

## The Letter

La carta

ALBERTO CARBALLO MEZA

### Characters:

Constanza: A woman in her late thirties

Bruno: A man in his late thirties

Amelia: A woman in her early forties

Leo: A man in his late forties

Regina: A lady in her late sixties

The play takes place in an old outer corridor of a house surrounded by a small wooden fence. You may see a hammock and two wooden rocking chairs. It is located in the countryside.

Constanza: (*She is reading the Bible and hears some steps*) Hello, thanks for coming! (*They hug and kiss*) It's been a long time without seeing you. (*Like reproaching*)

Bruno: Please, not again. I don't want your reproaches.

Constanza: Sorry! I don't want to bother you, but you know how I feel.

Bruno: I know that Constanza, but I can't do anything. (*With curiosity*) Are they coming?

Constanza: I don't know. I hope they do. (*Looking at him like questioning*) Did you make up your mind?

Bruno: Constanza you know I can't do it. I explained that to you.

Constanza: But she is your mother too, isn't she?

Bruno: Yes, and you know how much I love her.

Constanza: I know what you have done, and I really appreciate it, but that isn't enough.

Bruno: You complain only to me, but you don't say anything to Leo or the others.

Constanza: You know Julia has been very sick. She needs a lot of care. At least her children and husband are there for her.

Bruno: Yes, I understand her situation and that hurts me too. But what about Leo and Amelia, they don't count?

- Constanza: You know how Leo is. Sometimes he doesn't send me the money. He's broke most of the time. We can't rely on him.
- Bruno: He should know his obligation. I've heard he spends lots of money downtown in games and alcohol.
- Constanza: But at least he asks for mother once a week. Besides, he doesn't have a steady job, but Amelia... Well you know how she is. I hope she repents from what she does some day.
- Bruno: Sometimes I wish I were like her!
- Constanza: Don't say that please! What would I do without you?
- Bruno: How is mother now?
- Constanza: She is all right. Sometimes I get immersed in her stories that I forget what she has.
- Bruno: I admire you. You are so strong! I don't know how you do to bear this ordeal.
- Constanza: This is a sacrifice I do from love, maybe because I have so much to thank her.
- Bruno: Everybody has I would say. (Some steps are heard inside)
- Constanza: I think she is coming! (Showing surprise)
- Regina: Oh my God! You are here, my handsome fiancé. (Wearing a bathrobe and sandals, addressing her son)
- Bruno: No, mom! I am Bruno, Bruno your youngest son. (Kisses her on the forehead)
- Regina: You are so funny my love! (Taking his arm) My mother is not here today. (In a flirtatious manner) Maybe we can go for a walk. Don't be shy! The day is sunny and I want to pick up some flowers.
- Constanza: Mom, come with me! (Addressing her brother) I'll take her to the bedroom. (She leaves for a moment; Bruno stays alone for a moment looking at the horizon with a lot of melancholy) (She comes back)
- Bruno: Is she OK? (With too much sadness) It really hurts me to see her in this situation.
- Constanza: Don't worry! She is fine now. (Rubbing his arm) She has her small radio on, and that makes her happy.
- Bruno: You know I can't take care of her. My wife and I talked about it.
- Constanza: And what did you decide?
- Bruno: It's not possible to take her home for the moment.
- Constanza: But we have to find a solution. The four of us have!
- Bruno: Yes, I know. It's not fair for you!
- Constanza: Oh look! They are coming.

Amelia: Hello Bruno! Oh my God you look so handsome. (They hug)

Bruno: You look fine too! Nice to see you! (Addressing Leo)

Leo: Nice to see you too!

Constanza: I love you both! (Hugging and kissing them)

Amelia: Thanks, we know that!

Leo: Well, here we are. We finally made it.

Constanza: Yes, only Julia is missing. I hope she recovers soon.

Leo: Yes, I hope that too. Before coming here, I passed by her house. Is mom in her bedroom? I want to see her.

Constanza: Yes, you both may go and greet her.

Leo: Amelia, are you coming with me?

Amelia: No, sorry. I'm not going.

Leo: Ok, I'll go alone. (He gets into the house)

Constanza: Amelia, what's wrong with you?

Amelia: There's nothing wrong with me. You don't understand!

Bruno: What do we have to understand? You know how mom was. She was very strict, but not only with you.

Amelia: That's what you think. I am free to think and believe what I want to.

Constanza: Amelia, do you love me? Do you love Bruno? Do you love us?

Amelia: I don't get your inquiries. You think I don't have feelings?

Constanza: I know you love us all, but I wonder why you are always so distant.

Amelia: You know well, I wasn't close to mom as all of you were. I am not like you are!

Bruno: But times have changed Amelia. Nobody has the right to think badly about you because of... because of your sexual orientation. (With some hesitation)

Constanza: Maybe I'm a little traditional, you know. But the relationship you have with a woman, though I don't accept it, doesn't have to interfere with the relationship you have with mom.

Amelia: That's not the point. I didn't come here to talk about my personal life. I came here to decide with you about our mother's destiny.

Bruno: The four of us have to make up our minds. Constanza has taken care of mother for almost two years now and she has come to a limit.

Amelia: What about a nursing home; I think it's a good place for her.

- Constanza: We are talking about our mother, Amelia, not about an animal or an article we don't want anymore.
- Amelia: We came here to give suggestions, didn't we?
- Bruno: Yes Amelia, but our idea is that... that you take care of her.
- Amelia: I can't; you know that. I can help you with some money per month now. I got a better job and my partner says she can pay for most of our bills.
- Constanza: Amelia, just for a moment; think about mom, not only about you.
- Amelia: I am thinking about her; I'm doing too much indeed.
- Bruno: Amelia, why are you so hard? Don't you feel bad about all this?
- Constanza: I don't know why I asked you to come if I know how you are.
- Amelia: Well, if you want me to leave, I am going away!
- Bruno: Amelia, you are a monster! I don't recognize you.
- Amelia: No, mother was the monster. She is the one to blame. (She looks around the place as if she were lost)
- Constanza: You are out of your mind! You are really sick!
- Amelia: You don't have any idea how much I suffered when I lived here and papa...
- Bruno: Don't invent anything. Don't dare to talk badly about our parents.
- Amelia: I was raped by him and I was only 12 years old.
- Constanza: No, this is not true. You are crazy! (She enters the house)
- Amelia: I was just a little girl. (Like telling a story) Mom told me to go outside to feed the chickens. (Enters Leo) Dad was there, waiting for me. I was sexually abused; abused by him who was supposed to love and protect me! (She is lost in her remembrances)
- Bruno: I don't believe you. You are such a liar.
- Leo: Amelia, I know what you are talking about.
- Bruno: What? Now you are going to support her. She is mentally ill.
- Leo: I have here the proof. (Takes a letter from his jacket) I have a letter written by mom.
- Bruno: A letter? Who wrote it? And to whom? (Like doubting)(Constanza comes back)
- Leo: Mom wrote this letter to Julia five years ago. Julia always called mom on the phone. She wanted to know the truth about Amelia.

Bruno: I don't understand. This is a conspiracy to mom and dad.

Constanza: Let me see! Yes, that's her handwriting! (In shock) Please, read it!

Leo: July, 1985. Dear Julia, I know you have been asking me about what happened to Amelia when she was just a child. I can't talk to you and tell you face to face, but I will try to do it by means of this letter. I can't forgive myself for what I did to her. I couldn't protect her as I had to.

Bruno: Please, stop reading that! It's better not to know anything!

Constanza: No Bruno, it's time for us to know the truth. Leo, keep on reading please!

Leo: I had Leo and you at that moment when your father left me for another woman. I met this man six months after your father's departure. I got pregnant and when he realized this, he left me too. Then your father returned home, almost one year had passed from his departure and I was pregnant with Amelia. He never forgave me this. Then I had Constanza and Bruno and I thought your father was going to forget everything, but every time he was drunk, he used to accuse me of being unfaithful. My life was so empty and miserable. He always complained about Amelia, her behavior, her attitude, her personality. I remember I used to make her

clothes because he didn't want me to spend his money on her. I did everything I could do to protect her, but that day became a horror to me.

Bruno: Oh my God! No, this is not possible!

Leo: I had to send Amelia with my sister Theresa. I had to hide the truth. My life and hers were threatened. I know God will never forgive me! I don't even dare to ask for His pardon. This is the cross I will carry the rest of my life. I am so ashamed and I don't know how to save my soul. Please, don't ask for more information. I'm devastated; your mom.

Bruno: Poor Amelia! She was a child and had to bear all this. My father was a bastard!

Constanza: And our mother accepted this and lived with him until he died. How could I live with a person without knowing her?

Leo: Constanza, mom is also a victim, but she did what she could to give Amelia a better life.

Constanza: I don't understand! So many years living with a monster and my mother was his accomplice.

Bruno: Constanza is right. We've been deceived for so many years! (There is a complete silence) (Regina gets into the scene)

- Regina: Where is the fabric? I can't find it! Bruno! Where are you? You are such a mischievous boy! You'll see when I put my hands on you. And you, who are you? (Addressing Leo)
- Leo: I am your friend madam! What are you looking for?
- Regina: The fabric, the yellow one. I want to make a dress. She is going to look so beautiful. She is going to look like a princess.
- Leo: A dress; who is it for? (With kindness)
- Regina: It's for Amelia. She is going to be 12 in a week. (Amelia returns to reality, as if she had awoken from a nightmare)
- Leo: She is going to look very beautiful; I know. Constanza, please, take her to her room.
- Constanza: No, I can't. I cannot forgive what she did.
- Amelia: I will take her. Please come with me! (Addressing Regina with kindness) I'll take you to your room. I am sure the yellow fabric is there and you will make that pretty dress for your daughter. (They both leave)
- Constanza: I am going to pack my things. I can't live with her anymore.
- Bruno: But she is our mother, we can't leave her alone!
- Constanza: Well, this is what all of you did so many years ago, didn't you? (She leaves the scene)
- Leo: Oh my God! I made a mistake. I didn't have to reveal this secret.
- Bruno: It's too late now! I cannot think about anything.
- Leo: You're right, neither can I.
- Bruno: I'm leaving. I need to find peace for my heart. (He leaves the place) (Constanza passes by with some baggage)
- Leo: Constanza, don't go away! Please stay!
- Constanza: Sorry, I have to go. I can't continue living with a stranger. (She goes away)
- Leo: Oh no! What did I do? (He starts crying)
- (Curtains close)