

The Games of Time

Triggered by Eduardo Galeano in Bocas Del Tiempo

by

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DESCRIPTION

Asaf and Jorgelina literally fall into a painting, and then into love.

CHARACTERS

- ASAF, young
- JORGELINA, young

MISCELLANEOUS

- Sound effects

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SOUND: _____ Murmurs of people at an art gallery or museum.

ASAF and JORGELINA enter the gallery, hand in hand, or arm in arm, and when they see what they've come into the room to see, they move slowly downstage: a wall-size painting, of ancient Chinese vintage, depicting a group of peasant women overseen by a male overseer in a field of poppies gathering the buds into their baskets. It is a big painting—they need to walk back and forth to see it all, which means eventually they have to separate.

There is a bench, which they can sit on if they want.

Throughout the scene, where possible, they touch one another: a caress, a hand on a shoulder, etc. They enjoy each other's company.

ASAF

Oh my—

JORGELINA

I'm—just—

ASAF

Just—

JORGELINA

Wow!

ASAF

Look! Those wonderful wonderful brush strokes.

JORGELINA

The broken-ink style.

ASAF

And the use of the overall wash—makes the mountains and trees seem to float—

JORGELINA

Like a paradise—like in Paradise—

ASAF

So different from our Western feeling about landscape—all domineering—or nostalgic for what we've fucked up—just look at those—

JORGELINA

The subtle touches—

ASAF

God, subtle, yes!

JORGELINA

—the dotted brush-tip work on the stones—the rubbed brushwork for the mists—the spiritual—

ASAF

Taoist.

JORGELINA

Did you know that the Chinese word for “landscape” is made up of two characters meaning “mountains and water”?

ASAF

I did indeed!

They laugh. They kiss.

ASAF

I did indeed. All this from paper, brush, ink, and inkstone. Retreat.
Contemplation.

JORGELINA

The reaching upward.

*They both sigh. They both look some more—moving back and forth, leaning in, pointing.
Obviously in love with what they're seeing, including each other.*

ASAF points.

ASAF

Do you see that?

JORGELINA

What?

ASAF

There—down in the field—

JORGELINA

Amazing!

ASAF

How could we have missed them?

JORGELINA counts.

JORGELINA

Five, six—ten—fifteen women—

ASAF

Doing—

JORGELINA

What the title of the painting says—of course!—"Gathering
Poppies"—

ASAF

The buds—

JORGELINA

About the people in the land—

ASAF

Those buds—into those baskets hanging from—

JORGELINA

And look—look over here!

ASAF

Incredible!

JORGELINA

You can barely make him out—

ASAF

Must be an overseer of some sort—the way he's perched on that rock—he even looks like the rock—and can you see—

JORGELINA

The one who's closest to him—

ASAF

Right!

JORGELINA

She's looking, too—

ASAF

You can trace that gaze straight on through—from his eyes to hers—

JORGELINA

And straight back from hers to his—

SOUND: Barely audible, soon crowding out the murmurs, is wind—starting very sotto voce but getting louder.

ASAF

And these mountains—and these trees—all around them—

JORGELINA

It's probably hot, though—

ASAF

That long dress is hot—

JORGELINA

That rock is hot—

They look at each out, enjoying the story-making.

SOUND: Wind is now a stronger—rustle of leaves.

ASAF

But he has a jug of water—behind the rock—

JORGELINA

And she knows this—

ASAF

And he knows she knows this—

SOUND: Wind is now strong.

They have to raise their voices. They move closer together

JORGELINA

And every time they do this harvest, she puts herself near him—

ASAF

Because they know—

JORGELINA

Because they know—

TOGETHER

Because they know—

SOUND: Wind is loud now.

Lights flash, sparkle. ASAF grabs a staff and a water jug and wears anything to make himself the overseer. JORGELINA grabs a basket, puts a kerchief on. They take up their positions in the painting.

SOUND: _____ Wind dies away. A warmish day in May—perhaps the buzz of insects.

JORGELINA straightens her back, stretches. ASAF watches closely.

JORGELINA

Ahhh!!

ASAF

Still early—you have a long day ahead of you.

JORGELINA

So do you.

ASAF

But you're already stretching.

JORGELINA

I don't have the pleasure of just sitting and watching.

ASAF

I do.

JORGELINA

I know you do. Commanding us. I know what your pleasure is.

They exchange a significant look.

ASAF hands JORGELINA the jug. She drinks, hands it back. He drinks. He runs his fingers over her lips to dry them. She does the same to him.

They drink again, this time moving closer. The drying of the lips. Then the moving closer.

SOUND: _____ Wind.

Lights go to black, up on another part of the stage.

ASAF is on his knees, sitting on his heels. JORGELINA, on her back, is reclined against him, and is in hard labor, breathing deeply.

SOUND: Just underneath his shouting and her shouting, hard breathing shifting into a heartbeat.

ASAF

Come on, my love, come on—push—push—pppuuusshhh—

JORGELINA

Arrrggghhhhh!!!

ASAF screams in sympathy.

ASAF

Arrrggghhhhh!!!

JORGELINA

Oh god oh god oh god oh god—

ASAF

Come on—you can do it—you can do it you can do it you can do it—

JORGELINA

Aaaaarrrrrrggggghhhhhhh!!!!!!!

JORGELINA's scream dies away. They both of them pant.

SOUND: A heartbeat.

They laugh, they smile.

SOUND: Wind.

Lights go to black, up on another part of the stage.

JORGELINA

You lied!

ASAF

I lied!

JORGELINA

You lied!

I know! ASAF

You cheated! JORGELINA

I did! ASAF

I hate you! JORGELINA

I hate myself! ASAF

I hate loving you! JORGELINA

Forgive me! ASAF

JORGELINA screams, then they slam their bodies together in an embrace and hold on tight.

SOUND: Wind.

Lights go to black, up on another part of the stage.

JORGELINA and ASAF stand next to each other, gazing out, their arms around each other. Together they wave goodbye to someone leaving. They strain to see the person until they can see the person no more.

They are alone, and their bodies and faces show this.

SOUND: Wind.

Lights go to black, up on another part of the stage.

JORGELINA is sitting on the bench. ASAF is flat on his back, his head in her lap, his breathing wracked and painful.

JORGELINA smooths his forehead, his hair, his face. There is nothing else she can do to ease his agony or hers.

ASAF

I wish I could have some water.

JORGELINA

Do you remember that day?

ASAF

We watered each other that day.

JORGELINA

As we have done for each other every day in our lives.

ASAF

Ah. Everything forgiven?

JORGELINA

It has always been forgiven.

ASAF lets out his last breath. JORGELINA lets grief settle into her.

SOUND: Wind, then the murmurs of the museum.

Lights go to black, then back to the gallery. ASAF and JORGELINA face each other just as they did before the wind came along.

They take a moment to register their surprise and delight at the journey they've just taken.

They pivot and face the painting. They hold hands. They exchange a look with each other, then face the painting.

Still holding hands, they slowly back up to take in the entirety of the painting, and they sit on the bench.

They each take in a deep breath and release it slowly—perhaps even a small “ah!” escapes from them.

SOUND: Wind mixed with a heartbeat.

And, of course, lights to black as they revel in the painting, themselves, and their possible life together.