

# Los Ochos A Dance with Death

*By Reid Conrad*

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**DEDICATION**

*To the students who turn words on a page into theatrical reality.*

**STORY OF THE PLAY**

The townspeople having been living in their quiet Spanish village for centuries under the hechizo, avoiding aging, disease, and death. But when Tomaso decides to leave after Rosita denies him, the spell is broken. The Eights come again, offering protection in exchange for the death of one of the villagers -- one that is selected by the townspeople themselves. Two Americans have unexpectedly arrived and are invited to stay at the inn, drink the wine, take part in the fiesta, and cast their votes. While Papa tries to unite the village, jealous Obella has her own agenda. They must decide if one of the American strangers should go or one of their own. But when the votes are cast and Rosita is selected, the villagers finally listen to reason, understanding that they are not truly alive until they know that each day may be their last day. Choosing to accept what it means to live, the villagers celebrate their new freedom as Rosita finds an adventure. Full evening.

**ORIGINAL PRODUCTION**

University High School, Orange City, FL, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013, with the following cast and crew: Reilly Pierson, Robert Gunn, Milena Canete, Christopher Rhodes, Isaac Ramos-Zayas, Lena Kees, Isabella Piparo, Jillian Goldman, Laura Degrenia, Madison Marion, Taylor Schuler, Shantal Mendoza, Anne' Revlett, Chris Logan, Jenny Morales, Joseph Warren, Ana Marrero, Robert Gunn, Bailey Green, Gabriel Maldonado, Diana Dugan, Collin Gunn, Elizabeth Romero and Sierra Schuler.

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**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(8 - 9 m, 12 w, extras)*

**The Townspeople**

**ROSITA:** Daughter to Mama and Papa, unable to walk after a back injury.

**TOMASO:** Denied by Rosita, leaves the village. Can double as one of The Eights.

**MAMA:** Passionate and stern.

**PAPA:** Kindhearted.

**DOMINGO:** Brother to Rosita, protective and unworldly.

**MARIA:** Waitress with the family's café.

**JULIETTA:** A townsperson.

**GUSTAVO:** Kind but timid townsperson.

**OBELLA:** Foul mouthed and ill intended.

**ROZ:** Sister to Obella.

**ALVARITA:** Friend to Obella.

**EXTRA TOWNSPEOPLE:** To listen, dance, and react.

**The Americans**

**BRADLEY LIVINGSTON:** Entitled tourist, loves wine.

**EVELYN BASSETT:** Girlfriend to Bradley, considerate.

**The Eights**

**MARCO:** The leader.

**ANGELINA:** Girlfriend to Marco.

**CUBIO:** The lieutenant.

**PAOLO:** Eager to fight.

**NINA:** A betting-type of girl.

**TERESA:** One of The Eights.

**EDUARDO:** Dislikes the American.

**CARLOTTA:** One of The Eights.

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**SETTING**

A quaint Spanish country inn is stage right. Upstage is a small stone footbridge. There is a bench under a tree down left. The rear drop is painted to resemble a mountainous farming region.

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**ACT I**

*(AT RISE: It is morning. ROSITA is reading alone on stage, sitting on a bench under a tree down left. TOMASO enters carrying a knapsack over one shoulder. He sees Rosita, pauses, then moves quickly to her.)*

**ROSITA:** Tomaso! You startled me.

**TOMASO:** Rosita.

**ROSITA:** Tomaso! What is that you are carrying?

**TOMASO:** I am leaving today, Rosita. *(Sits.)*

**ROSITA:** What do you mean, "you are leaving"? You make no sense.

**TOMASO:** It is for you that I did come by.

**ROSITA:** Yes?

**TOMASO:** I came to you because I knew you would understand.

**ROSITA:** What?

**TOMASO:** Rosita, I can't be here anymore. I am leaving here today -- this morning. It is something I must do.

**ROSITA:** Do? What must you do, Tomaso?

**TOMASO:** I am leaving.

**ROSITA:** Leaving? *(Pause.)* You know what you are saying?

**TOMASO:** Rosita...

**ROSITA:** I don't understand why you are saying this, why you are saying you are leaving!

**TOMASO:** Rosita...I'll die if I stay here!

**ROSITA:** And I'll die if you go! Tomaso, the whole town will die if you go!

**TOMASO:** That's just some old wives' tale.

**ROSITA:** It's not. You know it's true! Tomaso, we've been blessed for all of these years, because of The Eights—

**TOMASO:** *(Rising.)* The Eights! The Eights! I don't want to hear about The Eights—

**ROSITA:** And now you want to jeopardize everything just because you're a little unhappy today? Remember Enrique? We found him dead on the bridge that morning. Let my papa talk to you. Papa is good at putting things into perspective. *(Calling.)* Papa!

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**TOMASO:** *(Covering HER mouth and speaking in hushed tones.)* You do not listen! Rosita! If I stay, I will die! I'm going crazy. I'm like a bird trapped in a cage and the cage is too small and I'm suffocating. Don't you see? I will kill someone if I stay here or kill myself. Rosita, please. Of everyone here, you are the only one to understand. You do understand, don't you?

*(ROSITA nods. She touches TOMASO's hand and he releases it.)*

**ROSITA:** I hear you, Tomaso, my friend. But you make me sad...and scared. I want to scream. *(As TOMASO's hand come up SHE stops it.)* But I won't scream.

**TOMASO:** And you won't tell?

**ROSITA:** Tell? They will all know soon enough.... If this is something you must do, then God save us all. I knew a day like this would come, when the spell would be broken. I will pray for you, Tomaso.

**TOMASO:** If there is some way to let you know I'm safe I will try to reach you.

**ROSITA:** Or come back if you find the grass not so green on the other side.

**TOMASO:** I will.

**ROSITA:** Be careful.

**TOMASO:** Sure. I'm not afraid.

**ROSITA:** I will be afraid for the both of us.

*(ROSITA takes her kerchief and gives it to TOMASO.)*

**TOMASO:** You honor me. I will wear this next to my heart, Rosita, if I may be so bold.

*(TOMASO steps back, still looking at Rosita. Then, grabbing his knapsack and slinging it over his shoulder he crosses quickly to the bridge and is gone. SFX: A rooster is heard, then silence. ROSITA stares off in the direction of the bridge then goes back to her book as PAPA enters from café. He looks at the sky and stretches, then turns, grabs a table*

## **End of Freeview**

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