

THE REPUBLIC
(One-Act Play)

By

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THE REPUBLIC

The stage is divided into three areas:

A central area, with a platform where the action takes place, has a desk with a great many papers, a couple of chairs, a broom, a hammock and 20 TV screens of different sizes.

The perimeter, which includes the seating area for the audience, where there are 100 poles, each with a small speaker broadcasting the voices of the *coro sonante*. They are the mothers immemorial, weeping for their children and seeking their place in history.

The front, central proscenium, where the members of the *coro disonante* are seated, with their backs to the audience, in comfortable armchairs in front of a large screen as though watching a TV program. Between the armchairs and the screen there is a table with a bottle of whisky, four glasses and a remote control. The *coro disonante* never faces the audience. The front view of this chorus will be broadcast on the large central screen and on the screens located in the central section.

CHARACTERS

THE CAUDILLO - must wear a uniform very similar to those worn during the War of Independence. He must have a sword. The other characters wear modern clothing.

THE CAUDILLO

THE REBEL

THE LAWMAN

LA DEL AMOR [LOVE]

THE REINCARNATION

LA NEGRA

CORO DISONANTE: LARA, AVILA, ENEA AND MINA

VOICES OF THE CORO SONANTE

SCENE I

THE FOUNDING

THE CAUDILLO

(He is sitting stage center at the table covered with papers wearing the sword in a scabbard at his side. He writes, scratches out, crumples papers and throws them down, writes again. Then, satisfied with what he has written, he begins writing while, at the same time, tossing a pair of dice on the table)

Clause One:

All clauses in this document may be amended in full or in part

Clause Two:

The rules governing the full or partial amendment of the clauses in this document are to be found in Clause One.

Clause Three:

The player who has the highest score following a fair roll of the dice shall be entitled to amend all or part of each and every one of the clauses in this document with the exception of Clause One, which shall be binding on all parties involved and may not be amended under any circumstance whatsoever, even if argued and proposed by the player having a numerical advantage with the dice.

Clause Five:

Each player shall be entitled to choose and roll two dice the first time; once rolled he/she shall remain in possession of the dice and shall not be allowed to change them. The player with the highest score shall begin the contest. Note must be taken that, if any question should arise regarding the direction of the axis between the northern and the southern point of numbers, the number of the die tossed shall be considered null and void pursuant to the foregoing provisions and only the die not affected thereby and the numbers on that die shall be taken into account.

Clause Six:

Each round consists of three rolls. The sum of the numbers each player has following the three rolls is not what makes a winner. The game is won by the player who individually wins at least two of the three rolls.

We can check all the rest as we go along in light of our great destiny as a country and a republic.

DISSONANT CHORUS

LARA: Pass me the Scotch.

AVILA: Get it yourself, bro.

LARA: What's the matter? Why can't you hand it to me?

AVILA: What's the matter with you?

LARA: It's closer to you, bro.

ENEAS: The semantics of the game are interesting.

MINA: It's all a muddle to me. That part about the axis makes no sense. As for me, I didn't understand a word.

LARA: You're doing it again! After a couple of drinks you always have to start delving into everything. There are things you just don't have to delve into. As long as you have some idea, you more or less understand... the rest just falls into place.

MINA: I'm not delving into anything. It's very simple. I didn't understand, not even the plus or the minus.

AVILA: That guy isn't bad at all. Look at his outfit. Down with Spain! Besides, I slip by unnoticed.

ENEAS: It's an evolutionary process.

LARA: Evolutionary, my ass! All that rubbish to end up just the same. I'll back whoever is winning. Long live the Republic! That guy looks the part; and if he doesn't, we'll make sure that he does.

AVILA: You're so right. Long live the Republic! Not one step back, not even to gather speed. Down with the Crown!

LARA: Long live the Republic!

MINA: If you say so.

ENEAS: I do.

CORO SONANTE: (The voices join in one by one)

Naming, I name the names. Rolling names that I name. The nameless that I name. Naming the one who has a name. Naming the one who hides. Naming, naming, naming is a must.

Manuel Antonio 18, José Gregorio 22, Remigio Andrés 17, Leocenis Trinidad 21, Mariano 15, Gerónimo 25, Ignacio 19, Ponciano 14, Antonio María, Nicolás, Juan José. All the same. Just one

Name, just one absence. I come galloping to dethrone the battles. I come without protest to march through the anonymous history of my children. Missing children, removed from life. Vital statistics, added up without names, neither given nor last names, without brothers and sisters, friends, parents. That is how I come, to protest from within, that is how I come to scream from within, pushing away **the mutes**, pushing, shoving, butting, , thrusting aside.....

(The voices fade away)

THE REBEL (Handcuffed, he enters the central area, followed by LA NEGRA)

THE CAUDILLO

Welcome. I have been waiting for us to meet. I hope you are ready to defend yourself for your fatal disobedience.

THE REBEL

Disobedience? A victorious battle for honor and a cause that are yours, too. I have never wavered in my struggle to achieve the sublime goal of founding a free republic.

THE CAUDILLO

Regardless of the cost?

THE REBEL

Yes, that's where the danger lies.

THE CAUDILLO

You declare yourself my opponent?

THE REBEL

I declare that I oppose everything that would prevent us from lifting this yoke of oppression forevermore... and am in favor of everything that helps us do so.

THE CAUDILLO

And you have the gall to insist on the insult? You are leaving me no alternative.

THE REBEL

The gall is yours, refusing to acknowledge the value of others.

THE CAUDILLO

Others? What others? You're a subordinate and, as such, what you have to do is obey. I didn't give any order.

THE REBEL

Because he was fleeing, embracing fear perhaps. I reached a decision allowed me by my rank. A decision, I repeat, where we share the same achievements and goals.

THE CAUDILLO

Then, the right thing to do is discharge you. Or do you prefer to pay another price?

THE REBEL

Obviously I lack freedom of choice given that I am unarmed, locked up, and demeaned by a cause I repudiate. That leads me to the only conclusion I can possibly reach: Your personal intentions shape the cause, and your whims become the passions that govern us. I do not claim to be free of execrable personal feelings, most especially today, towards you, given that my fate is clearly in your hands. Nevertheless, I will never know how to beg, just as I never knew how to heed the pleas of my enemies. But I used to feel that we longed for the same thing.

THE CAUDILLO

The same thing? We did long, as you say. But obedience trumps even the most longed for ideals.

THE REBEL

Your words will be carved in the stones of history. But meanwhile, I ask you to listen to the rumblings from the bowels of our land. Republics are shaped by the lands that are trod upon, farmed, when so allowed, by the souls that inhabit them. Do you acknowledge them?

THE CAUDILLO

That's enough. Why did you come?

THE REBEL

I didn't come. You had me arrested.

THE CAUDILLO

Do you shoot dice?

THE REBEL

That depends on the reason.

THE CAUDILLO

To settle our differences based on fair, evenhanded rules.

THE REBEL

Without a court of law?

THE CAUDILLO

That would only draw things out.

THE REBEL

I'm your prisoner.

THE CAUDILLO

The prisoner of your rebellion.

THE REBEL

Once we have settled "your" differences, will I be set free?

THE CAUDILLO

Subject to certain restrictions. You will no longer wear a uniform, nor serve the cause so long as I am leading it.

THE REBEL

I presume that would be the outcome if I were to win fair and square. And if I lose?

THE CAUDILLO:

The firing squad, as called for by law. For betraying the Fatherland.

LA NEGRA

What Fatherland? What firing squad? What law?

THE CAUDILLO

Who let this woman into the room? Who is she? What is her interest in our cause?

LA NEGRA

I'm sort of like the man's mother.

THE CAUDILLO

I would appreciate it, dear lady, if you would step out immediately.

LA NEGRA

And where should I go? Look, if I stand here quietly I won't bother you. Don't worry, I won't utter a word. Look, I've been here all this time and neither you nor he had even realized it.

THE CAUDILLO

This kind of jousting isn't for women.

LA NEGRA

I don't know anything about that jousting, as you call it, but what I do know is that if he's here, I'm here. Plus you need someone to clean up all the mess and filth all around you.

THE CAUDILLO

Once again, lady, what's being discussed here calls for courage.

LA NEGRA

Courage I have!

THE CAUDILLO

Fearlessness.

LA NEGRA

That I have! That I have!

THE CAUDILLO

Sacrifice!

LA NEGRA

I'm willing! I'm willing! I'm willing!

THE CAUDILLO

Derring-do! Resignation!

LA NEGRA

I have that! I have that! I have that! And that TOO!

THE CAUDILLO

Inadmissible.

LA NEGRA

I swear, I will not cry.

THE CAUDILLO

What a nuisance! All right then. Begin by straightening up the room over there, on the right. So, where were we?

THE REBEL

The reason I'm here. You will not bend me. The rules!

LA NEGRA

Oh, and are there any rules?

THE CAUDILLO

What was that you said about not uttering a word?

LA NEGRA

You're right. I swear it won't happen again.

THE REBEL

The rules!

THE CAUDILLO (reading)

Clause Five:

Each player shall be entitled to choose and roll two dice the first time; once rolled he/she shall remain in possession of the dice and shall not be allowed to change them. The player with the highest score shall begin the contest. Note must be taken that... and so on and so forth.

Clause Six:

Each round consists of three rolls. The sum of the numbers each player has after the three rolls is not what makes a winner. The game is won by the player who individually wins at least two of the three rolls. Choose whichever dice you want

THE REBEL (Has a hard time picking up a pair of dice, hindered by his handcuffs)

Ready!

THE CAUDILLO

You can't expect me to take the cuffs off. A prisoner is a prisoner.

THE REBEL

Nothing could have been further from my mind. Ready!

THE CAUDILLO

Willing!

(Both roll their dice at the same time; the numbers are identical)

THE CAUDILLO (looking at the dice)

Seven!

THE REBEL (looking at the dice)

Seven!

THE REBEL (referring to the rules)

I don't think there's a rule dealing with this situation.

THE CAUDILLO (flips through the papers, then reads)

Note must be taken that depending of the direction the axis between the northern and the southern point of numbers, the number of the die tossed could be considered null and void and only the die and the numbers on that die shall be taken into account.

This three is exactly what's covered by this rule. The die with the three is null and void and the total number of your roll is four. Since mine is a seven, I'm afraid it is up to me to start the game.

THE REBEL

We must point out the premeditated and deliberate omission in that rule, worded in such a way that it can only be interpreted by the person who wrote it. Go ahead, your roll.

THE CAUDILLO (rolls the dice)

Four!

THE REBEL (rolls the dice)

Six!

THE CAUDILLO

One point for you. (Rolls the dice) Seven!

THE REBEL (rolls the dice)

Six!

THE CAUDILLO

One point for you and one point for me. (Rolls the dice) Eight!

THE REBEL

Your disregard for honor means you lack manliness. (Rolls the dice) Four!

THE CAUDILLO

You lost. Played strictly by the rules! Take the prisoner away! Let him feel the full weight of the law! To a free and independent Republic!

THE REBEL (being pulled off the stage as though grabbed by soldiers and dragged out of the room)

Betrayal of honor, law and justice is what you represent! I have always been willing to give my life for the cause. The cause of many that, on a day that is tragic both personally and in history, you, in a display of arrogance disguised as heroism, unentitled as you are, seek to make exclusively yours. And let me tell you that it is not the same to die fighting for freedom as it is to die at the whim of a man who claims to be more than his nature allows. Peace will come and, with it, honor. Just pray that you will not be standing in the way, seeking to halt them. Placing me before a firing squad will be futile; I am merely the reflection of thousands. Those who will follow will spring from that very spot as it is natural for men to rid themselves of those who would subject them.

LA NEGRA

Where are you taking him?

THE CAUDILLO

Don't ask. Pick up whatever is left over. And tell no one what you have seen. Do you understand me? If you have any papers proving you are the prisoner's mother, hand them over.

LA NEGRA

I don't understand the second part.