Un Amor Picante

A Telenovela-Themed Play

By Terry Schwinge
Original Songs by Moises Vasquez

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Dedication

Dedicated to my wife, Hilda, who, besides supporting me and inspiring me in everything I do, literally introduced me to telenovelas and fostered my love and appreciation for them.

STORY OF THE PLAY

El Fuego, a hot sauce empire owned by the Cienfuegos family for generations, has recently been falling victim to the newer, sleeker Hielo Azul, a corporate giant that wants to crush El Fuego for personal reasons. The Cienfuego family includes Violeta, the matriarch with dark family secrets; Hector, the wandering vagabond who left the family and the business many years ago but has suddenly returned; Julio, the playboy son and heir to the empire; and Margarita, his brilliant and bookish twin sister. They, along with Julio's supermodel girlfriend and Margarita's secret love interest, the poor, but hardworking stable boy, Carlos, must think of a way to thwart the ruthless competitor, Maribel Maximillion.

The play includes four commercials, which should be filmed beforehand, and two original songs providing the opportunity for a talented singer to play the role of Alejandro de la Rivas, a singer who was once popular, but has fallen on hard times.

This play celebrates everything we love about telenovelas as much as it parodies the form. It's a show that will leave the audience laughing and gasping as family secrets are revealed and surprise twists play out as the story unfolds to a satisfying conclusion.

Acknowledgements

This show would not exist without the support and guidance of my partnership with Sara Guerrero, Diana Burbano and the Breath of Fire Latina Theater Ensemble in Santa Ana, CA. Also, the staff, students, and community of Santa Ana High School for being my collaborators in creating the first production of this show. And the incredible talents of Moises Vasquez, who composed the brilliant songs, and Moises Aguilar who created the tracks.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(7 m, 8 w, extras)

VIOLETA CIENFUEGOS: Older woman, the matriarch of the Cienfuegos family and President of El Fuego Hot Sauce.
MARGARITA CIENFUEGOS: 24/25 years old, Julio's twin sister, smart, determined.
JULIO CIENFUEGOS: 24/25 years old, Margarita's twin brother, reckless, party boy.
CECILIA DIAMONTE: 20-something supermodel, the "face" of El Fuego Hot Sauce, Julio's on-again, off-again girlfriend.
ALEJANDRO DE LA RIVAS: 30-something, singer, hasn't had a hit in a while and he is broke.
CARLOS: 20s, virtuous, kind, strong, orphan stable keeper, he is the secret lover of Margarita.
EMILA: Older woman, suffers dementia and lives in the woods. Enters the Cienfuegos property from time to time shouting premonitions.
HECTOR CIENFUEGOS: Older man, long-lost father of Margarita and Julio and former president of El Fuego, he is now a content wanderer here to help his children.
MARIBEL MAXIMILLION: 40-something businesswoman, ruthless and ambitious, and President of Hielo Azul.
ENCARNACION: Head of the Cienfuegos household staff. She has plans beyond this job.
CATALINA: Second in charge of Cienfuegos staff. Older, keeps Encarnacion out of trouble.
RICARDO: One of Alejandro's tech crew, wants to leave Alejandro for a better job.
MANNY: Another.
ALICIA: Another.
TOMAS: Another stable boy. Simple and sweet.
EXTRAS:
ASSISTANT, PHOTOGRAPHER, SECURITY, PARTY GUESTS, DAUGHTER, REINA, ALFONSO, VINCENTE, POLICE OFFICERS, and STOCKHOLDERS

NOTES

Un Amor Picante translates more or less to “A Spicy Romance.” The two companies are El Fuego Hot Sauce (the company owned by the Cienfuegos family) and Hielo Azul Hot Sauce (the “enemy” company).

El Fuego = The Fire
Hielo Azul = Blue Ice

In other words, fire and ice. One is all about passion and the other is cold and corporate.

COMMERCIALS and SONGS

The show includes four commercials, which should be filmed prior to performance, giving students the opportunity to collaborate with their school’s film program, or, if they have no film program, to gain experience acting for the camera.

The show also includes two original songs (tracks available). Please contact the publisher for further information.

SETTINGS

The main set is the large living room of the La Familia Cienfuegos estate. It is a Spanish Colonial style home with luxurious furniture and a painting of Violeta above the fireplace and a sword display on the mantel. Off to the side is an office area with a large desk and an elegant glass-paned door leading out to the estate grounds.

Other settings are the estate stables and the Hielo Azul office. In the original production the El Fuego sets had warm tones and the Hielo Azul offices had cooler, colder tones.

Opening Credits

("Un Amor Picante" plays as ALEJANDRO DE LA RIVAS sings. ACTORS are introduced as "opening credits" with poses and fans and lighting. Signs with the characters' names can be used as part of the opening credits as well.)

ALEJANDRO:

CADA BESO TUYO ME CAUSA DOLOR
CADA PALABRA ES UNA PUÑALADA

SE NOS FUE DE LAS MANOS
NUESTRO AMOR ARDE EN LLAMAS
COMO ESTAR ENCHILADO
Y NO PODER TOMAR AGUA

NO HAY MAL QUÉ DURE CIEN AÑOS
NI HAY CUERPO QUÉ LO RESISTA

UN AMOR PICANTE
NO HAY QUIEN LO AGUANTE
EL TIEMPO TE HARÁ ENTENDER
UN AMOR PICANTE
NO HAY QUIEN LO AGUANTE
EL CORAZÓN TE VA ARDER

TU ERES AGUA, YO SOY ACEITE
TU ERES SALSA ROJA, YO SALSA VERDE

NO NOS ENTENDIMOS,
SOLO NOS HERIMOS
EL PICANTE ESTÁ BUENO
PERO DESPUÉS SUFRIMOS

Y COMO DICE EL DICHO,
TIEMPO IDO, TIEMPO PERDIDO

UN AMOR PICANTE
NO HAY QUIEN LO AGUANTE
EL TIEMPO TE HARÁ ENTENDER
UN AMOR PICANTE
NO HAY QUIEN LO AGUANTE
EL CORAZÓN TE VA ARDER

EL TIEMPO CURA LAS COSAS,
Y TAMBIEN TRAE LAS ROSAS

Commercial #1

(Ideally, this is filmed. We see a series of images of Mexico, agave plants, Aztecs, and fire which concludes with CECILIA DIAMONTE holding a bottle of El Fuego Hot Sauce.)

VOICEOVER: Born in the heart of Mexico, there is a unique pepper, La Mokuana, that has belonged to the Cienfuegos family for generations. It is legendary in flavor and heat. It is rumored to have been a sacred treasure dating back to the time of the Aztecs. Through hard work and sacrifice, refinement, and distillation, we have created a product that represents the best of our people, of our heritage. It is sophistication in a bottle. It is all that is fine and elegant.
CECILIA: El Fuego Hot Sauce, The Hot Sauce of Mexico.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: The home of La Familia Cienfuegos. VIOLETA is meeting with her daughter MARGARITA about the future of the family business and her upcoming 25th birthday party.)

MARGARITA: All of the financials are in place, Mama. Last month's inventories are up while sales are continuing to decline incrementally. Do you want to go over the projected forecast for the fiscal year?
VIOLETA: That will not be necessary, mija. I know what you are going to tell me. Our future looks a little bleak right now, but this is normal. The hot sauce market has highs and lows. Trends come and go, but sooner or later, El Fuego Hot Sauce remains because we have built a classic brand and you cannot underestimate the power of that name. The Cienfuegos name is known throughout Mexico and, in fact, throughout the world. It is synonymous with sophistication and with history. El Fuego Hot Sauce IS Mexico.

(VIOLETA's son and Margarita's twin, JULIO, enters with CECILIA. Cecilia, a model, is the face of El Fuego Hot Sauce and girlfriend of Julio. She wears sunglasses on her head.)

VIOLETA: *(Cont'd.)* Here he is, the heir of the El Fuego Hot Sauce empire who couldn't even be here on time for our board meetings.

JULIO: Oh, is that what this is? I guess it must be because I'm bored.

VIOLETA: Soon, not today, but soon, you will have to take the reins of this enterprise, and I really hope that you will grow up and become the man you were meant to be. This family is depending on you and where are you? Out cruising around, going to clubs, playing around with women...

CECILIA: He's not playing around anymore. He's found me. Isn't that right, Julio?

JULIO: Sure. I've got Cecilia. Anyway, doesn't it make sense that one of us has to be part of a scene? Our product is part of the club scene. Doesn't it make sense that one of us knows that scene, knows the clubs, the trends?

MARGARITA: Damas y Caballeros, the Research and Development branch of the family business, Julio Cienfuegos.

JULIO: You laugh, but while you've got your nose stuck in the books, one of us has to be out there where our market is. Tell me I'm wrong.

VIOLETA: Actually, he's not completely wrong.

JULIO: Thank you.

VIOLETA: But right now, I don't trust you to make decisions that can lead this family into a prosperous future.

MARGARITA: I can do it.

VIOLETA: Julio is your older brother.

MARGARITA: By like five minutes?! We are twins!

VIOLETA: Still, the family has traditions, and the business must go to the firstborn son.

MARGARITA: That makes no sense! I know this business inside and out. How can you honestly be considering my brother a better option? He dropped out of school at age eleven, he's been arrested twice for moving violations—

JULIO: But never convicted…

MARGARITA: Lucky for you, our famous name and the army of lawyers and, I suspect, bribes that our family can afford you.

JULIO: Fair point.

MARGARITA: He stays out every night, sleeps until noon and brings home a different girlfriend every week. Present company included.

CECILIA: *(Missing the joke.)* Oh, thanks for including me, hermana!

MARGARITA: There wouldn't be an El Fuego Hot Sauce if it weren't for me. Hielo Azul would have taken over long ago, if not for my careful guidance and steady hand. But I am not a firstborn male, so I am not qualified.

VIOLETA: Yes.

MARGARITA: Ahhhh! *(Exits.)*

JULIO: Mama, you know that I am the right one for this. I understand the hot sauce business. When my time comes, I will be ready. You are right to trust me.

VIOLETA: I don't know. I don't know why I have such a soft spot for you, mijo. When your father left, I had to take control. I was just a simple girl from the country. I had no education, no experience with running a business. Then, your father abandoned us, while I was still a new mother with twin infants. He claimed I had changed. I believe he was suddenly jealous that I was now giving my love to our children and not to him. He left us. He was no man. Who could abandon his family and his wife and his business?

JULIO: I never knew him. What was he like?

VIOLETA: When we were young, he was sweet. He was from a wealthy family, but he had no pretensions about it. He married me, a peasant girl from the country to the dismay of his parents. He was a romantic and he was sometimes reckless. I see his recklessness in you, mijo. That is what frightens me.

JULIO: I promise, Mama, I won't let you down. I am not like him.

VIOLETA: We shall see. In time, we shall see. I hope you are not.

CECILIA: He's not like him. He's younger first of all.

(CECILIA puts down her sunglasses revealing the HIELO AZUL logo on them.)

VIOLETA: What is that? Let me see those? Why are you wearing these in this house?
JULIO: I can answer that, I have a pair too. Hielo Azul had a big promotion last night at Club Coco Loco. They were giving them away.
VIOLETA: And you thought it was a good idea to bring them here, into this house? Do you know what they have tried to do to us? They are our enemy. Oh, Julio, que traicionero.
JULIO: Not at all, Mama. I mean, we were there, and it was a fun event. But that's just it. Why aren't we doing stuff like that? The people like giveaways. They like those big events.
VIOLETA: We have worked hard to create a classic brand– sophistication and class. A classic brand doesn't need free sunglasses. It stands for itself, on its name and in its history. Don't you forget that when you are in charge. Don't cheapen our brand con esas cosas.
CECILIA: But this is exactly what you were thinking, right baby?
JULIO: Now might not be the best time.
VIOLETA: Oh, no. I think NOW is the ONLY time.
CECILIA: Tell her, Julio. Let her see your vision.
JULIO: Okay. Here it is. I have a birthday coming up.
VIOLETA: You and Margarita both share a birthday.
JULIO: Right, her too. I'm, I mean, we're going to turn 25 in a couple of weeks. I say we throw an enormous party right here, in our home. We invite the press, we invite celebrity guests, we make sure that our brand is everywhere. We get all over the news and gossip magazines with free advertising and we reignite our brand into the public consciousness.
VIOLETA: It's actually not a terrible idea.
CECILIA: It was mine.
VIOLETA: No.
CECILIA: Yep.

VIOLETA: *(Beat.)* Okay. I am impressed. I might have misjudged you.
CECILIA: I think better when I wear these stretch pants. I think they squeeze all the good ideas up to my brain.
VIOLETA: Well, that didn't last.
JULIO: So, should I start planning?
VIOLETA: Yes. I think you have something here. Maybe, you are growing up after all.

(LIGHTS down.)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: The stable of La Familia Cienfuegos. CARLOS and TOMAS are looking toward the horses.)

CARLOS: Ay, Tomas, mira, los caballos, you have it so easy. There are no complications in your lives. Maybe that is why I see such wisdom, such tranquility in your eyes. It is hard to be a man. I envy you. Yes, it is hard to be a man, especially a man in love with a woman, and especially a man in love with a woman that he cannot have. Mis caballos, tienen una vida bien tranquila.

(MARGARITA comes running out.)

TOMAS: I will go get more feed for the horses. Buenas días, señorita.
MARGARITA: Buenas días, Tomas. *(TOMAS exits.)* Mi Carlito. Mi amor.
CARLOS: Margarita.

(THEY kiss.)

MARGARITA: Ay Carlos, you have it so easy. There are no complications in your life. Maybe that is why I see such wisdom, such tranquility in your eyes…

End of Freeview

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