



LA FIESTA DEL CHIVO

BY MARIO VARGAS LLOSA
DIRECTED BY JORGE ALÍ TRIANA

STUDY GUIDE

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Photo: The Banquet Scene, Production by Repertorio Español.
Directed by Jorge Ali Triana, Photo by Michael Palma.



*The return of Urania Cabral.
Ricardo Barber as Agustín Cabral and Alejandra Orozco as Urania.
Production of "La Fiesta del Chivo" by Repertorio Español.
Directed by Jorge Ali Triana. Photo by Michael Palma.*

THE FEAST OF THE GOAT

(An adaptation by Jorge Ali Triana of Mario Vargas Llosa's epic novel, *The Feast of the Goat*)

Full Synopsis

Note: Throughout the play, parallel plots unfold in different time frames (past or present), and scenes switch back and forth between:

- the reunion between Urania Cabral and her father, Agustín (in the present);
- General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo's quarters (bedroom, offices, meeting rooms) where he meets with cabinet members, military officers, his henchmen, and the like (in the past);
- various opposition leaders who are plotting Trujillo's assassination (in the past);
- Secret Police headquarters where meetings of various sorts take place (in the past);
- the reunion between Urania and her family (in the present).

-ACT I-

It is the present. Urania Cabral, daughter of former Senator and Trujillo's close associate Agustín Cabral, has returned to the Dominican Republic to visit her father. She hasn't seen him in thirty-five years. Urania finds him confined to a wheelchair. His full time nurse provides Urania details about his daily routine. From the onset, we know Urania has returned to settle old scores with her father. Theirs will be a one-way monologue, for Don Agustín cannot talk as a result of a stroke.

Urania tells her father about herself. At 49, she has remained single, "a spinster... a failure, as you intuited when I was a girl." She is a successful New York lawyer, much sought after by important men. Sarcastically she tells him she has become a Trujillo expert. "Where have all your books gone?" she inquires as she describes her own library. She regrets that he cannot talk so he could set the record straight about so many things: "Did Trujillo go to bed with my mother, too?" "Was she thrilled, like all beautiful Dominican women of her time, or did she simply resign herself?" "Did you allow it and score points in your political career, like the rest of your colleagues, or did you deny Trujillo the pleasure?" Don Agustín jumps in his chair, but cannot answer. The nurse returns with his lunch; Urania tries to feed him, but he tightens his lips and refuses.

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May 1961. General Trujillo is in his bedroom. He has just come out of the shower, and is getting dressed as he listens to the news on the radio. We learn that Catholic Bishop Tomas Reilly has gone into hiding in a nun's convent after declaring his opposition to Trujillo. There is unrest in the country, and the Catholic Church, a longtime supporter of the dictator, has turned against him.

Trujillo's sons, Ramfis and Radhames, are also in the news. They have been chosen most valuable players in a polo cup match in Paris. Trujillo complains about his decadent sons, whom he describes as indolent playboys who take after his brothers, chasing after women and squandering a fortune "What will become of this country after I die?"

In the presidential office, Trujillo meets with Colonel Johnny Abbes Garcia, head of the Secret Police, president Joaquin Balaguer, and Senator Henry Chirinos, his closest associates. Abbes wants to go after Bishop Reilly, citing that the [Irish Catholic] bishop might be conspiring with [Irish Catholic] president Kennedy against Trujillo. But Trujillo doesn't want trouble with the Church. "We are all Catholics, you know." Abbes Garcia reminds his boss that the honeymoon between government and Church is over. He proposes two alternative plans to get rid of the bishop, and at the same time expel all foreign priests from the Dominican Republic. Trujillo says no.

Abbes Garcia wants to reinforce security along the daily presidential car routes, but Trujillo wants none of that either. Senator Chirinos brings up other domestic issues, the dismal state of the economy, in particular. Trujillo's industries are falling behind, and Chirinos warns him that he will lose a lot of money if measures aren't taken. Chirinos suggests nationalizing all of Trujillo's private enterprises, so that the losses can be incurred by the Dominican state, and not by the Trujillo family. "We cannot afford for you to go bankrupt, my General."

Trujillo is angered by the implication of greed. He is convinced that his alleged greed is

actually patriotism. The fact that he owns most industries, Trujillo tells Chirinos, is the reason why there are jobs in the country. To Trujillo, his monopoly of industry and production is the reason there is progress in the Dominican Republic.

President Balaguer has been listening quietly to their exchange, but Trujillo engages him in the conversation. He remarks on Balaguer's secretive personality, and about the formal nature of their relationship. "I don't know any of your weaknesses," Trujillo tells his president. "I have always had to impose privilege on you, you never ask. The ambassadorships, the cabinet posts, the vice-presidency, even the presidency. Do you have a hidden agenda?"

Balaguer goes on to tell Trujillo how much he admires and reveres him, how much he is honored to serve him, to be at his command, to advise him on official matters, such as the fall out with the Catholic Church. Trujillo recites by heart excerpts from a speech Balaguer once wrote wherein he affirms that God himself sent Trujillo to govern the Dominican Republic. "You are an instrument of God, Excellency."



*Meeting with his cabinet.
Left to right: Pietro González as President Balaguer, Pedro De Llano as General Johnny Abbes, Ricardo Barber as General Rafael Trujillo and René Sánchez as Henry Chirinos.
Production of "La Fiesta del Chivo" by Repertorio Español.
Directed by Jorge Alí Triana. Photo by Michael Palma.*

A Lieutenant Amado Garcia Guerrero comes before Trujillo to request permission to marry his young fiancé. Requesting permission from "the Boss" is a customary ritual. Trujillo informs Amado that his future brother-in-law is a communist who was arrested in a recent conspiracy. "There are other women in this country. Find yourself one." With those words, permission is denied.

Amado meets up with his friend Salvador Estrella Sadhala, the son of one of Trujillo's generals. He is nicknamed Turco (Turk). Amado tells of how after the meeting with Trujillo, Abbes Garcia tested his loyalty by ordering him to execute a conspirator held in prison. At Abbes' command, Amado shot the man in cold blood, twice. Then Abbes took Amado to the local whorehouse to celebrate, and once there, he revealed the identity of the victim: none other than his former fiancé's brother. Amado vows to kill Trujillo. "You and Tony Imbert can count on me."

Salvador Estrella is a member of Trujillo's opposition. A devout Catholic, and a parishioner of Bishop Reilly, he is following the anti-Trujillo stand of the Catholic Church. We hear Monsignor Reilly blasting Trujillo from the pulpit. Salvador Estrella approaches him: "Father, will God forgive me if I kill Trujillo?" he asks the bishop. Quoting from St. Thomas Aquinas, Reilly encourages him. "Killing the Beast is justified if its death will free a people."



*The crowd and Trujillo's insiders listen to Monsignor Reilly's sermon.
Production of "La Fiesta del Chivo" by Repertorio Español.
Directed by Jorge Alí Triana. Photo by Michael Palma.*

A new character comes into the picture: Simon Gittleman, an American marine who is Trujillo's old time friend and supporter, has come to

the Dominican Republic to stand by Trujillo. Over lunch and champagne, Trujillo recalls the staging of the 1937 Dajabon massacre, where thousands of Haitians were slaughtered. He regrets having conducted "a necessary evil," and he justifies it by explaining that Haitians were crossing the border into the Dominican Republic displacing hardworking Dominicans in that area.

The other men at this luncheon reminisce about the operation and compare figures on fatalities. Senator Henry Chirinos describes the Haitian migration as a "hydra-like invasion;" Agustín Cabral-Urania's father- calls them "barbarians;" they speak of "the blacks" raping white Dominican women and killing landowners. General Pupo Román defends the Army's actions and recalls killing 20,000 Haitians. But Pupo Román also tells of Dominican civilians killing Haitians as well, not just the Army.

Trujillo asks president Balaguer to give the official count. Balaguer was chief negotiator of the peace treaty with Haiti. The official count was merely symbolic, says Balaguer, but the actual casualties were between 10,000 and 15,000 Haitians. The conversation switches to president Kennedy's foreign policy. Kennedy has just staged the Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba. Simon Gittleman fears an American invasion to topple Trujillo. But Trujillo is confident that president Kennedy will not make such a mistake. He reaffirms the strength and preparedness of the Dominican army, and reassures his guests that he will neither flee nor surrender, for, unlike other Latin American presidents who behave like cowards, he got his training with the United States marines.

Salvador Estrella; Army Lieutenant Amado Garcia; retired Air Force Lieutenant Antonio de la Maza; and Trujillo family administrator Antonio Imbert are inside a car along one of Trujillo's daily motor routes. They are part of an assassination plot and are expecting Trujillo's car to show up any minute now. Instead, officer Miguel Baez shows up in another car to inform them that Trujillo is delayed. Antonio de la Maza recalls his brother Octavio's arrest and murder.

At Trujillo's behest, Octavio "Tavito" de la Maza had killed a certain professor Galindez, an American citizen who had been flown to the Dominican Republic by Tavito's career co-pilot, a guy named Murphy. The murder caused such a ruckus in Washington that Trujillo decided to eliminate the sole witnesses to the crime: Murphy and Tavito. Antonio had warned his brother that Trujillo would do just that, but he paid no attention. When Antonio de la Maza learns of his brother's alleged suicide –Johnny Abbes in fact shot the younger de la Maza point blank from behind-, he vows to avenge him.

Trujillo buys Antonio's loyalty by awarding him a major government contract. He assures Antonio that he had nothing to do with Tavito's death, tells him he has named a commission to investigate the alleged suicide, and has even summoned the FBI to look into Murphy's death. But Antonio de la Maza doesn't buy any of it. He must, however, go along with Trujillo's agenda, or be killed. Salvador Estrella tells him that everyone thinks he sold out to Trujillo. But nothing could be further from the truth. Antonio will have his revenge when they kill Trujillo.

The conspirators –Antonio Imbert, Antonio de la Maza, Salvador, and Amadito- are still waiting for Trujillo's car. Suddenly, they see the lights. It is the official car. They get ready and as the car gets closer, they start shooting. Trujillo and his chauffeur are killed. Only one of the conspirators –Pedro Livio Cedeño, another Trujillo family administrator- is wounded. They hide Trujillo's body in the trunk of their car, dump the dictator's car by the roadside, and drive off to deliver the body to General Pupo Roman, who is part of the conspiracy and is waiting for them.

Back in the Cabral home, Urania attempts to feed her ailing father are useless. The nurse takes over. Urania asks her if she recalls Trujillo's rule, but the nurse was a little girl when Trujillo was assassinated. She has heard the stories, and also knows that don Agustin Cabral was a very important man. In her opinion, things were better when Trujillo was alive but Urania doesn't agree.

She proceeds to narrate how her father fell out of favor with Trujillo, all the while addressing her father and compelling him to agree with her story.

Urania recalls how there was hardly any street crime during Trujillo's thirty-year rule. However, there was big crime in high places: abductions, assassinations, people tortured and harassed by the Secret Police. Urania admits to coming to the Dominican Republic to torture her father's mind. She had resolved never to see him again. She remembers when he used to call her in the States, and she would not answer his calls. Don Agustin listens patiently to his daughter, shrugging his shoulders every so often as if saying, "I don't know what you are talking about," or "I don't care."

Suddenly, the doorbell rings: it is Urania's cousin Lucinda who comes to visit don Agustin regularly. She is happily shocked to find her cousin Urania there. They haven't seen each other since they were teens. Lucinda reproaches Urania for her absence, for not writing, for not telling the family of her plans to return to the Dominican Republic.

Lucinda gently scolds Urania for neglecting her father, and tells her many stories about his grief and troubles. The relatives know that Urania supports her father and pays for his nurse. But no one understands why Urania left without even saying goodbye, and why she cut all lines of communication, even with her father. Urania learns how the family lost everything after Trujillo's assassination.

We learn from Lucinda that Ramfis and Radhames Trujillo launched a political vendetta right after the assassination. Lucinda tells Urania of her father's arrest and humiliation. Don Agustin was floored when his loyalty to "the Boss" was questioned. Urania finds it amusing: "My father, who was capable of committing atrocities out of loyalty to Trujillo! How unfair!" She is being sarcastic, for she knows only too well about her father's loyalty, and how he almost lost his mind when he fell out of favor with the dictator.

GENERAL TRUJILLO:

**"A MÍ NO ME TIEMBLA LA MANO CUANDO TENGO QUE MATAR.
GOBERNAR EXIGE, A VECES, MANCHARSE DE SANGRE.
A LOS LEALES, LES HAGO JUSTICIA, NO LOS MANDO A MATAR".**

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*The assassination of Gen. Rafael Trujillo
Production of "La Fiesta del Chivo" by Repertorio Español.
Directed by Jorge Alí Triana. Photo by Michael Palma.*

But cousin Lucinda defends her uncle's honesty. Don Agustin made no deals with subsequent governments, like some of his former colleagues did, which is why he destitute, but for Urania's remittances. Lucinda wants to know about Urania's personal life, but only gets a dubious story from her cousin about an elderly gentleman lover who is married and sees her only on weekends. The story is music to Lucinda's ears, whose own husband left her with two young daughters. "What good is getting married? Look at me!" Urania accepts Lucinda's invitation to dinner at home with the family.

The story of Urania's estrangement from her father begins to unfold from here on, as the conversation between Urania and her father –Urania's monologues- turns to sex, Trujillo's men, political power, and Dominican women.

ACT II

The conspirators have been caught. In the torture chambers at police headquarters, Abbes García oversees personally the torture of Antonio de la Maza and Salvador Estrella. Ramfis not only had Salvador Estrella arrested, but he kidnaps his wife and children. Salvador prays to the Virgin Mary to spare his family. A guard brings him a pot of cooked meat, and Salvador devours it. When he has finished, the guard gives him a message: "General Ramfis wants to know if eating your son's flesh turns your stomach." Salvador thinks it's a sick joke. But enters Pupo Roman with the boy's head in his hand.

At the funeral, Trujillo's widow is hysterical, calling for the blood of her husband's assassins. Abbes Garcia goes up to Pupo Roman and arrests him. President Balaguer chums up to the widow, advising her of how best to protect her fortune before big changes take place. He recommends that Henry Chirinos can be of assistance and totally discreet. A greedy woman, Trujillo's widow doesn't even want her children to know how she will dispose of the family fortune.

Then he takes Ramfis aside, and tells him only he can preserve the legacy of his father. Balaguer has presented Ramfis with a transition plan, but is ready to go along with Ramfis if he has other plans, or even resign. Balaguer instructs Ramfis that Trujillo's brothers –army Generals themselves- must abandon the Dominican Republic and all hopes of political power, as must he. Ramfis accepts Balaguer's plans and agrees to leave as soon as he has avenged his father's death.

Finally, Balaguer calls on Senator Henry Chirinos to head the new Parliament. The transition to peace and democracy is under way, thanks to president Balaguer's political acumen.

Urania is dining with her family: aunt Adelina, cousin Lucinda and her daughter, Marianita. The conversation revolves around Urania's absence, her estrangement from her father, and her father's ordeals after Trujillo's assassination. Aunt Adelina assures Urania that her father was not only an exemplary honest politician, unfairly harassed and ruined during the post-assassination vendetta, but also the best father in the world. "You behaved unkindly towards him, Urania," admonishes her aunt.

Urania remarks that don Agustin was not the good father they have him to be. She proceeds to narrate the story of Senator Cabral's fall out with Trujillo, and his comeback through the influence of Trujillo's protocol advisor, Manuel Alfonso. Urania tells how as a young man, Alfonso had moved to New York, where he succeeded as a model in advertising. Trujillo recruited him for his personal entourage:

Alfonso selected Trujillo's wardrobe, advised him on etiquette and protocol, and was his English-language interpreter. He also picked the women Trujillo needed to satisfy his morbid appetite for sex.

Manuel Alfonso pays a visit to Agustin Cabral, who has asked to see him. He has just returned from the U.S. where he had throat surgery at the Mayo Clinic. Agustin asks for his help to win Trujillo's favor once again. He has been removed as president of the Senate and is under investigation, although he hasn't done anything to betray Trujillo's trust.

Alfonso reminds him that Trujillo was very upset when the Cabral Commission failed to get the Catholic prelates to name Trujillo "Benefactor of the Catholic Church". Nonetheless, Manuel Alfonso promises Cabral to do everything possible to stage the Senator's comeback. Don Agustin assures Alfonso that he is willing to do anything to appease Trujillo.

A few days later, Alfonso returns to the Cabral home, and runs into young Urania, who is fourteen at the time. He praises her beauty. "You've grown so pretty, you remind me of your mother! You must be breaking boys' hearts!" When they are finally alone, Manuel Alfonso states his plan: Agustin Cabral should offer his most precious possession to Trujillo as proof of his loyalty: the virginity of his daughter Urania. Initiating a virgin in the pleasures of sex, explains Alfonso to a dumbfounded Cabral, is Trujillo's predilection. "A man who works from dusk to midnight, seven days a week, twelve months of the year, deserves to feast himself with a woman every once in a while," Alfonso goes on. "There is nothing he won't grant you after he's had your beautiful daughter."

Manuel Alfonso:
"Qué suerte tienes, muchachita. Trujillo, invitándote en persona a su Casa de Caoba. ¡Qué privilegio! Se cuentan con los dedos de las manos las que merecieron algo así. Te lo digo yo, muchacha, créemelo".

That night, an unsuspecting Urania prays to the Virgin of Altagracia, patron saint of Dominicans, and vows a life of chastity if Manuel Alfonso succeeds in helping her father.

Back at the dinner table, aunt Adelina is upset when Urania describes her father as wicked. She demands an explanation. Urania breaks the news to the family explaining that she was her father's peace offering to Trujillo. Adelina, Lucinda and Marianita are in shock. "Father trembled, he was so afraid I'd know he was lying," adds Urania.

The tragedy unfolds. The day after his meeting with Manuel Alfonso, Cabral recruits young Urania's help. He tells his daughter that Trujillo has invited her to a party at Mahogany House, Trujillo's estate. When she learns that her father is not invited, she hesitates about going. But don Agustin reassures her that there will probably be other young ladies there as well. Manuel Alfonso will come for her at 8 pm. "Have you told Alfonso what time to bring me home?" She agrees to accept the invitation only because disappointing Trujillo will only make matters worse for her father.

In excruciating detail, Urania describes how Alfonso arrived with his chauffeur at 8 o'clock sharp. On the road to Mahogany House, Trujillo's matchmaker begins to "charm her," telling her she is one of the luckiest girls in the world to have been chosen by Trujillo for a private affair. He coached her on Trujillo's intimate likes and dislikes. "He likes a girl to be tender, but not overly amorous."

Urania tells how Trujillo was very disappointed. He liked sensuous women, with big breasts and hips, not skinny bodies like hers. Trujillo didn't send her away because he liked forcing himself on virgins. "Men love to break a young girl's cunt," he bluntly tells her.

She describes the evening: they danced to soft tunes. Trujillo doesn't call her by her first name, but instead calls her "Beautiful." He gives her a glass of sherry, sits her on a couch and asks her why she is so quiet. Finally, he kisses her several times, each time more passionately, while reciting a poem by Pablo Neruda.

"You are a virgin, are you not?" he asks her. Urania can feel his erection. "Sorry, auntie, but I must talk about erections," she explains to a scandalized Adelina. He then took Urania upstairs. He was seventy, and she was fourteen, a grandfather with his granddaughter. She thinks about jumping out the window while Trujillo slowly undresses her. She is very cold and trembling, so Trujillo holds her in his arms for a while.

But soon enough, he goes crazy with passion, angered by her stillness, by her apparent indifference. He speaks vulgarities to her, brings her to her knees. "You better help me get a hard on, or else!" Urania is traumatized. It's no use. He throws her on the bed, and rapes her. Urania cries as she bleeds all over the bed.

Aunt Adelina cannot take any more of Urania's crude story, and begs her to stop. "You are full of resentment and hatred, my child. Let us pray." Urania goes on. Trujillo throws her out, calls Benita his housekeeper, who arranges for Urania to be taken home in a jeep. Manuel Alfonso and the limousine are nowhere near. Urania asks to be driven to the Santo Domingo convent, where a Sister Mary takes her in and comforts her.

Although Lucinda and Adelina are in shock, they tell Urania that in spite of the horrible experience, she has been a lucky woman: her studies were paid for; she has a successful career and leads an enviable life any Dominican woman would die for! And she even has a gentleman friend who doesn't interfere with her life!

Urania breaks the news to her cousin Lucinda: she made up the story about the gentleman friend. She has never been with a man or had a relationship. All she does is work and work until she drops. "I envy you who have a family, children, relatives, a country. Thanks to my father and His Excellency, I am barren." Adelina still tries to find excuses for her brother Agustin's behavior, insisting that perhaps Manuel Alfonso had deceived Agustin. Urania understands clearly that her aunt Adelina is in denial, and drops the subject.

It's 2 o'clock in the morning, and Urania must return to the hotel to pack. She leaves on the first flight. The family reunion has been a good one. The four women agree to stay in touch and write to each other.

Monseñor Reilly:
"La raíz y fundamento de todos los derechos está en la dignidad inviolable de la persona humana. Hay millones... que continúan viviendo bajo la opresión y la tiranía; para ellos no hay nada seguro: ni el hogar, ni los bienes, ni la libertad, ni el honor. Hasta la paciencia divina tiene su límite".

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



For at least 5,000 years before Christopher Columbus "discovered" America for the Europeans, Amerindians inhabited the island that in 1492 he named Hispaniola. Anthropologists have traced two major waves of immigration, one from the West in Central America (probably Yucatan) and the second from the South, descendants of the Arawakan tribes in Amazonia and passing through the Orinoco valley in Venezuela. The ancestors of the taínos that welcomed Columbus on his first voyage originated from this second source.

The first permanent European settlement was founded in this island in 1493. It was called Isabella -after the Spanish queen- and was located on the north coast of the island not far to the east of Puerto Plata.

From there the invaders could readily exploit the gold in the Cibao River, a short distance away upstream. The Spaniards brought with them horses and dogs, and combined with their armor and iron weapons, they posed an occupation force that the peace-loving taínos were unable to defeat.

The Western third of the island became a French possession in 1697, and over the next century developed Saint-Domingue into what became by far the richest colony in the world. The wealth of this colony stemmed primarily from sugar. Hundreds of thousands of African slaves were imported from Africa to work in those plantations, where they were brutally treated.

Between 1795 and 1821, both Spain and France ruled the island intermittently. In 1821, the first independence from Spain was achieved, cut short by the Haitian occupation of 1822, which lasted until 1844. Haiti had become an independent country in 1804. The great national leader, Juan Pablo Duarte led the Dominicans against the Haitians. But by 1861, General Pedro Santana was inviting the Spanish to return to their former colony and take over control. After a short period of mismanagement, the Dominicans quickly realized their mistake and forced the Spanish out.

During the 19th century the country's economy shifted from primarily livestock grazing to other sources of revenue. In the southwestern region, a new industry sprung up: cutting down and exporting precious woods such as mahogany, oak and guaiacum. In the northern plains and valleys around Santiago, the emphasis was on growing tobacco, an activity that yielded some of the world's best cigars. Throughout the country, coffee was another important crop.

In 1905, the U.S. took over the administration of the customs revenues of the Dominican Republic, presumably to outmaneuver other European creditors. With the advent of the First World War, political instability raised fears and the United States sent in its Marines to occupy the country in 1916. Only a few months earlier, the Americans had occupied Haiti. The US occupation

lasted eight years in the Dominican Republic, 19 years in Haiti.

One of the changes implemented by the U.S. was to establish a trained national army to maintain law and order and uphold public safety. During the occupation, U.S. Marines established the Dominican National Guard. A former telegraph clerk named Rafael Leónidas Trujillo joined the new force and excelled in the ranks; the Americans chose him to head the police in 1924. The country had its first relatively free election after the U.S. forces withdrew that year; but Trujillo staged a military coup in 1930, overthrowing president Horacio Vázquez, and proclaiming himself head of state. There is no question that Trujillo reached out to his people, created jobs, paid off the national debt, strengthened the sugar industry and improved the general standard of living in the first years of his rule. Dominicans worshiped him like a deity.

Trujillo always made it clear that he was a racist –even though his mother was a mulatto woman with African slave ancestry- and he considered Black Haitians inferior and a threat to Dominican integrity. This feeling was echoed in most Dominican homes, in spite of the fact that about 70% of the population at the time were mulattoes and 11% Black. In 1937 he ordered his army to massacre all Haitians found illegally within Dominican territory, especially those near the border with Haiti. In Dajabón alone, some 15,000 Haitians were killed. However, during the peace negotiations –headed by Trujillo's president Joaquin Balaguer on the Dominican side of the table- an official figure of 2,750 casualties was "agreed upon." The Dominican government compensated its Haitian counterpart in cash.



Trujillo remained in power for over 30 years, but toward the end he succeeded in alienating even his most avid supporters, including the United States and the Catholic Church.



The Organization of American States imposed diplomatic and economic sanctions on his government. Finally, on May 31, 1961, after many local attempts, several revolts and an invasion in 1959 supported by Cuba's Fidel Castro, a CIA backed conspiracy succeeded in deposing the dictator. Trujillo's car was ambushed on its way to his estate, and both he and his chauffeur met a violent end.

After Trujillo's murder, his ruthless son Ramfis took over the government for a short time, during which he tortured and murdered everyone suspected of plotting against his father. Doctor Balaguer, who remained president at least nominally, finally succeeded in consolidating his power, and pacified the country during the following year and a half. In 1963 elections were held and Dr. Juan Bosch, of the Dominican Revolutionary Party, was elected president. However, his socialist program was deemed too extreme, and only nine months later he was ousted in a coup d'état. Political and economic chaos ensued; it culminated on April 24, 1965, when President Lyndon Johnson ordered the U.S. Marines to occupy the Dominican Republic one more time. A year later, Balaguer was re-elected president. This time, he remained in power for a continuous 12-year period, winning re-election in 1970 and 1974.

In 1978 Dominicans elected Antonio Guzman, of the Dominican Revolutionary Party, defeating Balaguer's incumbency for a fourth consecutive term. Just before his four-year term ended in 1982, Guzman committed suicide, prompted by the revelation that close family members allegedly were involved in massive corruption and embezzlement of government funds. Salvador Jorge Blanco replaced Guzman. The time-honored tradition of rewarding relatives, close friends and political supporters with lucrative governmental posts continued. His administration was in the end marred by allegations of corruption and misappropriation of public funds. In fact, he was subsequently found guilty and convicted to 20 years in prison for said crimes.

Thoroughly disillusioned by the misrule of the leaders of the Dominican Revolutionary Party, Dominicans returned to the polls in 1986 to re-elect

an ailing Joaquin Balaguer, who won re-election in 1990. That administration was plagued with international criticism due to the exploitation of Haitian sugar cane workers. In a draconian turn of events, in June 1991 the Dominican government deported all Haitian workers.

In 1994, Balaguer won re-election once again. The Organization of American States and other international observers unanimously agreed the election was rigged. In a bid to avoid a major outbreak of violence, Balaguer and Peña Gomez, his principal opponent, met and negotiated an agreement whereby Balaguer promised to remain in power for a period not to exceed two years, and not to run for re-election in 1996. Run-off elections were then scheduled for May 1996, and early returns showed Peña Gomez holding a plurality. However, Leonel Fernandez, the Patria Libertad y Democracia Party candidate (P.L.D.) edged out Gomez in the run-offs. Balaguer gave his support to Fernandez and helped him come up from behind to win the elections.

Some of Leonel Fernandez's anticipated reforms hinged upon his party gaining a majority in the National Assembly, which held elections in May 1998. Election results in the National Assembly gave a majority to Peña Gomez's opposition, and many Dominicans felt that Fernandez would have difficulties getting congress to pass his proposed legislation. However, this kind of political debate is more representative of a true democracy. Election results split between contending political parties is proof that democracy is at work and people are expressing their opinions with greater freedom.

Elections were held last in the year 2000, which brought Hipolito Mejia to the presidency for a four-year period. Elections are scheduled again for 2003. Today the Dominican Republic is progressing in all aspects as a free and democratic nation. Political demonstrations take place openly and freely in the main streets and politicians are able to campaign without being censored, a far cry from the Trujillo era when dissidents and opposition leaders could only work underground, and when discovered were tortured, murdered and thrown to the sharks.

SCENES FROM THE PLAY...

Scene 1: Urania has arrived at her father's house in Santo Domingo after a thirty-five year absence. Agustín Cabral is confined to a wheel chair and cannot talk. As soon as the nurse leaves the room, she confronts him, revealing the agenda behind her visit.

Urania: Soy Urania... ¿Te acuerdas que tienes una hija?... La casa estaba llena de libros. ¿Qué fue de ellos? Ya no puedes leer, claro. Tenías tiempo de leer entonces. No recuerdo haberte visto leyendo nunca. Eras un hombre demasiado ocupado. Yo también ahora, tanto o más que tú en esa época. Diez, doce horas en el bufete o visitando clientes. Pero me doy tiempo para leer un rato cada día. Tempranito, viendo amanecer entre los rascacielos de Manhattan, o de noche. La ventaja de haberme quedado soltera, papá... ¿Sabías, no? Tu hijita se quedó para vestir santos. Así decías tú: ¡Qué gran fracaso! ¡No pescó marido!.. No quise. Tuve propuestas. En la universidad. En el Banco Mundial. En el bufete. Figúrate que todavía se me aparece de pronto un pretendiente. ¡Con cuarenta y cuatro años encima! No es tan terrible ser solterona. Por ejemplo, dispongo de tiempo para leer, en vez de estar atendiendo al marido, a los hijitos. Mi departamento, ¿adivinas de qué época? La Era de Trujillo, ¿cuál iba a ser?... "Lo más importante que nos pasó en quinientos años". Lo decías con tanta convicción. Es cierto, papá. En esos treinta y un años cristalizó todo lo malo que arrastrábamos desde la conquista... En algunos de esos libros apareces tú, como un personaje. Secretario de Estado; senador; presidente del Partido Dominicano. ¿Hay algo que no fuiste, papá?... Me he convertido en una experta en Trujillo. Lástima que no podamos conversar. ¡Cuántas cosas podrías aclararme, tú que lo viviste del bracito con tu querido jefe, que tan mal pagó tu lealtad... Por ejemplo, me hubiera gustado que me aclararas si Su Excelencia se acostó también con mi mamá.....¿Lo permitiste? ¿Te resignaste? ¿Lo aprovechaste para tu carrera?... ¿Visitó el jefe a mi mamá? Lo hacía cuando las esposas eran bellas. Mi mamá lo era, ¿no? ¿Qué hizo mi mamá? ¿Se resignó? ¿Se alegró, orgullosa de ese honor? Esa era la norma, ¿verdad? Las buenas dominicanas agradecían que el jefe se dignara tirárselas. ¿Te parece una vulgaridad?

¡Pero si ese era el verbo que usaba tu querido jefe! Lástima que no puedas hablar. Trataríamos de entenderlo juntos.



Ricardo Barber as General Trujillo and Pedro De Llano as General Johnny Abbes.
Production of "La Fiesta del Chivo" by Repertorio Español.
Directed by Jorge Alí Triana. Photo by Michael Palma.

GENERAL TRUJILLO:

"AQUÍ, CONMIGO AL FRENTE, PELEARÁ HASTA EL ÚLTIMO DOMINICANO... LOS HOMBRES CON HONOR NO CORREN. PELEAN Y, SI HAY QUE MORIR, MUEREN PELEANDO. NI KENNEDY, NI LA OEA, NI EL NEGRO ASQUEROSO DE [RÓMULO] BETANCOURT, NI EL COMUNISTA FIDEL CASTRO, VAN A HACER CORRER A TRUJILLO DEL PAÍS QUE LE DEBE TODO LO QUE ES".

JOHNNY ABBES GARCÍA:

"MIENTA EL ENEMIGO DE DENTRO ESTÉ DÉBIL Y DESUNIDO, LO QUE HAGA EL DE AFUERA NO IMPORTA. QUE ESTADOS UNIDOS CHILLE; QUE LA OEA PATALEE; QUE VENEZUELA Y COSTA RICA LADREN; NO NOS HACEN MELLA. MÁS BIEN, UNE A LOS DOMINICANOS COMO A UN PUÑO EN TORNO AL JEFE. ESPECIALMENTE A LOS MILITARES".

Scene 3: General Trujillo and President Balaguer exchange mutual comments about how they have related over the years. Trujillo questions the motives behind Balaguer's apparent austerity, yet praises his loyalty; Balaguer reaffirms his absolute awe for the dictator.

Trujillo: Siempre lo he tratado de usted, ¿cierto? Es el único de mis colaboradores al que nunca he tuteado. ¿No le llama la atención?

Balaguer: En efecto, Excelencia. Siempre me pregunto si no me tutea porque confía menos en mí que en mis colegas.

Trujillo: Pese a todos estos años juntos, para mí es usted bastante misterioso. Nunca he podido descubrirle las debilidades humanas, Balaguer.

Balaguer: Estoy lleno de ellas, Excelencia. Pero, en vez de un elogio, parece que me lo reprochara.

Trujillo: Hay algo inhumano en usted. Que yo sepa, no le gustan las mujeres, ni los muchachos... Yo tuve que imponerle los ministerios, las embajadas, la Vicepresidencia, y hasta la Presidencia que ocupa. Si lo saco de aquí y lo mando a un puestecito perdido en Montecristi o Azua, se iría usted para allá, igual de contento. ¿Es usted así? ¿O esa conducta es una estrategia, con un designio secreto?

Balaguer: Desde que conocí a Su Excelencia, aquella mañana de abril de 1930, mi único vicio ha sido servirlo. Desde aquel momento supe que, sirviendo a Trujillo, servía a mi país. Eso ha enriquecido mi vida. Nunca tendré palabras para agradecer a Su Excelencia que me haya permitido trabajar a su lado.

Trujillo: Voy a decirle algo que le va a complacer, Presidente. Yo no tengo tiempo para leer las pendejadas que escriben los intelectuales. Además, nunca me he fiado de los artistas. Son deshuesados, sin sentido del honor, propensos a la traición y muy serviles. Tampoco he leído sus versos ni sus ensayos. Pero, hay una excepción. Un discurso suyo, hace siete años. El que pronunció en Bellas Artes, cuando lo incorporaron a la Academia de la Lengua. ¿Lo recuerda?

Balaguer: "Dios y Trujillo: una interpretación realista"...

Trujillo: Lo he releído muchas veces. Me sé párrafos de memoria, como poesías: "Una voluntad aguerrida y enérgica que secunda en la marcha de la República hacia la plenitud de sus destinos la acción tutelar y bienhechora de aquellas fuerzas sobrenaturales.. Dios y Trujillo: he ahí, pues, en síntesis, la explicación, primero de la supervivencia del país y, luego, de la actual prosperidad de la vida dominicana..."

Todos: ¡Amén!

Trujillo: ¿Cree usted todavía que Dios me delegó la responsabilidad de salvar este país?

Balaguer: Más que entonces, mi Excelencia. Trujillo no hubiera podido llevar a cabo la sobrehumana misión, sin apoyo trascendente. Usted ha sido, para este país, instrumento del Ser Supremo.

Trujillo: Lástima que esos obispos pendejos no se hallan enterado.



Meeting with his cabinet. Left to right: Pietro González as President Balaguer, Pedro De Llano as General Johnny Abbes, Ricardo Barber as General Rafael Trujillo and René Sánchez as Henry Chirinos. Production of "La Fiesta del Chivo" by Repertorio Español. Directed by Jorge Alí Triana. Photo by Michael Palma.

Scene 14: Urania's cousin Lucinda has come to visit her uncle Agustín, and is happily surprised to find her long-lost cousin Urania back home. They chit chat about their respective lives. Lucinda tells about the family's tribulations after Trujillo's assassination.

Balaguer: Es impertinente atosigarla con cosas prácticas, cuando el espíritu lo absorbe un quebranto atroz. Pero, ¿y el futuro? Usted todavía tiene una larga vida por delante. ¡Quién sabe lo que puede ocurrir luego de este cataclismo! La ingratitud de los pueblos está comprobada desde la traición de Judas a Cristo. El país llora a Trujillo y brama contra sus asesinos ahora. Pero, ¿seguirá mañana leal a la memoria del Jefe? ¿Y si triunfa el resentimiento, esa enfermedad nacional? Debe asegurarse de poner a salvo de cualquier eventualidad los legítimos bienes adquiridos gracias al esfuerzo de la familia Trujillo, y que, además, tanto han beneficiado al pueblo dominicano. Debe hacerlo antes de que los reajustes políticos se vuelvan un impedimento... Si quiere, discútalo con Henry Chirinos. Él le dirá qué tanto de su patrimonio puede ser transferido de inmediato al extranjero, sin mucha pérdida.

Viuda: Yo sabía que usted era un amigo leal, doctor Balaguer.

Balaguer: Espero demostrárselo, doña María. Confío en que no haya tomado mal mi consejo.

Viuda: Es un buen consejo. En este país nunca se sabe lo que puede pasar. Hablaré con el doctor Chirinos mañana mismo. ¿Todo se hará con la mayor discreción?

Balaguer: Por mi honor, María.

Viuda: Le ruego que ni a mis hijos hable usted de este asunto. Por razones que sería largo de explicar.

Balaguer: A nadie, ni siquiera a ellos. Permítame reiterarle cuánto admiro su carácter. Sin usted, el benefactor jamás hubiera hecho todo lo que hizo.

Viuda: ¡Venganza! Ramfis, mi hijo, ¡Venganza! ¡Hay que vengar a tu padre!

Ramfis: (Ante el ataúd en que reposa el cadáver de Trujillo) Yo no seré tan generoso como tú fuiste

con tus enemigos, papi.

Balaguer: (A Ramfis Trujillo) Es indispensable que conversemos unos minutos, general. Ya sé que es un momento muy difícil para usted. Pero hay asuntos impostergables. De usted, y sólo de usted, depende que perdure algo, mucho, o nada, de la obra realizada por su padre. Si su herencia desaparece, la República Dominicana se hundirá de nuevo en la barbarie. Si quiero que crean que todo está cambiando, que el país se abre a la democracia, debo hacer un examen autocrítico del pasado. Es doloroso para usted, lo sé. No lo es menos para mí. La política exige desgarramientos, a veces. Si prefiere tomar las riendas, no necesita sacar los tanques. Le entrego mi renuncia ahora mismo.

Ramfis: Todos me lo piden. Mis tíos, los comandantes de regiones, los militares, mis primos, los amigos de papi. Pero yo no quiero ocupar el puesto de papi. A mí esa vaina no me gusta, doctor Balaguer. ¿Para qué? ¿Para que me paguen como a él?

Balaguer: Entonces, general, si usted no quiere el poder, ayúdeme a ejercerlo.

Ramfis: ¿Más? Si no fuera por mí, mis tíos lo hubieran sacado a balazos hace rato.

Balaguer: Sus tíos deben irse. Mientras estén aquí, ni la comunidad internacional, ni la opinión pública, creerán en el cambio. Sólo usted puede vencerlos.... Y usted también. No todavía... Después de hacer partir a sus tíos, de ayudarme a consolidar el gobierno...

Ramfis: Me hubiera ido hace rato, si hubiera encontrado a todos los asesinos... Una vez cumpla la promesa que he hecho a papi, me iré.

Balaguer: (Se dirige al senador Henry Chirinos) Quiero que usted sea el líder parlamentario de este nuevo gobierno. Necesitamos cuanto antes mejorar nuestras relaciones con Estados Unidos, y confío en usted para hacerlo.

Chirinos: Permítame congratularlo, excelentísimo señor presidente. Siempre pensé que el régimen debía abrirse a los nuevos tiempos. Cuento conmigo como su colaborador más leal y dedicado.

Scene 22: General Trujillo has cast aside Senator Agustín Cabral –Urania's father. Cabral doesn't know the reasons for el Jefe's disapproval. He turns to Trujillo's personal assistant, Manuel Alfonso, for help; he tells Alfonso that he will do anything to win back Trujillo's confidence. Alfonso has come to see Cabral with a plan. They are at the Cabral home, drinking.

Alfonso: Se me ocurrió al entrar. Siempre he sido así: primero el Jefe, después yo. Te quedaste demudado, Agustín. ¿Me equivoco? No dije nada, olvídame. Yo, ya me olvidé. ¡Salud, Cerebrito!

Cabral: Es que... es que...

Alfonso: Olvidémoslo. Espero que no lo hayas tomado mal, Cerebrito. ¡Olvídame! ¡Olvidémoslo!

Cabral: No lo tomé mal. Es que, estoy desconcertado. Algo que no esperaba, Manuel.

Alfonso: La crees una niña, no te diste cuenta que se volvió una mujercita. Una linda muchacha. Estarás orgulloso de tener una hija así.

Cabral: Por supuesto. Ha sido siempre la primera de su clase.

Alfonso: ¿Sabes una cosa, Cerebrito? Yo no hubiera vacilado un segundo....No para reconquistar su confianza, no para mostrarle que soy capaz de cualquier sacrificio por él. Simplemente, porque nada me daría más satisfacción, más felicidad, que el Jefe hiciera gozar a una hija mía y gozara con ella. No exagero, Agustín. Trujillo es una de esas anomalías de la historia. Carlomagno, Napoleón, Bolívar: de esa estirpe. Fuerzas de la Naturaleza, instrumentos de Dios, hacedores de pueblos. Él es uno de ellos, Cerebrito. Hemos tenido el privilegio de estar a su lado, de verlo actuar, de colaborar con él. Eso no tiene precio.

Cabral: Es todavía una niña...

Alfonso: ¡Mejor, entonces! El Jefe apreciará más el gesto. Comprenderá que se equivocó, que te juzgó

de manera precipitada, dejándose guiar por susceptibilidades o dando oídas a tus enemigos. No pienses sólo en ti, Agustín. No seas egoísta. Piensa en tu muchachita. ¿Qué será de ella si pierdes todo y terminas en la cárcel acusado de malos manejos y defraudación?

Cabral: ¿Crees que no he pensado en eso, Manuel?

Alfonso: Se me acaba de ocurrir al ver lo linda que se ha puesto. El Jefe aprecia la belleza. Si le digo: "Cerebrito quiere ofrecerle, en prueba de cariño y de lealtad, a su linda hija, que es todavía señorita", no la rechazará. Yo lo conozco. Él es un caballero, con un tremendo sentido del honor. Se sentirá tocado en el corazón. Te llamará. Te devolverá lo que te han quitado. Uranita tendrá su porvenir seguro. Piensa en ella, Agustín, y sacúdete los prejuicios anticuados. No seas egoísta.

Cabral: Me emociona lo que dices, Manuel. Pero no me sorprende... Lo que tú sientes por él, esa admiración, esa gratitud, es lo que he sentido siempre por el Jefe. Por eso me duele tanto esta situación.

Alfonso: Se arreglará, Cerebrito. Hablaré con él. Yo sé cómo decirle las cosas. No le diré que es idea mía, sino tuya. Una iniciativa de Agustín Cabral, un leal a toda prueba... Recuperarás tu posición... Lo organizaré todo con la más absoluta discreción... Tú, más bien, prepara a Uranita, Sin entrar en detalles. No hace falta. De eso se encargará el Jefe. No puedes imaginar la delicadeza, la ternura, el don de gentes con que actúa en estos casos. La hará feliz, la recompensará, tendrá su futuro asegurado....



Alejandra Orozco as Urania Cabral
Production of "La Fiesta del Chivo" by Repertorio Español.
Directed by Jorge Alí Triana. Photo by Michael Palma.

Scene 24: Manuel Alfonso has picked up Uranita at home, as arranged with her father. He has brought the fourteen-year old girl to the Trujillo Estate, under pretext of a party. Uranita finds herself alone with the old dictator. There is no party. In this scene, Urania is remembering as she narrates the events to her Aunt Adelina and her cousins.

Trujillo: Buenas noches, belleza.... Bienvenida a la Casa de Caoba, belleza. ¿Benita no te ha ofrecido nada?

Urania: (Talking to her relatives) Se llevó una decepción. Yo era muy delgada, y a él le gustaban llenas, con pechos y caderas salientes. Hasta pensaría en despachar a ese esqueleto de vuelta a Ciudad Trujillo. ¿Sabes por qué no lo hizo? Porque la idea de romper el coñito de una virgen excita a los hombres. Romper el coñito de una virgen excita a los hombres. A Petán, a la bestia de Petán, lo excita más todavía romperlo con el dedo.

Trujillo: Te daré una copa de jerez dulce, especial para una niña como tú. No me como a las niñas. ¿Eres siempre tan callada, o sólo ahora, belleza? ¿Te gusta bailar? Seguro, como a todas las muchachas de tu edad. A mí, mucho..... (They dance for a while). ¿Eres siempre una esfinge? No, no. Debe ser que me tienes demasiado respeto. Me gustan las bellezas discretas, que se dejan admirar. Las diosas indiferentes. Me gustas cuando callas, porque estás como ausente; parece que los ojos se te hubieran volado y parece que un beso te cerrara la boca.



Urania: (Talking to her relatives) Esa noche hice un montón de cosas por primera vez: tomar jerez, ponerme las joyas de mamá, bailar con un viejo de setenta años y recibir mi primer beso en la boca.

Trujillo: No sabes besar, belleza... ¿Eres doncellita, verdad?

Urania: (Talking to her relatives) Se excitó. Tuvo una erección. Tengo que hablar de erecciones. Si el macho se excita, su sexo se endurece y crece. Cuando metió su lengua dentro de mi boca, su Excelencia se excitó.

Trujillo: Vas a descubrir una cosa maravillosa. El amor. El placer. Vas a gozar. Yo te enseñaré. No me tengas miedo. Te haré feliz, belleza.... No te desnudes todavía, belleza. Yo te ayudaré..... Tienes los pies muy fríos, belleza. ¿Estás con frío? Ven para acá, deja que te los caliente.

Urania: (Talking to her relatives) Seguía muy excitado, creo. Cuando empezó a tocarme y acariciarme. Y a besarme, obligándome siempre a abrir la boca con su lengua. En los pechos, en el cuello, en la espalda, en las piernas.

Trujillo: Romper el coñito de una virgen siempre excita a los hombres.

Urania: (To her relatives) La primera palabrota, la primera vulgaridad de la noche. Después, diría peores. Ahí me di cuenta de que algo le pasaba.

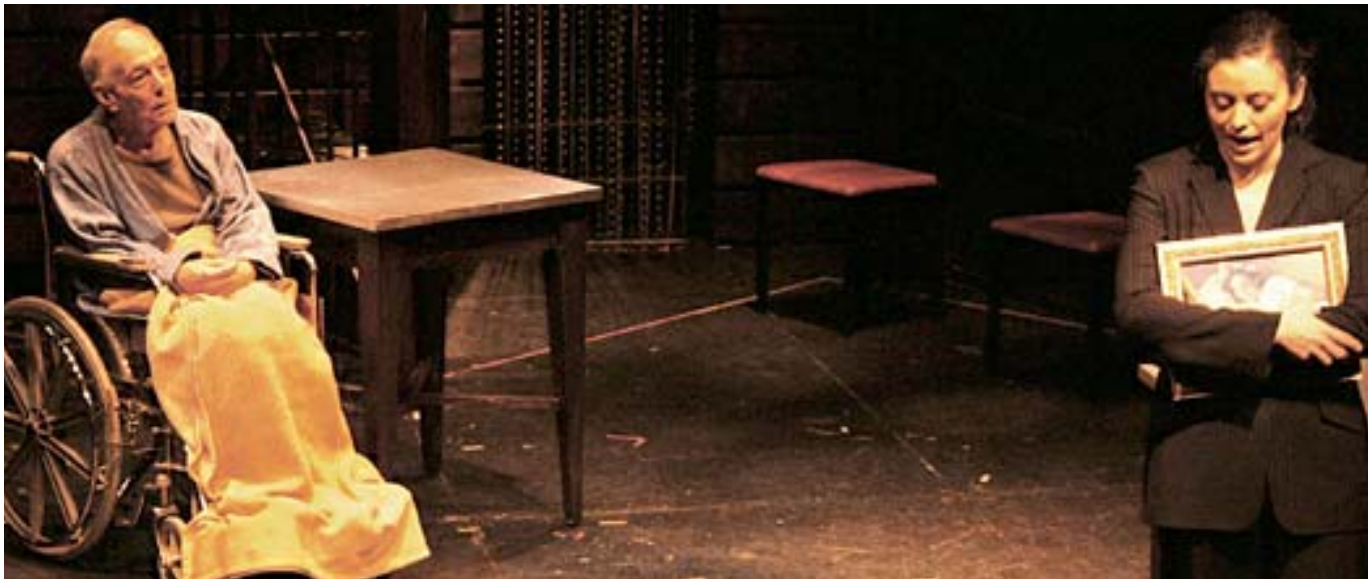
URANIA CABRAL:

"MÁS NUNCA UN HOMBRE ME VOLVIÓ A PONER LA MANO, DESDE AQUELLA VEZ. MI ÚNICO HOMBRE FUE TRUJILLO. HE ESTUDIADO, TRABAJO, ME GANÓ BIEN LA VIDA. PERO NO ES PARA QUE ME ENVIDIEN. YO LAS ENVIDIO A USTEDES, MÁS BIEN. TIENEN UNA FAMILIA, HIJOS, UN PAÍS. ESAS COSAS LLENAN LA VIDA. A MÍ, PAPÁ Y SU EXCELENCIA ME VOLVIERON UN DESIERTO".

*The Violation Scene
Alejandra Orozco as Urania Cabral and
David Crommett as Manuel Alfonso
Production of "La Fiesta del Chivo" by Repertorio Español.
Directed by Jorge Alí Triana. Photo by Michael Palma.*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT STUDY QUESTIONS (1-10)

1. Johnny Abbes says to Trujillo "El idilio de treinta años se acabó. La Iglesia quiere guerra. Y, en las guerras, hay sólo dos caminos: rendirse o derrotar al enemigo". What did the Dominican Catholic Church do to show its condemnation of Trujillo's regime?
2. What measures does Senator Henry Chirinos propose to Trujillo in order to avert his financial ruin? What makes such a proposition possible?
3. Were the Trujillos a dysfunctional first family? What kind of men were Ramfis and Radhames, the dictator's sons? How about "the benefactress", the First Lady?
6. Rebels with a cause: What reasons do Amadito (Amado García Guerrero), Antonio de la Maza, and Salvador Estrella Sadhala have to risk their lives in order to assassinate Trujillo?
7. What happened in Dajabon?
8. Sexism, Dominican style: identify instances of machismo in this work. What attitudes do the different male characters have toward women (Agustín Cabral, Manuel Alfonso, Abbes García, others)?
9. Nations are traditionally depicted as females. In Spanish, we say "la patria", "la nación". In many illustrations, a half-naked woman stands for "the nation." For tyrants, the nation is "rape-able" just like a woman. Discuss Trujillo –and any other dictator- as a predator, both sexually and politically.



The Return of Urania
Alejandra Orozco as Urania Cabral and
Ricardo Barber as Agustín Cabral.
Production of "La Fiesta del Chivo" by Repertorio Español.
Directed by Jorge Ali Triana. Photo by Michael Palma.

4. Why do Trujillo's advisors fear that the U.S. could take action against the Dominican Republic? What kind of action were they afraid of?
5. How would you describe Dr. Joaquin Balaguer? "Paint" a personal and political portrait. Is he a despot, or does he believe in democracy? How many posts did he hold during Trujillo's dictatorship? How about after?
10. A large percentage of the Dominican population falls under the category of "people of color", because they are either Black or mulatto. Discuss the possible historical and social causes of racism aimed at Blacks in the Dominican Republic.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT STUDY QUESTIONS (11-20)

11. What does Joaquin Balaguer propose to Ramfis Trujillo at the dictator's funeral? To Henry Chirinos? Discuss Balaguer's motives, and his political acumen.
12. Who is Manuel Alfonso? Is he merely a "yes man" or is he a pervert as well?
13. How will Agustin Cabral win back "el Jefe"? What is Manuel Alfonso's role in this strategy?
14. "A mí, papá y Su Excelencia me volvieron un desierto", says Urania to her aunt and cousins. What exactly does she mean by that?
15. Urania in New York, and her cousins in Santo Domingo live very different lives. What are some of the differences? How are their priorities and expectations different?
16. Urania reveals that she feels nothing for her father. Is this true? What feelings does she harbor toward don Agustin? How does Adelina (Urania's old aunt) feel about Agustin? Does she persuade Urania to forgive and forget? If you were Urania, would you?
17. Political henchmen; ruthless army officers; corrupt politicians; decadent oligarchs. But for the conspirators who kill Trujillo –and are themselves tortured and killed-, the male characters in this novel/play are a despicable bunch.
18. Take one or two dictators, past or present, and explore the similarities (and perhaps differences) between them and the Trujillo regime, comparing the family excesses, the abuse of power, the suppression of civil rights, the sacking of national resources, the personality cult, etc. Draw from Vargas Llosa's quotes included in this Study Guide concerning absolute power and absolute corruption.
19. Discuss how Mario Vargas Llosa has constructed the [all-fictional] female characters in this novel. Is Urania a victim, or an assertive survivor? Compare

Urania with real-life women whose experiences of abuse are documented (there are several books written by survivors of rape, incest, sexual traffic, etc). Is the character of Urania a realistic construct? Or is the outcome of her life "too good to be true"?

20. Write a different ending for this novel/play. Venture to tell Urania's story from the time she left Santo Domingo to the present, prior to her return to Santo Domingo, 35 years worth of a survivor's life that the author tells us very little about.

GENERAL TRUJILLO:

"DECIDÍ IR YO MISMO A LA FRONTERA. CON ESTOS OJOS LO VI: NOS HABÍAN INVADIDO DE NUEVO, COMO EN 1822. ESTA VEZ, PACÍFICAMENTE. ¿PODÍA PERMITIR QUE LOS HAITIANOS SE QUEDARAN EN MI PAÍS OTROS VEINTIDÓS AÑOS?"



Original logo for the production of "La Fiesta del Chivo by Repertorio Español. Designed by Puerto Rican Artist: José Efraín Rodríguez

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MARIO VARGAS LLOSA



Peruvian novelist, playwright, essayist, journalist, literary critic, one of the central writers in the Hispanic world. Vargas Llosa started his literary career in Europe, but most of his novels are set in Peru. From his first works, Vargas Llosa has used a wide variety of avant-garde techniques to create an aesthetic "double of the real world." Although Vargas Llosa has followed the tradition of social protest of Peruvian fiction exposing political corruption, machismo, racial prejudices and violence, he has underlined that a writer should never preach or compromise artistic aims for ideological propaganda.

Mario Vargas Llosa was born in Arequipa. After his parents separated he was brought up by his mother and maternal grandparents in Cochabamba, Bolivia (1937-45), Piura, northern Peru (1945-46), and then in Lima. When he was about eight years old his parents reconciled. He attended Leoncio Prado Military Academy (1950-52), and Colegio Nacional San Miguel de Piura (1952). In 1955 he married Julia Urquidí; they divorced in 1964. From 1955 to 1957 Vargas Llosa studied literature and law at the University of San Marcos. He then attended graduate school at the University of Madrid, from where he received his Ph.D. in 1959. Vargas Llosa's doctoral dissertation about García Márquez (1971) was followed by several books on literary criticism, among them *La Orgía Perpetua* (1975) about Flaubert's masterpiece *Madame Bovary*. With Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes, and García Márquez, Vargas Llosa was among the most famous writers, whose aim was to

revitalize the Latin American novel.

In the 1950s, while still a student, Vargas Llosa worked as a journalist for *La Industria*. He was a coeditor of the literary journals *Cuadernos de Conversación* and *Literatura*, and journalist for *Radio Panamericana* and *La Crónica*. His first collection of short stories, *Los Jefes*, appeared in 1959. In the same year he moved to Paris because he felt that in Peru he could not earn his living as a serious writer. Although the boom of Latin American fiction in the 1960s opened doors to some authors for commercial success, the great majority of Peruvian writers suffered from the problems of the country's publishing industry.

In France Vargas Llosa worked as Spanish teacher, journalist for *Agence-France-Presse*, and broadcaster for *Radio Télévision Française* in early 1960s. From the late 1960s Vargas Llosa worked as a visiting professor at many American and European universities. In 1965 he married Patricia Llosa; they had two sons and one daughter. In 1970 Vargas Llosa moved to Barcelona and five years later he settled back in Peru, ending his self-imposed exile. In 1977 he was elected President of PEN Club International. The military dictatorship, which started in 1968 when General Francisco Morales Bermudez took over the country, ended in 1980.

In 1980 Vargas Llosa lectured and traveled in Japan and in 1990 he was a conservative candidate (Fredemo, the Democratic Front) for the Peruvian presidency. Vargas Llosa was defeated by Alberto Fujimori, an agricultural engineer of Japanese descent, also a political novice. President Fujimori escaped to his ancestral homeland Japan after a corruption scandal in 2000. In 1991 Vargas Llosa worked as a visiting professor at Florida International University, Miami and *Wissenschaftskolleg*, Berlin from 1991 to 1992. The author has received several prestigious literary awards, including Leopoldo Alas Prize (1959), Rómulo Gallegos Prize (1967), National Critics' Prize (1967), Peruvian National Prize (1967), Critics' Annual Prize for Theatre (1981), Prince of Asturias Prize (1986) and Miguel de Cervantes Prize (1994).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MARIO VARGAS LLOSA (CONT.)

Vargas Llosa made his debut as a novelist with *The Time of the Hero* (1962), set in Leoncio Prado military Academy, where he had been a student. The book received an immediate international recognition. According to Vargas Llosa's theory, personal, social or historical daemon gives a meaning to a novel and in the writing process unconscious obsessions are transformed into a novelist's themes. Autobiography and art has been one of the themes in his criticism.

One of Vargas Llosa's own obsessions is the conflict between a father and son, which he has approached from the private level or from more universal or social levels. *The Time of the Hero* is a microcosm of Peruvian society. The murder of an informer is buried due to the codes of honor to protect the academy's reputation. *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* (1977) is a partly autobiographical story of a courtship and marriage, written with uninhibited humor. The tyrannical father threatens to shoot his son, a novelist named Marito Varguitas, in the middle of the street, because of his marriage to the sexy, sophisticated, older Aunt Julia. Marito is eighteen and the marriage is illegal. Eventually his father accepts the situation. The book started to live its own life when Aunt Julia, Vargas Llosa's first wife, wrote a reply to it.

In *The Green House* (1966) Vargas Llosa returned to formative experiences of his childhood and youth. The complicated novel has two major settings: the first, a provincial city and the second, the jungle, a challenging, hostile and attractive environment, which the author has depicted in several works. In 1957 Varga Llosa traveled with a group of anthropologists into the jungle, and learned how Indian girls were being drafted into prostitution on the coast. The "Green House" of the story is a brothel, which is burned to the ground but rebuilt again. Another storyline follows the fate of the virginal Bonifacia from a jungle mission; she becomes a prostitute in Piura.

The War of the End of the World (1981) is a story of a revolt against the Brazilian government in the late 19th-century and the brutal response of the authorities. A religious fanatic, known as *Conselheiro* (Counselor), is followed by a huge band of disciples drawn from the fringes of society. Before the army of the Republic wins, the modern rational world suffers several humiliating defeats with the group of outcasts. Vargas Llosa uses Euclides da Cunha's account of the events, *Os sertões* (1902), as a source. One of the characters, a "nearsighted journalist", is loosely based on da Cunha.

The Real life of Alejandro Mayta (1984) is written on several narrative levels. It deals with a failed Marxist-Leninist insurrection in the Andes, led by an aging Trotskyist Alejandro Mayta. He is captured and his second lieutenant Vallejos executed. The novelist-narrator interviews a number of people who give a contradictory view of Mayta's personality and the events. Finally the reader realizes that in the process of creating a novel within a novel, the narrator has invented Mayta's life and undermined the concepts of writing and reading history.

Vargas Llosa's bitter memoir, *El Pez en el Agua* (A Fish in the Water), appeared in 1993. It focused on his run for the presidency in 1990 - he was supposed to win the little-known Alberto Fujimori.

JOAQUÍN BALAGUER:

"HE AQUÍ, SEÑORES, TRONCHADO POR EL SOPLO DE UNA RÁFAGA ALEVE, EL ROBLE PODEROSO QUE DURANTE MÁS DE TREINTA AÑOS DESAFIÓ TODOS LOS RAYOS Y SALIÓ VENCEDOR DE TODAS LAS TEMPESTADES".

REMARKS AND REVIEWS ABOUT VARGAS LLOSA'S NOVEL

About Urania Cabral

"La hija del doctor Agustín Cabral, Urania, no es un personaje histórico, como lo son por ejemplo los Trujillo, Joaquín Balaguer, Abbes García y otros. Ella y su padre son seres de ficción. La pluma astuta y precisa de Vargas Llosa nos presenta los muchos estragos de la dictadura de Trujillo, a través de los ojos inteligentes de una mujer atormentada. Vargas Llosa nos dibuja primero una Urania independiente, profesional exitosa en un mundo competitivo, misteriosa, inteligente, inalcanzable en su ser más profundo, una mujer lejana que guarda un abrumado y doloroso secreto, acaso un trauma infantil tan execrable como el incesto, o tal vez sufre por un amor imposible, quizás una enfermedad incurable. No lo sabemos, pero ese misterio y esa ambigüedad contribuyen a crear un clima de tensión dramática a lo largo de la obra, que azuza nuestra curiosidad, nos envuelve y estremece".

"La Urania adulta rechazará todo tipo de relación sentimental en su vida. Sí, vivirá con esa limitación, con esa amputación de su sensualidad, y de su confianza hacia los hombres. A diferencia de la Yerma de García Lorca, que es rechazada por su marido, Urania será la que rechace a todo aquél que intente aproximarse a la orilla de sus afectos".

"Urania es, entonces, la Ifigenia mitológica que estuvo a punto de ser inmolada para aplacar la ira de la diosa Artemisa. Ifigenia fue rescatada por la misma Artemisa en el altar de los sacrificios y reemplazada por un ciervo, o por un oso según otras versiones de origen ático. El sacrificio de Urania no se consumó tampoco, a ella la salvó la impotencia de Trujillo, el otrora macho cabrío, pero la arrojó despiadadamente a la furia de éste por haber sido testigo de su oprobio. Ifigenia supo lo que Agamenón, su padre, fue capaz de hacer, y Urania supo también a qué sórdidos extremos de servilismo había llegado Cabral. Así como Abraham, que para probar su amor incondicional a Dios, está dispuesto

a sacrificar en holocausto a su unigénito hijo Isaac... Agustín Cabral, hundido en la desesperación, está decidido a hacer cualquier cosa para recobrar el favor del dictador Trujillo, incluso inmolarse a su única hija, una niña de catorce años."

Tomado de Urania en "La fiesta del chivo", de María Elvira Luna Escudero-Alie, Georgetown University. Versión original publicada en la Revista El Patio (La Revista de la Cultura Hispano-Guineana), No. 70, junio-julio 2000, Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial.

"[Urania] es un personaje basado en muchas experiencias concretas. De La fiesta del Chivo, lo que más me fascinó es la relación subjetiva que llega a establecerse entre el dictador y su pueblo. Esa especie de vasallaje espiritual, que va más allá de la simple servidumbre, por culpa de la coacción o el temor. Es el mundo de los caudillos militares, quizá lo que más se parece a una dictadura totalitaria. Llegan a controlar no sólo la esfera cívica, sino la familiar, la profesional"

"Ésa es una de las hazañas de Trujillo: lograr tener ese control tan absoluto no sólo sobre las conductas, sino sobre las conciencias y hasta los sueños. Los padres llevaban a Trujillo a sus hijas, está completamente documentado. El secretario de Trujillo, que, dicho sea de paso, es una persona muy simpática, me contó que era un problema por la cantidad de padres que llevaban al generalísimo sus hijas. Era una manera de expresarle su admiración, y eso ocurría en los años cincuenta, no en la Edad Media. Es una de las cosas que me precipitó a tratar de entender ese fenómeno. Ni una sola de esas víctimas, y eso es interesante, de las que está comprobado que fueron sacrificadas, digamos, ha querido contarlo".

"Urania es un personaje que yo inventé, es un personaje totalmente ficticio, porque muchas dominicanas vivieron traumas terribles de niñas, de adolescentes, parecidas a las de Urania. Entonces, es un personaje que de alguna manera es simbólico de lo que fue la condición de la mujer en esos años. La mujer realmente fue, quizás, una de las peores víctimas de la dictadura.

REMARKS AND REVIEWS ABOUT VARGAS LLOSA'S NOVEL (CONT.)

Una dictadura que, además, estaba muy apoyada en la cultura del machismo, si se puede llamar cultura a esa forma de discriminación radical de la mujer."

"Urania [es] una víctima de la dictadura y una de las víctimas, además, más terribles, porque es una víctima inocente, es una niña a la que jamás nadie le ha consultado sobre su destino, un destino que se decide brutalmente por razones políticas. Porque, cuando el padre acepta ofrecérsela a Trujillo en señal de fidelidad, de sacrificio de un cortesano, realmente destruye el futuro de esta niña. Entonces, eso es lo que yo quería que el personaje representara: lo que fue la situación de la mujer en un mundo en el que, además de un régimen autoritario, había una actitud frente a la mujer profundamente machista que, por supuesto, hacía de la mujer una víctima de un modo quizás más radical que el de los hombres que fueron víctimas también del régimen".

Entrevista realizada por José Zepeda,
Publicada en Internet cortesía de AOL
Español y The Americas Society)

About dictatorships and democracy

"Las dictaduras reemplazan la razón por un sentimiento de otra índole, un sentimiento que es mucho más religioso que inteligente. Hay una adhesión personal a la figura del dictador que se justifica con argumentos racionales por supuesto, pero en realidad lo que se crea allí es un tipo de adhesión personal que llega a tener características religiosas. Todos los grandes dictadores, grandes caudillos, al final, se convierten en figuras casi semi-divinas, por la adulación, el servilismo que general el entorno, lo que además los va convirtiendo en unos verdaderos monstruos de vanidad, de egolatría".

"La tradición más antigua de la Humanidad no es la democracia, es la dictadura. Son las satrapías, los regímenes contruidos en torno a déspotas, a esos

seres semi-divinos que parecen adquirir otra naturaleza, superior a la humana del común, por el poder que llegan a acumular. Desde luego, una de las características de la dictadura es ésta de abdicación de una sociedad, a veces entera, y a veces de una buena parte, frente al líder, al que se confía su libre albedrío, renuncia a toda forma de soberanía frente al dictador. Y ese fue, sin ninguna duda, el caso de Trujillo. Trujillo era temido por muchísimos dominicanos, pero fue inmensamente respetado y reverenciado."

"Si un hombre queda exonerado de todo tipo de críticas, si vive en un mundo donde todo lo que hace es aplaudido, ovacionado, si vive en un estado de divinización permanente, al final llega a creerse un ser divino, un ser que está por encima de los demás, y no hay ninguna duda de que Trujillo se lo creyó. Hay testimonios fehacientes de que cualquier manifestación de oposición a su régimen, era un acto profundamente ingrato hacia alguien que había convertido a la República Dominicana en un país moderno, que había acabado con las luchas de caudillos regionales, que había construido carreteras, puesto la luz eléctrica, traído teléfonos a un país que no tenía nada de eso.. Entonces, ¿cómo podían hacerle eso a él? ¡Es una mentalidad típica de los dictadores!"

Mario Vargas Llosa, entrevista realizada por José Zepeda. Publicada en Internet cortesía de AOL Español y The Americas Society.

En general / In general

"La vida sexual de los dictadores es muy rica en pormenores. Dictadores austeros sexualmente son pocos: Franco, Salazar y Hitler, quien da la impresión de que la pasión carnívor no le dejaba tiempo para la pasión sexual. Pero la mayor parte de los dictadores latinoamericanos, por efecto del machismo, han tenido un prontuario sexual muy abundante. No sólo era la búsqueda del placer, sino la afirmación de la virilidad. Coleccionar mujeres era una manera de afirmar su hombría, su poder, y de mantener el mito.

REMARKS AND REVIEWS ABOUT VARGAS LLOSA'S NOVEL (CONT.)

El dictador no sólo es el fuerte; es el chivo, el gran fornicador. Es el macho cabrón. A Trujillo le decían El Chivo por eso. Ha sucedido con muchos dictadores. A Stalin le gustaba más el alcohol que las mujeres, pero digamos que le gustaba mucho fornicar. Y Mao: ahora se ha revelado cuánto le gustaban las niñas, que practicaba la ninfomanía de manera colectivista. Por eso es que el poder hay que limitarlo, reducirlo al mínimo, porque cuando a un ser humano se le da todo el poder, aparece la crueldad".

Mario Vargas Llosa, en entrevista realizada por Sol Alameda, "El imperio del miedo" publicada en El País, España, 8 de marzo 2000

"La libertad de expresión es la principal de las conquistas. Una sociedad sin libertad de expresión está condenada a ser corrompida y maltratada por el poder".

Mario Vargas Llosa, Conversatorio electrónico en AOL el 26 de febrero de 2002

"[Vargas Llosa possesses] an ambition worthy of Balzac, Dickens and Galdós, but with a technical skill that brings him closer to the heirs of Flaubert and Henry James."

Suzanne Jill Levine, The New York Times Book Review

"Most of the characters are taken from life, and Mr. Vargas Llosa has captured the dictator and his supporters so well that the book has caused scandal and embarrassment in Santo Domingo. Although he is not a fine stylist, few writers can match Mr. Vargas Llosa for storytelling. His words serve the unfolding plot."

The Economist, 2000

"(H)is Trujillo is not some Rabelaisian monster, some demi-god of brutality sprung fully-blown from the Latin American psyche, but a human grown monstrous with the accumulation of power and its brutal applications. It is in this critical difference that Vargas Llosa's psychological astuteness reveals itself – as well as in the depiction of how terror, once unleashed, slithers through the body politic gradually to eviscerate all its members."

Lisa Appignanesi, The Independent, 2000

"Still, laborious as it seems in the beginning, this difficult structure pays off extremely well in the second half of the book (...) What we are brought to see at the end of this novel is the ultimate horror of the Trujillo regime: Not so much that he raped people's daughters but that his power was so total and pervasive that he could get people to cooperate, voluntarily, in the raping of their own daughters."

Madison Smartt Bell, The Los Angeles Times, 2000

"La fiesta del Chivo es algo más que los últimos días de Rafael Leonidas Trujillo; es una historia de desamor. De una niña, Urania, que es conducida al altar de los sacrificios de la tiranía, en la más absoluta inocencia. Urania es el símbolo de todas las víctimas que han padecido la prepotencia de las botas y las pistolas en una región donde la democracia no ha sido moneda corriente"

José Zepeda, "La fiesta del chivo. La fiesta de la palabra".

"... la controversia en torno a la novela se debe a que la obra es un retrato sumamente duro de una época muy difícil en la que la vida y la palabra estaban totalmente polarizadas... porque no había un rincón de la existencia social donde los símbolos opresivos de ese poder no estuvieran presentes... la novela refleja esa situación con mucha crudeza".

Andrés L. Mateo, autor, en entrevista a la AP, citado en El Comercio, Perú, 6 de abril 2000. <--Back to table of contents/23

STUDY GUIDE

SUGGESTED READINGS

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GENERAL TRUJILLO:

"TÚ TAMBIÉN PIENSAS QUE ACAPARO FINCAS Y NEGOCIOS POR ESPÍRITU DE LUCRO. SI ESAS EMPRESAS NO FUERAN DE LA FAMILIA TRUJILLO, ESOS PUESTOS DE TRABAJO NO EXISTIRÍAN. Y LA REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA SERÍA EL PAISITO AFRICANO QUE ERA CUANDO ME LO ECHÉ AL HOMBRO".



Jorge Ali Triana (left) giving directions to Actors, Ricardo Barber, Anilú Pardo and Alejandra Orozco during rehearsal process of production of "La Fiesta del Chivo" at Repertorio Español. February 2003. Photo by Michael Palma



René Sánchez rehearsing backstage for his role of Henry Chirinos in the production of "La Fiesta del Chivo" at Repertorio Español. February 2003. Photo courtesy of El Comercio, Perú.