

Nominated for the 26th Helen Hayes Award/Charles MacArthur Award 2010 for  
Outstanding New Play or Musical.

# Mummy in the closet

by

Gustavo Ott ©Aug.2008

Translation: Heather L. McKay ©May.2009

PLAY COMMISSIONED BY GALA, WASHINGTON, D.C.

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This play premiered as a musical by GALA Theatre in Washington, D.C. (Hugo Medrano, Artistic Director; Abel López, Associate Director; Rebecca Medrano, General Producer) in the Tivoli Theater on June 4, 2009, under the title “MOMIA EN EL CLOSET: EL RETORNO DE EVA PERÓN” (MUMMY IN THE CLOSET: THE RETURN OF EVA PERON). Music by Mariano Veles, Lyrics by Gustavo Ott and Mariano Veles, Choreography by Corina Losano, English translation by Heather L. McKay, all under the Direction of Mariano Caligaris.

The cast was as follows:

Laura Conforte	Eva Peron
Martín Ruiz	Dr. Ara/ Gen. Aramburu/ Lanusse/ Gen. Videla
Diego Mariani	Genaro/ Muri/ Lopez Rega
Antonio Soto	Peron/ Expert
Belén Oyola-Rebaza	Sara/ People/ Isabel
Sebastián Vitale	Bourgeois/ Mailboy/ Stylist/ Soldier/ People/ Orisha/ Moragas/ Montonero
John Hager Flores	Bourgeois/ Mailboy/ Stylist/ Soldier/ People/ Orisha/ Cabanillas/ Montonero
Gerald Montoya	Bourgeois/ Mailboy /Stylist/ Soldier/ People/ Orisha/ Montonero
Michael Vitale Sazonov	Bourgeois/ Mailboy /Stylist/ Soldier/ People/ Orisha/ Montonero

And a chorus of 18 people and an orchestra of seven musicians directed by Mariano Veles.

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## ACT 1

*Music*

*A platform at center stage dominates the scene.*

*On it, Eva Duarte, incensed, makes a speech.*

*We hear the multitudes of people shouting:*

*“Evita!” “Evita!”*

*In the lower part of the stage, a party breaks out among the delighted bourgeoisie.*

PEOPLE: Evita! Evita!

BOURGEOIS1: Long live cancer!

ALL: Viva!

EVITA: My dear *descamisados*!

BOURGEOIS3: Long live cell destruction!

ALL: Viva!

EVITA: You must lie in wait for the traitors in the dark of night...!

PEOPLE: Evita! Evita!

BOURGEOIS1: Cancer is life! Cancer is love!

BOURGEOIS2: Long live untimely death!

EVITA: ...they will try to sink their viper's venom into the body and spirit of the people!

PEOPLE: Evita! Evita!

BOURGEOIS3: Long live the coup!

BOURGEOIS4: Long live the return to order!

ALL: Long live soldiers!

EVITA: No viper will curtail the condor's flight!

PEOPLE: Evita! Evita!

BOURGEOIS2: Death to disorder!

EVITA: No more will the oligarchy's boot tread upon the workers!

PEOPLE: Evita! Evita!

BOURGEOIS1: Cancer is anticommunist!

BOURGEOIS4: Cancer is love!

PEOPLE: Evita! Evita!

EVITA: I want to tell my *descamisados*, the humble people I hold deep in my heart, that in my hours of joy, my hours of pain and my hours of uncertainty, I always lift my gaze to them, for they are pure, and see with the eyes of the soul.

ALL: Almighty Cancer, Argentina's Savior.  
You made that whore a corpse!

BOURGEOIS3: Glorious Cancer, now you're here, may you also take Peron!

EVITA: Take heed traitors, for we'll do justice with our own hands!

BOURGEOIS3: Stiff hands!

BOURGEOIS1: Dry hands!

BOURGEOIS2: Hands six feet under!

EVITA: I pray the Lord  
Won't let those fools  
Raise their hand against Peron,  
For on that day...  
Oh, that day!

BOURGEOIS4: Chop her to bits and toss into the sea!

BOURGEOIS3: One day we'll toss others out after her.

BOURGEOIS2: Life at sea is so pleasant.

BOURGEOIS1: And the bodies dissolve so much better.

BOURGEOIS4: Disappear her!

BOURGEOIS3: Disappeared. Nice word.

BOURGEOIS2: We'll have to learn it.

ALL: You never know when it might come in handy!

EVITA: (SPOKEN) For that day I will rise up with our workers; with our women; with our nation's *descamisados*, but this time we won't leave a single anti-Peronist brick standing in all of Argentina!

(EVA, GRIPPED BY INTENSE PAIN, CRUMBLES BEFORE THE PODIUM)

BOURGEOIS2: Do you hear something?

BOURGEOIS3: The corpse quit talking.

BOURGEOIS4: Her dead words dropped off.

(BOURGEOISIE FACING AUDIENCE)

BOURGEOIS1: Because the whore died on July 26th at the age of 33. Young, sure, but a real pain in the ass...

(EVA FALLS IN FRONT OF THE PODIUM)

BOURGEOIS3: So, now what do we do?

BOURGEOIS2: With her, burn her.

BOURGEOIS4: And take him down.

ALL: My darling Cancer, you're such a blessing to me!  
Almighty God the Father, creator of cancer, death and the Restoration!

(MUSIC.

THE BOURGEOISIE BECOME SOLDIERS WHO CARRY EVA'S CORPSE FROM THE PODIUM TO CGT HEADQUARTERS.

IN THE END, THEY PLACE HER ON A DAIS. FLOWERS AND CANDLES SURROUND HER.

IN THE DISTANCE, SHOUTS OF “EVITA, EVITA” CONTINUE.

TO ONE SIDE, PERON WITH GENARO AND DR. ARA. PERON GOES TO THE BODY)

PERON: She came to Buenos Aires at fourteen and at thirty-three she leaves us, like Christ. But, greater than the son of God, she takes the love of the entire nation!  
(HEARS THE SHOUTS OF “EVITA, EVITA” IN THE DISTANCE)  
Will they love me as they loved her?

DR. ARA: Exact time of death, President Peron?

GENARO: The Nation’s Spiritual Guide passed away at 20.25.

PERON: Dr. Ara, when will you begin to...?

DR. ARA: To make her a Mummy? This very instant, General.

PERON: Know this, Dr. Ara, it is not I who ask it of you, it is the people’s demand, the wish of all who loved her.  
(RAISES HIS VOICE, PASSIONATELY) May she never decompose. Let the worms dream of her, as the Oligarchy’s worms dreamed of this day, never knowing she’s now more dangerous than ever!

DR. ARA: Consider it done. And then: Where do we take her?

PERON: She’ll stay here till her Monument’s ready. It will be magnificent: Three times as tall as the Eiffel Tower! Grander than the Statue of Liberty! It will be visible from space!

DR. ARA: But then I’d have to...

PERON: Make sure she’s kept immaculate. No matter the time or the cost.

(PERON, EXITING)

DR. ARA: Mr. President... I’m no coward, but... What about security? There’s rioting and something’s in the air.

PERON: The men who guarded my wife when she was alive are at your orders as of today. Nothing will happen.

DR. ARA: And the people? My work is delicate. They can’t be kissing or touching her too much. Who can control the people?

GENARO: That question’s 5,000 years old, you know.

DR. ARA: And the answer is never satisfactory. Is it, General?

PERON: Leave the people to me. You see to it her body’s eternal.

DR. ARA: Eternity’s untouchable, its makeup won’t run and it has the people under control...

PERON: Eternity will be what we say it is!

DR. ARA: But I’m warning you, eternity’s awkward. At first, we’re delighted with it, but then it grows tedious. Time goes by and eternity’s bruised, beaten. A mouse nibbles it. Then you don’t know what to do with eternity anymore and it ends up like everything else; with the junk no one dares to throw out. And so, eternity winds up in the closet. Till a grandchild finds it and tosses it in the trash without a thought. That’s eternity’s place when you don’t respect it as God intended.

PERON: She’s all yours. Eternity, my good man, is all ours.

(PERON EXITS. GENARO FOLLOWS. DR. ARA IS LEFT ALONE. LONG PAUSE. WE HEAR THE PEOPLE SHOUTING “EVITA, EVITA” AGAIN. ARA IS ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING, BUT LAUGHS AT THE THOUGHT)

DR. ARA: What is it that Theater says?  
Because this is theater, baby.  
Don’t you see? Lights, actors, audience. Theater.  
So what is it that Theater says...? (LAUGHS)  
That play...the one with the skull...something like:  
“Here’s what’s left of you, Evita.”

This is what becomes of the Nation’s soul? Don’t get me wrong, you’re not bad.  
But a bit stiff. Let’s say you’re “a still soul,” like a piece of wood, a wooden soul. Pinocchio’s what you’ll be. Or Frankenstein. Whatever they want. (LAUGHS) Eternity drop by drop.  
And the thing is, to me you’re no longer the nation’s soul because you’re my soul.  
Because of you, I’ll be known in eternity.  
Eternal you, eternal me.  
Rat food you, oblivion me.  
In short, my nation’s soul, you’ll be my work of art. And through you, I too will savor a slice of eternity.  
(TOUCHES THE BODY. STOPS LAUGHING)  
Such an honor. To touch the skin of Sainthood.  
(RAISES HIS VOICE) SARA!

(ENTER SARA)

SARA: Do we begin, Doctor?

DR. ARA: First: the bleeding.

(SARA BEGINS THE PROCESS OF DRAINING THE BLOOD. WE HEAR SHOUTS OF “EVITA” “EVITA”. AND THEN A RADIANT EVA APPEARS AT THE PODIUM)

EVITA: I wondered: Will they still love me in heaven? Will I hear them shout my name from there? Will my name make sense in their songs and prayers in those bloodless heavens of the Lord?

DR. ARA: (LECTURING, PERFORMS WHAT HE DESCRIBES)...I rub the body with a bleaching solution. Then I cover the face with a cloth soaked in this solution, which gives off a good deal of oxygen...

EVITA: Looking out the window, you couldn't help but wonder if the doctor was talking about my body or my country, on the brink of having its soul mummified.

DR. ARA: I'm rather alarmed that the reaction produces heat, which then concentrates in the cloth. This leads me to lift it all off again and dilute the bleaching agent by stirring, for fear that too much oxygen will accumulate...

EVITA: Between you and me, who's been bled? Who's beneath the soaked cloth? Between you and me, who's bleached out? Vulnerable Eva there, or you, interrupted Argentina over there?

DR. ARA: ...producing corrosion or a high reaction temperature that could damage the face or head. We call this Paraffinization.

EVITA: So then: What says more about you, Argentina? What says more about what lies ahead? Where men see deeds, Angels see steps.

DR. ARA: I have the reagents. I bandage the fingers one by one...

EVITA: Eva bandaged to her fingertips or Evita, symbol of nothing, singing don't cry for me Argentina? Don't cry for me? Who the fuck do you think you are, you little British piece of shit, saying the people have to cry for me when it's I who cry for my people?

DR.ARA: I soak the bandages in a trichloroethylene solution. I bathe her with acetate and nitrate.

EVITA: This trichloroethylene beauty that isn't truth or the truth, that with pain, will become beauty?

DR. ARA: I check to see the head and hands are fully submerged.

EVITA: Me, submerged.

DR. ARA: Then, inspection and movement. Lastly, I uncover the cadaver and remove the pads from the eyelids. (CONSULTS A CALENDAR) Let's see... (WRITES) At eight a.m. on July 27th, Evita's cadaver is now definitively incorruptible...

EVITA: I wasn't going. Not heaven, not hell, nowhere. Here I'd stay, looking on the remains of utopia from the gates of hell; here bled dry, here disappeared.

SARA: But Doctor: she has to be dressed and styled, returned to the beauty she led Argentines to expect.

DR. ARA: Very well: (SHOUTS) Come in!

ENTER MANICURIST, DRESSERS, HAIRSTYLISTS. THEY ARE THE BOURGEOISIE/SOLDIERS)

ALL: Clothes and nails

SARA: She told me, for her nails...

EVITA: When I die, remove this cherry red and paint them Revlon clear.

SARA: Done.

EVITA: And the ivory dress...

SARA: I've been working on it all night.

DR. ARA: Come in!

ALL: Stylists!

STYLIST1: Only I styled her hair.

STYLIST2: Only I brushed it out in the morning.

STYLIST3: Only I traveled with her.

STYLIST4: Only I washed her feet.

STYLIST1: We spent over an hour

STYLIST2: Styling her hair for the last time.

STYLIST3: But not before we cut a lock

STYLIST4: A souvenir, for the market.

DR.ARA: Come in!

ALL: Various props and effects.

STYLIST1: The mother of pearl and silver rosary

STYLIST2: Given to her by the Pope

STYLIST3: And the shoes she liked to wear

STYLIST4: On gala occasions.

STYLIST1: They're designer.

STYLIST2: Boutique.

STYLIST3: Expensive.

STYLIST4: But they're on a dead woman's feet.

(GENARO ENTERS AND GOES TO DR. ARA)

GENARO: All set? (ARA GESTURES TO THE MUMMY) Incredible, she looks...!

ARA: Alive?

(IN THE END, DR. ARA CLOSES THE COFFIN, WITH A MONUMENTAL BOOM. JUST THEN, PERON ARRIVES)

GENARO: Ready for the masses, General?

DR. ARA: Ready! (LEAVING) And so am I, it's off to the Costa del Sol!

(GENARO PREVENTS HIM FROM LEAVING)

GENARO: General Peron’s orders: you are to remain always by the side of the Nation’s Spiritual Guide.

DR. ARA: Until?

GENARO: Until new orders. It’s in your contract.

DR. ARA: (TAKES OUT HIS CONTRACT, CHECKS) It doesn’t say remain by her side...

GENARO: Check the fine print, those lovely little words that always go hand in hand with some handsome asterisks.

DR. ARA: (FINDS IT) It does say!

GENARO: You see?

DR. ARA: That’s one big asterisk!

GENARO: And it says till when?

DR. ARA: “Till death do us part.” That’s one lethal asterisk, isn’t it?

(GENARO AND DR. ARA EXIT.

SAD MUSIC. BLACKOUT ON ALL BUT PERON. AGAIN WE HEAR THE CHORUS OF PEOPLE SHOUTING “EVITA.” BUT LITTLE BY LITTLE THE CHORUS FALLS SILENT)

PERON: Thirty-three years, eighty-one pounds, two million people, twenty-five petitions to name her a Saint and a two-mile long line at her funeral. Will they love me as they adored her?

(IT RAINS FLOWERS)

The people without their Eva are like a faithless prayer; like a beggar pleading to exist; like a rock on the seabed saying, “that unholy water won’t pass through my skin, because we rocks come from mountain peaks!”

It’s the people outside the *Casa Rosada*. Can you see them? In lines two- or even three-miles long to see her. And at the steps, they wait for her, their flowers carpeting the plaza.

Four people have already died while waiting to see her.

The leaden day, what more could you ask? The cold, constant drizzle that never leaves our side. The heavens are weeping, that’s what her

*descamisados* said. And above all, what we'll never be able to forget, the silence. There's not a sound. No one says a word.

Things are said as they're thought, in silence. You speak as you do when you fall in love, without a sound. You cry as you do when you're ashamed of death, in silence. You are stricken in silence. (SILENCE) So many people gather and not a sound. Silence.

(SILENCE. THEN, A DISTANT NOISE)

Someone is walking, in the distance, and his steps resound like cannon fire. Like a clock ticking toward the end of the world; as if everyone, me, them, an entire people, were waiting to die as well.

(ALL NOISE STOPS. ABSOLUTE SILENCE)

What are you, silence, that you walk with death?

(ALL NOISE STOPS. ABSOLUTE SILENCE)

That's what you are, Argentina, when faced with your disappointments. In that silence of death we envy.

Like this day faced with the body of our saint. In silence.

(PAUSE)

Like this.

(PAUSE)

Do you know the power this has?

(PAUSE. SILENCE)

(EVA APPEARS, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STAGE)

EVA & PERON: You could kill an entire people with this alone.

(PAUSE, EXTENDED SILENCE)

PERON: With silence.

EVA: And with nothing.

MUSIC.

2

*Images of the procession.  
Enter Sara, Genaro, Dr. Ara, and the soldiers.  
Dr. Ara, always cleaning the Mummy.*

- GENARO: The procession's begun, General!
- PERON: What are the people doing?
- GENARO: Kissing her forehead.
- DR. ARA: Slobbering on my work!
- PERON: These humble people, full of thanks!
- DR. ARA: Who can't open their mouths without drooling!
- SARA: With their desperate love.
- DR. ARA: Who can't kiss without sticking out their tongues.
- GENARO: With their selflessness and solidarity.
- DR. ARA: Who don't brush their teeth.
- PERON: Will they love me as they adore her?
- DR. ARA: All I know is my hand's getting tired from cleaning my work of art! So that when today's 10,000! have gone by, she won't end up with a hole in her forehead from all those slobbery lips. (TO SARA) She needs a little more color there. (TO PERON, WHO APPROACHES WITH GENARO) We have to put her back in the glass case, General, to protect my work, keep her out of reach, touch her up after the damage affection can do.
- GENARO: We can't put her away now, General. They keep coming! More and more people!
- SARA: I didn't know there were this many people in the whole country.
- PERON: We may have to allow two more weeks of mourning!

DR. ARA: If we don't stop the funerals she'll be damaged! And Eternity will end up looking like a watercolor!

(PROJECTION OF THE PROCESSION STOPS. PERON SEES TWO SOLDIERS TALKING SECRETLY)

PERON: For now, Dr. Ara, you tend to the body. I must tend to the living.

DR. ARA: (TERRIFIED) The living? Who do you mean? Is something going on?

PERON: Something's always going on.

DR. ARA: Should I be afraid?

PERON: (LOOKING AT THE SOLDIERS) Afraid in Argentina? Always!

(PERON TALKS TO THE SOLDIERS. ONE TAKES HIM BY THE ARM AND PULLS HIM OFFSTAGE. THE REST TAKE OUT THEIR GUNS. SOUNDS OF GUNFIRE AND AIRPLANES)

GENARO: Suddenly, before I knew it...

DR. ARA: Before anyone figured it out...

SARA: I didn't realize...

GENARO: It's September 16th!

(THE BOMBING BEGINS)

SARA: (SUDDENLY, HYSTERICAL) They're firing on the people!

GENARO: The Marines are staging a coup!

SARA: They've ousted Peron!

(GENARO TAKES OUT A GUN)

GENARO: I always said Peron wouldn't last two years without Eva!

SARA: She was the only one in this country with enough balls to defend the nation!

DR. ARA: ...And the Mummy? What do we do with the Mummy?

GENARO: (SHOOTING AND EXITING) Run Ara! Run! They're not going to kill the Mummy!

SARA: Save yourself, they're bombing Buenos Aires!

(ARA AND SARA RUN BACK AND FORTH, BUT CONTINUE TO HEAR BOMBING NEARBY AND MUST RUN AGAIN)

Where can you hide in Argentina?

DR. ARA: Here? Not on your life. I'm going to Madrid.

(WHEN DR. ARA AND SARA FINALLY GO TO THE DOOR TO LEAVE, THERE IS A KNOCK)

SOLDIER1: Open the door!

SOLDIER2: The new administration is here!

SOLDIER3: The Liberating Revolution!

SOLDIER4: Long live ARAMBURU!

DR. ARA: (TO AUDIENCE) And so, without further ado, I said so long to the Mummy.  
(SAYS TO HER) So long, sweetheart. And I left. Goodbye, boys. The Mummy's all yours.

(DR.ARA GOES OUT A WINDOW. SARA FOLLOWS.  
THE ROOM IS DESERTED.  
MORE POUNDING AT THE DOOR.  
SUDDENLY, THEY BREAK IT DOWN.  
ENTER FIVE SOLDIERS WHO GO STRAIGHT TO THE WINDOW.  
THEY SHOOT, BUT CLEARLY MISS.  
THE SOLDIERS COMMISERATE, BUT ALSO CONGRATULATE THEMSELVES. THEY TALK NONSTOP WHILE THEY SEARCH THE OFFICE, BUT DON'T NOTICE THE MUMMY. IT SEEMS THEY WILL, BUT SOMETHING ALWAYS DISTRACTS THEM.  
THEY LAY A GUN ON THE MUMMY, HAVE A CUP OF COFFEE.  
ONE PICKS HIS NOSE AND WIPES IT ON HER FOOT.  
SUDDENLY, SOLDIER1 NOTICES AND IS SPOOKED. ALL ARE SPOOKED. SOLDIER2 SCREAMS A BIT EFFEMINATELY. THE OTHERS LOOK AT HIM IN DISAPPROVAL. SOLDIER2 SCREAMS AGAIN, MACHO THIS TIME)

SOLDIER1: What is this!?

SOLDIER2: The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor office, Colonel!

SOLDIER1: I mean that!

SOLDIER3: What is it?

SOLDIER4: I think it's the body, general!

SOLDIER5: Whose?

SOLDIER1: Body?

SOLDIER3: For God's sake, don't say body. Dead people give me the heebie jeebies.

SOLDIER2: But you must've killed 50 people yourself just today!

SOLDIER3: Well, it's the dead people I didn't kill that scare me.

SOLDIER4: Colonel, I think it's "her" body.

SOLDIER1: Her who? My mother?

SOLDIER2: No, we chopped her to bits, remember?

SOLDIER1: For being a communist, yeah.

SOLDIER2: She was your mother.

SOLDIER1: But a lousy mother.

SOLDIER3: A real mother.

SOLDIER2: Better off dead.

SOLDIER3: My mom's from Boca. Can we chop her to bits too?

SOLDIER2: We should, that's worse.

SOLDIER5: I think, Colonel, he means it's Evita's body.

SOLDIER1: Evita?

SOLDIER2: The late-deceased-who-died-like-two-years-ago Evita?

SOLDIER4: Exactly.

SOLDIER1: Could it be her?

SOLDIER2: How can a body stay like that?

SOLDIER3: Peronists, you know they're all perverts.

SOLDIER3: It's true. I had a neighbor who was a Peronist and he did it with a dog.

SOLDIER2: I've seen Peronists performing Satanic rituals.

SOLDIER4: I met one who had three ears to hear what other people were thinking.

SOLDIER2: I've got an aunt who's a Peronist and...

SOLDIER1: Enough! (ALL FALL SILENT) This doesn't look like a body.... Could it be a wax figure?

SOLDIER4: It looks an awful lot like her.

SOLDIER1: (TO SOLDIER5) Captain: Go now and bring the experts to see if it's real...

(EXIT SOLDIER5)

SOLDIER3: I bet you 100 pesos it's a doll.

SOLDIER2: I bet 150 it's a statue.

SOLDIER4: It's kinda creepy, Colonel, isn't it?

SOLDIER1: I think it's disgusting, to be honest.

SOLDIER2: It gives me weird chills.

SOLDIER1: Well who asked you?

SOLDIER2: It gives me chills too, Colonel.

SOLDIER3: Now you, Colonel, are really smart.

SOLDIER2: And, in all honesty, quite good-looking.

SOLDIER1: ENOUGH!

SOLDIER4: Do you think, Colonel, we could, I don't know, take a better look at her?

SOLDIER1: What do you mean?

SOLDIER4: Inside.

SOLDIER1: Without clothes?

SOLDIER3: To see what's there.

SOLDIER1: Statues don't have anything under there!

SOLDIER4: Well that's it. What's it matter then?

SOLDIER3: True.

SOLDIER4: 100%

SOLDIER3: So?

SOLDIER1: So what?

SOLDIER3: Do you want to...uh...check?

SOLDIER4: (VOLUNTEERING) Well, you say the word and...

SOLDIER3: These are Revolutionary times and things are permitted.

SOLDIER4: If not permitted, at least pardoned.

SOLDIER1: Go ahead then!

(WHEN SOLDIER4 IS GOING TO CHECK, SOLDIER5 ARRIVES WITH THE EXPERT)

SOLDIER5: Here's the expert, Colonel.

SOLDIER1: Always so diligent.

SOLDIER4: And quick.

SOLDIER3: When it's to fuck us over there's always a rush.

SOLDIER1: Well, now, doctor. Tell me, what is that? A statute, a doll or what?

(THE EXPERT GOES TO THE BODY. HE TAKES A FINGERPRINT FROM ONE HAND. HE EXAMINES IT)

SOLDIER3: Do dolls have fingerprints? I mean, I've heard these dolls have it all.

SOLDIER4: All what?

SOLDIER3: Their parts. Breasts and down there, you know, really lifelike. Like humans.

(AT THIS POINT, THE EXPERT TAKES OUT A SCALPEL)

SOLDIER5: Halt! Don't move! What are you planning to do?

EXPERT: I'm going to cut off an ear and a finger to run tests.

SOLDIER3: But she's a doll!

SOLDIER2: A statue with clothes!

SOLDIER4: A Peronist toy!

SOLDIER3: Or isn't she?

EXPERT: While more testing is needed, I'd go so far as to guarantee you this is none other than the body of Maria Eva Duarte de Peron.

(ALL ARE SURPRISED, TERRIFIED)

SOLDIER1: Impossible!

EXPERT: She's been mummified.

SOLDIER4: Who could do such a thing!?

EXPERT: The most advanced were the Egyptians...

SOLDIER2: Arabs and their disgusting habits!

EXPERT: ...Lenin's mummy was splendid....

SOLDIER3: Communists right down to the Mummy!

EXPERT: This work is one of a kind. Maybe Dr. Ara was involved in this. I heard he was working with Peron. (HE FINALLY CUTS OFF THE EAR, SOLDIERS 2 AND 3 FEEL THE PAIN) A work of art, I should say. (SHOWS THE EAR TO SOLDIER1) May I?

SOLDIER1: Help yourself.

SOLDIER3: He’s going to eat it!

SOLDIER2: And cold cuts are so fattening!

(THE EXPERT THEN CUTS OFF A FINGER. SOLDIERS 2 AND 3 FEEL THE PAIN AGAIN. THE EXPERT EXAMINES THE INCISION)

EXPERT: I’m positive, It’s her. Evita’s mummy.

SOLDIER4: Unbelievable!

SOLDIER2: It’s scary!

SOLDIER3: How creepy!

SOLDIER1: This mummy’s incredibly dangerous, men. If this gets out, they could seize her and use her against us. This Mummy’s a lethal weapon. It’s the worst thing that could happen to us! (PICKS UP PHONE AND CALLS) We have to make a decision fast... (SPEAKS TO SOMEONE, WE CAN’T HEAR)

SOLDIER2: What if we toss her out to sea?

SOLDIER4: Or make her disappear?

SOLDIER3: It would be good to practice.

SOLDIER2: And it might come in handy later.

SOLDIER4: Tossing people out to sea.

SOLDIER3: Nice idea.

SOLDIER4: I don’t know, it just popped into my head.

(THEY CONGRATULATE HIM)

SOLDIER3: What if we burn her?

(SOLDIER1 HANGS UP)

EXPERT: Well, she’d light easily. A mummy is primarily pure toxin.

SOLDIER1: Yes, but if that burns, then we burn.

SOLDIER2: My God! What're you saying?

SOLDIER1: We're making decisions here about a body that doesn't belong to us. It belongs to other people. Thousands of others who right now, with country's current situation, are scurrying like rats to hide, but later they might be the ones in power and we'll be the ones scurrying. And then, we'll have that blazing Mummy on our tails. Oh no! I agree no one should know she's here. But let's show her some respect. If we don't, she won't show any for us.

SOLDIER2: But she's dead!

SOLDIER4: I don't know about you, but my mom still prays to her.

SOLDIER3: Mine lights a candle to her every night.

EXPERT: And my wife says Eva is the mother of the nation.

SOLDIER4: So, Colonel? Do we burn her or hide her?

SOLDIER1: I say we stick her in a closet until someone asks about her.

(NOISE. ENTER ARAMBURU)

SOLDIER1: President Aramburu!

SOLDIER5: What an honor!

SOLDIER4: Mr. President, General!

SOLDIER3: So hot.

SOLDIER2: Sizzling

SOLDIER3: And strong.

SOLDIER2: I could just eat him up!

ARAMBURU: Colonel. Is it true?

SOLDIER1: The tests corroborate it.

EXPERT: There's no doubt, Mr. President. It's Her.

(ARAMBURU GOES OVER TO HER. HE IS INCREDULOUS. HE REACHES OUT TO TOUCH HER BUT DOESN'T DARE. SOLDIER2 TAKES HIS PICTURE. THE SITUATION SUDDENLY DAWNS ON ARAMBURU. HE IS ENRAGED. BREAKS THE CAMERA)

ARAMBURU: Photos are prohibited!

ALL: NO PHOTOS!

ARAMBURU: And another thing. As of today that woman's name is prohibited!

SOLDIER1: Names are prohibited!

SOLDIER2: Saying Peron is prohibited!

SOLDIER3: Remembering her is prohibited!

SOLDIER4: Thinking about her is prohibited!

SOLDIER2: Boca is prohibited!

SOLDIER3: Boca?

SOLDIER2: I wanted to see if I could slide it by.

SOLDIER5: Drums are prohibited in carnival parades!

ARAMBURU: Drums?

SOLDIER5: Drums are Peronist, Mr. President.

ARAMBURU: Then they're prohibited! On pain of...

SOLDIER1: Erase them from history

SOLDIER2: Toss them into the sea.

SOLDIER3: Bury them in the *pampas*.

SOLDIER4: Crucify them upside down in Cordoba.

SOLDIER5: Interrogate them in... The Naval Mechanics School!

ARAMBURU: Nice place for it. Good idea. Write down "ESMA," good place for future interrogations.

SOLDIER5: (WRITING IT DOWN) Some day it will make national history.

SOLDIER1: Mr. President, so what do we do with the mummy?

ARAMBURU: Lose her.

SOLDIER1: But, it's Eva!

ARAMBURU: So what?

SOLDIER1: Well, later, we might get...

ARAMBURU: What's going to happen to me?

SOLDIER1: Nothing's going to happen to you.

ARAMBURU: I'm the president!

SOLDIER1: Your Excellency.

ARAMBURU: And I say the body disappears. You (TO SOLDIER5) What's your detachment?

SOLDIER5: Army Information Services, Mr. President.

ARAMBURU: Then you're in charge.

SOLDIER5: You want me to hide her?

ARAMBURU: Do what you want. But she disappears. Is that clear?

SOLDIER5: Crystal.

ARAMBURU: Excellent.

(ARAMBURU EXITS)

SOLDIER5: (TO SOLDIER1) Colonel, permission to take the body.

SOLDIER1: Don't be a hypocrite. Nice job you did there. In front of the president himself no less you take the lead and make me look like a...

SOLDIER2: A dope?

SOLDIER3: An idiot?

SOLDIER4: Both?

SOLDIER3: Come on, tell us!

SOLDIER4: The suspense is killing me.

SOLDIER2: I just adore riddles!

SOLDIER1: (TO SOLDIER5) As you must know, you're a Colonel now.

SOLDIER5: So I make the decisions?

SOLDIER1: As you wish, Colonel.

SOLDIER5: So, I take her then, Colonel?

SOLDIER1: If you want her, she's yours, Colonel. But don't forget: you owe me, Colonel.

SOLDIER5: I won't Colonel.

SOLDIER2: Is there an epidemic of colonels?

SOLDIER3: Yeah, but we didn't catch it.

(SOLDIER1 EXITS, ANGRY)

SOLDIER5: Men!

SOLDIERS: Yes, colonel.

SOLDIER5: Colonel Muri.

SOLDIERS: Colonel Muri.

SOLDIER5: Much better.  
Take her! As of today, the Mummy's mine!

ALL: MINE!

SOLDIER5: What?

ALL: YOURS!

(THE SOLDIERS BECOME THE “MAILBOYS” AND TAKE THE MUMMY. FIRST THEY PUT HER IN A HIDEOUS WOODEN BOX. SOON, THEY BEGIN HITTING THE REMAINS. FIRST LIGHTLY, AS THOUGH CARELESS, BUT THEN ROUGHLY, WITH EVERY KIND OF BLOW IMAGINABLE.  
THEY TRUNDEL THE MUMMY ALL OVER THE STAGE)

MAILBOY1: Don't worry, Colonel.

MAILBOY2: Don't fret, sentry.

MAILBOY3: Leave it up to us.

MAILBOY5: We'll hide her with all possible care.

(NOW THE BOX IS ON FOUR WHEELS AND THE MAILBOYS CARRY OUT THE ACTIONS IN THE TEXT)

MAILBOY1: First the Mummy went to the basement.

MAILBOY2: But she didn't fit with all the junk

MAILBOY3: So we stood her on one end,

MAILBOY2: And there she stayed for 50 days.

(MURI FINDS A LIT CANDLE. SCREAMS. GIVES ORDERS. THEY MOVE THE BOX. THEY PUT IT AMONG OTHER BOXES, BUT STANDING ON ITS HEAD)

MAILBOY3: We took her to a warehouse in Rosario

MAILBOY2: After that we hid her at the port

MAILBOY1: Three months silent as the dead

MAILBOY4: She stayed in the closet standing on her head.

(MURI FINDS A LIT CANDLE. SCREAMS. GIVES ORDERS. THEY MOVE THE BOX)

MAILBOY4: Then a hatless general ordered me

MAILBOY2: “Take her to the embassy”

MAILBOY3: Of Sodom and Gomorrah.

MAILBOY1: They’ll find some use there for her.

(THEY HAPPILY USE HER AS A TABLE AND SERVE TEA. MURI FINDS A LIT CANDLE. SCREAMS. GIVES ORDERS. THEY MOVE THE BOX)

MAILBOY1: We hid her with the horses

(THEY RUN OVER THE BOX)

MAILBOY 3: Under my grandma’s rug

(THEY PUT A RUG OVER IT)

MAILBOY2: Used her as stage and studio

(TWO WORK MARIONETTES, TWO DANCE FLAMENCO)

MAILBOY4: But the candle would always know!

(AGAIN, MURI FINDS A LIT CANDLE. SCREAMS. GIVES ORDERS. THEY MOVE THE BOX)

MAILBOY1: As secret as could be

MAILBOY2: And hide her where they might...

MAILBOY3: They gave away the Mummy

MAILBOY4: With a candle’s light.

MURI: How do they know what cargo we carried?  
How do they communicate?  
Who’s betraying us?

MAILBOY3: Then the boss said “toss her into the sea!”

MAILBOY4: But the Colonel disagreed

MAILBOY2: Without mincing words

MAILBOY1: He changed his mind.

MURI: I should take her home.

ALL: Whaaaaat?

MURI: I'm not afraid of candles.

ALL: Oh, that's good!

MAILBOY2: The Colonel shows true bravery.

MAILBOY3: Long live Muri!

MAILBOY4: So we left him with his corpse!

(FINALLY, THEY SET THE BOX IN MURI'S HOUSE. HE SAYS GOODBYE TO EACH OF THE MAILBOYS. THE COLONEL, BOTTLE IN HAND, DRINKS NONSTOP)

MURI: (AS HE OPENS THE BOX)

You'll see.

The problem's not just you, the problem's all of you.

Because you're you and you still are you, but you weren't what you've turned into, what you've become.

See, Peronism is a disease.

Peronism is cancer.

And you, riddled with Peronism, stopped being just you and became all of you.

And that's the problem. Not just you. All of you.

Because all of you can turn anything into a weapon. Even you.

Especially, you.

(AT THIS POINT, HE HAS ALREADY OPENED THE BOX AND WE SEE EVITA'S BODY. HE TOUCHES IT VERY CAREFULLY)

If the candle people find you, they'll use you. They'll say you want things, that you say things, that you're not dead, they'll say just look how wonderful you still look, that you look alive, that you perform miracles and worst of all: that you can talk. And this is an ignorant people. All people are, sweetheart, but this one more than others.

Because Argentina's people fall in love with death just like that.

(BEGINS UNDESSING HER AND KISSES HER)

And, even if they saw you like this, sleeping, let's say, with your closed eyes (KISSES THEM) and your doomed lips (KISSES THE), they'll say, my love, that you're saying things you wouldn't. That you might have said, but you don't think them anymore.

Because you understand, right my love? You've come to understand,  
isn't that so, my love? That the words between you and me are mine.

You know? That's a problem. Our pining for extinction and my love for  
loss.

(THE COLONEL BEGINS TO UNDRRESS)

Between us there is no politics

But passion.

And there's no ideology.

Only surrender.

And in surrender, pain.

(AS HE SPEAKS THE FOLLOWING LINES, HE CLIMBS ON TOP  
OF THE MUMMY)

Come on, I know you like it.

Come on Argentina, What are you waiting for?

You like violence!

You love death!

for anyone who thinks differently from you!

Come on Argentina, you're mine!

All these months you have been and will be mine.

Scream, bitch, scream I'm the colonel forever stalking your soul!

Howl, damn you, howl I'm the Colonel you wanted inside you.

I'm your colonel, Argentina.

AND YOU'RE ME, FOR FUCK'S SAKE!

Look in the mirror and see!

You'll see me in your reflection!

(SUDDENLY THE MUMMY SITS UP AND SCREAMS  
HYSTERICALLY. THE COLONEL FALLS TO ONE SIDE.  
KNOCKING AT THE DOOR)

SOLDIER4: Colonel Muri! Open the door!

MURI: Go away, I'm with my Goddess!

SOLDIER3: Colonel Muri: we have orders to search your house!

MURI: Go to hell, I'm the hero here!

SOLDIER2: We're coming in!

(MURI GOES TO THE MUMMY, COVERS HER WITH A SHEET.  
TRIES TO CARRY HER OFF)

MURI: See, my mummy is getting her color back!  
(WE HEAR THEM BREAKING DOWN THE DOOR)  
My Diva's getting hot...! She's reviving, damn you! What did you expect a Goddess to do when she finds her God? For them to march triumphant over death! Come my love, come my passion!

(THE SOLDIERS ENTER. MURI POINTS A GUN AT THEM. THE SOLDIERS TAKE IT FROM HIM. IN THE STRUGGLE, THE MUMMY FALLS TO THE FLOOR AND BREAKS A FOOT. THE SOLDIERS ARE HORRIFIED BY THE SPECTACLE OF EVA'S NUDE BODY)

SOLDIER4: My God! It's true!

SOLDIER3: He did it with a corpse!

SOLDIER2: Like you and your wife!

MURI: Leave me with my love! With my martyrdom!

SOLDIER4: What do we do?

MURI: I order you: go, leave me to my delirium of love!

SOLDIER2: Do we dress her?

SOLDIER3: You do it.

SOLDIER2: I don't touch naked women.

SOLDIER3: Ayyyy!

SOLDIER2: Dead ones, I mean.

SOLDIER3: So put on gloves.

SOLDIER4: Do gloves revive them?

MURI: Don't you dare touch her! She's mine! All mine!

SOLDIER3: Cover her up already!

(SOLDIER2 COVERS HER, REVERENTLY. ENTER SOLDIER1)

SOLDIER1: Soldier!

SOLDIER4: We found the colonel doing it with the corpse.

SOLDIER1: Good God, Muri! You were to guard the whore!

MURI: She's my life! My one love!

SOLDIER1: She's dead!

MURI: No she's not! She looks at me! She begs me!

SOLDIER1: (TO THE SOLDIERS) Fine...Take her away...!

(THE SOLDIERS, DISGUSTEDLY, GET TO WORK)

SOLDIER2: But, where do we take her?

SOLDIER3: We'll decide that later.

SOLDIER2: But that's how we got into this mess, by deciding later.

SOLDIER4: Besides: what do we do with the sicko?

SOLDIER1: Leave him to me.

(SOLDIER1 HANDCUFFS MURI, WHO CONTINUES RAVING)

SOLDIER1: Don't you know the harm lunatics like you do to our nation? You know what they'll do to us when they find out you defiled their Saint? You think they'll say you were the only one? They'll blame all of us, you son of a bitch!

MURI: Not a bitch, a mummy. She'll give me children! The Mummy's pregnant! (HE STOPS, AS THOUGH ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING MONUMENTAL, IN NORMAL TONE)  
If you only knew, I even screwed her standing up.  
LIKE SHE WAS A MAN! (LAUGHS CRAZILY)

(SOLDIER1 HANDS HIM OVER TO SOLDIER4. MURI EXITS.  
SOLDIER1 IS LEFT WITH THE MUMMY. HE COVERS HER UP A BIT MORE, MODESTLY)

SOLDIER1: What the hell do we do with you?

(TRIES TO LIFT HER. WHEN HE DOES, HE LOSES HOLD OF HER  
AND SHE FALLS FACE DOWN. SOLDIER1 GIVES UP.)

MUSIC.

THE MAILBOYS TAKE THE MUMMY. THEY JOSTLE HER AROUND, BACK AND FORTH. SOMETIMES HER ARM FALLS OFF, BUT THEY PUT IT BACK ON WITH A HAMMER AND NAILS. THEY DESTROY HER, BUT PUT HER BACK TOGETHER (RATHER BRUTALLY)

ALL: Where's the mummy?

PEOPLE 1: They say she's out there.

PEOPLE2: That she comes at night.

PEOPLE3: That she'll wreak vengeance on the rich

PEOPLE4: That she smells of tar and flowers

ALL Where's the mummy?

PEOPLE1: Making speeches in La Plata

PEOPLE2: Sabotaging factories in Cordoba

PEOPLE3: She made it rain fish at the Port

PEOPLE4: She drove the priests from the church

ALL: Where's the Mummy?

(A RADIANT EVA APPEARS, FACING THE AUDIENCE)

EVA: I'm dead but still in love with my people I dreamt of once in Los Toldos. Dead, but so impassioned by my people, that when I return I won't be just one, but millions.

ALL: Where's the mummy?

PEOPLE 5: She's in the patio.

PEOPLE 6: In my backyard.

PEOPLE7: I keep her in a box.

PEOPLE8: I use her as my bathroom door.

ALL:           Where’s the mummy?

PEOPLE1:       They say they sent her to Germany.

PEOPLE2:       They say they’re very upset.

PEOPLE3:       They say they shipped her to France.

PEOPLE4:       They say she got lost at the store.

ALL:           Where’s the mummy?

EVA:           I’ll return still and tense, like the people before they return a blow when they have no more cheeks left. I’ll return as millions on the side of the lowliest people; I’ll be millions hanging from the slenderest but surest side of nothing.

ALL:           Where’s the mummy?

PEOPLE5:       They took her here and there.

PEOPLE6:       I’m using her as a planter.

PEOPLE7:       I sleep with her every night.

PEOPLE8:       (ANOTHER MAN CORRECTS HIM) You sleep with me every night!

ALL:           Where’s the mummy?

PEOPLE8:       We cut her to bits

PEOPLE1:       We’re selling her cheap.

PEOPLE2:       Pieces go for 100 a pound.

PEOPLE3:       If you eat a little...

PEOPLE4:       It makes you potent.

PEOPLE5:       It gives you another 20 years or more.

PEOPLE6:       It cures diseases.

PEOPLE7:       And foot odor.

PEOPLE8: Toothache.

PEOPLE1: And heartache.

ALL: Where’s the mummy?

EVA: When a Mummy is in love with her people, she never takes her eyes off them. For if hatred is a historical force, love for the people is a universal cataclysm.

ALL: Where’s the mummy?

PEOPLE1: She’ll turn up soon.

PEOPLE2: I can see her now.

PEOPLE5: Mummy, the nation’s reason

PEOPLE6: Mummy, the country’s future

PEOPLE1: Mummy of my soul.

PEOPLE2: Mummy of my heart.

PEOPLE3: Mummy, Argentina’s light

PEOPLE4: Mummy of love.

ALL: Where’s the Mummy?

(SUDDENLY ALL NOISE STOPS, ALL ARE FROZEN, EXCEPT EVA)

EVA: Can you still be in love though you’re dead?  
Can this mummy’s wax fingers feel passion?

(THE ACTION CONTINUES. IN THE END, AFTER SO MUCH JOSTLING AND MANHANDLING, THE MUMMY IS NOTICABLY THE WORSE FOR WEAR. THEY FIND A CLOSET AND PUT HER INSIDE IT. ONE ARM FALLS OUT AND THEY SHOVE IT BACK, LIKE A PIECE OF OLD JUNK. FROM BEHIND, A SHINING EVA APPEARS. EVA IS THEN LEFT ALONE, LIT UP)

EVA: And so in love and with hate I ask not that you love me.  
But that you let me love you,  
My Argentina, my dearest Argentina.

Don't worry.  
This doesn't end in this closet.  
The stairway continues.  
For where men see deeds,  
We angels see steps.

(END OF ACT ONE)

## ACT 2

*Music.*

*Onstage, the people, looking for the mummy.*

*We can see the hidden closet where the mummy is stored.*

PEOPLE: Saint.  
Saint.  
Saint.  
700 candles for my saint.  
Evita.  
Evita.  
Evita,  
700 candles for my saint.

(EVA APPEARS, RADIANT)

EVITA: Drop the saint, my dears  
Saint gets us nowhere  
Now, instead, a mangled doll  
locked up in a closet there

PEOPLE: 730 candles  
one for each day  
for two years they lit  
the Mummy in the Closet

EVA: Time goes by  
And they don't find me  
Though the candles show  
I'm here and I'm there  
For I'm in love with Argentina.

PEOPLE: At night they blew them out  
for in the dark they'd bite  
in the dark they wouldn't shine  
those candles of the day  
730 suns  
lighting the shadows  
of Argentina's  
saddest hours

EVA: Today, hidden and humbled  
like a fallen saint  
but tomorrow, comrades  
I'll come back swinging  
I'll leave the closet soon  
I'll return as millions  
drop the Saint, my dears  
Saints are for priests  
And I chew priests up and spit them out  
drop the Saint, compatriots!  
I'd rather be a rifle, a people, rage!  
I'd rather take the candles' burn  
I'd rather die 1000 times with my people!  
But never a useless Saint!

PEOPLE1: Two years passed, 730 candles and one passion

EVA: For I may be dead and a mummy.  
But a Saint,  
A Saint I'm not.  
Saints are meant  
To stifle their people  
To take their money  
To pay for their dominated illusion  
And I, if I'm still here  
It's not as some overthrown Saint  
Not as some humbled Bourgeois Saint  
No sir!  
Drop that!  
I'm still here  
Out of rage and pain!  
That's what I'm saying!

EVA AND THE PEOPLE: Comrade!

(AT THIS POINT, THE PEOPLE AND EVITA MEET. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER HAPPILY. EVA DISAPPEARS. THE PEOPLE ARE LEFT. THEN THE PEOPLE ALSO DISAPPEAR.

THE OFFICE OF THE STATE INTELLIGENCE SERVICE NOW APPEARS. THERE IS A DOOR TO THE AREA WITH THE MUMMY IN THE CLOSET. ENTER CABANILLAS. AT HIS SIDE, HIS ASSISTANT, MORAGAS, WHO KEEPS A CERTAIN DISTANCE.)

CABANILLAS: ...President Aramburu has ordered us to restructure the State Intelligence Service. I've had it with all this loafing. I'm going to make this the best office the government has. Is that clear?

MORAGAS: Crystal clear, General.

CABANILLAS: Take this down: a full inventory of everything in the whole building. I want a list of every person working in this institution. Name, rank, salary and a comment. I want to know who is who.

MORAGAS: I'll get right on it, General.

CABANILLAS: Before you go. What's behind that door?

MORAGAS: Closets, junk.

CABANILLAS: Open it please.

MORAGAS: It hasn't been opened in two years, General.

CABANILLAS: I didn't ask how old it is, I ordered you to open the door.

MORAGAS: Yes, sir.

(MORAGAS OPENS THE DOOR. WHILE HIS ASSISTANT LOOKS THROUGH IT, CABANILLAS REVIEWS PAPERS ON HIS DESK)

CABANILLAS: Laziness, laziness. Here Aramburu is taking responsibility for the country for us and we all just twiddle our thumbs. If the enemy ever finds out how inept we are, they'll grow bold. (WITHOUT SEEING WHAT'S IN THE ROOM) Get rid of all that!

MORAGAS: Yes, sir.

(FINALLY, MORAGAS OPENS THE CLOSET WITH THE MUMMY INSIDE. YELLS)

MORAGAS: General!

(CABANILLAS ENTERS THE ROOM AND SEES THE MUMMY)

CABANILLAS: Jesus CHRIST!

MORAGAS: What is it... Tell me, General...!

CABANILLAS: The remains of Eva Duarte no less!

(MORAGAS VOMITS)

CABANILLAS: (WATCHING MORAGAS VOMIT)  
As I said: if the enemy finds out, they’ll grow bold!  
(CABANILLAS GOES TO THE PHONE, DIALS WHILE MORAGAS LOOKS AT THE MUMMY AND VOMITS AGAIN)  
President Aramburu, I have news: I just found Eva’s mummy here in a close!  
(LISTENS TO THE PHONE)  
Now? I see. I’ll be here.  
(CABANILLAS HANGS UP. TO MORAGAS)  
You. Get a grip or I’ll shoot you!  
(MORAGAS COMPOSES HIMSELF)  
I just spoke to the President, he’s on his way here now. Meanwhile, fix the Mummy up a bit. And fix her up right! Put some color in her cheeks! And lipstick! The President shouldn’t see her in that state.  
(MORAGAS PUTS A BIT OF MAKE-UP ON THE MUMMY AND FIXES HER UP THE BEST HE CAN)  
Aramburu’s given me very specific orders. On pain of Council of War and summary execution, speak of this to no one. Not your wife, not your mother!

MORAGAS: Yes, sir.

CABANILLAS: Remember: if you so much as breath a word of this, a syllable, anything at all, consider yourself a dead man.

MORAGAS: Don’t worry, General.

CABANILLAS: (SMOKING, NERVOUS) A Mummy in the Closet two years!  
(WATCHING MORAGAS WORK ON THE MUMMY) Do what you can, they’ll still blame me for the damage!

MORAGAS: Yes, sir!

(ENTER ARAMBURU, UPSET. MORAGAS FINISHES UP THE MAKE-UP JOB AND STANDS AT ATTENTION BEFORE THE PRESIDENT)

CABANILLAS: Mr. President!

(ARAMBURU GOES STRAIGHT TO THE MUMMY. LOOKS HER OVER SLOWLY. SIGHS)

ARAMBURU: So, it's true. She's still with us. (EXPLODES) The woman's a nightmare!

CABANILLAS: Who'd think to dump a thing like this in a government office? Not even in a casket, Mr. President, a closet!

ARAMBURU: Is she in good shape?

CABANILLAS: She was pretty beat up. We fixed her up a bit. Make-up, war paint, theater you see.

ARAMBURU: Theater. The sixth column. What would we do without theater, General?

CABANILLAS: Without theater, we'd make fools of ourselves.

ARAMBURU: How can anyone be such an idiot and be in the army?

CABANILLAS: I remember the Mummy was in the hands of Colonel Muri.

ARAMBURU: Of course I'd heard of Muri's excesses, but that episode, so long ago, TWO YEARS!, seemed more like a joke, like a myth. Honestly I didn't think it was true. It's macabre. (LOOKS CLOSELY AT THE MUMMY) Very well, Cabanillas. Is she secure here? She won't go running off?

CABANILLAS: She's dead, Mr. President.

ARAMBURU: Still. She's one mobile mummy.

CABANILLAS: Don't worry. If she moves, I'll kill her.

ARAMBURU: As many times as it takes. (TO MORAGAS) In all this time no one checked this room? (MORAGAS SHAKES HIS HEAD) Nothing strange happened? Nothing suspicious?

MORAGAS: Well, lit candles and flowers showed up at times, Mr. President, but no one knew where they came from.

ARAMBURU: Candles and flowers? Where?

MORAGAS: At the outside door. They appeared and disappeared. We assumed it was for the poor little prisoners, oh they're being tortured and executed.

ARAMBURU: It's macabre. (SUDDENLY REALIZING) Obviously they know the mummy's here! Everyone knew it but us, the heroic Argentine army! (NERVOUS) Increase the guard!

MORAGAS: Increase the guard!

(PEOPLE SHOUTING “EVITA, EVITA!” A LIT CANDLE APPEARS. CABANILLAS SNUFFS IT)

ARAMBURU: (FRIGHTENED, TO CABANILLAS) Call the army!

CABANILLAS: We are the army, Mr. President!

(SHOUTS: “EVITA, EVITA!” GROW. A LIT CANDLE APPEARS. CABANILLAS SNUFFS IT)

ARAMBURU: A battalion cordoning off the whole block!

CABANILLAS: Let no cars or people through!

(SHOUTS: “EVITA, EVITA!” GROW. A LIT CANDLE APPEARS. CABANILLAS SNUFFS IT. FINALLY, CABANILLAS TAKES OUT HIS GUN AND SHOOTS THE CANDLE. THE CANDLE, NEVERTHELESS, RELIGHTS. CABANILLAS TAKES AIM ON IT AGAIN. BUT THIS TIME THE CANDLE GOES OUT BEFORE HE CAN FIRE )

MORAGAS: (TERRIFIED) There IS a plot! They’re trying to take the mummy!

ARAMBURU: With a mummy they’ll topple the government! We’ve got to get rid of her.

CABANILLAS: What if we give her to the church?

ARAMBURU: Here? To our church?

CABANILLAS: No, to the Vatican. After all, they owe us plenty of favors for hiding the Nazis. We’ll ask them for the love of God to help us get rid of this embarrassment. Let them bury her as God intended, but far, far from here.

ARAMBURU: In Italy?

CABANILLAS: Better there than here, right?

ARAMBURU: I’ll call the Pope right now.

(TAKES THE PHONE. ON THE OTHER END, THE POPE APPEARS)

POPE: *Pronto?*

ARAMBURU: Yeah, pronto.

POPE: *Pronto?*

ARAMBURU: Pope?

POPE: *Si*, I am me.

ARAMBURU: Pope: this is Aramburu...

POPE: A burro?

ARAMBURU: Aramburu, the President....

POPE: Ah, yes, of course, *belo mio, Presidente di Chile*.

ARAMBURU: Argentina.

POPE: *Bellissimo*. I am very fond of the silver. How much silver you are sending me?

ARAMBURU: Argentina, Buenos Aires, the Tango.

POPE: *Bellissimo!* The Tango. Sensual... and dangerous. But I like. I, I dance very much with beautiful nun from Zaire. *Bella*. Black. But *bella*. Nice round ass, *bellissimo*.

ARAMBURU: I'm calling to ask you a favor, Holy Father.

POPE: *Favore?* No bring up favor. Favor is shit. Don't like favor. But like nun from Zaire and mother Helena from China. Like Chinese. They are like figlio... Ah?

ARAMBURU: A favor, as payment for favors received.

POPE: God no pay *favore*, my son, *Presidente di Peru*. He ask, but no pay.

ARAMBURU: President of Argentina, the same Argentina that, at your request, hid the Nazis. Remember?

POPE: Nazis! Beautiful boys. A little out of control the *bello* Nazi, but beautiful people. You see the doctor Mengale?

ARAMBURU: Mengale's in Brazil.

POPE: Brazil in Argentina. Pretty boy our little Mengale! *Bellissimo!* A Nazi, yes, but *intelligentissimo*. How is Mengale? He is eating well?

ARAMBURU: (GIVING UP, PLAYING ALONG) ...He's great. He eats better than you or me.

POPE: *Bellissimo*. Our little Mengale still is doing experiments with the children of God?

ARAMBURU: Experiments? Yes, but only on poor children.

POPE: *Molto Bene. Bellissimo*. Give the doctor Mengale *un bacci* from me. Yes?

ARAMBURU: Yes, I'll give him a kiss from you. But the favor I need to ask...

POPE: *No favore, no favore, Presidente Ecoator*.

ARAMBURU: Not Ecuador!

POPE: *Brasile!*

ARAMBURU: Argentina!

POPE: *Eco*. Argenzuela.

ARAMBURU: Remember, here we've been good anti-communist Christians.

POPE: Anti-communist, *molto bene*. Communists are the devil.

ARAMBURU: And, Your Grace, if you help me, I'll owe you.

POPE: You pay in *dolari*? Word of God?

ARAMBURU: And having someone in your debt is like having a Swiss bank account. Isn't that so, Your Grace?

POPE: *Bellissimo!* *Dolari* to my account in the Switzerland! With the grace of God. Very true. Now: What I can do for you, dear Aramburu, *Presidente di Uruguay*?

ARAMBURU: Argentina!

POPE: My child, you no *capisce*. *Argentina, Brasile, Venezuela*: Is same shit, *caro mio!* You not realize that yet? Now, tell me. What I can do for you?

ARAMBURU: Well, it so happens we have a Mummy in the Closet that....

(POPE AND ARAMBURU CONTINUE TALKING, BUT IN SECRET, VERY COMICALLY, SO THAT NO ONE CAN HEAR. THE POPE UNDERSTANDS AND DOESN'T UNDERSTAND. HE SHOUTS, HITS THE TELEPHONE. “NON CAPISCO UN CAZZO!!!!” HE ONLY CALMS DOWN WHEN ARAMBURU SAYS “DOLARI”. THEN ARAMBURU HANDS CABANILLAS A PAPER)

ARAMBURU: Done! She sets sail for Italy tonight!

CABANILLAS: (AFTER READING THE PAPER) I'll take care of buying the cemetery plot. She'll go under the name of...

ARAMBURU: (STILL FIGHTING WITH THE POPE) MARIA MAGGI!

POPE: No! No Mary Magdalene! That one is whore...!

ARAMBURU: I'm talking about Evita's body!

POPE: Another whore! All are whores, *caro mio!*

ARAMBURU: Are we clear, Your Grace?

POPE: No understand *un cazzo di bola.*

ARAMBURU: *Dólari.*

POPE: *Bellísimo.* All clear. But, no forget you owe me a *favore.* Ah?

ARAMBURU: Of course not, Supreme Pontiff.

POPE: Super man, super this, super that. Whatever. But, remember, *figlio mio,* there is always a criminal who need the protection of the Church. No forget the word of Jesus.

ARAMBURU: What words of Jesus, Your Eminence?

POPE: “He who eats priests, eats poison”

ARAMBURU: Jesus said that?

POPE: I say it for him. I am the Pope, damnit!

(ENTER THE NUN FROM ZAIRE. THE POPE HANGS UP AND LEAPS ON HER)

POPE: *Arrivederci! Viva la vita loca!*

(THE POPE AND NUN FROM ZAIRE DISAPPEAR.  
MORAGAS AND CABANILLAS TAKE THE MUMMY AND PUT HER IN A BOX. THEY AFFIX THREE LABELS:  
1-"ITALY. FAVORE OF THE POPE"  
2-"NAME: MARIA MAGGI"  
3-"GOODBYE, DAMN WHORE")

EVITA: Buried in foreign soil.  
Under another's name.  
At times forgotten, isn't rest in peace.  
Among these dead, I'll stay for now  
A captive mummy  
Here, between you and me.  
Who's disfigured, between you and me, Argentina?  
Between you and me, darling,  
Who's disappeared?  
Who's more Mummy  
and who's the buried Saint?  
After all,  
Between you and me:  
Which of us lies down  
More often with barbarians?

MUSIC

## 2

*Perón's House in Madrid.  
Isabel and Lopez Rega onstage.  
Isabel in a dress very similar to Eva's. Lopez corrects Isabel's  
movements, poses.*

- LOPEZ: Very good, Isabel. Now say: (LIKE EVA) “Eternal hatred for the enemies of the people”
- ISABEL: She said that?
- LOPEZ: And it's our motto.
- ISABEL: She was tough...huh?
- LOPEZ: (ARRANGING HER HANDS) A martyr to work. They were terrified of her. Now say it.
- ISABEL: “*Infernal* hatred for the enemies of the people”
- LOPEZ: (LIKE EVITA) You have to move your hands like this. And it's not “infernal,” it's “eternal”
- ISABEL: (MAKES THE HAND GESTURES, BUT LOOKS BAD) Like this?
- LOPEZ: It'll have to do.
- ISABEL: What are you trying to say, doctor dear?
- LOPEZ: Your hands are...
- ISABEL: I mean with all that “Eternal hatred for the people”
- LOPEZ: Not for the people, sweetheart. For the enemies of the people. You hate the enemies, not the people. Now say: (LIKE EVA) “We must be vigilant against traitors from within and without, who in the dark of night...”
- ISABEL: “We must be vigilantes against the traders who without the dark are within”
- LOPEZ: Something shorter perhaps: “The toad's envy will never silence the

nightingale’s song”

ISABEL: “...the toad’s envy will never squash the nightingale’s song.” Doctor dear, can toads squash? Don’t you think that’s going a bit far?

LOPEZ: Silence. Because of their song. Silence, not squash.

ISABEL: And that about envy. That toads are envious. We don’t have any proof that they are. In fact, it’s my understanding that they’re very selfless and they like to live in community.

LOPEZ: It’s a metaphor, Isabel. That’s all. She spoke in metaphors, with images. That’s the way to speak to the people.

ISABEL: Really, Doctor dear? Do you think I’m like her?

LOPEZ: Do you want to be Eva?

ISABEL: I’ll do whatever the General asks me to.

LOPEZ: Then, yes you’re like her! Because she did everything for him. And it’s now, at this very moment, that the General needs Eva the most!

ISABEL: I guess he does, because he treats me like the maid.

LOPEZ: Don’t say that. It’s just that she comes first, and after all it isn’t fair to compete with her.

ISABEL: I think he’s ashamed of me. Look how long it took him to marry me!

LOPEZ: It’s not that he doesn’t love you, Isabel. It’s politics. As long as Eva’s body is missing, it wasn’t a good idea for him to marry you. The people could see it as a betrayal.

ISABEL: Well I see it as a betrayal, if you ask me too much!

LOPEZ: (SUDDENLY SERIOUS. ISABEL IS SCARED) Don’t make that mistake, Isabel. Don’t make it. Don’t think you’re just any woman. You’re here, in Madrid, with General Peron. No less. You’re his wife. The wife of the man, the Great Pharaoh, who receives and transmits the direct vibrations of the universe!

ISABEL: Oh my God! Peron has Pharaoh! Is that serious?

(LOPEZ LOOKS AT HER, READY TO KILL HER, ALMOST DESERVEDLY)

LOPEZ: (CALMLY) Maria Estela Martinez Cartas de Peron: if you want to act like a silly girl, go ahead. THAT'S MARIA ESTELA! But if you want to be part of history, then be Isabel. Don't be the woman by the hero's side, be an instrument of the forces of history. You must be willing to set your lowly self aside. You are no longer Maria Estela. You are Isabel Peron. And you have a whole book to write. Unless you don't want to.

ISABEL: I do!

LOPEZ: Why?

ISABEL: For Peron!

LOPEZ: Fine. Then learn to hold your hands like her.

ISABEL: What do hands have to do with it?

LOPEZ: Your hands are antennas.

ISABEL: The things you learn in this life!

LOPEZ: They are radars that receive vibrations from the heavenly spheres. And send them down to the people, thanks to Peron.

ISABEL: How do you know all that?

LOPEZ: I have spiritual contacts and guardians.

ISABEL: Who?

LOPEZ: Orishas

ISABEL: Ay!

LOPEZ: I'm the lightning rod that stops all evil sent against this house! Every day I'm less myself and more the health of the General! Everything for the General! Peron is our light! And I am the edifice that shields the light! Are you paying attention?

ISABEL: Of course. So what do these "rickshaws" say about me?

LOPEZ: Orishas. And they say the return is near.

ISABEL: Good God. The return.

LOPEZ: So...shall we continue?

(ISABEL NODS. PERON ENTERS TO ONE SIDE AND WATCHES WITHOUT THEM NOTICING)

LOPEZ: Fine. Say: "We will never allow ourselves to be crushed beneath the treasonous, oligarchic boot of those who sell our homeland and exploit the working class."

ISABEL: (DRAMATIC, BUT FALSE. TRYING TO BE EVA, BUT A CHARICATURE) "We will never allow the treasonous, aristocratic boost selling Holland and exploding to bits the working class!"

(LOPEZ'S EXPRESSION SAYS THE TASK IS TOO DIFFICULT. PERON BURSTS INTO LAUGHTER)

PERON: To think there are people who actually believe Isabel could be Party Secretary one day! Ha ha ha!

LOPEZ: She's trying, General.

PERON: You're wasting your time, Lopez. You may as well go back to your housework and let her go shopping. Now that she's good at, spending the party's money.

ISABEL: I know I can't do much, Juan, but don't treat Lopez like that. He's really smart. He can help you a lot.

PERON: Yeah, he can help do our horoscopes. That's all the witch is any good for!

ISABEL: But he's loyal.

PERON: That's true. Look at the tricks I've taught him. Lopez: Bring me some coffee!

(HE DOES)

PERON: Lopez. Clean my shoes!

(HE DOES)

PERON: Lopez! Push dear Isabel down the stairs!  
(LOPEZ DOES NOTHING. PERON LAUGHS)  
It's a joke!! Hahahaha. You see? He's not as loyal as you say.

ISABEL: That’s what you want? For me to die?

PERON: Darling: do what you want. Honestly, I couldn’t care less. Don’t you have something to clean? Some clothes to buy?

ISABEL: I’m practicing making my hands antennas!

PERON: (TO LOPEZ) At this point, the best thing would be for her to go get drinks and for you to find me a secretary.

LOPEZ: As you wish, General.

PERON: Don’t be an idiot, Lopez! It’s a joke!

LOPEZ: Whatever you say, General.

(PHONE RINGS. LOPEZ, SERVILE, ANSWERS)

PERON: One more thing, Isabel. Change your dress. You know I don’t like to see you in her clothes. One day those rags will be the showpiece of Argentina’s Museum of History and we don’t want them to lose their mild scent, their bold air, the nation’s memory of her skin brushing cream linen.

LOPEZ: General. The call you were waiting for.

PERON: Lanusse?

(LANUSSE APPEARS TO ONE SIDE. LOPEZ NODS AND HANDS THE PHONE TO PERON. LOPEZ GOES TO ONE SIDE, CLEANING, BUT LISTENING IN ON THE CONVERSATION. ISABEL, MEANWHILE, GOES BACK TO REHEARSING THE STEPS, LINES AND POSES FROM THE OPENING OF THE SCENE. PERON AND LANUSSE SPEAK FACE TO FACE)

LANUSSE: So. Have you thought about it?

PERON: What, do you think I spend all day thinking about traitors?

LANUSSE: I’m not a traitor.

PERON: You said it.

LANUSSE: May I remind you I’m the President of Argentina.

PERON: So? Are you telling me to mind my words?

LANUSSE: No, of course not, but...

PERON: Is Montoneros keeping you busy?

LANUSSE: Please rein in your madmen!

PERON: They're not my madmen. They're yours now.

LANUSSE: The country's a bloodbath, Peron. Montoneros kidnapped and killed Aramburu, as you know.

PERON: What, did the man responsible for the disappearance of Eva's body think nothing would ever happen to him? Justice has finally been served.

LANUSSE: They're committing horrific crimes!

PERON: Eternal hatred for the enemies of the people!

LANUSSE: Now Montoneros is demanding Evita's body in exchange for Aramburu's!

PERON: Eva's worth a thousand Aramburus!

LANUSSE: The unburied bodies are crippling the country. It's macabre. We have to get out of this, Peron.  
We've reached an agreement. We'll take you. At least you're not from the left or more or less...

PERON: Left, right, I'll be whatever it takes so long as I return to power.

LANUSSE: What do I need to do to get your support?

PERON: Two things.

LANUSSE: Consider them done.

PERON: First: TRIUMPHAL return to Argentina. I take over as movement leader, with an eye to upcoming elections.

LANUSSE: General: you're needed here. Come now.

PERON: And second: I want Eva's body back.

LANUSSE: I've determined her exact location.

PERON: Where? In Argentina? In Brazil? Where?

LANUSSE: Italy. Aramburu buried her there with the Vatican's help under a fake name: Maria Maggi.

PERON: Fucking priests! They'll find out what kind of devil they have on their hands when I get back to Buenos Aires. So?

LANUSSE: So pack your suitcases for the return trip. And prepare a room for Eva's body. I'll send it to you in Madrid immediately!

PERON: Have them send it to Argentina. We'll meet there!

LANUSSE: It better be Madrid first. Montoneros is out of his head with this whole mummy thing.

PERON: What can they do?

LANUSSE: Snatch her. Eva's a national treasure.

PERON: She is but I'm not?

LANUSSE: They think she's the revolutionary.

PERON: And me?

LANUSSE: Juan; the military needs you to take care of Montoneros. That's the deal.

PERON: But...I...

LANUSSE: Besides, imagine Eva's body in the terrorists' hands.

PERON: You're right. They'd have too much power. Send her to me in Madrid!

LANUSSE: She's on her way!

(PERON HANGS UP. PERON LOOKS AT LOPEZ AND ISABEL)

PERON: Eva. Eva's coming!

LOPEZ: Incredible!

ISABEL: I can't believe it!

PERON: After 14 years!

ISABEL: When will she get here?

PERON: A few days! Call Dr. Ara!

LOPEZ: Yes, General!

(CLAMOR. PERON GOES TO ISABEL, WHO THINKS HE WILL EMBRACE HER, BUT THE GENERAL SHOVES HER ASIDE AND EMBRACES THE ARGENTINE FLAG)

PERON: You’ll be mine again, Eva. Mine.

(DR. ARA APPEARS ON THE OTHER SIDE)

LOPEZ: Dr. Ara? This is Lopez Rega, General Peron’s Personal Assistant. I’m calling to let you know Eva’s body will arrive in Madrid in a few days. Yes, the mummy herself. In person. You’re needed here ASAP!

DR. ARA: There goes my vacation in the Costa del Sol!

(MUSIC.

THE MAILBOYS APPEAR CENTERSTAGE, ONCE AGAIN WITH THE MUMMY IN A BOX. THEY BEGIN THE “ITALY-MADRID” CHOREOGRAPHY. WHAT THE MAILBOYS NARRATE OCCURS ONSTAGE. DURING THE CHOREOGRAPHY, DR. ARA ARRIVES AT THE HOUSE AND GREETES PERON)

MAILBOY1: First exhume her

MAILBOY2: And when the box is open

MAILBOY3: Maggi the Italian

MAILBOY4: Is Eva once again.

ALL: Mummy Express Italy-Madrid.

MAILBOY1: The workers can’t believe it

MAILBOY2: Buried 14 years

MAILBOY3: And she hasn't aged a bit!

MAILBOY4: Like a winged statue!

ALL: Mummy Express from Italy.

MAILBOY1: She still looks alive.

MAILBOY2: She looks like a doll.

MAILBOY3: It's the Devil's work.

MAILBOY4: Worse: South American voodoo.

ALL: Mummy Express from Italy.

MAILBOY1: She went by train.

MAILBOY2: Traveling in coach.

MAILBOY3: En route to Madrid.

MAILBOY4: She hit her nose.

MAILBOY1: A little boy bit her.

MAILBOY2: A tomcat shit on her

MAILBOY3: Two old ladies shrieked.

ALL: Mummy Express Italy-Madrid.

MAILBOY1: They moved her to 3<sup>rd</sup> class

MAILBOY2: One drunk said she looked like his aunt.

MAILBOY3: Another said his granny

MAILBOY4: One said his couch

MAILBOY1: Three said their wives

MAILBOY2: Who like to play dead.

ALL: Mummy Express Italy-Madrid.

MAILBOY1: She arrived, they got her out.

MAILBOY2: She somehow broke her toe

MAILBOY3: Then danced at Puerta de Hierro

MAILBOY4: And at last made her grand entrance

ALL: At the General's residence!

(THE DOORBELL RINGS AT THE HOUSE. LOPEZ OPENS)

MAILBOY1: Package for General Juan Domingo Peron.

LOPEZ: This is the place.

MAILBOY3: Sign here.

(LOPEZ IS ABOUT TO SIGN, BUT PERON STOPS HIM)

PERON: I'm not signing for the delivery till we've seen it's really her.

(THE MAILBOYS, ANNOYED, ENTER AND SET HER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STAGE)

ISABEL: (BREAKS THE SILENCE, CRYING) OUR Saint in a burnt wooden box!

PERON: Open it!

(THE MAILBOYS DO SO. WE SEE THE MUMMY, BATTERED, VERY BEAT-UP)

PERON: Dr. Ara.

(DR. ARA GOES TO THE BODY AND IMMEDIATELY BEGINS EXAMINING IT)

DR. ARA: It's been 14 years since last I saw you, my work of art. And here you are. (REMEMBERING) "Here's what's left of you"

PERON: (NOT WANTING TO LOOK) How is she?

DR. ARA: At first glance...mutilated. Battered. A gash on her right cheek and what's left of her nose, which is destroyed in any case. Feet: bare,

covered in tar. I think she was standing for a while, maybe against a wall or in a closet.

ISABEL: Mummy in the closet.

LOPEZ: Hush, child, hush.

DR. ARA: I see they also bit her ear. Broke her fingers and toes.

PERON: But her hair's still radiant

DR. ARA: Wait... (PUTS IN HIS HANDS) Bad...bad

PERON: What?

DR. ARA: It would appear internally, I think, she's a bit destroyed.

PERON: How?

DR. ARA: Groping, lewd acts

(PERON EXPLODES. TAKES OUT A GUN. THREATENS ALL OF THEM)

PERON: Everyone out or I'll kill you! Leave me alone with my Saint! Go!

(THE MAILBOYS ARE THE FIRST OUT LIKE A SHOT, BUT NOT BEFORE SIGNING THE DELIVERY SLIP THEMSELVES. ARA FOLLOWS THEM, TERRIFIED. ISABEL DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. LOPEZ ASKS HER TO LEAVE BUT STAYS HIMSELF)

LOPEZ: This is the beginning, General. This is where it all starts!

PERON: Get out you Fucking Witch! GO! Get out of my sight!

(LOPEZ EXITS.

PERON THEN, FINDING HIMSELF ALONE WITH THE MUMMY, BREAKS DOWN CRYING, LIKE A BOY. HE EMBRACES HER. HIS WAILS ARE THOSE OF A WOUNDED ANIMAL, MOVING. MUSIC)

PERON: I'll fix you up my dear  
I'll glue on your finger  
I'll staple your ear  
I love you, darling.

(EVA SEES HIM AND GOES TO HIM AS PERON RECITES HIS VERSES)

PERON: It's been so long  
But you're just the same  
Without you the sun was a stiletto  
The moon quicksilver tea  
And now this most brutal blow  
To see you were also suffering  
Though you perhaps felt nothing  
Prisoner of perfection

You'll change no more  
Impassioned heart  
And your gaze  
Will reflect my love  
You'll be a mirror  
of this punishment  
to see you absent  
will slowly  
finish me

Love, time in flesh  
Has left you no trace  
And these wax tears  
Are but proof  
Our flame's survived  
That bitter blackout.

What doesn't burn won't hurt  
won't consume or kill  
But it doesn't light us either  
Pain is what I choose  
If your eyes give the spark  
I'll be the gasoline  
And together we'll ignite  
Our people with this love

(EVA JOINS HIM)

PERON:  
You'll change no more  
Impassioned heart  
Your gaze  
Will light my love  
Like a lighthouse

EVITA:  
I'll change no more  
My passionate heart  
My gaze, my love,  
will light you  
show you the way

In the storm	In the storm
It will flood	It will flood
This cruel present,	This cruel present
so inclement	so inclement
Nothing matters now	
If my love's flame	If my love's flame
In your still eyes	In these still eyes
Will never die	Will never die

(PERON EXITS, SADDENED. HE CAN BARELY WALK. FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE SEE HE IS SICK.

THE MUMMY REMAINS ONSTAGE, MOUNTED ATOP AN ALTAR. SHE IS RADIANT ONCE AGAIN. HER HAIR, FOR SOME REASON, SEEMS BLONDER. SHE TRULY RESTS WITH AN AIR OF EXTRAORDINARY SAINTLINESS.

WE HEAR THE PEOPLE SHOUTING: “EVITA! EVITA! EVITA!,” BUT THEN THE VOICES DISAPPEAR, IN AN ECHO.

ENTER LOPEZ AND ISABEL)

LOPEZ: For the great architect everything has a reason. Lines intersect. (TAKES ISABEL) Stand here where she can see you.

ISABEL: You think she knows I'm here?

LOPEZ: Of course she does. Why do you even ask?

ISABEL: Well, since everyone's ignoring me.

LOPEZ: No one's ignoring you, Isabel.

ISABEL: Now that she's back, I'll just be a footnote.

LOPEZ: Now that she's with us, you'll be the end page.

ISABEL: Right. That end page. The one no one reads.

LOPEZ: (PASSIONATELY) The most important page. The end page, the page that gives us the chance to allow ourselves excesses; they're the end pages of treason, violence and faith. Don't you see, the end pages are the end pages of a country too.  
(HE LOOKS AT HER. ISABEL IS TERRIFIED)  
That's what you are, Isabel Peron!  
The end page! (POINTING TO EVA'S BODY)

And she's your illustration!

ISABEL: THE MUMMY?

LOPEZ: Her soul's not been able to find rest. Eva wasn't able to finish her work in the government, that's why she can't leave the living.

ISABEL: You mean she's still here?

LOPEZ: In the box, in the body, with us.

ISABEL: Are you sure?

LOPEZ: That's her karma. Until she returns to the government and fulfills her mission, she won't find eternal rest.

ISABEL: But how can she return to the government if she's a Mummy?

LOPEZ: Inside you, sweet Isabel, the last page. Eva will sit in her throne at the right hand of Peron the Father and from there she will finish her work in Argentina!

(SUDDENLY, ENERGETICALLY)

Isabel, stand beside her.

ISABEL: Me?

LOPEZ: Eva's personality can migrate to another body. It's best you stay near.  
(TAKES ISABEL BY THE CHEEKS. VERY DRAMATIC, NEARLY UNRECOGNIZABLE)

I can transfer her spirit to you!

(SHOUTS) He who rules the mind, rules all!

ISABEL: Ay! That's terrifying!

LOPEZ: That's the idea Isabel! Terror! That's what History calls for! Terror will make you cease to exist so that she can! So that you can have Eva's spirit inside you!

ISABEL: Her spirit goes inside me?

LOPEZ: That's why you must be empty! The last page is blank!

ISABEL: I thought it was for taking notes.

LOPEZ: Are you mocking me?

ISABEL: Never!

LOPEZ: Then, do as I tell you! Isabel; it is a true privilege for you to speak to an exceptional being like me. That’s why Peron obeys me, that’s why things are as they are and why Eva has returned to this house. Not by chance. She’s here to meet me.

ISABEL: Lopez!

LOPEZ: And to migrate her spirit! Come, let’s begin!

ISABEL: My God! Migration Express!

LOPEZ: Come, lie down, with your head touching hers.

(LOPEZ MOVES ISABEL HEAD TO HEAD WITH EVA. HE STANDS BETWEEN THEM. HE PUTS ON A VERY STRANGE RELIGIOUS ROBE AND BEGINS PRAYING. LOPEZ’S GESTURES ARE CLEAR: WITH HIS ARMS HE TAKES AIR FROM EVA AND TRANSFERS IT TO ISABEL.

THIS CAN BE DONE IN DIFFERENT WAYS: MOUTH TO MOUTH RESPIRATION, BLOWING, WITH FANS, ETC.  
THE CLIMAX COMES. ISABLE SCREAMS.)

LOPEZ: How do you feel?

ISABEL: Small and silly.

LOPEZ: Your suffering is negligible. Mine is much greater. These sessions wear me out. I’ve lost 13 pounds since the body came.

(SUDDENLY, ISABEL STARTS TO CRY)

LOPEZ: What?

(ENTER PERON. LISTENS IN WITHOUT THEM NOTICING)

ISABEL: (SHOUTS) It’s just I don’t know what you want from me!  
I fell in love with Peron before I even met him.  
My mother was in love with him, my aunts, my grandmother, my father, we all loved him.  
And when I met him in Panama, I told myself: If Peron looks at me, my life has meaning. If Peron touches me, I’ll live forever.  
That was all.  
To be with him, even for one night;

For him to see me, nothing more,  
And then my life was worth something.

But then he asked me to help him out at home,  
to write his letters,  
to drain his tensions and I:  
“Say the word general, as you wish.”  
That was all.  
Then as if winter were surprised by summer,  
like that, I became his lost spring.  
And I remade myself, migratory,  
Into his beloved  
His favorite idolater,  
His one habitual lover.  
From object of adoration to companion,  
Then assistant, secretary, dishwasher, and maid,  
Simply, his wife.

I do everything and ask nothing.

Just that he look at me. Not even much. Every other day is enough; five times a month and I’m satisfied, I know how to live on the crumbs of his regard. After all, he is who he is and I, well I am who I am. Eternity’s beggar.

One day he says: “Isabel, marry me.” He didn’t ask, it was an order. It’s politics, they tell me. “It’s politics; men with lovers aren’t invited to the right parties.” And I understand and I accept.  
Then I get married. Marriage: a small ceremony, but big paperwork.  
And now this. Evita. No less!  
Do you know how all this weighs on me?  
Do you have any idea how much I can take?

LOPEZ: You tell me.

ISABEL: Not much. Not very much.

LOPEZ: (HOLDS HER LIKE A CHILD) I know.

(PERON FINALLY ENTERS)

PERON: Get everything ready. Tomorrow we’re off to Buenos Aires and the next day we take Power.

LOPEZ: (POINTING TO THE MUMMY) And her?

PERON: She'll come later. When her Mausoleum's ready and the people are prepared to welcome her for what she is: the nation's soul.

LOPEZ: I could stay with Eva in Madrid, if you wish General.

PERON: Lopez: I want you to take care of me. And the Ministry of Social Welfare. You have a grand future in our new government, my friend.

LOPEZ: I thought Social Welfare would be for Isabel.

ISABEL: Me?

PERON: You. You'll be my Eva. Now that I have her body, we only need someone to remind them of her. Our plan will be PERON-PERON, as it was before and was always meant to be!

(EXIT PERON)

ISABEL: Peron-Peron me? What does he mean?

LOPEZ: You'll be Vice President

ISABEL: Oh God!

LOPEZ: And with his health, soon you'll go even further

ISABEL: Lopez!

LOPEZ: Don't worry. I always be right there to help you.

(LOPEZ EXITS, THRILLED. ISABEL IS ALONE WITH THE MUMMY. SHE LOOKS AT HER, WITH SOME DISGUST. SUDDENLY, SHE NOTICES SOMETHING. SHE TAKES A LIPSTICK FROM HER PURSE)

ISABEL: Whatever you are, Mummy, death really doesn't suit you.

(THEN, THE MUMMY TAKES ISABEL'S HAND, CAUSING HER TO SCREAM HYSTERICALLY)

EVA: Eternity suits you even less.

ISABEL: (CLOSING THE COFFIN) Well I'm leaving for Buenos Aires tomorrow. While you, Mummy, you're staying here.

(EVA TRIES TO STOP HER, BUT CAN'T. ISABEL LOCKS THE MUMMY IN WITH CHAINS.  
MUSIC. SHOUTS: "PERON, PERON"  
A SIGN APPEARS WITH THE SLOGAN: "PERON-PERON."  
THE PEOPLE AND MONTONEROS ENTER.  
ISABEL JOINS PERON, WITH LOPEZ AT HER SIDE.  
THEY WAVE TO THE CROWD FROM THE PODIUM. BUT, TO THEIR SURPRISE, THE PEOPLE DON'T APPLAUD, BUT HECKLE THEM)

ALL: We want Eva!

MONTONERO2: Peron, Isabel, sellouts and traitors!

MONTONERO3: SOLDIERS, ASSASINS, DEFENDERS OF THE RICH!

MONTONERO4: The people, as one, will not be overcome!

MONTONERO2: Peron, you queer, you brought repression here!

ALL: We want Eva!

(VIDELA AND LOPEZ STAND BEFORE THEM)

VIDELA: And what'll we call it, Minister?

LOPEZ: We don't have to call it anything, General Videla.

VIDELA: I mean, amongst ourselves.

LOPEZ: I've thought we could use an acronym: Argentine Anticommunist Alliance. Triple A. Period. Once the bodies start, Montoneros will understand.

VIDELA: Let's get to work.

LOPEZ: Let's get to our country, Videla!

(SHOOTING AT THE DEMONSTRATORS. THE PEOPLE RESPOND)

MONTONERO2: We need food!

MONTONERO3: The Peso is shrinking!

MONTONERO4: Prices are rising!

MONTONERO2: The military uses torture!

MONTONERO3: The right is controlling Peron!

MONTONERO4: Argentina is falling apart in our hands!

ALL: We want Eva's body back!

(PERON, VISIBLY ILL, JOINS VIDELA AND LOPEZ. WITH THEM ISABEL)

PERON: Why do they hate me? Why can't they love me as they loved her?

VIDELA: It's the press that's doing the most damage, Mr. President.

LOPEZ: Because we control the loose canons...

VIDELA: But the press...

LOPEZ: Who should be with us...

VIDELA: Has gotten awfully chatty.

PERON: I'll get on it right away. I'll speak to the owners.

LOPEZ: Maybe a little arm-twisting.

PERON: If you keep criticizing my government, I'll quit! Then you can figure out how to control those demons! Think it over carefully: Should Peron stay or should he go!

ALL: He should go!

(PERON ASKS LOPEZ TO SPEAK WITH HIM, APART, IN SECRET. ISABEL LISTENS IN)

PERON: We have to stop Montoneros. Open up a channel of communication. I want to talk to them.

LOPEZ: Right away, Mr. President.

(PERON FALLS INTO THE BED LOPEZ HAS MADE HIM)

LOPEZ: He wants the Triple A to take out three more union leaders. Blame Montoneros.

ISABEL: I thought he said dialogue?

LOPEZ: It's politics Isabel. Remember you don't know a thing about anything and all I do is for you.

VIDELA: The President doesn't want to talk to those bastards.

LOPEZ: He says that so they won't think it was his orders. What the general means is: Kill them and ask questions later.

VIDELA: My pleasure.

(PERON GETS UP. HE WALKS WITH DIFFICULTY. LOPEZ GOES TO HIM)

LOPEZ: Montoneros says he won't to talk to you.

PERON: (MAKING A SPEECH) They won't talk to me? And they call themselves Peronists? Well, I am Peron. I'm still Peron! They aren't Peronists at all! They're a bunch of useless idiots and mercenaries serving the international union powers!

MONTONERO4: What's the matter, General?

MONTONERO3: The populist government's full of gorillas!

PERON: (MAKING A SPEECH) Isabel will hand out aid to the poor!

MONTONERO2: There's only one Eva!

MONTONERO3: Isabel's a jackass!

MONTONERO4: Throw the nitwit out!

ALL: We want Eva's body back!

(PERON TUMBLES INTO THE BED AGAIN)

PERON: (DYING) ...My ears ring with the most wonderful music, the word of Argentina's people!  
(COUGHS. IS IN PAIN. LOOKS WORSE)  
Lopez, I think this is as far as I go.  
I'd advise you to leave Eva in Madrid, until things calm down. Don't bring her. And I have to say, in this situation, I don't think it's such a

good idea for Isabel to take over. We'd better name Balbin. He can settle the country down.

LOPEZ: But she's the Vice President, General

PERON: She's nothing and you know it.

LOPEZ: We'll do as you say.

PERON: Don't leave everything in her hands.

(ENTER ISABEL)

LOPEZ: Don't worry, she won't be alone.

PERON: And watch out for Videla's and Massera's men. Those dogs have masters.

LOPEZ: I've got them under control, General. Don't worry. They won't do anything without my permission. (SHOUTS) Videla!

(VIDELA GOES TO HIM)

LOPEZ: Isabel, come here. (SHE DOES) The President's very ill. I've spoken with the American Embassy and they're aware of the situation. They feel the most important thing is to control the terrorists and maintain national security. Is that clear?

VIDELA: Yes, and we agree.

LOPEZ: Good. The President has delegated power to the Vice President.

(VIDELA SALUTES ISABEL, HIDING HIS SMILE. ISABEL SALUTES BACK, BUT LOOKS RIDICULOUS. PERON BEGINS TO DEFLATE AND SLUMPS TO HIS SIDE. GENERAL ALARM. LOPEZ GOES TO HIM)

LOPEZ: (LOPEZ TAKES PERON BY THE ANKLES AND PRAYS)  
Great Pharaoh! Don't go! (SHAKES THE GENERAL'S LEGS. DOES THIS SEVERAL TIMES, BUT NOTHING HAPPENS)  
The Great Pharaoh is not responding to my efforts to keep him on Earth!  
I must desist and let him go!

PERON: Will they love me as they adore her?  
(PERON DIES)

LOPEZ: Thirty years of the Nation’s life have died!  
(THE ANTHEM PLAYS. ALL PRAY AND CRY)

VIDELA: (GOES TO ISABEL) Madame President. Prepare yourself to govern.

LOPEZ: We’re ready now.

MONTONERO2: Now the popular war begins!

MONTONERO3: With Peron gone, the right is taking over everything!

MONTONERO4: Isabel will last as long as a fart in the wind!

MONTONERO3: Assassins are in power here!

MONTONERO2: When aren’t they in Argentina?

ALL: Peron! Peron!

LOPEZ: (BESIDE PERON’S BODY) If Mom could only see me. I have the second most important corpse in the nation in my power. (SHOUTS) Videla, how’s the cleanup coming?

VIDELA: We’ll have to throw several thousand into the sea, that’s all.

LOPEZ: Run them through with a bayonet first. In case they know how to swim.

(MONTONEROS BECOME THE PRESS CHORUS. ISABEL, TERRIFIED)

ISABEL: The press is here, Lopez. What should I say?

LOPEZ: DON’T say anything. Leave it all to me. You stand there, and smile.

ISABEL: Like Eva.

LOPEZ: Like Eva.

REPORTER3: What about the Triple A?

VIDELA: I don’t know what that is.

LOPEZ: Honestly, I think it’s just a myth made up by reporters.

REPORTER2: How long will we be at war, Minister?

LOPEZ: They give themselves up or we annihilate them.

REPORTER3: Videla: And meanwhile?

VIDELA: It's the eternal battle. And let me say that all Argentines implicitly, either directly or by omission, support the government's actions.

REPORTER4: One last question: When IS THE MUMMY COMING BACK TO ARGENTINA?

LOPEZ: Coming back?

REPORTER2: That's what the Peronists are waiting for, isn't it?

VIDELA: Maybe, for the time being, it's not necessary...

LOPEZ: (GETTING AN IDEA) Well of course Eva's coming back as soon as possible! Next week, to be exact.

(ALL ARE SURPRISED. VIDELA IS CLEARLY NOT PLEASED BY THE IDEA)

ISABEL: Yes? She's coming back?

LOPEZ: Exactly two years after Peron's return, Eva will come back, to rest beside her husband, to guide all of Argentina's people to peace and unity!

ISABEL: (CLAPPING ALONE) Wonderful!

VIDELA: I don't think now is the time, Lopez....

LOPEZ: And the people can be at peace with their Saint!

(EXIT REPORTERS. ENTER DOMINGO)

LOPEZ: (TO DOMINGO) You! When she gets here, I want you to restore the Mummy!  
But I want a Saint, none of this revolutionary business!  
Like an English queen!  
That will make them lambs again.  
Make her look like a  
Bourgeois lady.  
That will put them back to sleep!

(THEN THE MUMMY APPEARS. BUT THIS TIME EVA IS BESIDE HER, RADIANT. ABOVE ALL, WE NOTICE HER HAIR, A DAZZLING BLONDE. WE HEAR THE SHOUTS OF “EVA, EVA, EVA!” AGAIN. EVA STEPS TOWARDS THE AUDIENCE. SHE COULD REACH OUT AND TOUCH THEM. BESIDE HER, DOMINGO)

DOMINGO: Finally, the Mummy returned to Argentina and the people went out to meet her. (SHOUTS OF “EVITA” “EVITA”) Some felt passion, others reverence. Many were armed, with passion and reverence too.

VIDELA: I told you Lopez! The People have taken the airport!

LOPEZ: Don't let them take her! Kill them all if you have to!

VIDELA: (FURIOUS AT LOPEZ) We'll do what we have to do!

(VIDELA EXITS WITH OTHER SOLDIERS)

EVITA: I was going back, but it wasn't my Argentina anymore. It had stopped being a land of Mummies and had started being a land of corpses.

LOPEZ: It's what the people want, Isabel! Give the people what they want, bread and circuses, movies and musicals, novels and theater, Mummies and Soccer! Whatever they want from Eva, there's plenty of entertainment to go around!

DOMINGO: The work of restoring Evita's corpse began one November morning in 1974.

EVITA: There are so many I wonder: Will we be able to embalm them all? Will we have enough formaldehyde for this much macabre national history?

DOMINGO: Preserving and cleaning a body that looked calamitous and was subjected to vast abuse.

EVITA: There's no Saint, my dears, just me. You and facing us; barbarism.

ISABEL: (TO LOPEZ) I think Videla's conspiring.

LOPEZ: Videla's loyal, he's not power-hungry.

ISABEL: All Argentines want power!

LOPEZ: Videla's a pipsqueak, Isabel. Forget about him. Videla's not the problem, he's not what this is all about.

- DOMINGO: There is deep and superficial damage. To the bones, muscles... But it's a mummified body. Strong, resistant, the material of pyramids. To damage it, you have to hit it hard.
- EVA: How do I walk past the skeletons? What music can I sing to the disappeared? What lights do I use to overlook your arrested soul of shadows?
- LOPEZ: That's what this is all about: a theme.
- ISABEL: And a character.
- LOPEZ: (NERVOUS) The dead in the street aren't a problem or a central theme!  
(DELIRIOUS) MONTONEROS IS BECOMING A MYTH, IS HE?  
Well I have the dead, the body and the Mummy! And they're all mine!  
Now that's a myth! That's me!
- DOMINGO: The solutions used by Dr. Pedro Ara in the mummification process have drained downward, since the body has been in a vertical position for an extended period.
- EVITA: Let's see: What says more about you, Argentina??  
This beauty that isn't truth or the truth, that with pain, will become beauty?
- DOMINGO: The blow to the nose was hard, deliberate. That blow, or asskicking rather, snapped her neck.
- EVITA: (TO ISABEL, WHO WATCHES HER IN TERROR) Who's disfigured between you and me, Argentina?
- DOMINGO: The body has a deep gash in the throat where there are insects and microorganisms; the nasal septum is destroyed, one ear damaged...
- EVITA: Between us, darling... Which of us is the Mummy in the closet?
- DOMINGO: ...damage to the arms and knees, one phalange missing from the right hand and the middle toe from one foot.
- EVITA: Which of us two has more than enough phalanxes?
- DOMINGO: ...The burns on her wrist are marks left by the rosary that began to decompose
- EVITA: In this never-ending South.  
Destroyed Mummy of a Nation?  
Decomposed Mummy of a Nation?

Destroyed Mummy of a Nation?  
One deed leads us to the next  
in this never-ending South  
one step meets the next  
massacres are born of a slap  
crime begins with a speech  
hatred ages with the years  
When did all that lies behind begin?  
When does all that lies ahead begin?  
Where men see deeds,  
We Angels see steps.

(THEN WE HEAR THE TERRIBLE NOISE OF JET PLANES  
FLYING BY OVERHEAD. THE SOUND IS INTENSE,  
TERRIFYING. SHOTS, MACHINE GUN FIRE, GRENADES AND  
SHOUTS FOLLOW.  
ENTER VIDELA, SURROUNDED BY SOLDIERS. THEY DETAIN  
LOPEZ AND ISABEL. SAD MUSIC.  
EVA IS CENTERSTAGE, RADIANT. THE MUMMY DISAPPEARS)

- VIDELA: A Military Junta, made up of the commanders of the three branches -  
General Jorge Rafael Videla, Admiral Emilio Eduardo Massera and  
Brigadier Orlando Ramón Agosti...
- EVITA: There is no beauty because there is no truth. And there is no truth  
because there is no poetry.
- VIDELA: ...have taken control of the country.  
The armed forces, realizing that normal continuation of the process  
doesn't offer an acceptable future for our country...
- DOMINGO: Damage that didn't happen when the body was moved, but when brutal  
force was used against it.
- VIDELA: ...gave the only answer possible at this critical juncture.
- EVITA: And we never asked ourselves questions, even the most personal one:  
Do we come from fascism and to fascism we shall return?
- VIDELA: That decision, based on the mission and very essence of our military  
institutions, was carried out...
- EVITA: Here I'd stay, looking on the remains of utopia from the gates of hell;  
here bled dry, here disappeared.

VIDELA: ...with a restraint, responsibility, determination and steadiness that has earned the respect of the Argentine people.

EVITA: The pencils do their work by day, until by night we break their leads.

VIDELA: If need be, they will disappear any and all necessary to achieve national security.

EVITA: We blanketed the sea with the bodies of students.

VIDELA: If 100 innocents must be killed for one guilty person to die, then so be it.

EVITA: And we twisted the howls of the mother  
Who gives birth and is shot  
Once they have given  
Some rich family her daughter.

(ALL APPLAUD VIDELA, INCLUDING LOPEZ AND ISABEL, IN HANDCUFFS)

ALL: Anything for national security!

EVA: The thing is, between us, nothing defines and decides us like hatred.

(DOMINGO DISAPPEARS.  
SAD MUSIC, MAIN THEME.  
FOOTLIGHTS UP ON AUDIENCE, MAKING SHADOWS)

VIDELA: Well, let's give this Mummy a Christian end. Give her to her family and let them bury her once and for all in la Recoleta. Fifteen feet underground. No, make that twenty, twenty-five, thirty feet. Put her under solid ground, with rocks and a monument that's good and heavy, so we never see her again.

(VIDELA DISAPPEARS. EVA IS ALONE ON STAGE, RADIANT. MUSIC)

EVA: What's a Mummy to do  
when she doesn't want to die?  
She breaks her bandages  
Her invisible rebel soul  
Goes and returns  
As millions  
Argentina  
You're the best thing in my life

Death has reigned  
but now it's time to begin living  
Let the macabre, with love,  
Become our poetry  
That's what a Mummy does  
When she doesn't want to die  
She sings to Argentina  
You're the best thing in my life  
For among Mummies and the dead  
No grace of God  
Can compare to the grace of the People  
For where men see deeds  
We angels see steps  
What's a Mummy to do  
When she doesn't want to leave?  
She breaks her bandages  
And her invisible rebel soul  
Goes and returns  
As millions

Meanwhile,  
Here I'll stay,  
looking on the remains of utopia  
from the gates of hell;  
here bled dry,  
here disappeared.

(BLACKOUT)

END OF MUMMY IN THE CLOSET. ©2008