENTINO

I name you mine, belleza.
You belong to me.

ROSE

You can kill me,
But you can't hurt me.

FLORENTINO

Hurt you?
I would never hurt you.
I would not cause you harm.
I would love you.
I have dreamed to find my equal,
A woman with my passion
And disdain for life.
But I could find no one.
Then I saw my lost self
In your haunted eyes,
And I dared to dream again.
Ojala! Soon I will come for you.
Soon we begin our life together.
Nuestra vida nueva.

ROSE

Never!

FLORENTINO

You cannot resist me, belleza.
You need my love.
You long to have me touch you.

ROSE

Never!

FLORENTINO

Do not anger me!

Defiance will be punished.
Perhaps I will shoot the doctor.

ROSE

No! I beg you, don't hurt him.

FLORENTINO

Ah, begging, this surprises me.
Do you have feelings for this doctor?

ROSE

He is my friend.

FLORENTINO

Ah, un amigo. I can see that.
But beware of her, Doctor.
Inside her lurks a savage beast,
A beast that might attack if provoked.
She would kill me now if she could.

ROSE

I swear I *will* kill you!

FLORENTINO

There, Doctor, la bestia bella roars,
It will be such pleasure to tame her.
My fiery pet, as a gift to you
I may let your friend live.
But if I grant you his life,
Then when next you see me,
You must come away with me.
Do not dare disappoint me,
Or your friend might pay the price.
Doctor, we must exit together,
I feel safer with you beside me.

(Florentino takes Diego as a hostage as
he exits.)

ROSE

(putting her gun belt on)

Oh, dear God! No!
Don't let him hurt Diego!
What kind of fiend could do that?
That vile monster now has me trapped.
There is no escape but death.
I must never let him hurt Diego,
But I will never submit to that fiend, never!

Oh, Diego, I am so drawn to you,
But my feelings for you
Now put you in danger.
The sooner I am gone,
Gone from your life,
The safer you will be.

Only death can end this.
Let the anger within me rage—
Let two savage beasts rip each other apart!
Let one of us destroy the other,
Or let us both die.

(Diego returns)

Diego! Thank God! Are you hurt?

DIEGO

No, but shaken.

ROSE

Diego, please, could you just hold me.

(They embrace each other.)

DIEGO

Ah, Rose! All I want is to be near you.

ROSE

Ah! Hold me.

DIEGO

(Diego holds her near.)

But for now we should stay apart.

ROSE

Please, just for now. Just hold me close.

DIEGO

Oh, Rose, I would hold you forever.
But we must survive,
So for now we must part.

ROSE

No, let this moment stay.

DIEGO

We must wait. Stay apart until it's safe for us.

ROSE

Safe?

DIEGO

Yes. For now we must seem to part.

ROSE

We can never be safe while he lives,
So all I must do I will do.

DIEGO

All we can do now is dream.

ROSE AND DIEGO

For now we will dream
Of we two as one,
Never to be apart.

(Rose starts to exit.) ROSE

May I still see Lucia?

DIEGO

Yes, of course.

ROSE

Thank you. Goodbye, Diego.

DIEGO

We won't be apart for long, I promise.

ROSE

No! No, don't make that promise!
Don't challenge fate!
A monster stands between us.
And as long as he lives,
There can be no promises.
Not even that I will live
To see the sunrise.

(Rose exits.)

SCENE 3 - THE PLAZA. - DAY - CINCO
DE MAYO

(Townspeople flood the stage.)

TOWNSPEOPLE

Vida Nueva: it means New Life.
Friendship growing, goodwill sowing,
Hared dying, peace abiding.
This lovely day fills us with hope.

Lucia enters wearing new dress she
made.

CECILIA

Lucia, let me see your dress. Oh, it's lovely.

LUCIA

Rose helped me.

BUD TREON

Gosh, Miss Lucia, you look all growed up today.

LUCIA

Thank you, Bud.

CECILIA

Do you have a shawl, Lucia? It may get cool after
dark.

LUCIA

Oh, no. I forgot. I'll run get one.

(Lucia rushes off as the mayor enters.)

(Rose enters.)

MAYOR PICKARD

Ah, Miss Wingate, welcome to our celebration.

ROSE

Beautiful day.

MAYOR PICKARD

Ah, it's a glorious day! A day to celebrate our
freedom.

ROSE

(aside to Bud)

No gun today, Bud?

BUD TREON

The buckle on my gun belt broke.
But my gun's tucked in here.

ROSE

You need a new gun belt.

BUD TREON

Yes, ma'am, first thing tomorrow.

(Diego enters. Bud moves away.)

DIEGO

Buonas días, Miss Wingate.

ROSE

Doctor.

Florentino steps into view, with Lucia
in his grasp.

LUCIA

Help!

FLORENTINO

Have you lost someone, Doctor?

TOWNSPEOPLE

No! Not Lucia!

DIEGO

Lucia!

ROSE

How brave! Hiding behind a girl.

FLORENTINO

Look at her.
She is clearly a woman.
All of you, put down your weapons.

DIEGO

Please! Do just as he says.

(Everyone complies except Bud, who during the scene slowly moves closer to Rose.)

FLORENTINO

There is no point in resisting me.

ROSE

Let Lucia go.
This is between the two of us.

FLORENTINO

Toss your weapon away.

ROSE

As you wish.

(She tosses her gun away.)

FLORENTINO

Come with me, Rose,
Or in your place
I must take this sweet young woman.

LUCIA

No! Please!

ROSE

You monster!

DIEGO

I will kill you if you hurt her.

FLORENTINO

Not you, Doctor, you couldn't.

ROSE

You coward!

FLORENTINO

Call me coward if you wish,
But soon you will call me amante.
You know I have won, belleza.
You know you must come.
Why delay?
In the end my gun is the law
You all must obey.

(As Florentino's gaze moves over the crowd, Bud slips Rose his gun. Lucia suddenly breaks free. Rose shoots Florentino. Florentino falls and Diego rushes towards him.)

FLORENTINO (CONT'D)

If I can't have you...

(Florentino lifts his pistol at Rose, but Diego grabs the gun, which turns toward him.)

ROSE

Diego!

(Bud helps Diego twist the gun out of Florentino's hand. Diego checks Florentino's wound.)

FLORENTINO

I hope we meet again, belleza.

DIEGO

The bullet went through.
I'm sure I can save him.

ROSE

Why?

DIEGO

For justice!

ROSE

I want him to die.

DIEGO

He will die.
He will hang, Rose.
You have won.
You are safe now,
As are we all.

(Rose points her pistol at Florentino.)

FLORENTINO

Kill me, mi amor.
I will wait for you in the flames of Hell.

DIEGO

Rose, don't. If you kill him,
You will be lost to us all.

ROSE

I swore I would kill him.

LUCIA

No! Please, no!
It is all my fault.
Your brother died because of me.

ROSE

No, you are not to blame.

LUCIA

I am! He died trying to protect me.

ROSE

As was his duty.

LUCIA

But I was flirting, I *am* to blame! I am to blame.

ROSE

No, sweetheart, you were never to blame. No more than
I. This man is evil.

FLORENTINO

Then you must finish me, if you dare.

LUCIA

No! Not another killing, please.

FLORENTINO

Now! Kill me now, my love.

DIEGO

Don't do this to Lucia.

(Tension builds, then finally Rose
lowers the pistol.)

MAYOR PICKARD

Come on men, after the doctor treats his wound,
We'll lock this scum in the jail.

(Men help Diego take Florentino away.)

Cecelia and other women comfort Lucia.
Rose is left standing alone. Father
Salazar approaches.)

FATHER SALAZAR

(to Rose)

Bless you, child.
God will not forget your mercy.

ROSE

Thank you, Father.

(Lucia and Cecilia approach her.)

ROSE

Lucia! Are you all right?

LUCIA

I'm fine, but my dress is torn.

ROSE

Oh, honey, I'm sure we can mend that.
Don't you think so, Cecilia?

CECILIA

Oh, I'm sure we can.

ROSE

Let's go mend your dress.

(Rose, Lucia, and Celeste exit. Time
shifts to early evening. Townspeople
begin coming onstage.)

TOWNSPEOPLE

Twilight comes new now;
Peace and calm abide.
The night comes soft now;
Old anger put aside.
New moon, new love, new life--
Arm in arm, side by side--
Vida Nueva

(Diego enters. Rose and Lucia enter
together.)

DIEGO

Lucia, are you all right?

LUCIA

Of course. Rose helped me fix my dress.

DIEGO

I was so afraid for you!

LUCIA

Papa, you were brave! You saved Rose's life.

(Diego and Rose gaze at each other.)

ROSE

Diego...

DIEGO

Rose...

You've taken off your gun.

ROSE

I have. I was hoping to dance tonight.

DIEGO

I know one man who hopes to dance with you.

ROSE

He will have to ask then, won't he?

DIEGO

Oh, he will ask you that and more.
And he'll do so all may hear.

TOWNSPEOPLE

Soft now so all can hear.

DIEGO

Rose, may I have permission to court you?

LUCIA

(to herself)

Say "yes." Say "yes."

ROSE

Aren't you being rather impetuous?

DIEGO

Ah, not at all.
What else can I do?
I love you with all my heart.

ROSE

As I love you.
Yes, yes, you may court me.

Lucia

Yes!

TOWNSPEOPLE

"Yes!" She said, "Yes!" Hoorah! Hoorah!

ROSE

But I should warn you,
I've been told I lack patience.
When will this courtship begin?

DIEGO

Right here, now.
I want you for all my life
I want to dream a day
when I'll become your husband.

ROSE

And I'll become your wife.

ROSE/DIEGO

We both had dreamed
Of whom we'd meet
And when we'd fall in love.
We hoped it wasn't whether
But only when that day would come.

ROSE

And now it has

DIEGO

And now it has

ROSE

And we pray

DIEGO

And we pray

ROSE/DIEGO

We'll never be alone. Two dreamers joined,

DIEGO

I to be your husband,

ROSE

And I to be your wife,

ROSE/DIEGO

Together to share this mortal life.
 I found you, my love,
 And soon we'll wed
 And share the dreams we carry.
 Joined by a kiss
 This single hope we sow:
 Our love, love will last forever.
 Our love will bloom and grow.
 And every day when we awake
 We'll speak our love anew.

ROSE

Let us promise to always care.

ROSE/DIEGO

You for me and I for you.
 We swear to cherish we two as one.
 We two dreamers joined as one. I love you.

ALL

Vida Nueva -- it means New Life.
 Friendship growing, goodwill sowing
 Hatred dying, peace abiding.
 We now start our new life,
 Viva, Vida Nueva!
 Viva!